

SIMON & SCHUSTER'S

PIMSLEUR[®]

USER'S GUIDE

PIMSLEUR®

LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

You have just purchased the most effective language program ever developed. As you probably know, learning a new language can be frustrating. Your first experience with a foreign language may have been in school. If the classes seemed difficult, or if your grades were poor, you probably believed you had no aptitude for languages. Even if you did well, you may have been surprised later to discover that what you learned was of little or no use when you tried to converse with native speakers.

Perhaps you waited until later in life and tried adult education classes, language schools, or home training programs. There too you may have found the information hard to retain, the lessons tedious, and your progress slow. Many language students give up early in these programs, convinced they lack the natural ability to understand and use what they read and hear.

The truth is that anyone can acquire a foreign language—with the right teaching system. With the Pimsleur® Method, you will benefit from the years of research and development that have helped create the world's most effective method for teaching foreign languages. The Pimsleur® Language Programs, developed by Dr. Paul Pimsleur, fill an urgent need for self-instructional materials in many languages.

HOW TO USE THE PROGRAM

To get the full benefit of each lesson, choose a quiet place where you can practice without interruption and a time of day when your mind is most alert and your body least fatigued.

The length of each lesson, just under 30 minutes, is that recommended by teaching specialists for a concentrated learning task. Once you've started the program, simply follow the tutor's instructions. The most important instruction is to respond aloud when the tutor tells you to do so. There will be a pause after this instruction, giving you time to reply. It is essential to your progress that you speak out in a normal conversational voice when asked to respond. Your active participation in thinking and speaking is required for your success in mastering this course.

The simple test for mastery is whether you are able to respond quickly and accurately when your tutor asks a question. If you are responding correctly about eighty percent of the time, then you're ready to proceed to the next lesson. It is important to keep moving forward, and also not to set unreasonable standards of perfection that will keep you from progressing, which is why we recommend using the eighty percent figure as a guide.

You will notice that each lesson contains both new and familiar material, and just when you may be worrying about forgetting something, you will conveniently be reminded of it. Another helpful feature of the Pimsleur® Language Program is its rate of "saturation." You will be responding many times in the half-hour. This saturation enables you to make substantial progress within a short period of time.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS

Complete the lesson units in strict consecutive order (don't skip around), doing no more than one lesson per day, although the lesson unit for the day may be repeated more than once. Daily contact with the language is critical to successful learning.

Listen carefully to each lesson unit. Always follow the directions of the instructor.

Speak **out loud** when directed by the tutor and answer questions within the pauses provided. It is not enough to just silently “think” of the answer to the question asked. You need to speak the answer out loud to set up a “circuit” of the language you are learning to speak so that it is heard and identified through your ears, to help to establish the “sounds” of the target language. Do this prior to hearing the confirmation, which is provided as reinforcement, as well as additional speech training.

Do all required activities according to the instructions, without reference to any outside persons, book, or course.

Do not have a paper and pen nearby during the lessons, and do not refer to dictionaries or other books. The Pimsleur® Method works with the language-learning portion of your brain, requiring language to be processed in its spoken form. Not only will you interrupt the learning process if you attempt to write the words that you hear, but you will also begin to speak the target language with an American accent. This is because the “sounds” represented by the American letters are different from the same-looking letters from the foreign language.

DR. PAUL PIMSLEUR AND HIS UNIQUE METHOD

Dr. Paul Pimsleur devoted his life to language teaching and testing and was one of the world's leading experts in applied linguistics. He was fluent in French, good in German, and had a working knowledge of Italian, Russian, Modern Greek, and Mandarin Chinese. After obtaining his Ph.D. in French and a Masters in Psychology from Columbia University, he taught French Phonetics and Linguistics at UCLA. He later became Professor of Romance Languages and Language Education, and Director of The Listening Center (a state-wide language lab) at Ohio State University; Professor of Education and Romance Languages at the State University of New York at Albany; and a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Heidelberg. He did research on the psychology of language learning and in 1969 was Section Head of Psychology of Second Language Learning at the International Congress of Applied Linguistics.

Dr. Pimsleur was a member of the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), American Educational Research Association (AERA), Modern Language Association (MLA), and a founding member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

His many books and articles revolutionized theories of language learning and teaching. After years of experience and research, Dr. Pimsleur developed a new method (The Pimsleur Method) that is based on two key principles: the Principle of Anticipation and a scientific principle of memory training that he called "Graduated Interval Recall." This Method has been applied to the many levels and languages of the "Pimsleur Programs."

GRADUATED INTERVAL RECALL

Graduated Interval Recall is a complex name for a very simple theory about memory. No aspect of learning a foreign language is more important than memory, yet before Dr. Pimsleur, no one had explored more effective ways for building language memory.

In his research, Dr. Pimsleur discovered how long students remembered new information and at what intervals they needed to be reminded of it. If reminded too soon or too late, they failed to retain the information. This discovery enabled him to create a schedule of exactly when and how the information should be reintroduced.

Suppose you have learned a new word. You tell yourself to remember it. However, after five minutes you're unable to recall it. If you'd been reminded of it after five seconds, you probably would have remembered it for maybe a minute, at which time you would have needed another reminder. Each time you are reminded, you remember the word longer than you did the time before. The intervals between reminders become longer and longer, until you eventually remember the word without being reminded at all.

This program is carefully designed to remind you of new information at the exact intervals where maximum retention takes place. Each time your memory begins to fade, you will be asked to recall the word.

PRINCIPLE OF ANTICIPATION

The Principle of Anticipation requires you to “anticipate” a correct answer. Practically, what this means is that you must retrieve the answer from what you have learned earlier in the course. It works by posing a question, asking you to provide a new sentence, using information you’ve learned previously and putting it into a new combination. This provides novelty and excitement which accelerates learning.

A possible scenario:

Speaker’s cue: “Are you going to the movies today?” (PAUSE)
Drawing on information given previously, you respond (*in the target language*):

“No, I’m going tomorrow.”

The instructor will then confirm your answer:

“No, I’m going tomorrow.”

The Narrator then may cue:

“Is your sister going to Europe this year?” (PAUSE)

Response: “No, she went last year.”

Before Dr. Pimsleur created his teaching method, language courses were based on the principle of “mindless-repetition.” Teachers drummed words into the students’ minds over and over, as if there were grooves in the mind that could be worn deeper with repetition. Neurophysiologists tell us however, that on the contrary, simple and unchallenging repetition has a hypnotic, even dulling effect on the learning process. Eventually, the words being repeated will lose their meaning. Dr. Pimsleur discovered that learning accelerates when there is an “input/output” system of interaction, in which students receive information and then are asked to retrieve and use it.

CORE VOCABULARY

While “Graduated Interval Recall” and the “Principle of Anticipation” are the foundation of the Pimsleur® Method, there are other aspects that contribute to its uniqueness and effectiveness. One involves vocabulary. We have all been intimidated, when approaching a new language, by the sheer immensity of the number of new words we must learn. But extensive research has shown that we actually need a comparatively limited number of words to be able to communicate effectively in any language.

Language can be divided into two distinct categories: grammatical structures (function words) and concrete vocabulary (content words). By focusing on the former category and enabling the student to comprehend and employ the structure of the new language, Dr. Pimsleur found that language learners were able to more readily put new knowledge to use. There are few content words that must be known and used every day. The essential “core” of a language involves function words, which tend to relate to human activities.

This course is designed to teach you to understand and to speak the essential elements of your new language in a relatively short time. During each half-hour lesson, you will actually converse with two native speakers, using the level of language spoken by educated citizens in their everyday business and social life. The program’s unique method of presenting dialogue in-situation relieves you of the most common learning problem, the problem of meaning.

ORGANIC LEARNING

The Pimsleur® Method centers on teaching functional mastery in understanding and speaking a language, in the most effective and efficient way possible. You will be working on your vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation in an integrated manner, as you are learning specific phrases that have practical use in everyday activities.

There are several thousand languages in the world. Because fewer than five hundred of these languages have developed formal systems of writing, linguistic specialists accept that language is primarily speech. For this reason, it is also accepted that the human brain acquires language as speech. Therefore, when Dr. Pimsleur created his language programs, he began teaching with recorded materials, which enabled the learners to acquire the sounds, the rhythm, and the intonation of the target language. The learners did this more rapidly, more accurately, and with great enthusiasm because they found themselves capable of almost instant beginning communication skills.

Dr. Pimsleur called this “organic learning” because it involves learning on several fronts at the same time. His system enables the learner to acquire grammatical usage, vocabulary, and the “sounds” of the language in an integrated, exciting way. In short, the learner gains the language as a living, expressive form of human culture.

COURSE CONTENT

When you have mastered a Pimsleur® Language Program, you will have a highly-practical, every-day vocabulary at your command. These basic words, phrases, and sentences have been carefully selected to be the most useful in everyday situations when you visit a foreign country. You will be able to handle social encounters graciously, converse with native speakers in travel situations, and use transportation systems with confidence. You'll be able to ask directions and to navigate your own way around the cities and countryside.

The language skills you learn will enable you to participate in casual conversations, express facts, give instructions, and describe current, past, and future activities. You will be able to deal with everyday survival topics and courtesy requirements. You will be intelligible to native speakers of the language—even to those who are not used to dealing with foreigners. What is equally important, you will know how to ask the kinds of questions that will further expand your knowledge of and facility with the language, because you will have been trained by the Pimsleur® open-ended questioning technique.

The Pimsleur® Method becomes a springboard for further learning and growth to take place—the ultimate purpose of any real educational system. This desire to learn will be apparent to the people with whom you speak. It will indicate sincere interest in and respect for their culture.

A NOTE ON REGIONAL LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

In any large country, and even in many smaller countries, regional differences in language are common. In the United States, for example, a person from Maine can sound very different than someone from Texas. Pronunciations (“accents”) vary, and there are also minor differences in vocabulary. For example, what is called a “drinking fountain” in New York or Arizona is known as a “bubbler” in Wisconsin, and a “soft drink” in one part of America will be called a “soda” elsewhere. The differences in English are even more distinct between North Americans and Britons, or between Britons and Australians. But all are native speakers of English; all can communicate with spoken English, read the same newspapers, and watch the same television programs, essentially without difficulty.

Native speakers of a language can often tell where someone is from by listening to him or her speak. In addition to regional differences, there are social differences. Pimsleur® Language Programs use a standard “educated” speech, which will generally carry you throughout the country without difficulty.

For more information,
call 1-800-831-5497 or visit us at
www.pimsleur.com

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Pimsleur® Language Programs are available
in all of the commonly spoken languages.

Many other languages are also available. Refer to
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