

Last one in the skills series for now, tips on how to improve your writing.

There are so many different types of writing, that it's impossible to advise for each type in one post.

These tips are very general. They give you ways to practise your writing, but if you need better academic writing skills, preparation for that will also be important.

1 - Read read read

This is a great way to improve your writing, because when you read, you see hundreds of examples of perfect sentences.

It is like somebody showing you exactly how to write.

Find something you are interested in, a novel, newspaper, magazine, etc, and just read it.

Do this regularly.

You can make notes if you want, but even just reading is very effective.

2 - Keep an English diary / blog

The advantage of this, is that it means you write every day, or on most days.

Regular practice is good, and if you write what you feel, what you experienced, what you saw, etc, you will always have something to say.

3 - Write stories

This is what I do in French now I am re-learning it. I just get an idea, and write a story about it. I don't think any of them are amazing, but in three weeks I have almost reached the level I was at when I was 16, after not using French for 25 years.

4 - Write everything in English

Shopping lists, memos, tips for learning English, even notes to help you study your other subjects - if you are a student.

If you are not, some of the things you write at work every day, try doing them in English.

You could even start texting your friends in English, if they know it.

Often the little things help so much.

5 - Copy

Get some English texts, book, magazine, whatever. But not too difficult.

Copy some of the text and study it.

Highlight sentences that contain English that you would like to learn, or use better.

6 - Translate things

Short texts are better because you can see the finished product more often. But you can translate things like newspaper articles or magazine features into English. Even if you make mistakes, you are practising your writing.

7 - Edit

Write something in your own language and translate it into English online, maybe Google translate.

IMPORTANT! Remember your English level if you do this. Don't write things that you won't understand in English.

The translation may be OK, but probably not perfect. So edit it, rewrite some of the sentences if necessary.

8 - Penfriend

This idea went out of fashion when I was at school, but I don't understand why, not for language students.

Regular correspondence in English will give you some really good practice.

9 - Time yourself

Set yourself a time limit and try to write a good text inside that limit. Make it hard.

Then, when the time is up, re-read and edit your work.

You could also give yourself a word limit. And you could also include all the new words you learned that week.

10 - Reviews

When you go to a film, play, sporting event etc, eat in a restaurant or read a book, write a review.

Keep it short, maybe under 200 words.

11 - Put sentences in order

This can be annoying, as it takes time, but I used it with Italian, and I was pleased with the results.

Copy type a page from a book, start each sentence on a new line.

Print it and cut the sentences up, so each is on a separate strip of paper.

Put the sentences back in order.

Check to see how you did, and don't worry if you got some wrong.

12 - Change the style

Best for higher level students.

Re-write a text so the meaning is the same, but the style is different.

For example, get a copy of a formal letter, and re-write it so it is informal. Or vice versa.

Maybe re-write a page from a story with different emotions, make it happier, sadder, angrier etc

Sure, it's hard work, I know, but challenge yourself Смайлик «grin»

And if you don't want to do any of these, no problem, but Tip 1 above should be something you try to do as much as you can.