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The secrets of learning a new language | Lýdia Machová



Want to learn a new language but feel daunted or unsure where to begin? You don't need some special talent or a "language gene", says Lýdia Machová. In an upbeat, inspiring talk, she reveals the secrets of polyglots (...) and shares four principles to help unlock your own hidden language talent - and have fun while doing it.

You are going to listen to a podcast¹ by Lýdia Machová whose title is *The secrets of learning a new language*. Pay attention to what she says and think about your own language learning experience by doing the activities below.

Before you listen

1. Based on your own experience, how difficult is learning English?
2. What are some usual activities that you do to learn English?
3. How often do you do them?

While listening

4. Match the words to their definition:

- a. approach
- b. polyglot
- c. method
- d. subject

- () a particular form of procedure for accomplishing or approaching something, especially a systematic or established one
- () a person who speaks several languages
- () a branch of knowledge studied or taught in a school, college, or university
- () a way of dealing with something

5. What question did people always ask Lýdia when they found out she was a polyglot?

6. What are some methods to learn new languages used by polyglots?

7. What does Lýdia say all polyglots have in common?

¹ Available at <https://www.podbean.com/media/share/dir-i23bs-9dfc441?utm_campaign=w_share_ep&utm_medium=dlink&utm_source=w_share>. Access on August 5, 2020.



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ANWER KEY²

1. Personal answer
2. Personal answer
3. Personal answer
4. c; b; d; a.
5. Lýdia was always asked how she could do that and what her secret was.
6. Some methods used by polyglots to learn new languages include speaking what you learn from the first day, by talking to people either personally or on-line; using the internet to chat with people who speak the language one is learning as a first language; imitating sounds of the language; learning the most frequent words of the language; studying grammar etc.
7. Lýdia says the one thing all polyglots have in common is finding ways to enjoy the language learning process.
8. You need effective methods, for example, revising words that you have been learning using space repetition; you also need to create a system in your learning, scheduling some time to learn a little every day so that you can follow a solid plan; and finally, you need patience, because learning a language takes some time.
9. You can find inspiration by looking for polyglots' YouTube channels and getting some ideas from them.
10. According to Lýdia, the most motivating aspect in the language learning process is one's own success.
11. Lýdia tells us the story of Benny and Lucas, two of the polyglots mentioned earlier. Benny studied Irish Gaelic for 11 years and German for 5 years at school, but he could not speak these languages when he graduated. After finding his own way to learn languages, today he can speak 10 different languages. Lucas studied English for 10 years at school, being one of the worst students in class. After finding his own way to learn, today he speaks 11 languages fluently.
12. Personal answer.

² Your answers do not need to be exactly the same. The answers presented here are provided as models with which you can compare your own answers.