

Unit 1

How is language learned?

In this unit you will learn how to

- become a more successful language learner
- prepare for an interview
- use countable and uncountable nouns
- understand gestures in Western culture



Around the topic



01

A quiz

Below is a quiz to help you find out how good a language learner you are. Read each question and choose an answer that is closest to your situation.

Are you a good language learner?

1. Do you know exactly why you are learning English?
 - a. Yes, I know.
 - b. I'm not very sure.
 - c. I don't know.
2. Do you know at what level your English is now?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
3. When you learn something new, do you try to practise it?
 - a. Always.
 - b. Usually.
 - c. Sometimes.
 - d. Seldom.
 - e. Never.
4. Do you try to find out the rules when you are learning English?
 - a. Not really, I just try to understand the meaning.
 - b. Yes, I think it is very important to understand the rules.
 - c. There are so many rules that I find it impossible to learn them.
5. How do you try to remember new words?
 - a. I don't try.
 - b. I write them in my notebook and review them.
 - c. I memorise the words by reading them aloud many times.

(to be continued)



(continued)



6. Do you check your homework before you hand it in to the teacher?
 - a. Always.
 - b. Sometimes.
 - c. Occasionally.
 - d. Never.
7. Do you ever speak English with native speakers?
 - a. No, there are no native speakers around.
 - b. Yes, I always try to speak English when I meet foreigners.
 - c. I sometimes speak with them.
 - d. I'm afraid they won't understand me, so I seldom try.
8. What do you do when you feel depressed about your English?
 - a. I think about the situation and try to encourage myself.
 - b. I want to give up learning English.
 - c. I don't do anything.
9. How do you feel about learning English? (Please be honest!)
 - a. I hate it, but I have to learn it.
 - b. I like it most of the time, but sometimes I find it boring.
 - c. I love it all the time.
 - d. I have no feelings about it.
10. How do you feel about the culture in English-speaking countries?
 - a. I'm not interested in it at all.
 - b. I'm very interested in it.
 - c. I'm not very interested in it, but I think I need to understand it if I want to learn English better.

02

Discussion

Have you ever had any difficulties in learning English? What did you do to overcome these difficulties? Fill in the table below and then share your experiences with your partner.

| My difficulties | My solutions |
|-----------------|--------------|
| | |

03

Listening and speaking

Do you agree with Mr. Martin's opinions? If you have different ideas, discuss them in pairs.

A. Peter Martin is an experienced language teacher from America. He has been teaching English in China for some years. He has some good advice on how Chinese students can learn English better. Listen to a short talk given by Mr. Martin. As you listen, note down his advice below.

Advice 1: _____

Advice 2: _____

Advice 3: _____

Advice 4: _____

B. Many students find it difficult to improve their English listening skills. Do you have any good advice? Would you recommend the following activities?



Listening to English radio programmes



Watching English films



Listening to English songs



Trying to find opportunities to listen to foreigners



Doing listening practice tests



Improving pronunciation



Memorising a lot of words

Reading A



01

Pre-reading tasks

You are going to read some extracts about tips for language learning. Below are the subtitles for the extracts. Before you read, work in groups and try to guess what these subtitles probably mean.

- Focus on your interests
- Talk to yourself
- Think in the language
- Don't give up

Titles and subtitles provide a lot of information about texts. Effective readers always predict the content of text by reading the subtitles.

02

Reading comprehension

General tips for language learning



Here are some language learning tips that can help you learn your target language. Not all of them may be perfect for you, but if you try many different approaches, you may find that something works very well for you.

Study every day

Try to set aside some time every day for your studies, ideally when your brain is at its most receptive. It's better to study for 30 minutes every day than for three hours once a week. If you can spare an hour a day, break it up into two or three sessions to avoid brain overload. Revise regularly. Give your brain time to digest the

material, but make sure the gaps between periods of study are not too long, or you will forget most of what you're trying to learn.

Focus on your interests

Learn to talk/write/read about the things that interest you. In this way you are more likely to remember the words, phrases and grammatical constructions you meet. Find ways to make language learning fun. This could involve games, songs, stories, tongue twisters, jokes and anything else you can think of. You have to ensure that you are enjoying the time when you are studying another language. Be sure that you are having fun while learning!

Don't worry about making mistakes

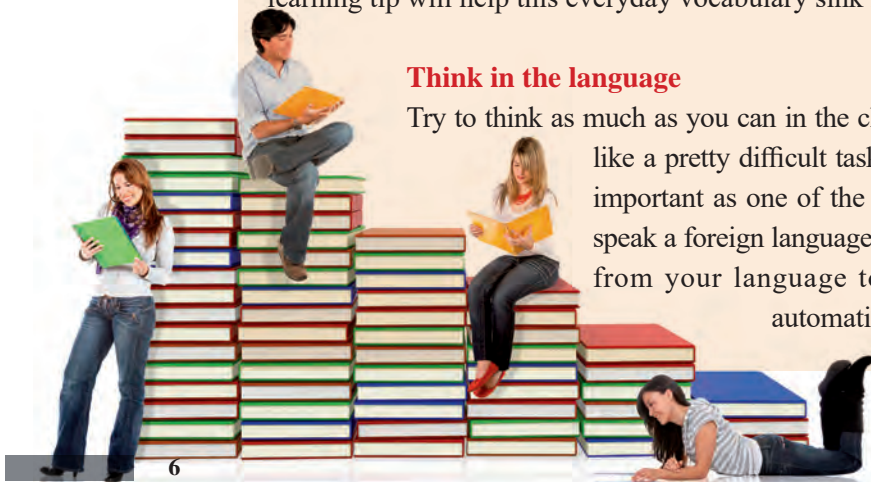
You probably make the occasional mistake when speaking your native language, so making mistakes in a foreign language is nothing to worry about. What matters is getting your message across, not whether you use all the right words, tenses, cases, etc. If you cannot think of the exact words, try using other ones. If you have a teacher or native speaker to help with your studies, ask him or her to point out your mistakes and to correct them.

Talk to yourself

It may be obvious, but the best way to get better at a language is to speak it! Even if there is no one around to speak to, talk to yourself. Name things as you pass them in your house—chair, television, and cat. Name things as you pass them in the car—automobile, tree, school. Read license plates aloud, translate street names, etc. Learn basic phrases like—"it is cold today" or "it is sunny today" and use whichever is appropriate when you first look out the window. This simple language learning tip will help this everyday vocabulary sink in and become second nature.

Think in the language

Try to think as much as you can in the chosen second language. It sounds like a pretty difficult task, but bear with it. This is greatly important as one of the greatest issues when studying to speak a foreign language is the habit to actively translating from your language to another, instead of thinking automatically in the other language. This



will ready you to become more confident and comfortable when faced with the chance to actually speak in the other language. If you will practise it regularly, it will gradually become much more natural to you.

Learning a new language can seem a bit suffering at times. You forget everything so quickly! You were so proud of yourself for all you learned before, but now you don't understand a word! That's normal. It's all part of the process. Don't let it get you down! A new language is a new world. Conquer it with pleasure.

New Words & Expressions

Reading A

New Words

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| approach /ə'prəʊtʃ/ | <i>n.</i> | 方法; 步骤 |
| digest /daɪ'dʒest/ | <i>v.</i> | 理解, 领悟 |
| gap /gæp/ | <i>n.</i> | 差距, 差别 |
| ideally /aɪ'diəli/ | <i>adv.</i> | 理想地 |
| overload /'əʊvələʊd/ | <i>n.</i> | 超负荷 |
| receptive /rɪ'septɪv/ | <i>adj.</i> | (对新思想、别人的意见等) 乐于接受的 |
| regularly /'regjʊləli/ | <i>adv.</i> | 定期地 |
| revise /rɪ'vaɪz/ | <i>v.</i> | 复习 |
| session /'seʃən/ | <i>n.</i> | 一段时间 |
| spare /speə/ | <i>v.</i> | 抽出时间 |
| tip /tɪp/ | <i>n.</i> | 忠告, 建议 |

Phrases & Expressions

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| second nature | 第二天性, 习性 |
| set aside | 留出 |
| sink in | 逐渐被充分理解 |
| break up | 把……分成几部分 |

A. Read the text and decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

- () 1. You can always find a perfect way of language learning.
- () 2. Learning a foreign language is always full of fun and enjoyment.
- () 3. Making mistakes is nothing to worry about no matter whether you are speaking your native language or a foreign language.
- () 4. The best way to get better at a language is to use it every day.
- () 5. The habit of translating from one language to another is bad.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. Why should we study every day when we are learning a foreign language?
2. What is the best way of revising what you have learned?
3. Can you think of other interesting ways of learning a foreign language except the ones mentioned in the text?
4. How should you deal with your mistakes made in the process of language learning?
5. Do you agree with the tip “talk to yourself”?

03

Vocabulary and structure

A. Paraphrase the following sentences chosen from the text.

1. Try to set aside some time every day for your studies, ideally when your brain is at its most receptive.
2. Give your brain time to digest the material.
3. What matters is getting your message across, not whether you use all the right words, tenses, cases, etc.
4. This simple language learning tip will help this everyday vocabulary sink in and become second nature.
5. This is greatly important as one of the greatest issues when studying to speak a foreign language is the habit to actively translate from your language to another, instead of thinking automatically in the other language.

B. “get” is a very active word. It can form many phrases with different prepositions or adverbs. Choose a proper phrase to complete the following sentences.

get along get across get around get over get by

1. The company changed its name to _____ the law.
2. The trip will help him _____ his father’s death.
3. I don’t earn a huge salary, but we _____.
4. Joan _____ well with her colleagues.
5. We must _____ the simple fact that drugs are dangerous.

C. Rewrite the following sentences after the model, using the expression “rather than”.

Model: What matters is getting your message across.

What matters is not whether you use all the right words, tenses, cases, etc.

→ What matters is getting your message across rather than whether you use all the right words, tenses, cases, etc.

1. I think you’d call it a lecture.
I don’t think you’d call it a talk.
2. Why not get some work experience first?
Don’t go straight on to university.
3. It would be better to make a decision now.
You shouldn’t leave it until later.
4. She likes dancing.
She doesn’t like singing.
5. I’d prefer to read in the library.
I don’t want to read at home.

Work in groups of three or four to discuss why you think learning English is important. Then write a short essay on the importance of learning English, using no less than 100 words.

Guidelines: Structure of an essay

Each essay is written according to a basic structure: Introduction, Body paragraphs, and Conclusion. The structure is the core of each paper that helps the writer to make a very well-founded written construct. In order to compose an essay accurately the way it should be it is necessary to keep in mind the main hints concerning the contents of the essay structure elements.

1. Introduction

- Introduction of any essay should be no longer than 1/10 of its length. If the essay itself must be of a significant size, the introduction may have several paragraphs; in the rest of the cases it consists of one solid paragraph.
- The content of an introduction has a deductive nature, as it leads the reader from the general views or positions on the analysed topics to the specific narrow theme of the essay.
- Opening sentences introduce to the topic of the essay.
- Background information on it (gradually leading to the analysed aspect of the theme).
- Use literature techniques to grab the reader's attention.
- A strong thesis statement defines and states the point the author is making in the essay, the paper's main argument.

2. Body paragraphs

- The body of a basic essay may have as many body paragraphs as it is necessary to prove the author's argument of the thesis statement.
- It is vital to keep in mind that each paragraph is supposed to have one main argument to analyse and has to reveal it in one solid thought in a sentence called the topic sentence. Therefore the amount of the body paragraphs equals the amount of topic sentences.
- Each body paragraph must be connected to the following one with a logical link.

3. Conclusion

- It is usually written in one solid paragraph.
- The conclusion always deals with summing up the essays' arguments revealed in the topic sentences, and therefore presents substantial evidence to prove the thesis statement.
- It is also important to mention the importance of the general conclusion of the essay.

Language in use

01

Test your grammar

A. Correct the mistakes in the following sentences. The first one has been done for you.

1. Those are yellow star. *Those are yellow stars.* _____
2. These are pretty dress. _____
3. These are two sheeps. _____
4. The child are in the house. _____
5. The wachts are on the table. _____

B. Rewrite the sentences in the plural form. The first one has been done for you.

1. The mouse is behind the tree. *The mice are behind the trees.* _____
2. The policeman is clever. _____
3. This is a clean glass. _____
4. The baby is near the window. _____
5. That is a green leaf. _____

02

Grammar development: Countable and uncountable nouns

In English some words can be used as both countable and uncountable nouns, but their meanings are different. For example, when we use “language” as a countable noun, it refers to a particular type of language, such as Chinese, English and French. So we can say:

*English is a language spoken all over the world.
My friend Tom speaks three languages:
English, French and Chinese.*

When “language” is used as an uncountable noun, it refers to language in general. For example, we can say:

*Language and thought are closely related to each other.
It is still a mystery how children learn language.
Language is the most important means of communication.*

A. The word “language” is not used appropriately in the following sentences. Correct the mistakes. There may be more than one way to correct them.

1. Most Chinese students are required to learn foreign language.
2. Please do not use dirty words. They are bad languages.
3. English is official language in India.
4. Written languages are usually more formal than spoken languages.
5. There is no such thing as backward language.
6. It is important for us to speak and write in a plain language.
7. Many people in the world are learning Chinese as foreign language.
8. Sometimes a language is not as powerful as we wish it to be.

Some words such as *water, tea, coffee, beer* are usually used as uncountable nouns. But sometimes they are used as countable nouns. For example, in restaurants you often hear people say *two coffees, three teas*, etc. Can you guess what these expressions mean? In Chinese what do we say to express these meanings?

B. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with *coffee* or *coffees*. Think about the meaning of each sentence.

1. Would you like some _____? —Yes, please!
2. Can I help you? —Two _____, please!
3. When they arrived at a small town, they stopped for a cup of _____.
4. That’s four _____ and two pieces of apple pie, right? —Yes, sir.
5. Lisa felt refreshed as she made herself some _____ and settled down to work.
6. One of the most popular drinks in America is _____.
7. Do you like your _____ black or white? —White, please!
8. After dinner the guests chatted over _____ for a while.

Grammar tips

可数与不可数是英语名词的最基本特征。一般说来，个体名词是可数名词；物质名词、抽象名词和专有名词是不可数名词；集体名词则有的可数，有的不可数。可数名词与不可数名词在一定条件下可以相互转化。

- (1) 物质名词一般是不可数的，但用来表示具体、个别事物，或表示各种不同品种时，通常是可数的，如 *different coffees, various soaps*。
- (2) 抽象名词一般是不可数的，但当它前后有修饰语表示“某一种”或“某一方面”的抽象概念时，其前可加 *a/an*，例如：*A good map would be a help.*

03

Vocabulary building: Ways of word formation

A. When we learn English words, it is useful to be aware of the different forms of a word; for example, the noun form, the verb form and the adjective form. Complete the following word formation table. Some of the words are from the passage.

| Verb | Noun | Adjective |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| succeed | success | successful |
| fail | | / |
| determine | | |
| learn | | |
| tend | | / |
| | | different |
| analyse | | / |
| | practice | |
| discover | | / |
| | knowledge | |
| / | | important |

B. Complete each of the following sentences with a word from the table above. Change the form where necessary.

- If you want to do research work, you should be familiar with data _____ .
- There is an English saying, "A little _____ is a dangerous thing."
- Many students _____ to learn English words by memorising a word list.
- Do you really believe that _____ makes perfect? I doubt it.
- You should not blame others for your _____ in life or work.
- I can't tell the _____ between the twins. They're the same to me.
- My grandfather is always saying to himself, "One is never too old to _____."
- A good start is half _____ .
- _____ is the key to success.
- Many great _____ were made by chance.
- Later we learnt that there was a very _____ person on board.

Reading B



01

Pre-reading tasks

It is said that people who can speak more than one language are smarter than those who can't. Do you agree with this opinion? If you do, what do you think are the possible reasons? If you don't, what are your ideas?

02

Reading comprehension

Why are bilinguals smarter?

Speaking two languages rather than just one has obvious practical benefits in an increasingly globalised world. But in recent years, scientists have begun to show that the advantages of bilingualism are even more fundamental than being able to talk with a wider range of people. Being bilingual, it turns out, makes you smarter. It can have a profound effect on your brain, improving cognitive skills not related to language and even protecting against dementia in old age.

This view of bilingualism is remarkably different from the understanding of bilingualism through much of the 20th century. Researchers, educators and policy makers long considered a second language to be an interference, cognitively speaking, that delayed a child's academic and intellectual development.

They were not wrong about the interference: there is plenty of evidence that in a bilingual's brain both language systems are active even when he is using only one language, thus creating situations in which one system blocks the other. But this interference, researchers are finding out, isn't so much a disability as a blessing in disguise. It forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind practice that strengthens its cognitive muscles.

Bilinguals, for instance, seem to be more skillful than monolinguals at solving certain kinds of mental puzzles. The collective evidence from a number of studies suggests that the bilingual experience improves the brain's so-called executive function—a command system that directs the attention processes that we use for planning, solving problems and performing various other mentally demanding tasks. These processes include ignoring distractions to stay focused, switching attention wilfully from one thing to another and holding information in mind—like remembering a series of directions while driving.

The key difference between bilinguals and monolinguals may be more basic: a heightened ability to monitor the environment. “Bilinguals have to switch languages quite often—you may talk to your father in one language and to your mother in another language,” says a researcher in Spain. “It requires keeping track of changes around you in the same way that we monitor our surroundings when driving.” In a study comparing German-Italian bilinguals with Italian monolinguals on monitoring tasks, the researchers found that the bilingual subjects not only performed better, but they also did so with less activity in parts of the brain involved in monitoring, indicating that they were more efficient at it.

The bilingual experience appears to influence the brain from childhood to old age (and there is reason to believe that it may also apply to those who learn a second language later in life).

In a 2009 study, 7-month-old babies exposed to two languages from birth were compared with peers raised with one language. In an initial set of trials, the babies were presented with a sound and then shown a toy on one side of the screen. Both baby groups learned to look at that side of the screen. But in a later set of trials, when the toy began appearing on the opposite side of the screen, the babies exposed to a bilingual environment quickly learned to switch to the new direction while the other babies did not.

Bilingualism's effects also extend into later life. In a recent study of 44 elderly Spanish-English bilinguals, scientists found that individuals with a higher degree of bilingualism—measured through a comparative evaluation of proficiency in each language—were more resistant than others to the beginnings of dementia: the

higher degree of bilingualism, the later the age of onset.

Nobody ever doubted the power of language. But who would have imagined that the words we hear and the sentences we speak might be leaving such a deep mark?

New Words & Expressions

Reading B

New Words

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|----------|
| academic /ˌækə'demɪk/ | adj. | 学术的 |
| bilingual /baɪ'lɪŋɡwəl/ | n. | 会讲两种语言的人 |
| cognitive /'kɒɡnɪtɪv/ | adj. | 认知的 |
| dementia /dɪ'menʃə/ | n. | 痴呆 |
| fundamental /ˌfʌndə'mentl/ | adj. | 根本的, 基本的 |
| intellectual /ɪntrɪ'lektʃʊəl/ | adj. | 智力的, 才智的 |
| interference /ɪntə'fɪərəns/ | n. | 干扰, 妨碍 |
| onset /'ɒnset/ | n. | 开始; 发病 |
| profound /prə'faʊnd/ | adj. | 深刻的; 极大的 |

Phrases & Expressions

a blessing in disguise 貌似灾祸实际使人得福之事

A. Answer the following questions.

1. Why do people consider a second language as an interference? What is the author's idea about it?
2. Bilingual experience can improve the brain's executive function. How does it work? Explain based on the text.
3. How is bilingualism similar to talking while driving?
4. How does the bilingual experience influence the brain in childhood?
5. How does the bilingual experience influence the brain in old age?

B. Discussion

1. After you finish reading this text, do you agree to the author's opinion that bilinguals are smarter? Do you think the author's argument is persuasive?
2. What are the stylistic features of this text? Where, do you think, is this text chosen from? Who, do you think, does the author write this text for?

03

Vocabulary and grammar

A. Fill in the blanks with the words below. Change the form where necessary.

profound remarkably intellectual block resolve
 executive switch efficient expose resistant

1. The child lags behind his peers in _____ development.
2. They threatened to _____ him to the media unless he changed his ways.
3. The mother's behaviour has a(n) _____ impact on the children.
4. The huge building across the street _____ our view of the sea.
5. He felt _____ calm, as if everything had already happened to him.
6. This type of flu is _____ to antibiotics.
7. Congressmen called for a third meeting to _____ the conflict.
8. Government rules now require car companies to design and produce cars with increasingly _____ engines.
9. He _____ easily and fluently from speaking English to French.
10. She has been given _____ powers on this matter.

B. There are many different uses of gerund in the text. Study them and finish the following exercise. Tick the proper form of the verb in the sentences. It is also possible that both forms can be used.

1. I dislike to go/going to the movies by myself.
2. We started eating/to eat dinner without you.
3. I can't imagine buying/to buy my own house.

4. I used to watch/watching that television show all of the time.
5. I always eat breakfast before to go/going to school.
6. When do you practise playing/to play the piano?
7. My grandmother prefers reading/to read science fiction books.
8. You need to study/studying harder this year.
9. I am used to seeing/see her in a bad mood.
10. Have you talked to the dentist about to clean/cleaning your teeth?

C. Translate the following sentences into English.

1. 一棵歪倒的树把马路给堵死了。 (block)
2. 危机可以通过谈判解决。 (resolve)
3. 我们决定把会议时间从周二改为周四。 (switch)
4. 作为一名医生，你必须了解医学的最新发展动态。 (keep track of)
5. 他们正在努力寻找一种高效使用土地的方法。 (efficient)

Project

The best way to learn English

There are lots of facts you can find which help to persuade you that learning English is a good idea—400 million first language speakers, 700 million second or foreign language speakers, over a billion people learning it right now. Over 80% of the information stored in the world's computers is in English, more than half of the world's scientific journals are in English, and it's the main language on the Internet, and so on. But the questions are: How can we learn English better? What is the best way to learn English? The first answer is: Nobody knows. And the second answer is: Because nobody knows the best way to learn English, there isn't one. It's an old fantasy for learners and teachers—to find the one perfect key. Now you may try it. Try to find out what is the best way to learn English by interviewing people who have studied English. You may do the interview project along the following steps:

Step 1

Work in groups of four. Design at least five questions for the interview. The topic should be around what is the best way to learn English.

Step 2

Look for suitable interviewees. The interviewees should be able to speak English and have some experience in learning English. They can be your teachers, your schoolmates or some foreigners you come across in the street.

Step 3

When you do the interview, write down the answers you get from the interviewees.

Step 4

Collect the results within groups and prepare a presentation for the class.

Step 5

Each group presents the results and gives a report to the whole class. Group members may also talk about what they have learned from this interview project.



Culture tips

Gestures are useful body language. Many gestures are culture-specific, that is, the same gesture may have different meanings in different cultures. The gestures on the right can be understood by most speakers of English.

- A. Work in pairs and discuss the meaning of these gestures.
- B. Draw some other gestures that are often used by Chinese people.



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)

Learning to learn

Attitude plays a very important role in learning English. What attitude should you hold towards learning English? Why do you choose English as your major? Consider the following statements and then discuss your ideas with other students.

I'm here because:

1. I want to really understand English grammar.
2. I want/need to get my English up to date.
3. I don't know enough words.
4. I've got an important English exam in two months' time.
5. English will give me more chances to have a good job.
6. I want to speak proper English.
7. I can't understand English on the radio.
8. I want to learn to write business letters.
9. I want to be able to read English better.
10. I want to talk to foreigners.
11. I just need to get away.
12. English is not my first choice, but I have to take this major and get a college diploma.

