

HOW TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE INTERNET

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In modern world the Internet is various means of communication and huge information resources. The role of the Internet is growing as an educational resource, used by millions of people for learning, including foreign languages. Is it possible to learn a foreign language in the Internet? In this article we offer a brief overview of the Internet resources, which can help to answer this question.

It is well known, that English is the most used language in the world. To learn it, the Internet space offers a wide variety of resources. Let's start with the site of the *British council* [1] - the United Kingdom's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities. It offers hundreds of Web-pages, containing various interesting educational audio and video materials and more than 2,000 interactive grammar exercises. The approach to mastering the language is versatile enough: you can find anything from educational games to business English here. Registration on the site allows to communicate with other learners and to download educational materials for free. Note, that it is not necessary to have a high level of English to work with this resource, so children and teens will also find here a lot of interesting things for themselves. It's also important, that the British council provides practical materials for the preparation for IELTS – the International English Language Testing System.

LearnEnglish Kids [2] is a fun, free educational site of the British Council for children aged from 5 to 12 years, who study English. It contains online games for memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary development, songs, poems, stories, video materials and a lot of interactive exercises and tasks, that make the learning process fun. This site is useful for teachers, as it contains a large number of materials available for downloading and using in the classroom, and parents, who want to help their children learn the language outside of school.

The website *LearnEnglish Teens* [3] was developed by the British Council for teens of 13-17 years. Various materials will help to develop the skills of listening to English, learn to write creatively and error-free, learn phrasal verbs with fun video comics, games and puzzles. This resource contains exercises on language practice, grammar and vocabulary, tips for preparing for exams, interesting videos, audio podcasts and stories in English about various aspects of life in modern Britain.

Everyone who is learning a foreign language out of the country of its usage, usually has difficulties with understanding of foreign speech. Besides, during the language acquisition process you need to form the vision of culture and traditions of the country. Websites [4-5] of the oldest British news channel *BBC* cope with both problems perfectly. First of all, BBC offers news reviews of current interest [4]. As part of the BBC World Service, *BBC Learning English* [5] has been teaching English to global audiences since 1943, offering free audio, video and text materials to learners around the world. One can not only improve his language skills here, but also broaden the mind. At the same time, as the information is diverse and is brought to you by native speakers, for effective work with this resource it's essential to have at least an intermediate level of English.

The next website is *MyLanguageExchange* [6]. It brings together the online community of more than three million of foreign languages learners from 133 countries speaking more than 115 languages. The method of language exchange, used on this website, was tested at schools in Canada, where lots of immigrants, who need to learn English as fast as possible, come. The essence of the method is that the users are offered to work in mini-groups of up to 4 people and communicate during the session first in one, and then in another language, in order to stay in the role of both the teacher and the student at the same time. On this site you have an opportunity to choose your interlocutor not only by a language, but also by a country, a city of residence, by age, gender etc. The possibility to look through the profiles of potential collocutors and to send them greetings is free. But if you want to send them messages, the 'gold member' status is required, which costs about \$6 per month.

As for the kinds of language exchange we can distinguish:

- Voicechat – conversation using Skype or similar programs;
- Textchat – communication by sending small messages in chat;
- Penpal – e-mail communication (which will improve your writing skills).

In addition to communication (voice or text chat), various vocabulary games, searching in a virtual library and other services are also available. It should be noticed, that the conversations are informal here with the use of different expressions peculiar to native speakers. It gives users an opportunity to immerse themselves in other cultural environment with its peculiarities, humor and values. To make the language exchange more productive, it is preferable to have an intermediate level at least. In general this resource helps its users not only to improve their language skills, but also to find new friends in the city where the trip is planned. You also need to be ready not only to learn another's language, but also to teach your native one.

As English is not the only language of international communication, users' attention should be paid to the resources, which suggest learning foreign languages different from English. And here we'd like to highlight such resources as *LANGMaster* and *InternetPolyglot*.

LANGMaster [7] positions itself as the world's largest free online language school (75 languages). After a free registration, the user is offered a test for the degree of proficiency in the chosen language. All tasks can be performed on three levels - beginners, intermediate and advanced, so that a student of any level can find useful materials. This site provides users with the most modern language courses, translated into many languages. There are tasks of different nature here: grammatical exercises, exercises to understand foreign vocabulary and to hear speech. It is also important that all audio recordings are made by native speakers.

InternetPolyglot [8] could be a great supporter in your vocabulary replenishment. It serves for learning a large number of foreign words. The choice of languages is rather wide there (37 languages). But working with this resource doesn't imply simple memorization as many words as possible, but participation in 5 games, which make a learning process both efficacious and entertaining.

Lingualeo [9] is an educational platform for learning foreign languages on the basis of game approach. In fact, nowadays it is one of the largest resources for English learning. LinguaLeo serves for the people, who want to improve their skills in proper reading, pronunciation and listening comprehension. This site will be useful for those who would like to expand their vocabulary quickly, memorizing 30-40 words a day. It is available as a web application and also as a mobile apps for iOS, Android and Windows Phone. Beside of free material, *Lingualeo* offers extended paid courses.

So, is it possible to learn a foreign language through the Internet? Yes, it is possible, and even not the one. At the same time, it is important to understand, that if you start from scratch, you are very unlikely to get the same learning efficiency as the academic education with its books, experienced teachers and arrangement of the educational process. However, if you have already had some language base together with the proper diligence, perseverance and the right choice of specialized Internet resources, the world web could be your great supporter.

Literature

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