

Unit 1

How is language learned?

■ Introduction to the unit

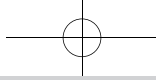
- The topic of this unit is about language learning.
- It is important for students to find out how to be a more successful language learner, because learning strategies play a very important role in language learning. It is crucial to help students to develop positive attitudes and effective learning habits from the very beginning.
- Reading A presents an article about how to be a more successful language learner. Reading B puts forward the idea that bilinguals are smarter than monolinguals.
- The unit has two interesting activities: Around the topic and Project. Around the topic starts with a quiz to test how good a student is at language learning. This part works as language input to elicit what students already have in their minds. Project asks students to interview other learners about the best way to learn English.
- Language focus

Grammar: Countable and uncountable nouns

Vocabulary building: Word formation

Important words and phrases: approach, digest, gap, get across, overload, receptive, regularly, revise, session, set aside, sink in, spare, target, tip

bilingual, cognitive, dementia, interference, onset, profound



Around the topic

1. A quiz

This activity is designed to help students recognise how good they are at language learning. In the process of learning English, students should get to know their motivations, learning habits, strengths and weaknesses, which may help them set up a higher goal to work for in the future.

The activity can be done in an interesting way. First of all, you may explain the aim of this quiz, and then ask students to answer these questions independently. After they have finished, let them refer to the scoring method and explanations. Finally you may pick up a few volunteers to report to the class how well they have done and what they have achieved.

Scoring method and explanations for the quiz.

- | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. a. 4 points | b. 2 points | c. 0 point | | |
| 2. a. 2 points | b. 0 point | | | |
| 3. a. 5 points | b. 4 points | c. 3 points | d. 2 points | e. 0 point |
| 4. a. 2 points | b. 3 points | c. 1 point | | |
| 5. a. 0 point | b. 3 points | c. 1 point | | |
| 6. a. 3 points | b. 2 points | c. 1 point | d. 0 point | |
| 7. a. 0 point | b. 4 points | c. 2 points | d. 1 point | |
| 8. a. 4 points | b. 0 point | c. 1 point | | |
| 9. a. 1 point | b. 3 points | c. 4 points | d. 1 point | |
| 10. a. 0 point | b. 2 points | c. 3 points | d. 1 point | |

25-35:

Congratulations! You already meet most of the requirements for learning a foreign language well. You understand the importance of practice, of checking, and of meeting English speakers. You probably like English, and are interested in language in general.

10-24:

You are certainly well on the way to becoming a good language learner. It may be necessary for you to “play to your strong points”—for example, you need to be realistic about your goals, and know exactly what you want, and the best way to get it. Don’t forget that, even if you are not “in love” with English, there are a lot of good habits which can help you in your studies.

Below 10:

Don’t worry! You may be studying English for many different reasons, and your way of learning a foreign language may need a change. But keep in mind that, if you develop some useful habits like always checking your work, practising as much as possible, and doing everything to revise new vocabulary, you are sure to make progress.

2. Discussion

This activity requires students to reflect on their difficulties in learning English. The aim is to work out some solutions to these difficulties. Ask them to do it in pairs, then get some feedback.

3. Listening and speaking

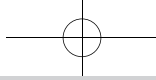
————→ A ←————

Remind students that as they listen they should take notes and write down at least three of Martin’s advice. If necessary, play the recording twice. Check their work and present all the advice Martin gives to students according to the recording. Based on the listening material, organise a discussion. Ask students whether they agree with Martin’s opinions.

Scripts

Many of us think to learn English well is quite difficult. But that’s not true. Good habits are really important in learning a foreign language. Here is some advice:

- 1) Try not to translate every word. Instead, try to guess the meaning of the new words whenever you meet them.



- 2) It's a good idea to write down your grammar mistakes in your notebook, and write down the correct ones next to the mistakes. Try to check your notebook as often as possible.
- 3) Try to read something in real English, such as newspapers, magazines and so on. It not only helps you to develop reading skills, but also enriches your knowledge.
- 4) It is very useful to watch English films and listen to English radio programmes. It helps you to learn real English and improve your listening.
- 5) You should speak English as much as possible. Don't worry about making mistakes.

Practice makes perfect.

Try your best to learn English, and you will find it easier. Remember: "Nothing in the world is difficult if you put your heart into it." Good luck with your English learning!

————→ **B** ←————

You may organise a class discussion based on this task. Ask students to think about methods to improve their English listening skills. After students' group discussion, get some feedback and you may stress some of the methods by explaining the importance of listening practice.

Additional material

VOA: The Voice of America (VOA) is a publicly funded broadcasting network, reaching millions of people worldwide in over forty languages. Since it first went on the air as a regional wartime enterprise in February 1942, VOA has undergone a spectacular transformation, and it now employs scores of reporters worldwide and broadcasts around the clock every day. Alan L. Heil, Jr., former deputy director of VOA, records this remarkable transformation from a young short wave propaganda organ during World War II to a global multimedia giant encompassing radio, the Internet, and associated radio and television stations across the globe.

BBC: The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) is the largest broadcasting corporation in the world in terms of audience numbers. It is a publicly financed broadcasting system in Britain. A private company at its founding in 1922, it was replaced by a public corporation under the terms of a royal charter in 1927. The BBC produces programmes and information services, broadcasting on television, radio, and the Internet, and offers radio networks and national television channels. The stated mission of the BBC is “to inform, educate and entertain” and its motto is “Nation Shall Speak Peace unto Nation”.

CRI: China Radio International (CRI) is the overseas broadcaster in the People’s Republic of China. CRI was founded on December 3, 1941 and provides comprehensive news and information. CRI is one of the “three central media organisations in China” along with China National Radio (CNR) and China Central Television (CCTV).

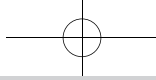
Reading A

1. Pre-reading tasks

Divide the class into groups of four. Before students read the text, ask them to guess what these subtitles probably mean.

Some possible answers

- Focus on your interests: Interest is the best teacher. Cultivate interest in English learning so that you can improve your English more efficiently.
- Talk to yourself: This is a way of practising speaking. When you think about something, try to figure out how to express it in English and then speak it out to yourself.
- Think in the language: Language is strongly influenced by thought. You cannot speak English natively if you don’t know how to think that way. Therefore, practise thinking in English.



- d. Don't give up: Language learning is not easy. When you meet difficulties, don't give up. You need to hold on and work hard.

2. Reading comprehension

→ A ←

Ask students to read the text quickly. Give them 5 minutes. When time is up, stop them and check their answers. This is a fast reading practice. Tell students to focus only on the information which can help them make their judgements.

Answers

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. T 5. F

→ B ←

This is a reading comprehension practice. Ask students to answer the questions according to the text. They may work in pairs or groups. Get class feedback when they finish.

Answers

- To avoid brain overload.
- Revise regularly and make sure the periods of study are not too long.
- Open (Encourage students to talk about some other ways they know or they are using, and ask a few students to report to the class).
- Making mistakes in a foreign language is nothing to worry about.
- Open (The method sounds strange; possibly it is the first time for them to hear about it. Encourage students to talk about their comments).

Background information

tongue twister

A tongue twister is a phrase that is designed to be difficult to articulate properly, and can be used as a type of spoken word game. Some tongue twisters produce results which are humorous when they are mispronounced, while others

simply rely on the confusion and mistakes of the speaker for their amusement value. Some examples are as follows:

- 1) She sells sea-shells on the sea-shore.
The shells she sells are sea-shells, I'm sure.
For if she sells sea-shells on the sea-shore,
Then I'm sure she sells sea-shore shells.
- 2) Betty Botter bought a bit of butter.
The butter Betty Botter bought was a bit bitter,
And made her batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter makes better batter.
So Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter,
Making Betty Botter's bitter batter better.
- 3) Say this sharply, say this sweetly.
Say this shortly, say this softly.
Say this sixteen times in succession.

Language points

1. approach

n.

- 1) a method of doing something or dealing with a problem
e.g. She puts forward a new approach to language teaching.
We will explore different approaches to gathering information.
- 2) movement towards or near to something
e.g. It's a sign of the approach of middle age.
v. to move towards or nearer to someone or something
e.g. As I approached the house, I noticed a light upstairs.

2. confident *adj.*

- 1) very sure that something is going to happen or that you will be able to do something



e.g. We are confident that next year's profits will be higher.

He is quite confident that there will be no problems this time.

- 2) sure that you can do something or deal with a situation successfully

e.g. I feel much more confident about myself and my abilities these days.

He began to read in a calm, confident voice.

3. conquer v.

- 1) to take land by attacking people or win it by fighting a war

e.g. The Normans conquered England in 1066.

- 2) to gain control over something that is difficult, using a lot of effort

e.g. She was determined to conquer her fear of flying.

4. digest v.

- 1) to understand or assimilate new information or the significance of something

e.g. I struggled to digest the news.

- 2) to change food that you have just eaten into substances that your body can use

e.g. Most babies can digest a wide range of food easily.

5. get across

to succeed in communicating ideas, information to someone, or to be communicated successfully

e.g. It took him ages to get his point across.

We must get across the simple fact that drugs are dangerous.

6. get down

- 1) to gradually make someone feel unhappy and tired

e.g. His lack of social life was beginning to get him down.

- 2) to write something down, especially something that someone is saying

e.g. He was followed by a group of reporters trying to get down every word he said.

It's important to get things down on paper.

- 3) to succeed in swallowing something

e.g. I knew I'd feel better once I'd got some food down.

7. regularly adv.

- 1) happening in such a pattern with the same time between individual instances; recurring at short uniform intervals

e.g. We meet regularly, once a month.

- 2) often

e.g. I see them pretty regularly.

It's important to exercise regularly.

- 3) evenly arranged or shaped

e.g. The plants are regularly spaced.

8. set aside

- 1) an amount of money or time that is kept so that it can be used for a special purpose

e.g. Try to set aside some time each day for exercise.

This is a room that has been set aside for visitors.

- 2) to decide that you will not be influenced by a particular feeling, belief or principle, because something else is more important

e.g. Both sides agreed to set aside the question of independence.

9. sink in

to gradually understand information, facts, etc. or realise their full meaning

e.g. He paused a moment for his words to sink in.

The implications of Labour's defeat were beginning to sink in.

10. suffer

v. to experience physical or mental pain

e.g. At least he died suddenly and didn't suffer.

She's suffering a lot of pain.

Sentence structure

1. What matters is getting your message across, not whether you use all the right words, tenses, cases, etc. (Para. 4)

最关键的是要表达出你的意思，而不是你有没有把词汇、时态、格等形式都用对。

本句中有两个需要注意的地方：第一，getting your message across是一个动名词短语，跟在is后面作表语；第二，整个句子的主干结构是“主语+is+sth.,+not+sth.”，表示“主语是什么而不是什么”。

e.g. What matters is what you can do, not what you want to do.

最关键的是你能够做什么，而不是你想做什么。

What most of us feel is to stick with what we have now, not to dream about something else.

我们大部分人觉得应该把握好我们目前拥有的东西，而不是幻想其他东西。

2. 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. (Para. 6)

这一点很重要，在学习一门外语时，我们习惯把母语翻译为这种语言再说出去，而不是直接用外语思考，这是外语学习中一个最大的问题。

这句话的句型结构比较复杂，as引导原因状语从句，在原因状语从句中，主语是one of the greatest issues，而when studying to speak a foreign language是when引导的现在分词短语，作从句的伴随状语。

e.g. We all like her as she is very kind.

我们都喜欢她，因为她很善良。

As I had a cold, I was absent from school.

因为我感冒了，所以没去上学。

Chinese version 语言学习小贴士

下面这几条语言学习小贴士能帮助你学好外语。当然，并不是每一条都适合你，但是如果你多尝试一下不同的方法，你就会觉得有些还是挺适合你的。

■ 每天学一点

试着每天抽出点时间来学习，最好是在你大脑最活跃的时候。每天学习半小时远比一周学一次、每次三小时要有效果。如果你每天抽出一小时来学习外语，最好把这一小时分成两到三个时间段，这样大脑就不至于过于劳累。定期回顾复习，给大脑时间来消化所学的知识，但是要注意，每两个学习时段的间隔不要太久，不然你该忘记所学的主要内容了。

■ 关注你感兴趣的東西

学着用所学语言聊一聊、写一写，或者读一些你感兴趣的東西。这样，你就更有可能记住见过的词汇、短语和语法结构了。要想办法把学语言变成快乐的事。你可以做游戏、唱歌、讲故事、说绕口令、讲笑话等，你能想到的都可以用。要保证你在快乐中学习！

■ 不要怕犯错误

即使说母语，你有时也会有口误。所以，学外语根本不用担心犯错误。最关键的是要表达出你的意思，而不是你有没有把词汇、时态、格等形式都用对。如果一时想不起哪个词，就用别的词替换一下。要是老师或外教帮你学习外语，要让他/她指出你的错误并及时改正。

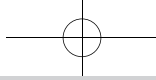
■ 自言自语

学好外语，就要多说，这一点可能是比较显而易见的事实，但这也是学好外语的最佳途径。即使附近没人陪你练习口语，也要自言自语。用所学语言叫出屋里各种物品的名字，如椅子、电视和小猫等。乘车时看到什么就用外语说出来，比如汽车、树木和学校等。还可以大声读出车牌号码，翻译街道的名字等。学一些基本的短语，如当你看窗外时可以说“今天好冷”或者“今天天气不错”，只要情况符合，就反复使用。这个简单的办法会帮助你积累常用词汇，把它们变成你的第二天性。

■ 用所学语言思考

尽量用你所学的语言来思考，这听起来很难，但是要坚持住。这一点很重要，在学习一门外语时，我们习惯把母语翻译为这种语言再说出来，而不是直接用外语思考，这是外语学习中一个最大的问题。用所学语言思考的习惯，会让你在真实的外语交流过程中，更加自信、更加自然。如果你能经常练习，你说的外语就会更加地道自然。

学一门新的语言有时会有点痛苦。你常常很快忘掉了所学的一切！你刚刚还对已经学到的内容感到骄傲，但是现在却连一个词都不认识！这很正常。谁都会经历这个过程。不要因此而灰心！新的语言就是一个新世界，快乐地去征服它吧。



3. Vocabulary and structure

This exercise is about vocabulary and structure related to the text. Ask students to finish them independently. Then check their answers in class. Give some explanations if necessary.

————→ **A** ←————

Possible answers

1. Every day, you should take some time out and practise your English. The best time to do it is when your brain is in the best state of functioning.
2. After you learn new things, you should give your brain some time so that it can fully understand and absorb it.
3. The most important thing is to let others understand what you mean. Sometimes you may use wrong words, tenses or cases, but it doesn't matter.
4. This small but useful language learning advice will help you to fully understand everyday vocabulary. This vocabulary will become very natural for your use.
5. The biggest problem for learning a foreign language is that learners always translate from their mother tongue to the language they are studying. They do not think in that language. This is a very important issue.

————→ **B** ←————

Answers

1. get around 2. get over 3. get by 4. gets along 5. get across

————→ **C** ←————

Answers

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

4. Writing

- Step 1: Ask students to discuss why they think learning English is important in groups of three or four. Get class feedback when they finish.
- Step 2: Explain the writing guidelines. You may just read some of the key points of the guidelines. Or, just give students a few minutes and ask them to read by themselves. Then ask if they understand them well or if they have any questions.
- Step 3: Then ask them to write a short composition on the importance of learning English, using no less than 100 words. If there isn't enough time in class, you may leave the writing task as homework. Check their work next time.

Language in use

1. Test your grammar

Ask students to do these exercises first. Do not say anything before they finish. After they finish, show them the answers. Ask them to think about what the grammatical mistakes are and let them find out some grammatical rules by themselves.

—————→ **A** ←————

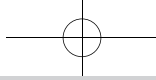
Suggested answers

1. Those are yellow stars.
2. These are pretty dresses.
3. These are two sheep.
4. The children are in the house.
5. The watches are on the table.

—————→ **B** ←————

Answers

1. The mice are behind the trees.



2. The policemen are clever.
3. These are clean glasses.
4. The babies are near the windows.
5. Those are green leaves.

2. Grammar development: Countable and uncountable nouns

————→ A ←————

Read the introduction and ask students to correct the mistakes in the sentences. Get class feedback and show them the answers.

Answers

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

————→ B ←————

Read and explain the introduction. Elicit a discussion about what we should normally say to express meanings like two coffees and three teas in Chinese.

Hint: In Chinese, we usually add quantifiers like “bei” (杯) to express such meanings.

Answers

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. coffee | 2. coffees | 3. coffee | 4. coffees |
| 5. coffee | 6. coffee | 7. coffee | 8. coffee |

3. Vocabulary building: Ways of word formation

It is very important for students to see how they can change the form of a word, usually via a suffix, so as to enlarge their vocabulary considerably. It will add power to their expression, and enable them to understand more when listening and reading.

A

Ask students to complete the table about word formation. They may use a dictionary if necessary. Choose one or two students to check their work.

Answers

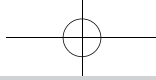
Verb	Noun	Adjective
succeed	success	successful
fail	failure	
determine	determination	determined
learn	learning	learned
tend	tendency	
differ	difference	different
analyse	analysis	
practice	practice	practical
discover	discovery	
know	knowledge	knowledgeable
	importance	important

B

Ask students to finish this exercise independently. Show them the answers and give some explanations if necessary.

Answers

- | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1. analysis | 2. learning | 3. tend | 4. practice |
| 5. failure | 6. difference(s) | 7. learn | 8. success |
| 9. Determination | 10. discoveries | 11. important | |



Reading B

1. Pre-reading tasks

Before reading the text, read the instructions. Paraphrase some of the difficult language points. Students may have different opinions on the view that people who can speak more than one language are smarter than those who can't. Divide students into groups and ask them to discuss about this question. Check their feedback five minutes later.

2. Reading comprehension

Ask students to read the text by themselves and finish the reading comprehension questions. They may refer to a dictionary if necessary.

Check the answers with students. Provide explanations if necessary.

Touch upon the important expressions and grammar points in the text according to students' needs.

—————▶ A ◀—————

Possible answers

1. Because there is plenty 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. The author thinks they are not wrong about the interference.
2. Bilingual experience can help to direct 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.
3. Bilinguals may have a higher ability to monitor the environment. They have to switch languages quite often. It requires keeping track of changes around you in the same way that we monitor our surroundings when driving.
4. Children exposed to a bilingual environment quickly learned to switch to the new direction.
5. Individuals with a higher degree of bilingualism were more resistant than others to the beginning of dementia.

→ B ←

First you read the introduction. Then ask students to discuss in pairs or groups. After students have discussed with their partners, you may encourage students to talk and express their personal ideas.

Background information

1. More myths about bilingualism

(1) “A child should learn one language properly first; then you can start teaching the other.”

As in the myth above, this is an old belief based on flawed research. Children who learn two languages in a loving, supportive environment learn them both well. Children who learn two languages in a stressful environment may have language development problems, and so will children learn only one language in that same sort of environment.

(2) “Children who were brought up bilingually will make great translators when they grow up.”

By no means all bilinguals are good at translating. Nor have any studies shown that growing up bilingually gives one an advantage or a disadvantage over those who became bilingual as adults when it comes to translating. There are many other skills involved, and bilinguals, just like monolinguals, are too different to allow for easy generalisations.

(3) “Bilinguals have split personalities.”

Some bilinguals do report feeling that they have a different “personality” for each language. However, this may be because they are acting according to different cultural norms when speaking each of their languages. When speaking English, they assume the cultural role expected of them in English-speaking society. This is different from the cultural role expected of them in German-speaking society, which they assume when speaking German. The change in language cues a change in cultural expectations.