

GET FLUENT

F A S T

61 practical tips

to accelerate your learning
of any foreign language,
whatever your level

This booklet applies the latest thinking in memory science, linguistics, productivity and NLP to help you lift your language learning to a new level.

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Introduction

This booklet helps you speed up your language learning. It's your roadmap to achieve better results in less time.

First some good news: **anyone can** become fluent in a foreign language.

Studies show that attitude and effective learning strategies are far more important than "natural talent". All major languages have been successfully learned by someone who was not born a native speaker.

Don't let anyone put you off. The keys to your success are: strong motivation, sustained effort, curiosity, great organisation and risk-taking ability. **Be bold** to get the results your hard work deserves.

Equip yourself with sound learning methods and take control of your learning. Get ready to enjoy the wonderful gifts that success in language learning brings.

The tips are based on "modelling" the habits of successful language learners and backed up by substantial research.

Allow this booklet to complement your own knowledge and experience. You'll soon have all the tools you need to get fluent fast.

Are you ready for the challenge?

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A: MOTIVATION & MOMENTUM

The two magic “Ms” are the foundation of your success. Apply these tips and feel energised to give your best **every day**.

1 Explore your purpose.

A clear purpose gives you a flying start. Why are you learning a particular language? The more angles you test this from, the deeper you’ll believe in your reasons and the further you’ll progress. Ask yourself: do I need it? Will it improve my quality of life? Is this the right language for me? Am I willing to invest the time and energy? Continue with this booklet only if your answer is a resounding “**yes**”.

2 Deepen your motives.

Motivation can be emotional (e.g. relationships), functional (e.g. career) or a varied mix. Be deeply convinced of your motives. Imagine the “hunger” of a new immigrant who needs a language to feed his family; or feel the joy of proving wrong someone who doubts you. Write down at least 10 solid reasons why learning this language will enhance your life. Close your eyes and imagine yourself enjoying the benefits now. You must feel it to believe it. **Self-belief** is the magic that sets the elite language learners apart – be one of them!

3 Write down your learning goals.

What gets written down gets done. Clear goals are a fair wind that will propel your language learning forward. Make them

specific, time-bound and measurable. They should focus only on your needs. Your positive goal-setting could be as follows:

- I want fluent German for my career.
- I'll learn 3000+ words in 6 months.
- I'll read German business news daily.
- I'll lead meetings in German (9 months).

The wording matters. Paint a vivid image of you participating actively in the goal. Keep these goals visible - on your desk, in your car, on your fridge or wherever you go most.

4 Make yourself fully accountable for your language learning.

Effective language learners take 100% ownership. Tell yourself: **you** will take charge of learning the language, not your teacher. Set goals **you** believe in. Develop **your own** study plan and learning materials. Track your progress. Share goals with close family and friends: let them hold you to account. Imagine how proud you'll feel after achieving your objectives and enjoy this feeling in advance. Make it personal to give yourself an edge. Back yourself to succeed.

5 Celebrate your successes.

Set up your language study for motivating "quick wins". Target benefits you can reap from the outset. Language learning is a joy when you approach it in an organised fashion **playing to your strengths**. Every step you take represents important progress. Celebrate all your little victories with relish. Mark milestones on a visual "gant chart" scoring yourself out of 10. Give yourself treats and rewards for achieving targets.

6 Keep a language learning journal.

This gives you another winning habit. You'll work it as a tool both to motivate and organise. Track your progress, note ideas and list actions. Take charge of your learning.

Here's what you can put in it:

- Your priorities and actions for the next day, week or month.
- Your new vocabulary acquired (and a running count – later tip).
- Your key achievements so far – keep on front or back sleeve.
- Areas to address urgently.
- Vocabulary topics so far/pending.
- Observations on good learners.

The best journals mix good planning and inspiring personal pep talk. Update it daily.

7 Create your own “quick start” bandwagon!

Many language resources are prefaced by terms like “quick start”, “instant” etc. They integrate approaches and boost your confidence. Consider buying an off the shelf toolkit or combine the following:

- A good vocabulary reference.
- A “handy” pocket dictionary to carry.
- A concise textbook with exercises.
- Multimedia tools.
- Your language learning journal.
- Sources reflecting an interest/hobby (e.g. magazine, website)
- Vocabulary flash cards (see later tip)

Tailor this toolkit around your goals. For example, are you most after spoken fluency or reading skills? Use your quick wins to give yourself unstoppable momentum.

8 Make your positive affirmations.

Use positive affirmations to motivate yourself every day. Keep updating them as you progress. For example:

- “I feel inspired by my progress”.
- “I’ve now nailed the grammar basics.”
- “I’ll cope confidently on my next trip”.
- “I always manage to be understood”.
- “I love how fast my vocab. grows”.
- “I’m excited I followed that speech.”

Develop dozens and keep them near. Believe in them **wholeheartedly** to activate your subconscious mind in your favour.

9 Get sociable with your learning.

Sign up for a group class to supplement your “quick start”, ideally an intensive course. A structured class gives you routine and consistency. Stimulating classmates help too as you’ll motivate each other. Interact socially with native speakers and make pen pals over the internet. Join a conversation group or form your own. Flap your wings to build linguistic muscle. Take risks in social situations and try out new phrases at every opportunity.

B: EFFECTIVE SELF-STUDY

Make the most of your time with these productivity-boosting language learning tips.

10 Pick your “low-hanging fruit”.

Order your learning from easy to hard. Glide through early material for an overview. Be ruthlessly pragmatic: it’s about essentials, not perfection! Examples:

- Get a basic grammar overview.
- Master the key phonetic sounds.
- Exploit familiar-looking “latent vocabulary” (see later tip). This may yield hundreds of easy words.
- Many languages have widely-used “nuclear verbs” (see later tip). Learn these early for maximum benefit.
- Target your topics of interest first.
- Focus on your “natural” strengths.

You’ll enjoy faster results by **ordering** your language learning strategically in this way.

11 Swallow “ugly frogs” of language learning every day.

There are tedious essentials in any language (e.g. verb endings and exceptions). See these as “ugly frogs” to swallow early each day. Many effective people share this habit. You’ll feel as though a weight has been lifted and later tasks will seem so much simpler. Start each day with an ugly frog!

12 “Mix and match” to accelerate.

Studies of effective language learners show that an eclectic approach works best. Flick through some pages of grammar. Memorise 50 words of vocab. Learn further grammar. Play some audio. Do some exercises. Practice conversation. Above all, keep moving forward constantly. Vary your choice of learning source all the time. Your “language brain” is a muscle you’ll strengthen by challenging it in different ways. Stretch out of your comfort zone. With your dynamic approach you certainly won’t get bored!

13 Apply your preferred learning style.

The basic learning styles are set out below. Which one are you?

- “**Analytical**”. You enjoy linking, goals and measuring progress.
- “**Concrete**”. You use your intuition plus trial and error.
- “**Visual**”. You like interactive learning, video and graphics.
- “**Auditory**”. You prefer tapes, listening/repeating and music.
- “**Tactile**”. You need to feel comfy and like touching and stretching.
- “**Kinaesthetic**”. You take a hands-on and practical approach.

In reality, we all display a mix with some dominant. Play to your strengths but vary it too. Try different styles for different tasks.

14 Synchronise with your natural energy cycle.

We each have individual lifestyles and sleep patterns. If you're a “morning person” this may also be a fruitful time for language learning. If not, you might start with gentle tasks to ease yourself in. Above all, be **conscious** of your energy cycle. Tackle tough tasks (e.g. a new verb tense or large slab of words) when you feel “in the flow” with your confidence and productivity soaring.

15 Create a study environment that motivates you.

Attention to detail is a key quality of successful language learners. Shape your environment carefully so as to:

- Minimise distractions.
- Stay physically comfortable with good posture. Stretch often.
- Work in an uncluttered setting.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Keep your goals and positive affirmations close to hand.
- Breathe well to relax and focus.
- Drink water as an energy booster.

16 Release your “hidden time”. People often claim they “lack time” to learn a language. But don’t we have time to eat, go out, sit in traffic, exercise and enjoy hobbies? You’ll make time by making your language learning a priority. **Motivation creates time.** Tips to use your time well:

- Use vocab. flash cards (later tip) during your commute to work.
- Fill “dead time” with learning e.g. ad breaks, queues, at dentist’s.
- Ask friends to quiz you.
- Learn while exercising (audio).
- Redirect at least 50% of your annual hours spent watching tv.

Brainstorm to discover “hidden time” opportunities in your daily routine.

C: SAVVY GRAMMAR TIPS

“Grammar” is only a set of rules to give your language learning a structure. Apply memory skills to grammar and make it fun!

17 Chunk grammar down to size. Cut grammar into small “chunks” along

tightly-focused themes. You'll find it less daunting and easier to absorb. For example, chunk "the subjunctive" as: (i) verb endings, (ii) usage, (iii) exceptions, (iv) how to avoid it and (v) my own examples. Treat each as a distinct digestible piece. With each session "integrate" them by reviewing earlier related chunks. Draw diagrams to link different chunks (see later tip on "visual mapping"). Grammar books can also help you chunk. However, by chunking yourself, you're **more likely to remember** as it reflects your own thought process. The process of chunking itself deepens your know-how. Get chunking now!

18 "Discover" your learning.

Memory experts advise you to "discover" grammar rather than passively follow a formal structure. Structured teaching is useful but don't rely on it. You'll excel if you create your own bespoke materials. An example: cut out interesting articles (on a topic you love) and highlight useful grammar points. Review them regularly. This way you see grammar **in use** rather than just in textbooks.

19 Use the "example first" system.

Many grammar texts present a theoretical explanation followed by examples. Try the opposite: look at examples first and figure out the grammar. This is again "discovery learning": fun and memorable. See grammar as an intriguing crossword puzzle or sudoku. Say "eureka" when you work it out!

20 Bring it to life through "play".

Admire the intricacy of grammar as you would the pillars of an impressive building.

Instead of learning by rote, look at context. Experiment with formats. Draw images for a key point or record your voice explaining it. Create mnemonic rhymes. Play interactive linguistic games on the net. Play, practice and play some more! Be “child like” (see later tip). This helps you remember and makes it fun.

21 Ask questions persistently, tirelessly, from all angles!

The best language learners ask more questions. Be confident you are doing your classmates a service by asking. When alone, you can often resolve questions in seconds with the internet. Keep a “point sheet” of questions in a notepad, jotting down answers and actions vigorously. This is now your private “solutions reference”: review it often. Fix regular question and answer sessions with fellow learners. If you come across an obstacle then solve it right now. Cultivate a sense of curiosity and of urgency. The **more questions** you ask the **faster** you’ll be fluent.

22 Target your private lessons proactively.

As soon as you’re aware of an area to improve, “blitz” it intensively. Private lessons are most effective when **you lead** them. Prepare and share your extensive list of questions beforehand. Tell the teacher what you want and keep your precious time focused on it. It may be business vocab. one day and possessives the next. Focus will help you win in your strategically-timed lessons. Be assertive with your teacher. Enjoy the glory of “nailing” a particular area!

23 Exploit linguistic linkages.

When your brain stores information it links it to other related data. You'll strengthen these links with regular review. Consciously connect what you learn with something you already know. Do this by "noticing the difference": what's distinct about a grammar rule between your mother and target language? Connect grammar chunks in your new language (e.g. relationship between nouns and adjectives). Look for alternatives to create new links. How else can I express this idea? How do I say that using a different verb tense?

24 Use it or lose it!

Memory scientists advise that you remember someone's name by using it straight away i.e. repeat it back in the next sentence. Similarly, you'll remember grammar by applying examples immediately. As soon as you learn something **just apply it** as a knee-jerk reaction. Imagine you lose money for each second of delay! Create your own sentences as well as doing exercises in your course book. Be consistent in this habit and you'll progress rapidly.

25 Teach to learn.

This is unorthodox but effective: pretend you're the teacher! Whatever your level, there's always someone who knows a bit less. Find a keen classmate/friend and prepare a "lesson" for them. You'll be keen not to let them down so prepare thoroughly. You'll also remember better as their queries will firm up your own knowledge. Finally, it will do your confidence a power of good. Find your own unofficial "students" today.

26 Dissect dialogues for grammar. The grammar used in dialogues (think of soap operas, film or real life) is often simpler to grasp as it reflects everyday usage. Take apart dialogues and squeeze out maximum learning from them. Substitute yourself into the dialogue and rewrite it. **Personalise it** to improve your success in recall.

27 Grammar is sexy! Handle grammar confidently and you'll sound like a native. Pronunciation and vocabulary are important too however, your clarity and confidence come from solid grammar. When locals compliment you they're referring to your mastery of a "code" they learned as kids. It shows a deep respect for their culture. Always remember how good grammar makes you look!

D: FAST VOCABULARY TIPS

Once the "poor cousin" of language learning, vocabulary now plays a central role. Take a **systematic** approach to nurture a fast-growing vocabulary you'll be proud of.

28 See your vocabulary-building as natural and fun.

A typical 5 year old knows 5000 words in their mother tongue before going on to acquire an average 10 words/day throughout childhood. A well-educated adult may know around 50,000 words. Learning new words is a natural and spontaneous human habit. Treat it like a game and recapture your childhood flair for new

words. Write down new words with **unflinching discipline**. Prioritise by focusing only on words and phrases you want to learn.

29 Pick up your “survival word-kit” as early as possible.

Speaking uses far less vocab. than reading. Just 100-120 common words cover as much as 50% of spoken language in some tongues. Pick up this “survival kit” and you’ll feel well-placed. In many modern languages only around 800 words are enough for basic operational communication: that’s an achievable goal. Use specialised sources to build your “word-kit” efficiently. Feel empowered by this solid foundation.

30 Accept vocab. “gifts” willingly.

Not all words are created equal. The widely used “**nuclear verbs**” cover:

- Motion – to go.
- Production – to do/make.
- Possession – to give/take.
- Perception – to see.
- Cognition – to know.
- Communication – to say.

Learn expressions associated with these verbs too. Target “**latent words**” that look familiar in your own tongue: these often cover specialised/technical fields (though beware of “false friends”!). Research shows that concrete “**basic-level items**” (e.g. dog, chair, house) are easier to remember in any language.

Verbs and nouns tend to be simpler than adjectives and adverbs with the latter more influenced by cultural factors.

31 Prioritise your desired vocabulary.

Define the types of vocabulary you most want and let your motivation drive you to success. Make a plan of vocab. “themes” linked to your goals and hobbies. Keep picking them off relentlessly. Devour articles in your chosen area of interest and note down new words religiously. Join internet chat groups and read online newspapers in your target language. Note down useful words from tv or radio. Follow your interests and you can’t go wrong.

32 Target/track your word count.

Keep a running count of the words you want. Be consistent and use your journal to track progress. At what level to set your target? It should be no less than 10 words a day: as mentioned above, this is child’s play! By using mnemonic tools you can potentially memorise 100 or more words daily. Set the bar high: tests show that those who learn a lot of words retain them better. **Memory benefits from exercise!** Make it a massive, systematic effort. Your powers of comprehension will improve markedly.

33 Make “intelligent guesses”.

Sometimes when you come across a new word, try to puzzle out its meaning from the context. This is more fun than slavishly looking everything up. Ask someone to test you on unseen words while offering smart clues: make it a game. There are also stimulating net tools out there. This process of “discovery” improves recall – just as with grammar. Use this tip selectively.

34 Use vocabulary “flash cards”.

While some language courses provide these ready, it's simple to create your own. Cut a rectangular piece of card with the word or phrase on one side and a translation on the back. Test yourself and find the answer by flipping the card. Repeat the exercise regularly by putting mistakes into a different pile until you've mastered all items. Take them with you and practice during “dead time” on the move. Keep creating new flash cards. The more often you do it the better results you'll enjoy.

35 Follow your “overnight” vocabulary routine.

Our minds are especially receptive as we drift off to sleep. Take a list of words to bed every night. If you feel drowsy, repeat the words gently to stimulate pleasant images in your mind. See how many words from the previous night you remember in the morning. If you find yourself dreaming in the language then you're well on your way to fluency!

36 Hunt down synonyms and opposites.

Why not learn two, three or six words for the price of one? Your memory retrieves words by activating related ones: the **more linkages** you create in your brain the **more words** you'll remember. Here is an example using the Spanish word “Bruto”:

- Bruto = stupid, rough, gross.
- Synonyms: ignorante, grosero.
- Opposites: sabio, educado, delicado.

Use a specialised dictionary of synonyms. With this tip, you'll substantially improve both your total word count and your rate of recall.

37 Create pictures and doodle. A picture tells a thousand words and is easier to remember. Doodle images around your word lists and in your mind's eye. Make them **colourful and vivid** to be more memorable. There is a mnemonic technique (later tip) that builds on this. Use picture dictionaries for inspiration.

38 Keep your memory razor-sharp. A recap of vocabulary memory tips:

- Group words by theme/context. Research proves that this works.
- Listen to background music (especially classical).
- Stay motivated: memory and motivation are closely linked.
- Get yourself in a relaxed state through breathing and posture.
- More words and a well-exercised memory mean better recall.
- Use the loci method. Hang new words on items in a familiar place e.g. room by room in your home.

39 Say words out loud! Research suggests recall of vocabulary is better when you repeat the word aloud. This works especially well if you're an auditory learner (earlier tip). But you'll benefit anyway just by the effect of repetition in your own voice. Test it and see.

40 "Activate" words just learned. When you learn a series of words grouped by theme, create a short story from them. Active writing beats passive reading every time. Write a series of conversations

you might have in the country. Imagine events that could really happen. This activates your new words as you picture a situation you can **personally identify** with.

41 Review your vocabulary lists at set intervals.

Transfer your words and phrases from short-term to long-term memory with regular review. Make it systematic. Write dates against your vocab. lists and schedule reviews after 1 week, 1 month, 3 months and 6 months. Set up alarms and schedules to remind you of “review days”. Your **discipline** will determine your **success**. Keep score to track your improved retention with each review. Do you want to accelerate still further? Maintain your lists on your computer (see later tip) and multiply them applying technology tools.

42 Get yourself a native speaker dictionary.

This is a great tip if you enjoy a challenge. Be brave and go for it a little “too early”: it will help you think in the language. You’ll also “puzzle out” words more naturally, making them more likely to stick. You’ll get even more benefit if your dictionary provides synonyms and opposites (see earlier tip).

43 Master the art of paraphrasing.

When in doubt express yourself differently. Do this whenever you can’t recall a word instantly. Learn lists of key expressions and find common paraphrasing “formulas”. Describe how you “see” something even if you can’t retrieve the exact word. Remember: getting your message across matters more

than translating the precise meaning. Perfect your paraphrasing and you'll never feel lost for words. **Just relax** and paraphrase away. Your confidence in your paraphrasing ability is critical to your spoken fluency.

E: SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE

You've seen already how well "spoken vocabulary" and "spoken grammar" help you speed up. Here are further tips to build on this.

44 Know your phonetics.

Be ultra-sensitive to the phonetics of the language. Use tv, radio, film and the internet to listen to native speakers and **train your ear**. Say it aloud as you come across a new phrase: a double win which aids recall and refines pronunciation at the same time. Add phonetic notes to your vocab. lists. Record yourself saying words correctly. Learn songs in your language! Do a private class purely to refine your phonetics. For trickier sounds, try lip reading and practice in front of a mirror.

45 Listen well to speak well.

Effective listening is the key. Attention and concentration are vital both to learn and to remember. **You'll notice small details** by dissecting how someone speaks. Watch far more than just accent and content:

- Stress.
- Rhythm.
- Volume.
- Intonation.
- Pitch.

Notice each element and mimic. Record a native speaker friend and analyse the tape.

46 Learn like a child.

Children often learn to speak a language more naturally than adults. What can we learn from them?

- Be happy to experiment. Kids usually have fewer inhibitions.
- Imitate continually – that’s how kids acquire a “natural” accent.
- Kids learn through play (see earlier tip).
- Kids look for feedback.
- Kids often “pretend to follow” and so listen longer. Let native speakers finish before you quiz them.

Add the above to your conscious thinking and experience advantages as an adult.

47 Read body language skilfully.

Body language conveys far more than words. “**Mirror**” the conventions of the foreign culture: you can’t ever assume that yours will apply. Certain hand-signs are friendly or offensive depending on how and where they are done. Some cultures are especially rich in body language. Sit in a café in the country and observe people. When you can’t understand someone’s words, watch their gestures intently. Body language is a vital ally to fill gaps in your vocabulary. Do your research on body language for different cultures.

48 Speak up without fear!

Take chances if you want to speak fluently. The expression “practice makes perfect” applies 100%. Dissolve your fears:

locals are often thrilled at your spirited attempt. Speak slowly and clearly – speed is overrated. Carry a **confident tone**: you're more likely to get it right. Be light-hearted and relaxed about it. Your confidence in speaking comes from knowing that you have worked on your grammar. Vocabulary is also useful but comfort in your ability to paraphrase (earlier tip) matters even more.

49 Learn colloquialisms, idioms and metaphors systematically.

Everyday language can be a world apart from your textbooks. Use specialised resources to pick up slang. Browse “real world” websites, not just language learning ones. There's a wealth of spoken expressions to get you well under the skin of a culture. Tap into this rich heritage. Use multimedia tools liberally. Add **colour** and **realism** to your words and pronunciation.

50 Think in the language.

This is the holy grail of spoken fluency. If it isn't feasible to visit the country here are some creative alternatives:

- Find native speakers in your area. Join or form a group over a shared interest.
- Find internet penpals abroad and keep contact through free web phone services, chat and email.
- Work in a company originating from the country.
- Immerse yourself in foreign media “as if” you're in the country.

Fix a day when you can speak and read only in the language. Get your friends into it too!

F: EXTRA MEMORY TIPS

Memory tips are integrated all over this booklet. Here are some bonus ones.

51 Practice your “speed reading”.

There are useful books dedicated to this technique. Here’s how you do it:

- Define a clear purpose for what you are reading. Get motivated.
- Use a horizontal slide rule to guide your eye down quickly.
- **Prepare** by reading the sleeve, summary, table of contents first.
- **Preview** by flicking through the book and noting the structure.
- **First read**: brisk and passive.
- **Second read**: be more active. Make notes/associations/links.
- **Selective review**. Go back in depth over key areas.
- Stretch and relax throughout.

Master speed reading with lots of practice. Your productivity and confidence will soar as you read more widely in your new language.

52 Use “suggestive” learning.

You remember better when you harness your senses in tandem. Take this a step further and engage your subconscious mind. Positive affirmations (earlier tip) do this superbly. You may also find it useful to keep foreign language radio on at night as you fall asleep. **Gently coax** your self-dialogue (inner voice) into using the foreign language. Just give it a go!

53 Use vocab. “memory keys”.

Here’s a method to potentially double your rate of recall. Unleash your imagination to create vivid mental photos linking each word with a “memory key”. The following examples in 3 languages illustrate:

<u>Foreign word</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Memory Key</u>
Aceituna (Spanish)	Olive (noun)	I say “tuna”, the waiter brings it stuffed with olives!
Santé (French)	Health (noun)	Santa is a bodybuilder now due to a major health drive!
Masticare (Italian)	Chew (verb)	I must a’ care in Italy to a’ chew hard on my pasta!

Repeat the word while creating your mental image. Make it personal and wacky to be memorable. Sound + image = “locked” meaning. Be creative and make up **your own memory keys** for even better results. You can order themed mnemonic booklets containing hundreds of words and memory keys in French, Spanish and Italian. Email info@getfluentfast.com for details.

54 Create your own visual maps.

One expression of this idea comes from Tony Buzan (“The Mind Map Book”), a true champion of memory. In essence you:

- Put the key idea at the centre of a page (landscape format).
- Create thick branches from the centre – these are the main ideas.
- Create secondary and tertiary ideas to flow from these.
- Make it concise and colourful.

This will build recall in at the outset since it reflects how your brain naturally works.

Research shows that this and other forms of “semantic map” give you **superior results** in language learning. Create visual maps now for both grammar and vocabulary.

55 Make your learning memorable.

Quick recap of earlier memory tips:

- Be motivated to memorise.
- Pay attention and concentrate.
- Imagine vividly, make it wacky.
- Use all your senses together.
- Be active, associate, suggest.
- Prepare and preview material.
- Review regularly.
- Personalise your learning.
- Know your learning style.
- Use systems and short-cuts.
- Believe you can remember.
- Innovate and improve.

G: FINAL STEPS TO FLUENCY

These tips consolidate prior knowledge. Stretch yourself and aim as high as you can!

56 Keep your pace steady.

Apply your learning plan at a pace you feel comfortable with. Customise every tool to make it 100% yours. Change the pace frequently depending on your mood and energy levels. Link your goals to tangible events (e.g. a holiday or exam) and plan your workload to be as consistent as you can. Avoid “cramming” at the end – that’s precisely when you should be feeling most relaxed. With your varied approach you’ll naturally “change

pace” as your brain slides **effortlessly** into different gears. Take care of your health and lifestyle to maintain high energy levels. Be good to yourself and be consistent for superb results.

57 Acquire the sense of humour.

In your battle to conquer a language, humour is often the last battalion to resist. You know you have got inside the culture fully if you can appreciate the jokes! Target humour consciously and you’ll turn this **to your advantage**. Read joke books and watch recordings that the locals find funny – even if you’re not sure why! Get fully into the humour. Write your own jokes in the language. If you love a challenge, combine this with the next tip and prepare your own comedy stand-up routine!

58 Prepare your speech!

Public speaking is one of the basic human fears. Tackle it and you’ll do wonders for your confidence even in your own language. In a foreign language it’s tougher still, but the rewards for your courage will be immense. Nothing focuses the mind better than standing up in public. The work you put into preparing for it will lift your language skills to a new level. Use it to vault yourself over a learning “plateau”! Options for public speaking can be varied: volunteer to speak to a community group in the country, at someone’s wedding there or even just in front of your class. You could also make a business presentation. Your speech will be **a defining point** in your journey to fluency: you’ll never look back!

59 Immerse yourself completely.

There's no substitute for going to the country for an extended stay. Get "in synch" with the culture and you'll enjoy a priceless advantage. These tips help you get the most while visiting your destination:

- Live with locals if at all possible (a "home-stay" or with flatmates)
- Try to work there just for the experience and the extra vocab.
- Find a good language school. Evaluate its extra-curricular activities as well as its teaching.
- Sign up for gyms, interest groups, sport: anything to meet locals!
- Talk to strangers (safely). Taxi drivers, waiters and kids can all offer you rich learning.

Whilst there, you'll pick up a wealth of local expressions as well as unconscious learning. Ask yourself if you **feel** any different. Are you more of an extrovert in the language? Do people see you in a different light? You may express a different side of your character when you've mastered a foreign language. Embrace this process. It's part of the fun and liberation of language learning!

60 Craft your online linguistic "workbench".

There are many useful electronic resources out there. Organise them. Set up a **dedicated work area** on your computer, your linguistic "workbench". You'll readily access the internet and create your own bespoke resources at lightning speed. Examples of useful electronic tools include:

- Word processors with language spelling and grammar checkers.
- Translation tools and packages.
- “Mapping” (for learning) software.
- Speech recognition/typing tools.
- Online language games, interactive tests and questionnaires.
- Online dictionaries/word lists etc.
- Online interactive courses.
- Online web radio tuners.
- Search engines for different countries and languages.
- Mnemonic learning systems.
- Websites to find language pals.
- News websites in the language.

This is only the tip of the iceberg. Create your own superstructure. Use your computer workbench to guide you to discover further exciting language learning tools.

61 Follow your passion.

Build your language learning around your interests whether in business, sports, a relationship, a hobby, politics or whatever inspires you. It must really set your pulse racing. Then simply tie this interest tightly to the language. If it's birdwatching: master the vocab. of birds, join birdwatching websites/communities in the country, make email or telephone contact with others sharing your enthusiasm, watch dvds and so on....just remember to do this in the language you're learning! Take the lead in combining your passion with your new language. Immerse yourself wholeheartedly in your passion and your language skills will develop faster alongside. It's the most natural way. Focus on your passion and **get fluent fast**.