Watch an interview with Alex Rawlings, who speaks 11 languages and fill the gaps with NO MORE than THREE WORDS.

1. According to Alex, you have to ..... and ..... a country to know it well.
2. Alex shows a ..... with his granny's mother tongue.
3. He finds ..... fascinating.
4. He is involved in yearly conferences for ..... in different countries.
5. Although originally from the UK, he isn't able to speak .....
6. On learning Russian, two of the hardest things he found were:
    - That there's a .....
    - There was a(n) .....
7. He has found himself ..... to languages and their culture by using the internet.
8. You need ..... and time allocation to learn a language.
9. It's easier to learn a language when this is ..... your mother tongue.
10. British and American people lack ..... when learning languages.
11. One of his final advice is that acquiring a language is a(n) .....
12. You have to develop ..... to feel confident using the language.

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An interview with Alex Rawlings – Part 1

Alex Rawlings became 'Britain's most multilingual student' in 2012, when he won a national competition which tested his fluency in 11 different languages. At the time, he was studying German and Russian at Oxford University. Originally from London, Alex has lived in Germany, Russia, Hungary and Spain, and he has gone on to learn more languages since he graduated.

An interview with Alex Rawlings – Part 2

I've learnt so many languages because I'm hooked basically on learning languages. I think every new language to me is like a new world, it's a completely new adventure and you meet totally different people, you have totally different experiences. I often say when, when you visit a country when you speak the language, you really get to know that country, you really get to explore it for yourself. But when you visit a country and you don't speak the local language, you're relying on other people to explain what's happening to you. They're kind of, they're showing you their version of the country, but you can't really see it for yourself.

All of the languages that I speak are fun. I think that's why I've stuck with them and enjoy speaking them. I think I have the, the deepest emotional connection with Greek because my grandmother was from Greece and so we use Greek in my family as well and I've heard it ever since I was a child. But I also really like speaking German.

There are so many languages that I would love to learn in the future. As I said, I'm hooked so... I'm, I'm very interested in Chinese at the moment. I work with someone from China who's teaching me little bits. And I think it's really cool when I hear her speaking to her family or friends on the phone in Chinese and think, 'Wow! Wouldn't it be really awesome to speak that.' I also, I organize an international conference for polyglots every year, which moves country, so last year it was in Iceland and this year it's going to be in Slovenia. So I'd like to learn some Slovene as well before we go there for the weekend.

I always feel a little bit guilty that I'm from the UK but I've never really learnt any of our local languages here. So I've never learnt Welsh, I've never learnt Irish, I've never learnt Scottish Gaelic. And I went to Wales recently and loved that we had everything in two languages. You walk into the supermarket and you see all these languages everywhere. And I thought, 'I think it would be really cool to learn a language which is very close to where I live that I could use. So I'd love to learn Welsh one day too.

The biggest challenge for me with learning a new language was with Russian. There were a number of things that I wasn't expecting to be hard that were. For example, there's a whole new alphabet, which, it's not too different to English – you get used to it – but when you're trying to learn a word, it's just an extra barrier to memorizing that word. First having to read it and understand what all of the letters mean and then having to actually memorize it. So there's that extra layer there.

Technology has been an amazing resource for me, especially when I was growing up actually, with YouTube and things like that, I was able to sort of come home from school and immediately immerse myself in this world of another language. I could just watch videos in different languages all evening and it was like I was there, it was like I was living in the country. So the internet has brought all of those cultures much closer to me and made them much more accessible. And since then I think there's now a lot of technology out there to help you learn vocabulary or to teach you grammar.

An interview with Alex Rawlings – Part 3

Presenter As well as learning languages himself, Alex has also taught intensive language courses. He also appears in the media and regularly attends events organized by institutions such as the European Council and the British Council to promote language learning and multilingualism. He has also written a book, 'How to speak any language fluently'.

Alex Yeah, it's a good question. So, put it, put it this way. I've never met anyone who couldn't learn a language, you know, I mean, if they had the right motivation, the right time allocation, the right resources, and the right expectations, I've never met anyone who's had all of those things in place and still failed. But many of us fail to learn languages because one of those things is not there. We don't have enough time, we're not doing it for the right reasons, or we expect it to be a lot easier than it actually is.

Well, the easiest language for me to learn was definitely Afrikaans, because the grammar's very, very simple, so there are almost no irregular verbs, there's only three real tenses you have to worry about and a lot of the vocabulary in Afrikaans is very similar to vocabulary in

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English. So for example, there's this sentence which is 'My pen is in my hand and my hand is in warm water', which in Afrikaans is 'my pen is en my hand and my hand is in warm water', which, you know is very, very easy for English-speakers to learn. So the easiest languages to learn are the languages which are most similar to the one you speak natively, because you don't have to learn so many new concepts and maybe you can already understand a lot of the vocabulary because it's similar to what you already know.

I think British and American people think that they're not very good at languages. I think we don't have much confidence. Because when we go abroad to other countries, we, we expect people to speak English, people expect us to speak English, so we never get a chance to practise the little bits of other languages that we might know... I think the most important thing for someone who wants to learn a new language to remember is that nothing happens overnight. Learning languages is a lifelong activity. And you basically, you never finish, you never get to that finishing line where you think, 'Right, what should I do next?' When you learn a new language you need to accept the fact that there will always be more to learn, no matter how much you learn. And so the best approach is to just start doing it in little steps, just doing say 10-15 minutes a day, whenever you can find time around your routine. And then building that up over a year or two years before you really start to feel very confident using that language.

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