

Lesson 11

A PROFILE OF THE SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE LEARNER

A. READING

General Comprehension

The following text gives information regarding successful language learners. Look at the way it is constructed. Then look at the following questions and read through the text quickly to find the answers. Remember, you do not have to understand every word in order to answer the questions.

1. According to the text, what characteristics does the successful language learner have?
2. What is the main idea of paragraph 2?
3. What is the main idea of paragraph 3?
4. What is the main idea of paragraph 4?
5. Can you apply the techniques on your own language learning? Explain.

Some people seem to have a knack for learning languages. They can pick up new vocabulary, master rules of grammar, and learn to write in the new language more quickly than others. They do not seem to be any more intelligent than others, so what makes language learning so much easier for them? Perhaps if we take a close look at these successful language learners we may discover a few of the techniques which make language learning easier for them.

First of all, successful language learners are independent learners. They do not depend on the book or the teacher; they discover their own way to learn the language. Instead of waiting for the teacher to explain, they try to find the patterns and the rules for themselves. They are good guessers who look for clues and form their own conclusions. When they guess wrong, they guess again. They try to learn from their mistakes.

Successful language learning is active learning. Therefore, successful learners do not wait for a chance to use the language; they look for such a chance. They find people who speak the language and they ask these people to correct them when they make a mistake. They will try anything to communicate. They are not afraid to repeat what they hear or to say strange things; they are willing to make mistakes and try again. When communication is difficult, they can accept information that is inexact or incomplete. It is more important for them to learn to think in the language than to know the meaning of every word.

Finally, successful language learners are learners with a purpose. They want to learn the language because they are interested in the language and the people who speak it. It is necessary for them to learn the language in order to communicate with these people and to learn from them. They find it easy to practice using the language regularly because they want to learn with it.

What kind of language learner are you? If you are a successful language learner, you have probably been learning independently, actively, and purposefully. On the other hand, if your language learning has been less than successful, you might do well to try some of the techniques outlined above.

Detailed Comprehension

Read the text through carefully, looking up anything you do not understand. Then answer the following questions.

1. What makes language learning easier for some people than for others?
2. How do successful language learners learn languages?
3. Why do independent learners not depend on the book or teacher?
4. How do successful language learners treat their mistakes?
5. Why do successful language learners not wait a chance to use the language?
6. What do successful language learners do when communication is difficult?
7. Why do successful language learners find it easy to practice using the language regularly?
8. What does the phrase *independent learners* refer to?
9. What is active learning?
10. Why is it more important to learn to think in the language than to know the meaning of every word?

B. VOCABULARY

Success, Failure, and Difficulties

The above text talks about some characteristics of people who succeed in learning a new language. There are some expressions connected with the words *success*, *failure*, and *difficulty*. Pay attention to the following examples.

To succeed

I **managed** to contact him just before he left his office.
I don't think I can **manage** the whole walk. I think I'll turn back.
We **succeeded** in persuading a lot of people to join our protest.
We've **accomplished** a great deal in the last three years.
The company has **achieved** all its targets for this year.
Do you think his plan will **come off**?

In addition, there are also common combinations of a verb and a noun to show success.

Verb	Noun
attain, realise, fulfil, achieve	an ambition
realise, achieve	a dream
reach, secure	an agreement
fulfil	an obligation
reach, attain, achieve	a target
reach, achieve	a compromise

To Fail

Plans and projects often **go wrong** or **misfire**. (don't turn out as intended)
Companies, clubs and societies often **fold** through lack of success. (close down)
A plan or project may **falter**, even if it finally succeeds. (go through ups and downs)
All your plans and hard efforts may **come to nothing**.

Difficulties

I have great **difficulty** in getting up in the morning.
I find it **difficult** to remember the names of everybody in the class.
It's **hard** to hear what she's saying.
I often have **trouble** starting the car on cold mornings.
We've had a lot of **bother** with the neighbours lately.
Can you **cope with** three more students? They've just arrived.
I've no money; my girl-friend left me; I need help; I just can't **cope** anymore.

The following examples show the formation of words relevant to this topic.

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
succeed	success	successful	successfully
accomplish	accomplishment	accomplished	-
achieve	achievement	achievable	-
attain	attainment	attainable	-
fulfil	fulfilment	fulfilling	-
-	-	hard	hard

Exercise

Choose a suitable verb to fill the gap in each of the following sentences.

1. The management have an agreement with the union which will guarantee no strikes for the next three years,
2. Now that I have all my responsibilities to my family, I feel I can retire and go round the world.
3. The church building fund has failed to its target of \$250,000.
4. I never thought I would my ambition, but now I have.
5. Very few people all their hopes and dreams in life, very few indeed, I can tell you.
6. We hope the two sides a compromise and avoid war.
7. I'm afraid that little scheme of mine didn't off.
8. She in rising to the top in her profession.
9. Do you have any using this photocopier?
10. I am amazed that you can with all the work they give you.

C. GRAMMAR

Passives: Simple Tenses

Most of us are already familiar with the passive voice. It is the sentence which takes *to be + past participle* as its verb. There can be two ways to understand the passive voice. We will call these: simple passive voice and complex passive voice. Today, we will study the former.

ACTIVE	PASSIVE
The headmaster often punishes him.	He is often punished by the headmaster.
The headmaster punished him yesterday.	He was punished by the headmaster yesterday.
The headmaster punished them yesterday.	They were punished by the headmaster.

As you can see from the examples above, the verb of the passive voice is constructed of *to be + past participle*. They are **is punished**, **was punished**, and **were punished**. The more complete forms of the *be* verbs are as follows:

		Singular			Plural		
Present	3 rd person	He She It	is	punished.	They	are	punished.
	1 st person	I	am	punished.	We	are	punished.
	2 nd person	You	are	punished.	You	are	punished.
Past	3 rd person	He She It	was	punished.	They	were	punished.
	1 st person	I	was	punished.	We	were	punished.
	2 nd person	You	were	punished.	You	were	punished.

Because we use the *be* verb, we must always think of the agreement between the verb and the subject and the tense. As we can see in the above table, we can ask these questions:

- ◆ Is the active sentence in the present or past tense?
- ◆ Is the subject of the passive sentence the first, second, or third person?
- ◆ Is this subject singular or plural?

The steps for changing the active sentence into the passive voice is as follows:

- 1) Pick out the object of the active sentence to be used as the subject of the passive sentence.
- 2) Select the form of the verb *be* according to the considerations above.
- 3) Turn the full verb of the active sentence into the past participle form.
- 4) Complete the sentence.

Exercise

Rewrite the sentences in their passive forms. The first sentence is given as an example. It is useful to follow the procedure given above step by step.

1. The Swiss nation does not need submarines.
Submarines are not needed by the Swiss nation.
2. The vertical line divides the space.
3. The teacher gives us many assignments each week.
4. PT Dino Industrial Ltd. produces various Biore make-ups.
5. The central authority plans the whole information program.
6. The government issued the regulations yesterday.
7. In 1992, the government set up an official planning body.
8. The committee punishes you for bad conducts.
9. The students discussed the solution to the problems yesterday.
10. Hair covers the whole body of the animal.
11. The scientists recognize seven sub-species of animals.
12. They told me about the accident yesterday.
13. The utility determines the relationship between a consumer and a commodity.
14. The cash account shows the cash effects of business transaction.
15. He combines them into seven species.