

# Keeping motivation alive through daily tasks

Start with small daily tasks to integrate new habits into your life.

To use the power of routine when learning a second official language:

- start **small** and **slow**
- set up **micro-tasks** that you can easily manage
- be **realistic** about your goals
- **gradually increase** your commitment as you become more competent and comfortable to
- **have fun**

**Don't just add language learning to your daily to-do list – make it part of your routine.**

Start by making simple changes

- Plan your learning and revision at the same time every day, preferably in the morning, when your brain is well rested and fresh. Reserve this time slot by putting it in your schedule to make it a meaningful commitment
- Customize your [Microsoft Teams](#) background ([options on the CLO website](#))
- Change the language settings on your phone and laptop to your second language, to help you get used to certain technical words. Do the same with your other electronic devices, such as Alexa, Siri and Google
- Create a bilingual voicemail message
- Tell others about your desire to learn
- Add a message to your Outlook signature inviting people to communicate with you in the language of their choice
- Consult your institution's website in your second official language
- Create a glossary or notebook to record the new vocabulary you learn every day. It will become your most valuable language tool – **keep it handy**
- Go around your home and add stickers with the translated name to every object and piece of furniture you own
- Make a list of commonly used words and phrases and post them on your fridge

**Here's what some people do to integrate their second official language into their daily lives without getting overwhelmed.**

We would like to thank the Canada Revenue Agency for its ongoing support. The Agency shares its best practices in language training with TBS. Some of the content and examples of daily routines in this document are taken from the Canada Revenue Agency's *Second Official Language Maintenance Program*.

## In the morning

“While I eat breakfast and have coffee before work, I read the [newspaper](#) or browse my favourite news websites. Why not keep up to date with the news and practice reading in another language at the same time? It’s easy enough to find an online newspaper in your second language.”: ~**Julia**

“I always check my social media and the news before I even get out of bed, then I always have a look at my [horoscope](#) in my second language.” :) ~**Richard**

## Morning commute

“When I’m driving in morning traffic, I always start my day listening to the [morning news](#). If the kids are with me, we listen to [audio children’s books](#) in our second language; since I’m a beginner, the content is perfect. Sometimes my kids, who are already beyond beginner level, can help me with certain words!” ~**Carole**

“I commute to work every day. I listen to [music](#) while walking and listen to some [podcasts](#) when I get to work.” ~**Mike**



## At work

“Every day, I write text messages, send online messages and emails, and I always have my [DeepL translator](#) close at hand.” ~**Kamal**

“I work for a service office, so I ask my manager if I can serve French-speaking customers. I want to be able to get my level C next year.” ~**Tara**

" I push myself to speak as much French as possible, even if I make mistakes. In fact, I've decided to work in a more French-speaking environment to improve myself. " ~**Nöel**

“I’m practising for my oral evaluation for the month. I try to hold as many of my meetings and discussions as possible with my team in French.” ~**Vanessa**

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## Morning break

“I just like to relax and be in my own little world for a while... and play my favourite online game.” ~**Jeffrey**

## At lunch

“I always take the opportunity to have lunch with my bilingual colleague; it’s a great opportunity to practice and get some friendly, constructive feedback.” ~**Anna**

“In my free time, I like to do a few exercises in my second language on my own and complete my [glossary](#). My favourite thing is to practice with flashcard app. It’s a fun and easy way to learn when you’ve got a few minutes to spare, like when you’re waiting for an appointment.” ~**Fatou**

## Back at work

“When I have the chance to participate in a work-related information or training session, conference or symposium, I try to do it in my second language (depending on the subject).” ~**Luca**

“I’m part of a small team and we’ve known each other for a while, so I feel pretty comfortable and try to express myself in my second language at team meetings. I also ask my manager to have my one-on-one meetings in French.” ~**Mélanie**

“I opened a [OneNote](#) and added tabs with different topics like work vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc. This tool is accessible to everyone and fairly simple to use.” ~**Jacob**

## Afternoon break

“Every day of my work week, during my afternoon break, I alternate between chatting in the Teams lobby or having a coffee with my French-speaking colleague. Then, on Friday, I update my glossary.” ~**Kirsten**

## Trip home

“On my way home from work, I choose a [mobile app](#) and practice or read my favourite monthly English magazine.” ~**Maya**

“My commute to work is pretty long, so I download [movies](#) or watch different videos on [YouTube](#) in or just scroll social media, as often as possible in my second language.” ~**Ben**

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### After work

“We always take advantage of our daily car journey to play a language game or sing with the kids; when I’m alone, I listen to the [radio](#).” ~**Kath**

“When I’m wandering around my house doing chores or busy with something, I put on a YouTube live broadcast of a news channel in my target language to get me some passive exposure to the language.” ~**Nicolas**

“I’ve made sticky notes and put them in my hallway for me to read every time I walk by; I usually put in the words I’m having trouble with, whether it’s vocabulary or grammar.” ~**Alice**

### At dinner

“We take advantage of meals to practice our French. We’ve asked the kids to put the topics they want to discuss in a bucket, and every evening we choose one over dinner and try to use French words to express ourselves. My kids are taking French at school, so they share what they’ve learned with all of us. We all have a good laugh when we practice our pronunciation!” ~**Lisa**

### In the evening

“In the evenings as a family, we always watch 30 minutes of cartoons before bedtime; we can also choose a book instead.” ~**Ethan**

“With my glossary in hand, I watch sports in my second language, and if it’s not game night, I pick a [movie](#) and add subtitles.” ~**Alex**

“I joined a French book club at my local library and try to make language learning a social activity.” ~**Isabelle**

### At bedtime

“As a single mom, I always take advantage of bedtime to have a conversation in English with my son: ‘What was your favourite part of the day? What was your least favourite part of the day? What’s one thing you’re thankful for today?’” ~**Emma**

“Every night, I read one chapter of my bedside novel out loud. Then I turn off the lights and listen to a 30-minute meditation session in English on one of my mobile apps.” ~**Jess**

### The weekend

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“My family and I [volunteer](#) for Parks Canada and meet lots of new people to talk to. You can also find interesting opportunities with the [Government of Canada.](#)” ~**Julian**

“I always fold my laundry while listening to my favourite [audiobooks](#) in English.” ~**Kate**

“On Saturday mornings, with my two kids, we prepare the shopping list and choose [Ricardo recipes](#) for us to make together over the weekend. When it comes to cooking, food and meal preparation, the vocabulary list is huge, along with ingredients and kitchen equipment. Then we make the meal together, reading a recipe and sometimes even exploring recipes from different cultures.” ~**Jen**

“While I’m doing my household chores, I put a sticky note on 20 objects around the house and these new words are the ones I need to practice saying for the next week, and so on.” ~**Mat**

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