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¿Habras español? Tips for learning a new language

Learning a foreign language can buoy your career and help you communicate better in general. It can give you a new perspective on the world while teaching more sensitivity to visitors from other countries. Whether you're considering Spanish, French, or Mandarin, start your studies with these guidelines in mind:

- Choose the best language for you. You'll do better if you study a language that interests you. You may have business interests in a foreign country or friends who speak a particular language. Without opportunities to practice with native speakers, your efforts will be more difficult. So be practical when deciding which classes to sign up for.
- Don't overdo it. Keep your study sessions outside of class brief so you don't grow too tired (or frustrated) to absorb the language. Try distributing your focus: Spend 15–30 minutes working on vocabulary one day (flash cards are useful), and the same amount of time on grammar the next.
- Immerse yourself. Don't use your new language only in class. Listen to music with lyrics in that language, or watch foreign films and videos to pick up its spoken rhythms. You'll learn more and enjoy the experience.
- Study with a group. Meet with classmates outside the classroom to practice and teach one another. Again, this makes the process more fun and allows you to practice in an atmosphere where everyone is at roughly the same level of proficiency.
- Be realistic. You're not going to become fluent in a few weeks, and you'll make mistakes as you go along. Don't obsess over it. Set some reasonable goals and relax.