READING COMPREHENSION & VOCABULARY

Can You Really Learn a Language in 22 Hours?

Based on Jon Foster's report on gamified language learning with Memrise

Student Name: ----------	Class / Level: ----------	Date: ----------

ARTICLE: HOW MEMRISE TURNS VOCABULARY INTO A GAME

I've never been much good at languages. But next month, I'm travelling to a remote area of Central Africa and my **aim** is to know enough Lingala – one of the local languages – to have a conversation. Normally when I get a spare moment at home, I go on Facebook or play games on my phone. At the moment, I'm using those short breaks to learn a foreign language with Memrise, and it feels just like a game.

'People often stop learning things because they feel they're not **making progress** or because it all feels like too much hard work,' says Ed Cooke, one of the people who created Memrise. 'We're trying to create a form of learning experience that is fun and is something you'd want to do instead of watching TV.'

Memrise is a **challenge**. It gives you new words as 'seeds' which you plant in your 'greenhouse' (your short-term memory). When you practise the words, you 'water your plants' and they grow. When the app believes you have remembered a word, it moves to your 'garden', earning you points. If you forget to log on, the app sends emails to **remind** you to water your plants.

The app uses two learning principles. First, people remember things better when they link them to a picture. Memrise **translates** words into your language, but encourages 'mems' – images that help you recall words. I **memorised** *motele*, the Lingalan word for 'engine', by imagining an old engine in a motel room. Second, we need to stop studying words and **repeat** them later, leaving time between sessions. I've learnt hundreds of words; I won't be a **fluent** speaker, but I'll do more than just smile when I meet people in the Congo.

TASK 1: Reading Comprehension — Multiple Choice

Click the box next to the correct answer (A, B, or C) based on the article above.

1. Why is Jon Foster learning Lingala at the moment?

- ☐ **A.** Because he is travelling to a remote area of Central Africa next month.
- ☐ **B.** Because he is moving to the Congo permanently to become a teacher.
- ☐ **C.** Because Ed Cooke asked him to test a new language app for work.

2. In the Memrise app, what does the 'greenhouse' represent?

- ☐ **A.** The points you earn when you reach the next level.
- ☐ **B.** Your short-term memory, where new 'seed' words are planted.
- ☐ **C.** A collection of funny images created by other Memrise users.

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3. How did Jon Foster remember the Lingalan word *motele* ('engine')?

- ☐ **A.** He repeated the word out loud while watching TV every evening.
- ☐ **B.** He pictured an old engine inside a motel room.
- ☐ **C.** He translated it into several different African languages.

4. According to the second learning principle in the text, what should learners do after studying words?

- ☐ **A.** Stop studying and repeat them later, leaving time between sessions.
- ☐ **B.** Spend at least two hours every night testing their memory.
- ☐ **C.** Compare their high scores with friends on Facebook.

TASK 2: True or False?

Read each statement carefully and check whether it is TRUE or FALSE according to the article.

Statement	TRUE	FALSE
1. Before using Memrise, Jon usually spent his spare moments at home on Facebook or playing phone games.	☐	☐
2. Ed Cooke says Memrise wants to create a learning experience people choose instead of watching TV.	☐	☐
3. Jon believes learning hundreds of Lingalan words on Memrise will make him a completely fluent speaker.	☐	☐

TASK 3: Key Vocabulary in Context

Complete each sentence using the correct highlighted word from the word bank below.

aim • challenge • fluent • making progress • memorised • remind • repeat • translates

1. My main _____ this year is to learn enough Spanish to order food and ask for directions on holiday.
2. Learning 500 new words in two weeks is a big _____, but turning it into a game makes it fun.
3. When you see that you are _____, you feel much more motivated to keep studying every day.
4. Please _____ me to review my flashcards tonight before I go to sleep.
5. This dictionary app instantly _____ unfamiliar phrases from Lingala into English.
6. She _____ all the irregular verbs by creating funny cartoons for each one.
7. To move words into long-term memory, you must _____ them over several days.
8. After living in Paris for five years, David became a _____ French speaker.

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