



Language Strategy Use Inventory

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The purpose of this inventory is to find out more about yourself as a language learner and to help you discover strategies that can help you master a new language. Check the box that describes your use of each listed strategy. The categories are: *I use this strategy and like it*; *I have tried this strategy and would use it again*; *I've never used this strategy but am interested in it*; and *This strategy doesn't fit for me*. Please note that "target" language refers to the new language you are learning.

I use this strategy and like it
I have tried this strategy and would use it again
I've never used this strategy but am interested in it
This strategy doesn't fit for me

Listening Strategy Use

Strategies to increase my exposure to the target language:

1. Attend out-of-class events where the new language is spoken.
2. Listen to talk shows on the radio, watch TV shows, or see movies in the target language.
3. Listen to the language in a restaurant or store where the staff speak the target language.
4. Listen in on people who are having conversations in the target language to try to catch the gist of what they are saying.

Strategies to become more familiar with the sounds in the target language:

5. Practice sounds in the target language that are very different from sounds in my own language to become comfortable with them.
6. Look for associations between the sound of a word or phrase in the new language with the sound of a familiar word.
7. Imitate the way native speakers talk.
8. Ask a native speaker about unfamiliar sounds that I hear.

Strategies to prepare to listen to conversation in the target language:

9. Pay special attention to specific aspects of the language; for example, the way the speaker pronounces certain sounds.
10. Try to predict what the other person is going to say based on what has been said so far.
11. Prepare for talks and performances I will hear in the target language by reading some background materials beforehand.

Regents of the University of Minnesota. From the Maximizing Study Abroad series published by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition. See: carla.umn.edu/maxsa/guides "Language strategy use inventory" can be found on pp. 165–171 in *Maximizing study abroad: An instructional guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use* (2009) by Kappler Mikk, B., Cohen, A.D. & Paige, R.M. (with Chi, J., Lassegard, J., Maegher, M. & Weaver, S.), and pp. 21–27 in *Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use* (2nd ed.) (2006) by Paige R.M., Cohen, A.D., Kappler, B., Chi, J. and Lassegard, J.

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I use this strategy and like it
 I have tried this strategy and would use it again
 I've never used this strategy but am interested in it
 This strategy doesn't fit for me

Strategies to listen to conversation in the target language:

- 12. Listen for key words that seem to carry the bulk of the meaning.
- 13. Listen for word and sentence stress to see what native speakers emphasize when they speak.
- 14. Pay attention to when and how long people tend to pause.
- 15. Pay attention to the rise and fall of speech by native speakers—the “music” of it.
- 16. Practice “skim listening” by paying attention to some parts and ignoring others.
- 17. Try to understand what I hear without translating it word for word.
- 18. Focus on the context of what people are saying.
- 19. Listen for specific details to see whether I can understand them.

Strategies for when I do not understand some or most of what someone says in the target language:

- 20. Ask speakers to repeat what they said if it wasn't clear to me.
- 21. Ask speakers to slow down if they are speaking too fast.
- 22. Ask for clarification if I don't understand it the first time around.
- 23. Use the speakers' tone of voice as a clue to the meaning of what they are saying.
- 24. Make educated guesses about the topic based on what has already been said.
- 25. Draw on my general background knowledge to get the main idea.
- 26. Watch speakers' gestures and general body language to help me figure out the meaning of what they are saying.

What other listening strategies do I use?

Vocabulary Strategy Use

I use this strategy and like it
 I have tried this strategy and would use it again
 I've never used this strategy but am interested in it
 This strategy doesn't fit for me

Strategies to learn new words:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 27. Pay attention to the structure of the new word. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28. Break the word into parts that I can identify. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29. Group words according to parts of speech (e.g., nouns, verbs). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30. Associate the sound of the new word with the sound of a word that is familiar to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31. Use rhyming to remember new words. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32. Make a mental image of new words. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33. List new words with other words that are related to it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34. Write out new words in meaningful sentences. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35. Practice new action verbs by acting them out. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36. Use flash cards in a systematic way to learn new words. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Strategies to review vocabulary:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 37. Go over new words often when I first learn them to help me remember them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 38. Review words periodically so I don't forget them. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Strategies to recall vocabulary:

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 39. Look at meaningful parts of the word (e.g., the prefix or the suffix) to remind me of the meaning of the word. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 40. Make an effort to remember the situation where I first heard or saw the word or remember the page or sign where I saw it written. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41. Visualize the spelling of new words in my mind. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Strategies to make use of new vocabulary:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 42. Try using new words in a variety of ways. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 43. Practice using familiar words in different ways. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 44. Make an effort to use idiomatic expressions in the new language. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What other vocabulary strategies do I use?

Speaking Strategy Use

I use this strategy and like it
 I have tried this strategy and would use it again
 I've never used this strategy but am interested in it
 This strategy doesn't fit for me

Strategies to practice speaking:

45. Practice saying new expressions to myself.
46. Practice new grammatical structures in different situations to build my confidence level in using them.
47. Think about how a native speaker might say something and practice saying it that way.

Strategies to engage in conversation:

48. Regularly seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers.
49. Initiate conversations in the target language as often as possible.
50. Direct the conversation to familiar topics.
51. Plan out in advance what I want to say.
52. Ask questions as a way to be involved in the conversation.
53. Anticipate what will be said based on what has been said so far.
54. Try topics even when they aren't familiar to me.
55. Encourage others to correct errors in my speaking.
56. Try to figure out and model native speakers' language patterns when requesting, apologizing, or complaining.

Strategies for when I can't think of a word or expression:

57. Ask for help from my conversation partner.
58. Look for a different way to express the idea, like using a synonym.
59. Use words from my own language, but say them in a way that sounds like words in the target language.
60. Make up new words or guess if I don't know the right ones to use.
61. Use gestures as a way to try to get my meaning across.
62. Switch back to my own language momentarily if I know that the person I'm talking to can understand what is being said.

What other speaking strategies do I use?

Reading Strategy Use

I use this strategy and like it
 I have tried this strategy and would use it again
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Strategies to improve my reading ability:

- | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 63. Read as much as possible in the target language. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 64. Try to find things to read for pleasure in the target language. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 65. Find reading material that is at or near my level. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 66. Plan out in advance how I'm going to read the text, monitor to see how I'm doing, and then check to see how much I understand. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 67. Skim an academic text first to get the main idea and then go back and read it more carefully. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 68. Read a story or dialogue several times until I understand it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 69. Pay attention to the organization of the text, especially headings and subheadings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 70. Make ongoing summaries of the reading either in my mind or in the margins of the text. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 71. Make predictions as to what will happen next. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Strategies for when words and grammatical structures are not understood:

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|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 72. Guess the approximate meaning by using clues from the context of the reading material. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 73. Use a bilingual dictionary to get a sense of what the equivalent word in my native language would be. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 74. Use a target language dictionary to see how words are defined by means of other target language words. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What other reading strategies do I use?

Writing Strategy Use

I use this strategy and like it
 I have tried this strategy and would use it again
 I've never used this strategy but am interested in it
 This strategy doesn't fit for me

Strategies for basic writing:

75. Practice writing the alphabet and/or new words in the target language.
76. Plan out in advance how to write academic papers, monitor how my writing is going, and check to see how well my writing reflects what I want to say.
77. Try writing different kinds of texts in the target language (e.g., personal notes, messages, letters, and course papers).
78. Take class notes in the target language as much as I can.

Strategies for writing an essay or academic paper:

79. Find a different way to express the idea when I don't know the correct expression (e.g., use a synonym or describe the idea).
80. Review what I have already written before continuing to write more.
81. Use reference materials such as a glossary, a dictionary, or a thesaurus to help find or verify words in the target language.
82. Wait to edit my writing until all my ideas are down on paper.

Strategies to use after writing a draft of an essay or paper:

83. Revise my writing once or twice to improve the language and content.
84. Try to get feedback from others, especially native speakers of the language.

What other writing strategies do I use?

Translation Strategy Use

I use this strategy and like it
 I have tried this strategy and would use it again
 I've never used this strategy but am interested in it
 This strategy doesn't fit for me

Strategies for translation:

85. Plan out what to say or write in my own language and then translate it into the target language.
86. Translate in my head while I am reading to help me understand the text.
87. Translate parts of a conversation into my own language to help me remember the conversation.

Strategies for working directly in the target language as much as possible:

88. Put my own language out of mind and think only in the target language as much as possible.
89. Try to understand what has been heard or read without translating it word for word into my own language.
90. Use caution when directly transferring words and ideas from my own language into the target language.

What other translation strategies do I use?