

LEARNING THE LINGO

Getting ready to head off on hols? Why not learn a little lingo before you go? Angela West shares her top tips on how to pack in a few phrases to get you by.

“Get a buzz as you wow everyone with your streetwise talk!”

Do you know your pommes frites from your pescado? Whether you're camping with your family in France, skydiving in Spain or clubbing in Croatia, even a few basic words in the language will go down well with the locals – and you might make a few new friends. But don't worry if you've spent every French lesson this term in a dreamy daze or if the only phrase you know in Italian is 'Chow baby!' There are plenty of courses and books out there that help make the whole experience fun and might save you from getting your tongue in a total twist. Bonne chance!

1 - uno - eins

Money an issue? It doesn't have to cost you a penny. Borrow books and DVDs in your target language from your local library, where you'll also find a list of evening classes offering group tuition. Or why not learn online? Play a few games, download phrases to your iPod or phone, or complete a course at your own pace. And if you're pushed for time, why not learn in your lunch-break? Just a few hours a week and you'll pick up the basics in no time.

2 - due - zwei

If you're starting from scratch, the BBC has phrase books and language learning DVDs plus fun, interactive online courses in over 40 languages. Its dedicated Languages site has everything from videos and downloadable phrases to fun quizzes and games. Best of all, it's free! Don't forget to print out the holiday Quick Fix phrases. What's more, if you take an online beginners course in French, Spanish, German or Italian, you'll even get a BBC certificate! Sign up for weekly email tips to help you through a Steps course in just 12 weeks.

3 - tre - drei

Enjoy a mystery? Try the award-winning Spanish learning course, Mi Vida Loca (My Crazy Life). You play the central character in an interactive video game with leads to follow, clues to interpret and locals to talk to. Enjoy the dramatic story of corruption and conspiracy on the Spanish Costas, Canary Islands and Madrid, learning the lingo as you go. The weekly email tips help you learn the authentic day-to-day phrases in no time. You'll feel as if you're actually in Spain!

4 - quattro - vier

If you already know some French try Ma France, which has games galore, such as solitaire and pétanque to help you refresh your rusty knowledge. Want to improve your street cred? Check out the 'cool' slang and festival phrases and get a buzz as you wow the native speakers with your vibrant streetwise talk. Enjoy other people's embarrassing language mistakes in the Your Say section and pick up some handy learning tips.

5 - cinque - fünf

For help with your French or Spanish exam, visit GCSE Bitesize which provides you with the chance to do listening, reading, speaking and writing via activities, audio downloads, mock exams and more.

6 - sei - sechs

Want to learn the lingo fast? Nothing beats total immersion in the country itself. Find out if your school, college or parish know of any student exchange programmes or affordable courses abroad. This method really worked for me – I studied French in the South of France and it was one of the best experiences of my life! I made friends from all around the world and discovered that if you charm the locals and show your appreciation of their culture, you'll receive bucket-loads of admiration in return.



Help - Aiuto - Hilfe

- For BBC Languages visit www.bbc.co.uk/languages
- GCSE Bitesize can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize
- You can find the BBC Two Learning Zone TV schedule at www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/langtravel
- Try BBC Schools programmes at www.bbc.co.uk/schools/guide/secondary
- Learning abroad? Cactus is one of the world's leading language training companies, with courses in over 25 languages, in 45 countries worldwide. Visit www.cactuslanguage.com

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