Spanish Version

Super Study Strategies

for the

Foreign Language Student

Written by Joanne E. O'Toole
Edited by Gloria DiFlorio
Illustrated by Jon Shatrau
**Note to the Foreign Language Student**

Dear Foreign Language Student,

This booklet, *Super Study Strategies for the Foreign Language Student*, was created for you! Whether you are just beginning your study of the foreign language or you have been studying one for several years, there are strategies in here that can help you learn it more easily. Take the time to experiment with all the techniques in this booklet. Find the ones that work best for you and use them every time you study and do homework for your foreign language class. I wish you much success in your studies and hope you find this resource helpful.

Sincerely,

Your Foreign Language Teacher

---

**Note to the Foreign Language Student’s Study Partner**

Dear Study Partner,

In this booklet, *Super Study Strategies for the Foreign Language Student*, there are a variety of study techniques to help a foreign language learner enhance and improve his/her knowledge and skills in the target language. Many of these are ones with which a study partner like you can be of great help...whether or not you know the language being studied.

Look for the symbol ♦ P in the upper right hand corner of the page to identify the strategies in which a study partner can play a role. Read about the strategy and what you can do. Then go ahead and study with the foreign language learner and encourage his/her growth and success.

Sincerely,

Your Foreign Language Teacher
# Super Study Strategies for the Foreign Language Student

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strategy 1: Study Actively!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strategy 2: Numbered Study Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strategy 3: Traditional Flashcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strategy 4: Three-Sided Flashcards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strategy 5: Acronyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Strategy 6: Name That Rule!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Strategy 7: Mnemonics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Strategy 8: Highlight Your Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strategy 9: Participate Silently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Strategy 10: Exercise Your Brain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Strategy 11: Track Your Written Mistakes and Their Corrections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Strategy 12: Create a Reference Section for Your Notebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Strategy 13: Learn Three Ways to Say Everything in the Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Strategy 14: Take Advantage of Your Foreign Language Teacher’s Expertise and Willingness to Help You!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Further Suggested Study Techniques for Successful Foreign Language Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Some Study Techniques to Avoid!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategy 1: Study Actively!

When to do: Whenever you study the foreign language, especially when you are learning something new.

How to do: Include all of your senses and skills when you study the foreign language by doing the following:

a) **Say the words aloud!** Pay attention to correct pronunciation. Repeat the words until you feel comfortable saying them.

b) **Listen to the words as you say them or as others say them!** Pay attention to the pronunciation. Notice how the words are used. Think about what the words mean as you hear them.

c) **Write the words!** Familiarize yourself with the accurate spelling. Based on what you know about the words, use them in appropriate sentences and phrases. Make them part of your repertoire.

d) **See the words!** Read in the foreign language. Get used to what the words look like and how they are used.
Strategy 2: Numbered Study Guide

When to use: When learning new vocabulary.

How to create: Fold a piece of lined paper in half vertically. On the left-hand side of the paper, write the foreign-language words that you need to study, numbering them as you go along. On the right-hand side of the paper, write the English or foreign language equivalents, numbering them identically to their corresponding foreign-language word. Be sure to spell everything correctly and to include articles (a/an/the) with nouns!

How to use:

1) Study vocabulary from both the foreign language to English and from English to the foreign language. If you're at an advanced level, study from the foreign language to the foreign language.

2) As you are studying new vocabulary, memorize nouns with their articles and verbs with their prepositions.

3) As you learn the vocabulary, circle the numbers of any words you have mastered. Study these words less frequently. Focus your energy on what you don't know.

4) Study alone by placing one side of the list next to a piece of numbered paper. Write the definitions on that piece of paper. Open your study guide to check your answers and your spelling.

5) Study with someone else by having them quiz you, using the opposite side of the study guide. If your study partner doesn't know the language you are studying, spell the words or give the English definitions.
Strategy 3: Traditional Flashcards

When to use: When learning new vocabulary.

How to create: Using index cards or any small piece of paper, write the foreign-language words that you need to study on one side of the flashcards and their English or foreign language equivalents on the other. Be sure to spell everything correctly and to include articles (a/an/the) with nouns! Be sure not to use marker or a heavy ink that might show through on the other side of the flashcard.

How to use:

1) Study vocabulary from both the foreign language to English and from English to the foreign language. If you're at an advanced level, study from the foreign language to the foreign language.

2) As you are studying new vocabulary, memorize nouns with their articles and verbs with their prepositions.

3) As you learn the vocabulary, place the flashcards of any words you have mastered in one pile. Study these words less frequently. Place the flashcards of the words you have not mastered in another pile. Focus your energy on what you have not mastered.

4) Study alone by quizzing yourself with the flashcards as described above.

5) Study with someone else by having them quiz you. If your study partner doesn’t know the language you are studying, spell the words or give the English definitions.
Strategy 4: Three-Sided Flashcards

When to use: When learning specific grammar rules.

How to create: Fold index cards or rectangular pieces of paper vertically into thirds. On the outside of one of the folds, write the grammar rule that you need to learn. On the outside of the other fold, write a sample sentence that represents the grammar rule, leaving a blank to be filled in. In the center of the flashcard, under the folds, write the answer which completes the sample sentence and reflects the grammar rule.

How to use:

1) With the flaps of the card closed, read the sample sentence. Decide what rule it represents. Lift the flap to see if you are right.

2) Return to the sample sentence. Decide what word(s) best complete it, according to the rule. Open to the center of the card to see if you are right.

3) As you learn the grammar rules, place the flashcards of any rules you have mastered in one pile. Study these words less frequently. Place the flashcards of the rules you have not mastered in another pile. Focus your energy on what you have not mastered.

4) Study alone by quizzesing yourself with the flashcards as described above.

5) Study with someone else by having them quiz you as above. If your study partner doesn't know the language you are studying, spell out any foreign language words.
Strategy 5: Acronyms

When to use: When learning a cluster of grammar rules, verb conjugations, vocabulary, etc.

How to create: Look at all of the rules or words in the cluster. Note the first letter of each. Arrange these initial letters in an order that:

a) creates a known word which will help you remember the cluster.

b) creates a "new word" which will help you remember the cluster.

c) creates a phrase or sentence which will help you remember the cluster.

How to use: When doing an exercise or a test which requires the knowledge of the clustered grammar rules, verb conjugations, or vocabulary, recall your acronym. Check to see that you have followed the right rules.

Study with someone else by providing them with your acronym and asking them to quiz you on what each letter of the acronym represents. If your study partner doesn’t know the language you are studying, spell out any foreign language words.
Strategy 6: Name That Rule!

When to use: When learning grammar rules.

How to create: Study the grammar rule. Give it your own name based on:

a) something the rule reminds you of.

Mi tío es abogado.

("Abogado" reminds me of "avocado.")

Rule: After the verb *ser* and before a profession, don’t use an article (the/a[n]).

b) an example of the rule’s usage that makes the most sense to you.

El agua es bonita.

Rule: Singular, feminine nouns beginning with the letter "a" require the masculine article (el/un) when the first syllable is accentuated.

How to use:

1) Study alone by creating several examples which represent each rule. If you want to, you can check these later with your teacher.

2) Study with classmates by teaching your rule to them and explaining why you gave it the name you did. Ask them to share their ideas with you.
Strategy 7: Mnemonics

When to use: When memorizing vocabulary or any foreign language concept.

Some mnemonics' techniques to apply:

a) Rhyme the new word or concept with another in either the foreign language or in English.

"YOU CAN'T TAKE MARIJUANA THROUGH THE ADUANA."

b) Create a silly sentence which will help you remember the new word or concept.

EL HOMBRE ES EL PROBLEMA.  
LA MUJER ES LA SOLUCIÓN.

b) Look for a clue within the new word or concept which will help you to remember it.

FERROCARRIL

How to use:

1) When studying alone, apply these different techniques to the new vocabulary words or foreign language concepts that you find most difficult. Then quiz yourself on these using your flashcards or study guide.

2) Study with classmates by sharing your ways of remembering the new vocabulary or foreign language concepts with them. Ask them to share their ideas with you.
Strategy 8: Highlight Your Writing

When to use: When writing in the foreign language, especially when you intend to include specific grammatical patterns, verb tenses, or vocabulary words.

Why highlight?: By highlighting specific grammatical patterns, verb tenses, or vocabulary words, you will be more conscious of what you are writing, how you are writing it, and how many examples of specific grammatical concepts or vocabulary words you have included in your writing. Additionally, it will aid you in double-checking your written work.

How to use:

1) Write your note, letter, composition, or essay in the foreign language.

2) Using a different color highlighter for each concept you want to identify, mark your written work.

3) Proofread your written work, deciding if you have used the highlighted words accurately and in the way you intended. If you want, you can review this with your teacher later.
Strategy 9: Participate Silently

When to use: Whenever your teacher asks a classmate something or a classmate is responding orally in your foreign language class.

How to do:

1) When your teacher asks another student to answer a question or respond to something in the foreign language, create your own foreign language answer in your head. Think about what you would say and how you would say it.

2) When a classmate answers your teacher’s question, compare your classmate’s answer to yours. Think of other possible ways to answer the question in the foreign language.

Strategy 10: Exercise Your Brain!

When to use: Whenever you learn a new grammatical pattern, verb tense, expression, or vocabulary word.

How to do:

1) “Play” the new grammatical pattern, verb tense, expression, or vocabulary word through your brain, over and over, in your own original sentences. Make small changes and substitutions each time. Continue to do so until the new concept is one you know and are comfortable using in everyday speaking and writing. Keep the sentences you create simple, so that you concentrate on learning the new concept and don’t confuse yourself.
Strategy 11: Track Your Written Mistakes and Their Corrections

*When to use:* When your teacher returns your written work with corrections.

*Why keep track of written mistakes and their corrections?* So that you can learn from your mistakes and don’t repeat errors.

*How to create:* On a piece of loose-leaf paper, create two columns. Label the left-hand column “Errors” and the right-hand column “Corrections.” Maintain this sheet in the front of your notebook and add additional sheets as necessary.

*How to use:*

1) When your teacher returns a corrected writing piece to you, read over all your errors and your teacher’s corrections. Ask your teacher about any correction that you do not understand.

2) Copy each significant error into the left-hand column of your Error-Correction Sheet. Copy its corrections into the right-hand column of the sheet, directly across from the error.

3) Prior to doing another writing assignment, re-read your Error-Correction Sheet in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes.
Strategy 12: Create a Reference Section for Your Notebook

When to use: Whenever you need to refer to grammatical rules and verb conjugations.

Why create a reference section? By creating a reference section for your notebook, you will have one specific place to refer to whenever you need to recall or clarify grammatical rules or verb conjugations. It will save you time and keep you organized.

How to create: Section off a part of your foreign-language notebook. Label it “Reference Section.”

What to include:

1) Papers from your teacher that you will need to refer to on a regular basis.

2) Your own lists of important things to remember.

3) Lists of verbs or other words that apply to specific grammar rules.

4) Your Error-Correction Sheet!
Strategy 13: Learn Three Ways to Say Everything in the Foreign Language

Why learn three ways to say everything? There are two main reasons why you should learn three ways to say everything in the foreign language. First of all, by knowing multiple ways to express a single idea, you will avoid being repetitive. This will improve your speech and your writing. Secondly, when you can’t recall a specific word, you won’t feel stressed or frustrated. You’ll know that you have alternatives. This is particularly helpful during testing situations.

How to learn three ways to say everything:

1) Each time you learn a new word in the foreign language, recall any synonym you know for that word. Add it to your flashcard or your study guide. Study both synonyms at once.

2) Practice vocabulary words using circumlocution. Circumlocution is when you describe the word’s meaning without using the word. You can add your circumlocution to your flashcards or study guide. Study it along with the synonyms.
Strategy 14: Take Advantage of Your Foreign Language Teacher’s Expertise and Willingness to Help You!!!

When should you seek help from your foreign language teacher?

1) When you don’t understand an explanation.

2) When you begin to feel confused.

3) When you don’t understand your errors or your teacher’s corrections.

4) When you were absent from class.

5) When you need help exploring, developing, or brainstorming ideas for future work.

6) When you would like additional practice with the foreign language.

A note to parents: If you should notice your child having any difficulty or concerns in the foreign language class, or if you would like your child to have extra support with foreign language studies, please contact the teacher. We are all available and most willing to help your child!
Further Suggested Techniques for Successful Foreign Language Learning

1) **Have an inquiring mind!** When you are reading and/or listening to the foreign language, analyze word usage and grammatical patterns. Think about why the words were used the way they were.

2) **Use your context!** When reading or listening to the foreign language, use what you know within the context you are given to guess what unknown words and phrases might mean.

3) **Teach someone else!** By teaching someone else (a peer, a parent, or a friend) what you are learning in the foreign language, you will clarify the information for yourself and learn it better.

Some Study Techniques to **Avoid!**

1) **Do not “read over” your notes!** While reading over your notes, the material will appear familiar. You will develop a false sense of confidence about your knowledge.

2) **Do not believe that something “sounds right” or “sounds wrong”!** Unless a language is your native language or you have had significant exposure to it, the reasons “it sounds right” or “it sounds wrong” may be nothing more than guesses.

3) **Do not study vocabulary in the same order each time!** The only thing you will truly learn from studying vocabulary in a particular order is which word comes after another on your list. Vocabulary in its real usage is random. Therefore, study it in random order.

4) **Do not rely on a dictionary!** Using a dictionary correctly is difficult. There are many possible definitions to a single word, which represent a variety of meanings and parts of speech. By relying on a dictionary, you don’t rely on developing your own knowledge. Learn to rely on yourself!

5) **Do not do your foreign language homework in English and then translate it!** Translation is an extremely difficult skill. People study for years to be able to do it well. Rely on your understanding of the foreign language words and rules to do your homework directly in the foreign language. You will be significantly more successful and will save a lot of time and frustration.

6) **Do not assume that all words in the foreign language are translatable literally or are used the same in the foreign language as in English.** Some things that we say in English simply are not said in the foreign language and vice-versa. Learn the foreign language words and their meanings. Use them as they are intended to be used without thinking about possible translations.