

UNIT 6: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1. What do you need to do to be a good language learner?

can-do attitude *chip away at* *cram everything in* *immersing yourself in* *learning curve*
long haul *on the pulse* *pick yourself up* *stumbling block* *throw yourself in*

Well, in my view, being a good language learner is a bit of a **marathon**, not a **sprint**. First and foremost, you need to be *in for the* (1) _____, because picking up a language takes consistent effort over time. It's no good trying to (2) _____ over a short period; instead, you have to (3) _____ it day by day.

Secondly, I think it's essential to (4) _____ *at the deep end* — that means (5) _____ the language as much as possible, whether by chatting to native speakers, watching programmes without subtitles, or reading books slightly above your comfort level. You'll probably make mistakes left, right and centre, but that's all *part of the* (6) _____.

Another important point is to *have your finger* (7) _____ of the language — keep up with how it's actually used in the real world, including slang, idioms, and cultural references, rather than sticking rigidly to textbook English.

Finally, you need a (8) _____. If you *lose heart* the moment you *hit a* (9) _____, you won't get far. Instead, you have to (10) _____, learn from your errors, and keep going. In short, patience, persistence, and a willingness to take risks are the hallmarks of a successful language learner.

Idioms & Phrasal Verbs

Expression	Meaning	Example
a marathon, not a sprint	Something that takes time and persistence, not quick results	Learning English is a marathon, not a sprint.
in for the long haul	Prepared to continue working hard for a long period	If you want to master French, you have to be in for the long haul.
cram everything in	Try to do too much in a short time	Don't cram everything in before the exam; spread out your revision.
chip away at it	Make slow, steady progress over time	She chipped away at her vocabulary list every day.
throw yourself in at the deep end	Start something difficult without preparation	Moving abroad forced me to throw myself in at the deep end with the language.
left, right and centre	Happening a lot, everywhere	When you start speaking, you'll make mistakes left, right and centre.
part of the learning curve	A normal stage of gaining knowledge	Forgetting words is part of the learning curve.
have your finger on the pulse	Be aware of current trends and developments	Good language learners have their finger on the pulse of how people actually speak.
lose heart	Become discouraged	He lost heart after failing the listening test twice.

Expression	Meaning	Example
pick yourself up	Recover after a failure or difficulty	I made a terrible presentation, but I picked myself up and tried again.
hit a stumbling block	Encounter a problem	Many learners hit a stumbling block with phrasal verbs.

Collocations

Collocation	Why it's natural	Example
consistent effort	Common pairing for sustained work	Consistent effort is key to fluency.
comfort level	Refers to difficulty someone can handle	Read slightly above your comfort level.
real world usage	How language is used naturally	Focus on real world usage, not just grammar rules.
textbook English	Standard, formal English taught in books	Textbook English doesn't always match everyday speech.
can-do attitude	Positive and proactive mindset	A can-do attitude helps you tackle challenges.
hallmarks of	Main characteristics of something	Perseverance is one of the hallmarks of good learners.

dust yourself off *immerse yourself* *in one go* *hit a rough patch*
keep your ear *par for the course* *put in the graft* *put your foot in*
steady headway *strike up* *the mark of* *throw in the towel*

Well, I'd say the key to being a good language learner is to treat it as a long game rather than a quick win. You have to be prepared to (1) _____ day after day, because it's impossible to master a language overnight. Instead of trying to *learn it all* (2) _____, it's better to *make* (3) _____ — even if it's just ten minutes a day.

Another tip is to (4) _____ *completely* — read newspapers, watch TV dramas, and (5) _____ *conversations* with native speakers whenever you get the chance. You might (6) _____ *it* occasionally, but those little blunders are (7) _____ when you're learning something new.

It also helps to (8) _____ *to the ground* so you pick up on how the language is actually used, including idiomatic turns of phrase and slang, rather than sticking rigidly to classroom English.

Finally, you need a resilient mindset. If you (9) _____ the moment you (10) _____, you won't get far. A better approach is to (11) _____ after setbacks and keep going.

All in all, (12) _____ a good language learner is persistence, curiosity, and the courage to make mistakes and learn from them.

Idioms & Phrasal Verbs

Expression	Meaning	Example
put in the graft (<i>UK informal</i>)	Work hard consistently	If you put in the graft, your language skills will improve.
learn it all in one go	Do everything at once	Don't try to learn it all in one go — pace yourself.
make steady headway	Make consistent progress	She made steady headway with her pronunciation.
immerse yourself completely	Be fully involved in something	He immersed himself completely in Spanish culture.
put your foot in it	Accidentally say something awkward	I really put my foot in it during that conversation.
par for the course	Normal or expected	Forgetting words is par for the course when you're learning.
keep your ear to the ground	Stay aware of current trends and usage	Good learners keep their ear to the ground for new phrases.
throw in the towel	Give up	Don't throw in the towel just because it's difficult.
hit a rough patch	Go through a difficult period	I hit a rough patch with grammar last month.
dust yourself off	Recover after a failure	After making a mistake, she dusted herself off and tried again.

Strong Collocations

Collocation	Why it's natural	Example
long game	Long-term approach	Learning Chinese is a long game.
quick win	Short-term success	Apps can give you quick wins but not full fluency.
classroom English	Formal, textbook-style language	Classroom English is different from real-world use.
resilient mindset	Ability to recover from setbacks	A resilient mindset is essential in language learning.
the mark of	A sign of quality or skill	Patience is the mark of a good teacher.

Category

Idioms & Collocations

Time & Effort

a marathon, not a sprint; in for the long haul; chip away at it; cram everything in; put in the graft; learn it all in one go; make steady headway; long game; quick win

Risk & Immersion

throw yourself in at the deep end; outside your comfort zone; immerse yourself completely

Mistakes & Learning

left, right and centre; part of the learning curve; hit a stumbling block; pick yourself up; put your foot in it; par for the course; dust yourself off

Staying Updated

have your finger on the pulse; textbook [skill/knowledge]; keep your ear to the ground; classroom English

Mindset & Resilience

can-do attitude; lose heart; hallmarks of; every cloud has a silver lining; throw in the towel; hit a rough patch; resilient mindset; the mark of