

BISHOP HEBER HIGH SCHOOL

RESPECT • OPPORTUNITY • ACHIEVEMENT

Monday, 4th May 2020

Dear parent / carer,

Successful Language Learning at Home

First and foremost, I hope this letter finds you and your family safe and well in these very strange times we are living through. I wanted to take the opportunity to write to you and outline some of the ways in which foreign language learning can be done from home in order to support your children as they face the challenge of distance learning in another language. Please be assured that the following is not intended to add to the burden of the excellent work that is clearly already happening. In fact, the following will hopefully reduce the pressure of home schooling in French, Spanish or German and maximise the chances for future success when we do return to more normal working routines.

1. Little and Often.

First and perhaps most importantly is creating a daily 'good habit' of 10-15 minutes of language learning. Repetition helps a lot when learning a foreign language and therefore having a daily languages workout is brilliant.

2. Listening, Listening, and Listening.

If you think back to how your children picked up their native language, the first skill they picked up in language acquisition was listening. This is no different when learning a new language. A daily dose of listening in the target language really does make a difference.

3. Vocabulary!

For success at GCSE level, there are approximately 2000 words to learn! It sounds a lot, but broken down into small daily chunks of 10-15 minutes soon eats into the list. 10 words a day is approximately 400 words in a typical half term. Again seeing the words more than once is important so repetition is key. Students have access to these word lists from their classroom teacher.

4. Reading for Leisure and Pleasure.

We all know that reading helps students learn their own language, it should therefore be no surprise that this also works when learning a foreign language. My advice is for students to pick a story that they already know and then read it in the target language. This 10-15 minute daily reading helps significantly with picking up new vocabulary but perhaps more importantly it helps students to understand sentence structure and key pronunciation rules.

5. Learning Together

I have been humbled during this period of school closure to hear that people in their thousands across the country are turning to language learning as a way of passing the time while they are staying at home. What better time therefore to learn alongside your son or daughter? Try doing your daily 10-15 minutes together. In my experience, this is often the most fun part and the most motivating for students themselves.



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6. Practice Makes Perfect

Most people think that learning a language is very difficult. I actually disagree with this; it just takes time and practice. It becomes much more difficult if you leave it a week between sessions. 10 minutes a day is much better than 1 hour per week.

As a department, we will of course continue to set lesson work through INSIGHT that is linked to our curriculum but hopefully I have given you some of the principles behind language learning and the kind of things that can keep students ticking along and motivated on a day-to-day basis.

Resources

The following list of resources will help with all of the suggestions outlined:

1. www.kerboodle.com – all students in Year 9 and above have access to a digital copy of the course textbook where vocabulary, listening activities, grammar activities and much more can be found. If students have forgotten their username they can contact their class teacher.
2. www.linguascope.com (username: **heber** and password: **sy148jd**) We have a school subscription to this web site (great apps available to download as well) and this is a fun way to access all the vocabulary linked to the GCSE course. There are printable worksheets for each topic as well as many very good games.
3. www.euronews.com This is a brilliant website that has a 30-minute rolling news bulletin. The drop down menu allows you to choose the language.
4. <https://blog.aboutamazon.co.uk/in-the-community/amazon-makes-books-video-music-and-more-available-for-free> - Amazon currently have loads of free downloads. For example, you can get the first Harry Potter book free as an audiobook in French, Spanish and German. Perfect for that daily listening session.
5. Vocabulary lists – students should have these but please contact your class teacher if not.
6. Coffee Break Languages - <https://radiolingua.com/> Great short podcasts in each of the target languages for a daily dose of listening.
7. www.duolingo.com – Many people already use this but it really is quite good.
8. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zhsvr82> - BBC Bitesize has lots of new content for daily language learning.
9. <https://www.thenational.academy/online-classroom/> - There are a range of daily video lessons here and they are very good. They are particularly good for accessing vocabulary linked to GCSE.

So remember, 10-15 minutes of daily, fun language practice really does make a difference and will just keep students tuned in for when we eventually do return to normal school life. In the meantime thanks for all your hard work so far, I have seen some fantastic work returned from students. Enjoy the challenge and stay safe.

Yours Sincerely



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