

Discover A New Character Within Yourself

By **Monica Di Santi**

As a writer, you bring characters to life, give them personalities, motivations, and expectations, and then throw them into a particular world where they have to act according to expected social behaviors. Would you like to explore a new world as your characters do? If you say "yes," go ahead and learn a foreign language for!" You wonder. Your mother tongue is English and everywhere you go you're sure you'll find somebody who speaks the language. That's true.

But learning a foreign language is much more than learning the basic grammar and uttering a few phrases poorly pronounced. Learning a foreign language opens up your mind to other people's hearts, helping you understand their behavior and customs.

You'll open your mind to see life from a different perspective because social relationships, body language, the kind of food and the time meals are eaten are particularly different in every culture. All these features are a treasure in themselves for a writer.

Why? Because learning a foreign language will provide you with a unique experience of learning a new behavior. At first, you'll feel like a child, learning from those around you, from those who know more than you, and in such a training you will develop a new personality, you'll discover a new character within yourself. A combination of your unique nature blended with the new language and culture behavior.

Learning a foreign language is like reading a book. After you've done it, you won't be the same person again.

How can you learn a Foreign Language?

1. Take some classes to understand the basic grammar of the language, and meet other people who are undergoing the same process, but don't tie yourself to a coursebook.
2. Learn songs and proverbs in the foreign language. This will help you memorize and store language structures in your mind, even if you don't understand thoroughly.
3. Watch videos and use software in the foreign language. These activities will let you learn the language and culture behavior without focusing on the learning process.
4. As you feel comfortable with the basic structures, read some simple stories or facts in the foreign language. Retell them and make a summary.
5. Never translate into English. Grasp the meaning relating the language to the particular situation in which it is used. There's no one-to-one equivalent translation besides, you'll start thinking in the foreign language.
6. Don't worry about advanced grammar. Always try to communicate and have fun. Perfection will come with time.
7. Don't be shy. Train yourself with your friends. Think about simple situations and use dialogue in the foreign language.
8. Record your dialogues and listen to them to correct your own mistakes.
9. Surf the net to find websites where you can chat with native speakers, find written texts, songs, or spoken e-books in the foreign language.
10. For further information, contact the embassies in your country. They'll offer you general information and brochures, so you can read and plan a trip as well.
11. Contact organizations such as AFS (American Field Service) to meet foreign people coming into your country as teachers or students. You can have a foreign home or in your community. This'll be a great opportunity to practice and improve the foreign language.
12. When you learn a language in a natural situation, like the mother tongue, you acquire the listening skill first, then speaking, then reading, and finally writing. This is not true of a foreign language, so if you want to profit soon, choose an area you want to master and work hard on it.

Learning a foreign language is an enriching experience in which you'll not only know other people's hearts deeply, but yours as well.

Online Resources to learn Foreign Languages

<http://www.spanishschool.com/>

Totally immerse yourself learning Spanish one-on-one five hours a day.

<http://www.castila.es/>

Learn Spanish in Granada.

<http://www.musicapaedia.com/>

Learning Spanish through songs.

<http://www.davidreilly.com/spanish/>

Spanish made easy. It's one of the fastest growing languages.

<http://www.june29.com/Spanish/lesson1.html>

Weekly Web-based Mexican Spanish Lesson by Tyler Jones.

<http://www.studyspanish.com/>

This site offers an online tutorial featuring interactive lessons for beginning students of Spanish.

<http://www.french-kiss.ca/>

The fun and easy way to learn French.

<http://www.tlwh.com/>

Learn Japanese: lessons.

<http://www.langexpress.com/>

Flashcards to learn Spanish, French, German, Italian and Japanese.

<http://www.italianlanguagelessons.com/>

Lessons for learning to speak Italian

<http://www.hebrewworld.com/> Learn Hebrew and Jewish prayer with top Multimedia!

<http://www.davka.com/cgi-bin/category.cgi?category=5>

Hebrew CDs. Software to learn Hebrew.

<http://www.oideas-gael.com/>

Courses for adults in Irish language and culture.

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Monica Di Santi is an ESL Teacher, Translator and has a master degree in Linguistics. As a translator, she has been published by Grijalbo, Mexico, and by several newsletters. Currently, she's writing a book to teach English as a foreign language.



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<http://www.soniccreations.com/>

Learn French through music.

<http://www.educorock.com/>

Learn French and Spanish listening to songs and watching videos.

<http://www.amy-hi-ho.ne.jp/masashi/index2.html>

Learn kana and the basics of Japanese grammar.

<http://sp.cis.iwate-u.ac.jp/sp/lesson/j/doc/japanese.html>

Introduction to Japanese language with speech.

<http://members.aol.com/writejapan/index.htm>

Japanese Writing tutor.

<http://www.thehaucks.com/learn.html>

Learn Japanese: lessons.