

LEARNING ACTIVITY GUIDE

Guide For Working With Your Language Helper

I. PURPOSE

A. Linguistic

1. Practice Fluency - Speaking smoothly and evenly: gaining command of the language in full sentences; learning and improving the practical skill of putting your thoughts smoothly into the target language.
2. Practice pronunciation - try to say everything exactly as your helper (or tutor) says it -- isolate problems and work on them one at a time.
 - a. Work on vowels, consonants, rhythm, intonation; work in drill lists: a list of different words with the same sound, starting with the same sound, ending with the same sound, having the same consonant in the middle, the same vowel in the stressed syllable, etc. This will reinforce your work on one particular feature, limiting time needed for review later on the same feature.
 - b. A tape recorder will enable you to compare critically your pronunciation with your helper's.
3. Grammar (formal) is secondary or incidental - this can be dealt with best in phrase work, along with fluency, with full phrase practice. Set up short verb phrases; noun-adjective phrases; drill-list of several different verbs with the same tense, same ending, same object, same relative, etc. Practice to establish the pattern in your sub-conscious. One feature at a time.

B. Cultural

1. Items to learn and discuss: How members of African cultures think about things, reason things out, deal with various problems and questions, how they come to decisions (the factors they consider, what factors are given the greatest significance.
2. Two stages
 - a. First, information - communicating, questioning, eliciting information and explanations; UNDERSTANDING, organizing
 - b. Then, feelings, ideas, beliefs - learning cultural "world-view" in order to know how to relate your ideas to their world-view: APPRECIATING and using their thought patterns.

II. FORMAT

- A. Learner-Directed:** YOU determine subject matter and guide the session; the helper is a resource person for you.

1. Prepare ahead of time what you want to work on. Have a basic plan.
2. Deal with one particular topic or problem feature at a time.

3. Elicit - Describe a situation to your helper (as a setting for what you want to know or learn): who, what, where, when, why.
4. Direct: Clearly explain what you want to know or what you want to do, how you want to use the materials you have.
5. Record: Write down or tape the correct word, phrase or action given by your helper. This is particularly helpful on drills for pronunciation, or phrase/sentence drills for grammar patterns -- taped drills can be used over and over for repeat practice on persistent problems.
6. Avoid abstract explanations; work on settings and usages for meaning.
7. Practice
 - a. Phrases or pronunciation word-lists:
 - Listen 3 times
 - Repeat 3 times
 - Say 3 times
 - b. Cultural matters: Discuss or act out, preferably in the target language.

Discuss writings on a particular subject from any book or article - in your target language. Note special words you need to talk about this topic or question.

B. Indirect method

1. Do not ask for word definitions or equivalents of English words (there are very few equivalents) or grammar explanations (your helper will not usually be a grammar teacher). Even if you get a good explanation, you still have to go through the practice and experience of using it to really know what it means. **LEARN MEANING THROUGH USAGE, EXAMPLES.**
2. Do ask for examples of use in sentences - 3 or 4 examples to give you the context of the word, the proper use of the grammar feature; use pictures or objects. **LEARN BY EXPERIENCE, NOT BY EXPLANATION** -- Learn the language, not just about the language.
3. Keep records and come to your own conclusions -use it as you hear it used. **Be INDEPENDENT** - do not limit yourself by depending on whatever explanation you may get. Rather build your own powers of analysis and generalization from your observation of usages.

C. Keep It Oral - Do the kinds of things that give you as much practice as possible in listening and speaking.

D. You do not need to know the language -- You need to know **how to speak** and understand the language.

E. Be systematic - Plan ahead, keep notes by subject.

III. POSSIBLE SUBJECTS of Sessions

A. Texts you have elicited, or topics and sentences from books, exercises, newspaper

1. Practice actual phrases from the lesson
2. Discuss the general subject, new word meaning, application and usage
3. Work on certain words or sounds, certain grammar feature
4. Elicit an easier way to say the same thing
5. Go over review questions on your reading selections in books that have these -- write out ahead of time the answers, then have your helper ask you while you answer orally. Or do them orally first, then review by writing.

B. Pronunciation or grammar problems - ORAL Practice, not just explanations. Set up drills by making lists of words with one sound in all; or of phrases or sentences with the same grammatical feature in all.
LEARN BY REPETITION, NOT BY MEMORY -- LEARN BY PATTERN, NOT BY RULE.

C. Subjects related to your particular area of work, interests, disciplines of education, science, industry, plants, sports, parts of the body, medical items, diseases, treatments, etc.

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Guide For Keeping A Language Notebook

1. Keep notes from various sources for your own reference and review. Sources may be teacher, helper, radio, church, news papers, school readers or text books, Bible, or other. Keep notes by categories, such as:

Vocabulary

- New words or special vocabulary
- Words not in dictionary
- Usages (special or extended meaning of words; or grammar forms)
- Plants, parts of body, etc.
- Technical words: Science
- Idioms and proverbs

Grammar: Word order

Pronouns and demonstratives

Verbs: tenses, aspects (endings), compound tense forms

Nouns: classes, nouns from verbs

Locative prefixes or suffixes

Relatives

Conjunctions: use and meaning

Topics

Culture, religion: notes on lectures, reading, experiences

Sports

Industry

Broadcasting

Automotives

Education

Government departments and officers, etc.

- Special sections for major reading sources: e.g., notes for all categories from one book under one section
- Sessions with helper: study, plan sequence of questions or work done with helper (see item No. 4)

2. **Document:** Copy actual sentences from your sources, (written or oral), especially for usages and new vocabulary. This gives you the context and range of usage or meaning. This also provides documentation for reference, or for comparison in case of difference of opinion between language helpers.

Format:

- a. Write out sentence or passage below entry for documentation.
 - Vocabulary: Write out what **you** think is the definition, if determinable from context.
 - Grammar: you try to figure out why it is used that way. Note **source** in both cases (e.g., newspaper: *Taifa Leo*, 22 Mei 1990).
- b. Bring all such items to sessions with helper or conference period with a tutor.
- c. Be sure to practice it orally.

d. Take additional notes (from your discussion with informant) to clarify, correct, or enlarge definition or usage.

e. Look up related words, usages, forms, or subjects to be sure you have a good understanding of the items, and enough **reinforcement** not to forget it.

3. A **card file** may be helpful for parts of speech -- prepositions, verbs, derived nouns, etc.

4. **Conversing** -- Some plan of study with reference to a language resource person is crucial to continuing and steady improvement in the language. Set up a **schedule** and keep **notes** -- be systematic.

a. Subject -- systematic use of reading sources, radio broadcasts, translation exercises, culture, vocabulary, usages, pronunciation.

b. Keep notes of your sessions (as 2. d. above). Evaluate your progress and plan the next session to build on the last one.

c. Drills should be made and used for: Pronunciation, grammar arising out of your reading, or listening, or difficulties encountered during text drill or conversation practice session.

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Readings

You should read more in the target language as you progress through your studies. This guide will apply to story books in the language, Bible selections, newspapers or other written sources. With graded school series, you will be able to begin at a basic level and systematically increase your level of comprehension and breadth of vocabulary.

Goals: Basic comprehension of the original piece.

Discussion in the target language of the ideas of the original selection you read.

Growing awareness of the usage, style and grammar of your target language.

Broadening of vocabulary on various topics.

Improving reading skills and comprehension.

Format:

1. Read silently over the whole selection. Read briskly to grasp the general flow of the **whole piece (a story, chapter, page)**.

a. Do not stop for new words, but you may mark some key words to check on later.

b. **Do not translate** at this stage. Read for general comprehension in the language written.

2. Go back portion by portion (by sentence or paragraph), still reading silently in the language.

3. Read the same portion aloud in the language, reading for flow, emphasis by phrase, and comprehension.

4. Pick out key words/grammar usage that seem new to you.

- a. Try to figure out their meaning from the context.
- b. Make notes in the margin or on a vocabulary sheet.
- c. Note related words/forms in the language.
- d. Give a reference word or usage in English.

(Note: Up to this point you have **not used** a dictionary or tried to go into English.)

5. **Now** look up key words you have not figured out. Do not write any English phrases until you have figured out the general meaning that can be expressed in sensible English for the whole portion.

6. Try to write out in English roughly what the source portion (sentence) was saying.

- a. Put the **basic idea** in **good**, but **simple English**.
- b. Do not think in terms of words, but phrases and ideas.

7. Review your original to see if there is a key word or phrase you have missed, and to be sure you have the idea stated with the same actor or **object**.

8. Proceed to the next portion, following steps 3 through 7, to end of the selection.

9. Read back over your whole English translation, making sure it is in acceptable English. Your translation should sound like normal English while reflecting the general style and meaning of the original. If you now translate your English back into the source language, it should give the same general form you had originally.

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Topical Study Materials

NOTE: This activity can be used with ANY topical interest. The specific design here was originally developed for Christian workers. Pick a similar basic text FOR NEW READERS on your topic in your language.

The initial book in the Bible Way series (or similar basic Bible Study) in the Swahili language will give you intensive practice with religious vocabulary. The emphasis in this activity **will not be translation** into English, but comprehension and discussion **in the target language**. Discuss each lesson in a session with your language helper. Read portions of the lesson orally, discuss the general topic, or particular questions from the text.

(For advanced levels, this Guide may apply to Theological Education by Extension materials also.)

Goals: To provide more extensive exposure to religious material in your target language.

To give advanced opportunities for formulating ideas in the language and for discussing topics flexibly.

To assist the learner to move past initial "translation" approaches into comprehension of the original text within its own context and discussion of it without the limitation of English.

To build general oral comprehension through discussion, question and answer.

Format:

1. You should read and prepare the lesson before meeting your language helper. Refer to Activity Guide for Readings, steps 1 through 5. Observe these steps carefully.

2. **Do not** write out a full text English translation. Take notes as necessary for new words and concepts. Translation is **not** the major focus -- **comprehension** is, along with oral discussion.

3. Try to clarify new words by discussion or elicitation of further examples in sentences. Get your language helpers to explain **in the language** as much as possible, by giving examples, drawing pictures, etc. For certain **technical** words, English equivalents may be helpful. **BUT TRY TO AVOID LIMITING YOURSELF BY THE ENGLISH.**

4. Discuss questions in the text or at the end of lessons. **THIS SHOULD BE DONE IN THE TARGET LANGUAGE.** This is **critical** if this exercise is to help you deal with lessons in a church setting.

5. Take the exam(s) and send them in as other students of Bible Way.

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Guide For Grammar Study

1. Study **patterns**, not rules or explanations.
2. Repeat many variations using the **same** sentence structure or grammar feature (tense, person prefixes, pronouns, etc.)
3. Use the exercise sections of lessons from graded readers or grammar reference books, choosing the feature, usage or type of sentence you want to work on.
 - a. **Repeat** them after your language helper,
 - 1) Without looking
 - 2) While looking

(This will build subconscious awareness on one feature or sentence, with some changes in other words in the sentence.)
 - b. Make up **substitution drills** in which a basic sentence is given, and various words substituted. Have your helper read the cue word, you make up the new sentence (using the same pattern) with the new word, without looking.

(Looking keeps you from hearing and forcing yourself to remember the pattern.)
 - c. **Repeat** the new sentence you have made, after your language helper. This reinforces or corrects the pattern.
 - d. **Read** all the sentences in the drill, and have language helper correct pronunciation, etc.
4. You must practice **orally**, repeating, making up sentences. You will remember what you **say**, but forget what you only read. **Repeat** patterns, make up new sentences, **use** what you practice.
5. Take about 15 to 20 minutes on each feature or type of sentence. This will build awareness of one feature to a higher level and keep you from having to remember many things at once. Study **one thing** at a time.
 - a. Learn **certain** features, not just all of Swahili. Use key word-association for tenses, or pronouns with personal subject prefixes.
 - b. You are trying to build **familiarity** with each feature: recognizing (hearing, seeing), saying, so that it sounds right when you hear yourself say it.

- c. Practice concords by drill lists: noun-adjective, noun-possessive, noun-verb subject, noun-verb object, noun- demonstrative.
- 1) For **one** class: several nouns, **all** with several adjectives; go through **all** classes thus on **one** pattern.
 - 2) For contrasting different classes of nouns: one adjective, match in phrase for some nouns of various classes; repeat mixed list with a second adjective, use 5-7 adjectives in this manner. Practice orally with language helper.
 - 3) Then go back and make complete sentences of such phrases, or do question/answer practice where answer repeats the question. This emphasizes the patterns, and gives you **oral** pattern practice in using each feature.
6. Make reference on each feature to your standard grammar books. Study explanations, **orally** practice examples, do exercises at home in writing, **then** orally with language helper.

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