

# How Can Language Teachers Improve Their Own Language Abilities Independently? 9 Practical, Research-Supported Suggestions for Finding Comprehensible Input

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1. Read for pleasure. Teachers who implement Free Voluntary Reading programs in their classrooms create time for themselves to model pleasure reading during class. They also give themselves the opportunity to improve their own vocabulary and language acquisition, which is crucial to maintaining our own level of language ability. Do not use that time to tackle difficult reading material. Students need to see that reading can be fun. If you are not currently teaching, set aside a dedicated time every day for pleasure reading. If you're on vacation, even consider very easy reading so you're more likely to look forward to it. Consider quantity over quality.
2. Listen to audio books in the language you teach. Audio books of book with which you are familiar in your first language or on a topic of great interest to you are the best. Listen to the same chapters multiple times at the beginning until listening feels easy and comprehensible.
3. Listen to music in the language you teach.
4. Watch movies with audio in the language you teach and subtitles in the language you teach.
5. Watch TV, particularly documentaries, histories and news programs to expand your vocabulary into subject matter you don't usually teach.
6. Be brave. Seek out opportunities in your community to spend time with native speakers on your own time. If you teach Spanish, go learn to dance. There are meet-up groups in many languages that gather just to chat in a different language.
7. Can't travel this year? Consider hosting a traveller from Couchsurfing.org who speaks the language you teach.
8. If you decide to take a local class, seek out classes on content taught in the language rather than language classes. (i.e. The History of the Mexican Revolution or French cooking).
9. Look for opportunities to create your own immersion environment. Are you going wine tasting? Ask if you can have a French-speaking guide and conduct the entire tasting in French. Were you thinking of working with a personal trainer? Look for one whose first language is German and refuse to speak anything else. Your vocabulary will expand and your comprehension will increase.

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