

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.
- ★ The *Reading* section presents an article about how to be a more successful language learner.
- ★ 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, followed by discussion activities and listening and speaking practice. This part works as language input to elicit what students already have in their mind. *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:** factor, process, failure, determine, contribute, goal, tend, blame, circumstance, take charge of, master, approach, seek, intuitive, repetition, involve, abstract

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 at the end of this unit. Finally you may pick up a few volunteers to report to the class how well they have done and what they have achieved.

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.

Read the instruction as a class. 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 the 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.
- 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 the 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 to 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 more than 90 million 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 1,500 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 royal charter in 1927. The BBC World Service began in 1932, and by the 1990s was broadcasting programmes in 38 languages to 120 million people worldwide. The corporation produces programmes and information services, broadcasting on television, radio, and the Internet, and offers five radio networks and two national television channels. The stated mission of the BBC is "to inform, educate and entertain". The motto of the BBC is "Nation Shall Speak Peace unto Nation".

CRI: China Radio International (CRI) is the only overseas broadcaster in the People's Republic of China. CRI was founded on December 3, 1941 and is owned and operated by the state. CRI is one of the "three central media organisations in China" along with China National Radio (CNR) and China Central Television (CCTV).

Reading

1 Pre-reading tasks

Read the introduction as a class. Divide the class into groups. Before students read the text, ask them to guess what these subtitles probably mean.

2 Reading comprehension

A.

Ask students to read the text. Then match the paragraphs with the subtitles given in the *Pre-reading* section. This exercise is designed to help students develop abilities of generalising the main idea of a paragraph.

Answers

1. c 2. a 3. d 4. b

B.

Ask students to read the text again and while reading they should judge whether these statements are true or false. This exercise trains students to pay attention to the detailed information in reading.

Answers

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F
5. T 6. T 7. F

C.

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

1. What he himself contributes determines whether he will succeed in language learning.
2. You know yourself best, so you should use your self-knowledge to guide your studies.
3. They prefer to gather examples and imitate them.
4. Learning a language is a little like learning to ride a bicycle. Only knowing how to ride a bicycle is not enough. You must get on the bike and play with it.

Language points

1. **factor** *n.* something that influences or causes a situation
e.g. The rise in crime is mainly due to social and economic *factors*.
2. **process**
n. a series of actions that are done in order to achieve a particular result
e.g. Repetition can help the learning *process*.
v. to make food, materials, or goods ready to be used or sold
e.g. Milk can be *processed* in many ways.
3. **determine** *v.*
 - 1) if something determines something else, it directly influences or decides it
e.g. The amount of water available *determines* the number of houses that can be built.
 - 2) to officially decide something
e.g. The date of the court case has not yet been *determined*.
 - 3) **be determined to do something:** to decide to do something
e.g. We *are determined to* leave at once.
4. **tend** *v.* if something tends to happen, it happens often and is likely to happen again
e.g. People *tend to* need less sleep as they get older.
5. **circumstance** *n.*
 - 1) the conditions that affect a situation, action, event, etc.
e.g. I can't imagine a *circumstance* in which I would be willing to steal.
 - 2) **under no circumstances also in no circumstances** (*British English*) used to emphasise that something must definitely not happen
e.g. *Under no circumstances* are you to go out.
 - 3) **under/given the circumstances also in the circumstances** (*British English*): used to say that a particular situation makes an action, decision, etc. necessary, acceptable, or true when it would not normally be
e.g. It's the best result that could be expected *under the circumstances*.
6. **take charge of:** to have control of or responsibility for a group of people or an activity
e.g. Owens came in and *took charge of* (=took control of) the situation.
7. **approach**
n.
 - 1) a method of doing something or dealing with a problem
e.g. a new *approach* to teaching language
 - 2) the approach of a particular time or event is the fact that it is getting closer
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 on upstairs.

8. **seek** v.

1) to ask someone for advice or help

e.g. If the symptoms persist, *seek* medical advice.

2) (*formal*) to try to achieve or get something

e.g. Thousands of people crossed the border, *seeking* refuge from the war.

9. **intuitive** *adj.* an intuitive idea is based on a feeling rather than on knowledge or facts

e.g. He seemed to have an *intuitive* awareness of how I felt.

10. **abstract** *adj.*

1) based on general ideas or principles rather than specific examples or real events

e.g. By the age of seven, children are capable of thinking in *abstract* terms.

2) existing only as an idea or quality rather than as something real that you can see or touch

e.g. the *abstract* nature of beauty

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.

Answers

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. without success; have less than enough of success | 2. control |
| 3. ask for advice | 4. like |
| 6. make something available for you to use by giving it | 5. depend on |
| 7. occupy yourself in the language | |

B.

Answers

- | | | | | |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|------------|------------|
| 1. lack/shortage | 2. opportunities | 3. rely/depend | 4. provide | 5. charge |
| 6. seek | 7. fond | 8. play | 9. becomes | 10. system |

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

Read the instruction as a class. Ask students to discuss why they think learning English is important in groups of three or four. Get class feedback when they finish. 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 and explain the introduction as a class. Then 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 **a learn 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 as a class. 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
contribute	contribution	_____
learn	learning	learned
tend	tendency	_____
differ	difference	different
analyse	analysis	_____
practise	practice	practical
discover	discovery	_____
know	knowledge	knowledgeable
_____	importance	important

B.

Read the instruction as a class. Ask students to finish this exercise independently. Show them the answers and give some explanations if necessary.

Answers

1. analysis 2. learning 3. contribution 4. tend 5. practice
 6. failure 7. difference 8. learn 9. success 10. Determination
 11. discoveries 12. important

Project

This project is designed to help students to recognise the importance of learning English and find out the best way to learn this language.

- As the first step, you may read and explain the introduction. Then clarify the idea of the best way to learn English. Actually, there is no perfect one and the so-called “best way” is an old fantasy for both learners and teachers.
- Then explain the steps for this project. Divide students into groups of four and ask them to do this interview after class.

- Get feedback next time by asking some groups to report to the class their results and their experience of doing this project.

Extension

This is an extended reading task related to the theme in this unit. It tells us how to be a better reader and gives some practical suggestions.

- Students do the *Discussion* task.
- Ask students to read the material by themselves and finish the vocabulary exercise. 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.

1

Discussion

This part should be done before students read the article. First you read the introduction. Then ask students to discuss in pairs or groups. After students have read the article and discussed with their partners, you may ask students what suggestions are given by researchers in the article and whether they agree with the suggestions. Encourage students to talk and express their personal ideas.

2

Vocabulary check

Answers

- | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. effective | 2. suffers | 3. adopt | 4. responsibility | 5. preferably |
| 6. strategy | 7. risks | 8. efficient | 9. skimmed | 10. enormous |

Notes

1. **skim:** *v.* to read something quickly to find the main facts or ideas in it 浏览（快速阅读的一种方式）
2. **learn text talk:** Learn to talk with the text. In this phrase, *talk* is a noun and *text* is used as a noun modifier. 学会与课文对话

Culture tips

Read and explain the introduction as a class. Explain the meaning of “gesture” if students don’t know it. Give some actual models and ask them to guess. First give them some easy ones, like nodding your head for “yes” and shake your head for “no”. Then ask students to work in pairs and discuss the meaning of the gestures on the picture.

Answers

1. OK, fine, good
2. to reject someone/something, to say no
3. to have no idea
4. to say “I am listening.”
5. depressed
6. good luck or wish me luck (also used to indicate that someone is lying if held out of sight)

Learning to learn

This part is designed to help students set up right attitudes towards learning English. Attitudes affect things people are doing. It is very important for students to have right attitudes towards learning English at the beginning of a college life. Help students to make clear what attitudes they should hold in their English study. Encourage them to think about these questions and discuss with their partners.

课文译文

如何成为一个更成功的语言学习者？

一切取决于你自己

作为语言学习者，你是整个语言学习过程中最重要的因素。语言学习成功与否最终取决于你为之付出的努力。例如，你学习是否用功？你采取了什么样的学习方法？你为自己制定了什么样的学习目标？很多语言学习者把自己的失败归因于教师、环境或者教材。事实上，他们失败的最重要的原因在于他们自身。

你最了解你自己

如果你不能很好地安排自己的学习，你可能很难掌握一门新的语言。最了解你的人是你自己，所以你应该充分利用对自己的了解去引导整个学习过程。如果你有时不认同

教师的教学方法或者书本上的学习建议，这是完全可以的。当然，必要时，你还是需要寻求他人的建议。

探索你自己的方法

人们学习语言的方法多种多样。有些人喜欢分析语言，并且努力寻求能解释一切语言现象的法则。另外一些人则更加相信直觉，他们喜欢搜集具体实例然后加以模仿。有些人需要不断重复以巩固所学的知识，另外一些人却不喜欢这种方法。在课堂上，教师不可能满足每个学生的需求。因此，你不能总是依赖教师给你提供一种专为你量身定做的学习方法。你需要亲自去尝试从而发现最适合自己的学习方法。

与语言互动

想要精通另一门语言，你一定要积极参与其中。你需要和这门语言密切接触，明白它的规则。这样，语言就不只是一种由各种抽象的规则构成的体系，而应该成为你的一部分。学语言与学骑自行车有点相似。仅仅知道怎么骑车是不够的，你需要骑到车上与之互动。