

Language Learning Advice- Modals Practice

Give advice on good and bad language learning ideas such as those below, maybe in response to your partner's (real) problems with learning foreign languages such as difficulty understanding English radio. Make sure you use the right level of advice, e.g. very strong negative advice, medium-level positive advice or weak negative advice, depending on how you really feel about doing that thing to improve your language skills. Note that the advice phrases are not in order of (positive and negative) strength below and that the words in brackets make the phrases stronger or weaker.

Suggested advice that you could give on language learning

You could (possibly)

You must(n't)

You (probably/ really) should(n't)

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- ask a teacher to correct all your mistakes
- copy emailing phrases from emails that you receive
- do online chat with your friends in English, e.g. half an hour on Line just in English
- download English language learning apps (= smartphone applications)
- go to a pub with lots of foreign customers and start conversations with them
- have a conversation exchange with someone who wants to learn your language
- have free conversation with a teacher
- help foreigners who look lost
- just study for TOEIC
- keep a list of new vocabulary to learn and go through it at least twice a day
- learn 5 new words every day
- learn 50 new words a day
- learn a (single) speech (by heart)
- learn idioms
- learn slang
- learn the 500 most common words in English
- learn the vocabulary and phrases in a phrase book for travellers
- learn the whole dictionary
- listen to ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) radio programmes
- listen to BBC radio
- listen to radio with English-speaking DJs
- listen to The Economist podcast
- make a page of useful emailing phrases
- play English recordings while you are sleeping
- practice English speaking with another non-native friend
- read a whole grammar book
- read an English newspaper
- read English children's books
- read English just for pleasure, not using a dictionary at all
- read graded readers (= easy readers)
- read local English-language newspapers
- read Shakespeare
- read the (English) plot summary of a movie before watching it
- read the Financial Times

- read the lyrics of songs that you like
- record your business meetings
- record yourself speaking English
- speak to yourself in English
- start speaking before you know what you are going to say
- stop reading and use a dictionary every time you don't understand a word
- take Skype lessons with a Filipino teacher
- tape a list of telephoning phrases on the desk next to your phone try to copy one particular English-speaking actor, e.g. Robert DeNiro
- use an electronic dictionary
- use an Intermediate-level English-English dictionary
- use an online dictionary
- use online translation
- volunteer to help foreign visitors, e.g. during the Olympic Games
- watch a movie with subtitles in your own language
- watch DVDs in your own language with English subtitles
- watch DVDs with English subtitles
- watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
- watch English action movies
- watch English children's TV
- watch English comedies
- watch the same English movie over and over again
- watch the same movie dubbed in your own language and then in English
- write the pronunciation of English words in your own language (e.g. katakana)

Suggested topics to talk about

- accuracy (= not making mistakes)
- Business English
- comprehension
- emailing
- fluency
- grammar
- listening
- meetings
- negotiating
- pronunciation
- reading
- reports
- socialising/ social English
- speaking
- telephoning
- travel English
- vocabulary
- writing

Ask about anything above which you couldn't understand or couldn't think of advice for, working together as a class to think of good positive or negative advice (at the right level) each time.

Without looking above, fill the gaps below with words to give strong, medium and weak positive and negative advice, from the strongest positive advice at the top to the strongest negative advice at the bottom.

1. You _____ must _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
2. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
3. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
4. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
5. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
6. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
7. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
8. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
9. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language
10. You _____ watch DVDs with subtitles in your own language

Look at the first page for more ideas of things you could put in the gaps above. Note that they are not in order on the first page, and that many more answers are possible.

Check your answers as a class or under the fold below.

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Suggested answers

1. You must
2. You really should
3. You should
4. You probably should
5. You could
6. You could possibly
7. You probably shouldn't
8. You shouldn't
9. You really shouldn't
10. You mustn't

Use the same phrases to give advice on other topics, without looking at this worksheet if you can.