

# Strategies for Learners

The following are tips for learning English more effectively, both inside and outside the classroom. Encourage awareness of strategies appropriate for your learners through lessons and classroom activities.

## Classroom Strategies

**In the classroom, learners should be encouraged to:**

- ask for assistance in improving their learning strategies
- identify preferred learning styles and use strategies to complement them:

Visual Learners	Auditory Learners	Tactile Learners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ draw symbols and pictures in notebooks to facilitate recall</li> <li>▪ keep learning journals</li> <li>▪ make Post-it notes containing vocabulary and place in highly visible places</li> <li>▪ make charts to organize information</li> <li>▪ make flashcards of new vocabulary</li> <li>▪ take notes in order to visualize information</li> <li>▪ word-process notes, tables, or charts and use print-outs for visual review</li> <li>▪ use highlighter pens</li> <li>▪ visualize new vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ join study groups or work with partners on an ongoing basis</li> <li>▪ learn songs to remember new vocabulary or grammar structures (e.g., <i>Ja-za Chants</i>)</li> <li>▪ talk out loud with study partners or to self</li> <li>▪ use commercial audio tapes or make own tapes by recording notes and textbook information</li> <li>▪ read notes aloud and talk out loud to aid recall when studying alone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ copy key points onto a chalkboard, easel board, or other large writing surface</li> <li>▪ take notes in class to help remember the information being heard</li> <li>▪ use movement and physical activity, e.g., walking, standing, writing when studying</li> <li>▪ walk through a set of instructions by using flashcards for each step and put the cards in order</li> </ul>

- make their own dictionaries to learn new vocabulary
- monitor and evaluate own progress
- participate fully in all classroom activities
- participate in needs assessments by expressing needs and preferences
- set realistic learning goals
- take an active approach to learning
- use linguistic knowledge of first language to master English

**To improve speaking skills, learners should be encouraged to:**

- ask for repetition or restatement in simpler language
- clarify information by paraphrasing
- develop awareness of body language, facial expressions, and intonation, and learn to interpret meaning within the context of these clues
- learn small talk topics, how to begin and end informal conversations appropriately
- learn techniques to maintain conversation (nodding, responding, agreeing, disagreeing)
- practice pronunciation techniques to aid comprehensibility

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- repeat to check understanding of spoken information
- use appropriate fillers/bridges when speaking to indicate they haven't finished speaking (e.g., *so...*, *and...*, *um...*)
- use mnemonics and other learning strategies

## **To improve listening skills, learners should be encouraged to:**

- continue listening to entire text even when they encounter unfamiliar words or phrases
- delay speaking to focus on listening
- identify keywords when listening
- listen for main ideas
- take notes when listening to something of interest

## **To improve reading skills, learners should be encouraged to:**

- continue reading for the gist (main idea) without resorting to a dictionary each time they encounter an unfamiliar word or phrase
- develop skimming and scanning skills to read more effectively
- distinguish important/relevant information from unimportant/less relevant information
- guess meaning of unfamiliar words from context where possible
- highlight important words or phrases in texts
- recognize when a familiar word has an idiomatic rather than a literal meaning

## **To improve writing skills, learners should be encouraged to:**

- keep journals
- look at and analyze other people's writing
- organize ideas in a logical sequence so others can understand them better
- organize thoughts and ideas in point form before writing letters or stories
- use authentic writing examples as models for own writing (e.g., resumés, letters, stories)

## **Independent Strategies**

### **Outside of the classroom, learners should:**

- ask for written versions of spoken information
- find someone willing to help them practice speaking (child, neighbour, store clerk)
- listen to and replay automated telephone messages at home to get essential information
- make own opportunities to practice speaking English (e.g., ask the bus driver for directions even when they know where they are going, make small talk with neighbours or sales clerks)
- observe the actions of others in various social situations and ask questions
- use new words and expressions in everyday conversations
- use pantomime and gestures to explain problems
- write down expressions or words they don't understand from television, newspaper, or conversations and share with class
- write, memorize, and rehearse questions and common phrases in advance