



Maintaining proficiency in your second official language

Like many government employees, you're no doubt proud to be able to express yourself in both of Canada's official languages. You may well have worked hard to reach the level you have now, and you'd like to maintain it in the long term. Through your efforts and your positive attitude, you contribute to the creation of a work environment where all employees feel fully involved and respected, and by the same token, respect for the *Official Languages Act*.

Motivation is a key factor in **maintaining** (and learning) your second official language. Using your second official language **every day** in an **authentic context** helps you maintain your language skills.

Here are some best practices and strategies for maintaining and even improving your skills in your second official language.

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The importance of routine in maintaining language skills

- **Daily practice**
How to integrate the second official language [into every moment of your day](#).
- **The importance of repetition**
Repetition is an important part of any learning process. For example, frequent rereading will help you remember the content of a training course more easily. To help you structure your revisions, here are a few resources:
 - [the 11 best reminder apps for Android and iPhone](#)
 - [Flashcards](#)

Perseverance is the key to building lasting habits and maintaining language skills over the long term.

Managing linguistic security

- **Linguistic security tools**
 - [From Linguistic Insecurity to Linguistic Resilience](#)
 - [Understanding Linguistic Insecurity](#)
- **Passport to linguistic security**
 - (To come)
- **Workshop series on linguistic security**
 - (To come)

Linguistic security refers to the level of comfort and confidence a person feels when using a language. Linguistic security can apply to both first- and second-language speakers. Here, it is mainly used for speakers of a second language.

How to maintain your second official language at work

- **Language pairing**
Several institutions offer language pairing tools. In these pairing meetings, two people, one English-speaking and one French-speaking, meet regularly to practice the two official languages alternately. Some social media also offer this type of meeting outside working hours.
- **Mentoring**
Some institutions offer mentoring for learning the second official language. These initiatives are often informal. A colleague can help you maintain and improve your second official language. Ideally, this person will not only practise with you, but also encourage you to stick with your language learning journey. Regular meetings are suggested.
- **The LRDG online self-learning program**
The LRDG online self-learning platform is designed for beginner, intermediate and advanced learners who want to start learning their second official language, or improve or maintain their language levels. It is available for [French](#) and [English](#) with or without virtual tutoring. Check with your manager to see if this training program is available to staff at your institution before registering. There are fees associated with using this program.
- **Language Portal of Canada**
The Language Portal of Canada offers exercises, games, a blog, glossaries, dictionaries and a host of other resources to help you maintain and improve your knowledge of [French](#) and [English](#).

Resources for maintaining your second official language

For French	For English
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Radio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio-Canada – ICI PREMIÈRE – Écoute en direct • qub radio • Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada ➤ Television <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio-Canada – ICI TÉLÉ • TV5 unis • TOU.TV • TV5 Monde Plus ➤ Websites / Apps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francolab • ILOBify (Université d'Ottawa) • Mauril • Ressources pédagogiques en ligne et gratuites • TV5 Monde – Apprendre le français • Livres audio • 18 best apps to learn French in 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Radio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC LISTEN - Live Radio • Live Canada Radio Stations Online • Online Radio Canada ➤ Television <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC Television • CTV Television • CBC Gem ➤ Websites / Apps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mauril • Learning English (Cambridge University) • ILOBify (University of Ottawa) • Audio books • 10 best apps to learn and practise English

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Films and shorts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office national du film • TV5 unis films courts • TFO – Télévision française de l’Ontario ➤ Podcasts / Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio-Canada - Ohdio • Télé-Québec • La Fabrique culturelle • L’actualité • Savoir média ➤ Speaking in public (even if French is your second official language) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toastmasters International • Le club bilingue Toastmasters (FR/EN) Meetup ➤ Virtual book club in French <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club de lecture en français - Alliance française Ottawa • quialu.ca La plus grande communauté de lecteurs du Québec ➤ TV5 Monde Information – Les nouvelles du monde en français ➤ Miniseries Chroniques de bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Films, documentaries and shorts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Film Board • CBC Gem - Films • TVO (Ontario) ➤ Podcasts / Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBC - Podcasts • Best Podcasts in Canada • The Globe and Mail podcasts • The National Post Podcast Centre • TED Talks ➤ Speaking in public (even if English is your second official language) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toastmasters International • Bilingual Ottawa Toastmasters (FR/EN) Meetup ➤ Virtual book club in English <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian bookclubs • CBC – Reading Lists ➤ English Listening Lesson Library Online (Database of short audios in English) ➤ News in Levels - World News for Students of English
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Tips for maintaining your skills

1. Set **realistic goals** and reassess them as necessary.
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - How will you increase your chances of success?
2. **Take every opportunity** to speak your second official language.
 - Tell your colleagues or friends that you want to maintain or improve your language skills and ask them to help you. You could even propose a buddy arrangement (pairing or mentoring).
3. **Take the initiative** to speak and write in your second official language.
 - Speak your second official language regularly with your colleagues.
4. **Incorporate** your practice and learning into the very heart of your work.
 - Organize your meetings in both official languages.
 - Write emails in your second official language.
 - Try to translate your messages.
5. Look for **interesting and varied ways** to practice and learn.
 - Movies, TV series, podcasts, apps, YouTube® videos, online newspapers, online courses, Netflix® and more.

- Be open to **the culture** of people who speak your other official language. Ask them about cultural activities in your area.
6. Create a list of **relevant favourites**.
 - Antidote, Termium, Linguee, DeepL, Vitrine linguistique de l'OQLF, Tradoolt, etc.
 7. **Explore new educational technologies** like AI and choose the ones that best meet your needs. There are plenty of tools to discover.
 8. Manage your time **efficiently**.
 - Set up a schedule of weekly activities in your second official or bilingual language to force you to practise.
 - Don't get discouraged. A little every day is better than nothing at all.
 9. Take **risks** and stay **positive**.
 - If you stay in your comfort zone, you won't learn new things.
 - Mistakes are part of the learning process. Become aware of them and turn them into a learning objective.
 10. Practise **active listening**.
 - Improve your skills by listening carefully to how other people talk.
 - Be proactive and curious. Take note of what you hear and ask questions if you don't understand.
 11. Focus your efforts on improving **one thing** at a time.
 - Practise what you learn as you go.
 12. Ask a colleague you're **comfortable with** to correct you.

Activities to take you further

- **From B to C**
 - **Formal language training (tools for managers)**
 - Formal language training [in the National Capital Region](#) (NCR)
 - Formal [regional](#) language training (outside NCR)
 - **Informal self-study language training**
 - [Level C learning path for second official language training \(self-directed\)](#)