



Tips for Language Learning Outside of the Classroom

Have you noticed that when children learn their first language they don't start speaking immediately?

"Comprehension before production". You can't expect to say a new word or phrase if you haven't been exposed to it. While you're learning any language (and you're past the true beginner stage) one of the best things you can do by yourself, outside of class, is to work on your listening skill by listening to authentic recordings (not the kind produced for language students). There are so many rich places to find listening segments including TV, podcasts and the internet. Remember that less is more, so you should limit the recording to less than a minute in length. Choose recordings that have a transcript. If you watch a segment from a video or something from TV, make sure you can activate your close-caption option. Make sure you choose something that interests you and follow the easy steps below to improve your listening... and speaking!



1. Listen to the recording at least 3 or 4 times. After each time you listen to the recording, take a moment to reflect on what you heard and ask questions about the recording (How many speakers are there? Where are the speaker/s? What are they talking about?) After each listening, think about what you heard in more detail, jot down words that you heard, write down predictions for the next listening (trying to understand in more detail with your predictions).
2. This step focuses on reading and there is no listening. Take time to analyze what you read; keep a list of new vocabulary words. If you're watching a segment on TV, make sure you turn down the sound while you're reading the text. You should read the text at least 2-3 times.
3. Once you understand what you have read, read again while listening to the text. You should also do this several times as it will help you with the rhythm and intonation of the language.
4. The final step is to listen again, this time without the transcript or the close-caption on. You'll be amazed at how much you understand!

One minute of material could turn into an hour of listening practice, but any time you spend listening (even only 5 minutes a day!) will help you improve your language skills.