

# Learn to Speak series

The Learn to Speak series is a guided tour through the language and the culture, but in this tour the visitor or learner directs the tour. The course title is true to its goals: if you go through the materials you *will* Learn to Speak English, French, German, or Spanish.

The watchwords of this program are:

- interaction in real world situations,
- authentic spoken language,
- a playful approach to “getting it right,”
- thoroughness, and
- flexibility.

Perhaps the best thing about the program is that it empowers you the learner to choose the level of competence you strive for and to map out the route you take to get there. Your learning style and your comfort level determine the route and the pace.

If you are a person who believes that being in the country and interacting with natives is the best way to learn the language, Learn to Speak gives you ample opportunity to do just that--in manageable doses with carefully chosen situations.

Pronunciation is a bedrock skill for spoken language, and Learn to Speak consistently helps you acquire a command of the basic sounds sufficient for communicating with natives.

Recognizing this, the Language Essentials section consists of three parts: Pronunciation, Basic Words, and Simulated Conversations.

In the Language Essentials *Pronunciation* module, you can hear each sound of the language spoken by a native speaker in everyday words. In keeping with the flexible, self-paced approach, you can train your ear to these sounds, listen to the words as often as you wish, and master them before testing your pronunciation with the computer’s speech recognition capability. You can even regulate the “strictness” of the software (easy, medium, hard) to fit your comfort level as you work to improve.

The *Language Essentials* section of the program also focuses on the *Basic Words* you are likely to encounter early in any communicative situation in the host country--such as numbers, time telling, days and dates, and basic colors.

The *Simulated Conversations* in the Language Essentials section then bridges over to brief exchanges--striking up a conversation, accepting or declining a refreshment, exchanging a few words of small talk, and concluding the interaction. The program presents a native speaker for you to talk to, and prompts you with three appropriate things to say in response to your counterpart. As in all parts of the program, the accuracy of your phraseology and pronunciation moves the situation along.

The Beginner Course builds on these essentials and develops your ability to respond more flexibly in basic conversational situations. This course expands possible responses in greetings, farewells, introductions, and making acquaintances.

If you are a person who requires a **full-fledged knowledge** of the language, especially for a long term stay in the host country, then Learn to Speak can admirably serve your needs. The Intermediate Course provides complete and systematic coverage of the full range of language typically treated in two years of college work, with particular emphasis on the spoken language.

When you proceed to the Intermediate Course, you can work through thirty modules (or chapters) covering a wide range of tasks likely to arise in an extended stay abroad--looking for an apartment, going to the theater, taking a taxi, opening a bank account, buying groceries, or going to the doctor. Each module or chapter is built around a substantial dialog containing not only an array of topically focused words and phrases for the situation, but also illustrating appropriate grammatical points in an authentic context.

For each of the thirty chapters, there are ten sections:

- vocabulary,
- vocabulary game drill,
- a warm-up “story” dialog,
- a parallel “action” dialog,
- several practice games reviewing material in the two dialogs,
- a short reading comprehension section covering parallel material,
- a grammar explanation of the points emphasized in this chapter,
- practice game drills covering these grammatical points,
- another simulation like that in the Language Essentials section, and finally,
- some additional games reviewing the materials covered earlier in the chapter.

The Advanced Course broadens the content further to include linguistically more challenging topics, such as making business calls, flirting, expressing frustration, or even watching a soccer game.

Another special feature of Learn to Speak is the Cultural Movies, which focus on cities and regions where the language is spoken and enrich the learner's cultural understanding of the country from the point of view of native speakers. Since the movies are in the "target" language, they enrich the range of vocabulary and cultural sophistication of the learner even further.

In short, the Learn to Speak series covers a remarkably broad range of language and enables learners to develop all four language skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking--all of this at the learners' own pace and by their own route. Every word, phrase and sentence in the course is presented by native speaker models, and the learners have the opportunity to hear ANY utterance as many times as they choose in order to gain full mastery of the material. The learners can set the standards of strictness by which they want their pronunciation judged as they work through an expansive variety of typical conversational situations and simulations. The range of vocabulary introduced and the grammar illustrated suffice to cover a significant spectrum of what a person would need for even an extended stay in the host country. Ample cultural notes explain the background of numerous fine points of language and culture likely to puzzle, or even trip up, English-speaking learners. Learn to Speak is a complete approach to learning another language.

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(2000-2004)