

Today's webinar: Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

Whichever back-to-school scenario language learners are facing, they will almost certainly have fewer opportunities to engage in meaningful language use during class time, making it more important than ever for them to be effective independent learners. Yet simply setting independent learning activities is not enough and it is the teaching strategies that we use in-class to set up independent learning tasks that are key to facilitating learner independence.



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Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

Mark Arthur

August, 2020



macmillan
education

Independent Learning



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Independent Learning

Independent Learners:

- Self-evaluate.
- Organise.
- Set goals.
- Monitor.
- Rehearse and memorise.
- Seek assistance.



Image used under CC by [Guian Bolisay](#) on Flickr

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“Why independent learning is not a good way to become _____”

Kirschner & Hendrick, 2020

Image used under CC by [Guian Bolisay](#) on Flickr

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*“Why independent learning is not a good way to become **an independent learner.**”*

Kirschner & Hendrick, 2020

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Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence



Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

Key Purpose



Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

🔑 Purpose

🔑 Structure and Strategies



Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

🔑 Purpose

🔑 Structure and Strategies

🔑 Goal Setting



Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

🔑 Purpose

🔑 Structure and Strategies

🔑 Goal Setting

🔑 Reflection

Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

🔑 Purpose

🔑 Structure and Strategies

🔑 Goal Setting

🔑 Reflection

🔑 Decision Making

Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence



Out-of-Class Reading
and Listening

Deliberate Vocabulary
Learning



Out-of-Class Speaking
and Writing

Purpose



Image used under CC by Rabie Madaci on Unsplash

Purpose

We're going to **read** three news articles a week...

Purpose

We're going to **read** three news articles a week...

...**in order to** improve your grammar.

Purpose

We're going to **read** three news articles a week...

...**in order to** improve your grammar.

...**in order to** deepen your word knowledge.

Purpose

We're going to **read** three news articles a week...

...**in order to** improve your grammar.

...**in order to** deepen your word knowledge.

...**in order to** feel more comfortable reading real texts.

Purpose

We're going to use
vocabulary flashcards to
learn 20 words a week...

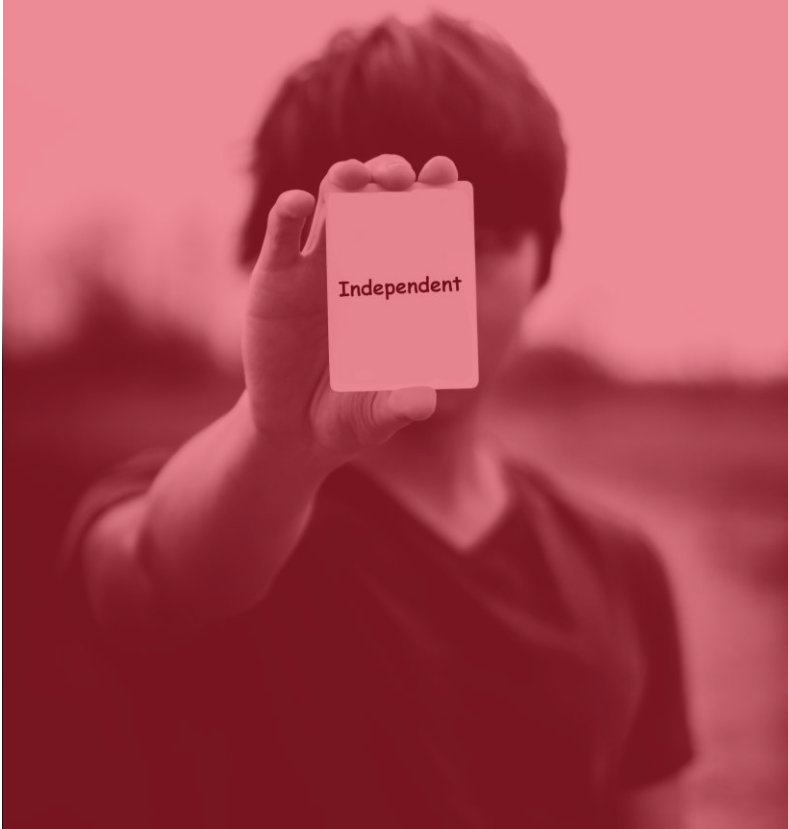
A person is holding a white flashcard with the word "Independent" written on it. The person is wearing a dark shirt and has dark hair. The background is a blurred outdoor scene. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

Independent

Purpose

We're going to use **vocabulary flashcards** to learn 20 words a week...

...**in order to** learn 500 words by the end of the year.

A person is holding a white flashcard in front of their face. The flashcard has the word "Independent" written on it. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a body of water and trees.

Independent

Structure and Strategies



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Structure and Strategies

5 Look at this writing task and answer the questions.

You see this announcement in your school's English-language magazine.

Articles wanted!

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT YOUR HOME?

Write an article telling us what you like best about your home.

What do you think makes a house a home?

The best articles will be published next month.

Write your **article**.

1 Tick two things you like best about your home or add your own ideas.

- our neighbourhood
- our garden
- my bedroom
- the things we have in the house
- the people I live with
- what I do at home
- _____

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

2 For each idea you have ticked or added in question 1, write the main reason why you like it.

Source: Optimse B1, Macmillan

Structure and Strategies

5 Look at this writing task and answer the questions.

You see this announcement in your school's English-language magazine.

Articles wanted!

Part	Purpose	Useful phrases	My notes
Paragraph 1	introduce the subject in an interesting way	<i>What do you think ...?</i> <i>Have you ever thought about/wondered /asked yourself ...?</i>	
Paragraph 2	make your first main point and give a reason	<i>The first thing that I like best about my home is ...</i>	
Paragraph 3	make your second main point and give a reason	<i>Another thing ...</i> <i>As well as that, ...</i> <i>You also need ...</i>	
Paragraph 4	briefly conclude the article	<i>I believe that what makes a house a home is ...</i>	

2 For each idea you have ticked or added in question 1, write the main reason why you like it.

Source: Optimse B1, Macmillan

Structure and Strategies

Reading Procedures

Reading is a receptive **skill**. But the fact that it is receptive does not mean that it is passive: reading is an active – even interactive – process. Readers bring their own questions to the text – based on their background knowledge – and they use these to interrogate the text, modifying their questions and coming up with new ones according to the answers they get. In order to do this, they draw on a range of knowledge bases. They need to be able to decode the letters, words and grammatical structures of the individual sentences – what is called **bottom-up processing**. But they also enlist **top-down processes**, such as drawing on **discourse** and schematic knowledge, as well as on immediate contextual information. Discourse knowledge is knowing how different text types – such as news reports, recipes or academic papers – are organized. Schematic knowledge is the reader's existing knowledge of the topic (→ **schema**). Reading involves an interaction between these different levels of knowledge, where knowledge at one level can compensate for lack of knowledge at another (→ **comprehension**). Research suggests, though, that relying on top-down knowledge is unreliable, and that fluent reading requires rapid and automatic decoding skills above all. But perhaps the most important predictor of fluent reading ability, both in the first and second language, is having an extensive vocabulary: the more words you know, the easier it is to read.

Readers also bring their own *purposes* to texts, and these in turn determine the way they go about reading a text. The two main purposes for reading are for *information* (such as when consulting a directory), and for *pleasure* (such as when reading a novel), although these purposes may overlap. Different ways of reading include:

- **skimming (skim-reading, reading for gist)**: Rapidly reading a text in order to get the *gist*, or the main ideas or sense of a text. For example, a reader might skim a film review in order to see if the reviewer liked the film or not.
- **scanning**: Reading a text in search of specific information, and ignoring everything else, such as when consulting a bus timetable for a particular time and destination.
- **detailed reading**: Reading a text in order to extract the maximum detail from it, such as when following the instructions for installing a household appliance.
- **reading aloud**: Such as when reading a prepared speech or lecture, or reading a story or newspaper article to another person.

A reader's purpose usually matches the writer's intentions for the text. Readers seldom read dictionaries from cover to cover, for example. Nor do they normally skim through a novel looking for names beginning with *Vron* ... In classrooms, however, texts are frequently used for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended. They are often used not so much as vehicles of information or of pleasure, but as 'linguistic objects'— that is, as contexts for the study of features of the language. A distinction needs to be made, therefore, between two types of classroom reading: reading as *skills development*, and reading as *language study*. There is no reason why the same text cannot be used for both purposes.

Another distinction that is often made is between **intensive reading** and **extensive reading**. The former applies to the way short texts are subject to close and detailed classroom study. Extensive reading, on the other hand, means the more leisurely reading of longer texts, primarily for pleasure, or in order to accumulate vocabulary, or simply to develop sound habits of reading. This is typically done outside class, using graded **readers**, authentic texts or literary texts (→ **literature**).

A third important distinction is between testing reading and teaching reading. Traditional reading tasks usually involve reading a text and then answering **comprehension questions** about it. This is the testing approach. A teaching approach, on the other hand, aims to help learners to become more effective readers by training them in the **sub-skills** of reading, and by teaching them **reading strategies**. Some of the sub-skills of reading are:

- decoding letters in order to recognize words
- understanding words and identifying their grammatical function
- recognizing grammar features, such as word endings, and ‘unpacking’ (or **parsing**) the syntax of sentences
- identifying the topic of the text, and recognizing topic changes
- identifying text type, text purpose and text organization, and identifying and understanding **discourse markers** and other cohesive devices (→ **cohesion**)
- distinguishing key information from less important information
- identifying and understanding the gist
- inferring the writer’s purpose, attitude, point of view, etc.
- following the development of an argument
- following the sequence of a narrative
- paraphrasing the text.

Activities designed to develop these sub-skills include following a text while hearing it being read aloud; underlining topic-related words; contrasting different text types; comparing different examples of the same text type and identifying generic features (→ **genre**); circling and categorizing discourse markers; identifying what the pronouns refer to (→ **reference**); predicting the direction the text will take at each discourse marker;

choosing the best summary of a text; putting a set of pictures in order; extracting key information on to a grid; writing a summary of the text, etc.

Strategy training involves training learners in ways of overcoming problems when they are reading. Some useful strategies include:

- using contextual and extra-linguistic information (such as pictures, layout and headlines) to make predictions regarding what the text is about
- brainstorming background (or schematic) knowledge in advance of reading
- skimming a text in advance of a more detailed reading
- keeping the purpose of the text in mind
- guessing the meaning of words from context
- **dictionary** use.

Thornbury, 2017

Structure and Strategies

Reading Procedures

The SQ3R Technique

- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite
- Review

Nuttall, 2005

Structure and Strategies

Reading Procedures

The SQ3R Technique

- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite
- Review

Nuttall, 2005

Create your own routine!

- Gist
- Purpose
- Organization
- Specific details
- Writer's attitude / opinions
- Source

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card in front of their face. The card has the word "Independent" written on it. The background is a solid blue color.

Independent

Image used under CC by Warren Wong on Unsplash

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word "Independent" written on it. The person's face is blurred, and the background is a soft-focus outdoor scene. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Independent

reventar

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word "Independent" written on it. The person is wearing a dark shirt and has dark hair. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

Independent

*burst*_(v)

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white rectangular sign in front of their face. The sign has the word "Independent" written on it in a black, sans-serif font. The person's face is obscured by the sign and the blue overlay. The background is a blurred outdoor scene.

Independent

Image used under CC by Warren Wong on Unsplash

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white rectangular sign in front of their face. The sign has the word "Independent" written on it in a simple, black, sans-serif font. The person's face is partially obscured by the sign, and the background is a blurred outdoor setting. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Independent

*de un
tirón*

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word "Independent" written on it. The person is wearing a blue shirt and has their hand raised towards the camera. The background is blurred.

Independent

in one go

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white rectangular sign in front of their face. The sign has the word "Independent" written on it in a black, sans-serif font. The person's face is obscured by the sign and the blue overlay. The background is a blurred outdoor scene.

Independent

Image used under CC by Warren Wong on Unsplash

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word 'Independent' written on it. The person's face is blurred, and the background is a soft-focus outdoor scene. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Independent

elenco

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word "Independent" written on it. The background is a blue-tinted image of a person's face and upper body.

Independent

*cast*_(n)

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white rectangular sign in front of their face. The sign has the word "Independent" written on it in a black, sans-serif font. The person's face is obscured by the sign. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a body of water. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Independent

Image used under CC by Warren Wong on Unsplash

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word "Independent" written on it. The person is wearing a blue shirt and has their hand raised towards the camera. The background is blurred.

Independent

aplazamiento

Structure and Strategies

A person is holding a white card with the word "Independent" written on it. The person's face is blurred, and the background is a soft-focus outdoor scene. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

Independent

*delay*_(n)

Goal Setting



Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash

Goal Setting

Why are you studying English?

I need English for my work.

Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash

Goal Setting

Why are you studying English?

I need English for my work.

What do you need to do in English at work?

I need to understand emails from my boss.

I need to understand technical engineering manuals.

Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash

Goal Setting



Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash

Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence / August 2020

Goal: I need to understand emails from my boss

*Action: Memorize 10 emails phrases from class
Do 3 extra reading activities this week*

ADVANCING
LEARNING

Goal Setting



Photo by Spencer Davis on Unsplash

Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence / August 2020

Goal: I need to understand emails from my boss

*Action: Memorize 10 emails phrases from class
Do 3 extra reading activities this week*

Goal: To score a B on the next English test

Actions: Review my English notes after every class and at weekends

Watch a series with English subtitles and English audio 3 times a week

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Goal Setting

Part one

1. Read each idea in the English Action Plan below and say:
 - which skills are being developed
 - how easy or difficult it is
2. Read the English Action Plan again. Which hobbies and interests does this student have?

This year I'm going to learn lots of English.

Every day I'm going to ...

- record myself describing the weather outdoors.
- learn one new word and write a sentence with it.
- listen to an English pop song and try to sing along.
- read the TV guide for the History channel to find the best programme.

Every week I'm going to ...

- write a recipe for a dish I like.
- read a food blog post and write down new words I learn.
- record myself singing a song by my favourite group.
- listen to a history podcast and write down 5 facts I remember.

Every month I'm going to ...

- watch a cooking video and repeat the instructions aloud.
- write an article about a famous person in history.
- listen to an interview with a musician and try to remember 3 facts.
- Find and read information on the internet about this month in history.

Source: teachingenglish.org.uk

**ADVANCING
LEARNING**

Goal Setting

Part one

1. Read each idea in the English Action Plan below and say:
 - which skills are being developed
 - how easy or difficult it is
2. Read the English Action Plan again. Which hobbies and interests does this student have?

Part two

Follow the steps to write your own English Action Plan.

1. Make a note of your own hobbies and interests.
2. Work with a partner and think of ideas for practising your English every day, every week and every month. Use the model as a guide.
3. Choose three or four ideas for every day, every week and every month. Make sure you have a balance of skills practice.
4. Write your English Action Plan and put it in a place where you will see it every day. Then stick to it!

Every month I'm going to ...

- watch a cooking video and repeat the instructions aloud.
- write an article about a famous person in history.
- listen to an interview with a musician and try to remember 3 facts.
- Find and read information on the internet about this month in history.

Source: teachingenglish.org.uk

**ADVANCING
LEARNING**

Reflection



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Reflection

8 Check Before you hand in your article, complete this checklist.

Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> I've started my article in an interesting way. | <input type="radio"/> I've answered all parts of the exam question. |
| <input type="radio"/> I've used the appropriate style for the topic and the reader. | <input type="radio"/> I've given reasons to explain my main ideas. |
| <input type="radio"/> I've written about 100 words. | <input type="radio"/> I've checked my spelling, grammar and punctuation. |

Source: Optimse B1, Macmillan



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Reflection

8 Check Before you hand in your article, complete this checklist.

Checklist

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> I've started my article in an interesting way. | <input type="radio"/> I've answered all parts of the exam question. |
| <input type="radio"/> I've used the appropriate style for the topic and the reader. | <input type="radio"/> I've given reasons to explain my main ideas. |
| <input type="radio"/> I've written about 100 words. | <input type="radio"/> I've checked my spelling, grammar and punctuation. |

Source: Optimse B1, Macmillan



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

I can evaluate my own language competencies.	1 I can do this	2 I want to learn this	3 This isn't important for me
I can analyse my own needs.	1 I can do this	2 I want to learn this	3 This isn't important for me
I can set myself goals.	1 I can do this	2 I want to learn this	3 This isn't important for me
I can plan a time and place for my learning.	1 I can do this	2 I want to learn this	3 This isn't important for me

Tassinari, 2015

**ADVANCING
LEARNING**

Reflection



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Learning Log

- Today I learned....
- I was surprised by...
- The most useful thing I will take from this lesson is...
- I was interested in....
- What I liked most about this lesson was....
- One thing I am not sure about us...
- The main thing I want to find out more about is...
- After this lesson, I feel....
- I might have gotten more from this lesson....

William, 2011

Reflection

Self-Transcription



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Reflection

Self-Transcription

Ok, so what would I pack on vacation? Would be, first of all, my backpack and my skateboard. Then, I would choose, probably, my camera, and all the lens and all the things that I need to take some pictures. What else? The things from, for my dog. Um... and what else? I guess some clothe...like t-shirt and stuff...uh what else? Some beanies. And, I think just that, probably. Yeah.

Decision Making



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Self-Assessment Sheet Part 1

1. The skills which I have chosen to work on for this assignment (my priorities):
2. Things I think I have done well in this assignment and why:
3. Things which I think I had difficulty with in this assignment and why:
4. Other comments/questions:

Based on Murphy, 2015

**ADVANCING
LEARNING**

Decision Making



Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels

Self-Assessment Sheet

Part 2

1. Summary of my tutor's comments on this assignment:

Speaking:
Good points:

Things to work on:

Writing:
Good points:

Things to work on:

2. Skills I am now going to try and improve on:
e.g. Speaking:

e.g. Writing:

3. I intend to improve in these areas by doing the following:

Murphy, 2015

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Decision Making

WRITING

A PLAN Imagine you have bought one of the products below. Take notes on the following questions.



a pair of running sneakers



a fitness game for
a game console



a winter sports jacket



a mountain bike

- 1 What positive points does the product have?
- 2 What negative points does the product have?

B WRITE Write a 100-word review of the product for a shopping website. Explain why you bought it and what positive and negative points it has. Then make a recommendation.

C REVIEW Work in groups. Read you classmates' reviews. Which are the best and worst products?

Source: American Language Hub 2, Macmillan

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Decision Making

A person is holding a white card with the word 'Independent' written on it. The card is held up in front of their face, which is partially obscured. The background is a warm, yellowish-orange color.

Independent

independent DEFINITIONS AND SYNONYMS ★★★

ADJECTIVE UK  /ˌɪndɪˈpendənt/

autonomy DEFINITIONS AND SYNONYMS ★

NOUN UNCOUNTABLE UK  /ɔːˈtɒnəmi/

Macmillan Dictionary: <https://www.macmillandictionary.com>

Decision Making

FREQ RANGE	1-500	501-3000	> 3000
95 WORDS	54 %	12 %	19 %

CLICK ON ANY WORD BELOW FOR A FULL WORD SKETCH

Independent

To many, the **phrase** student **self-assessment** **conjuges** up **images** of students giving themselves **grades** and **diplomas**, and the **reaction** is often **predictable**, including **phrases** like " **lunatics** running the **asylum** " or " fox **guarding** the **henhouse**. " There is, in fact, **evidence** that students can **assess** themselves **quite accurately** for **summative purposes**.. .but only when the **stakes** are low. Whether or not students can **assess** themselves **accurately** for **summative purposes** is **completely irrelevant** to the **topic** of this **chapter**, which is whether students can **develop** **sufficient insights** into their own learning to **improve** it

Source: <https://www.english-corpora.org/coca/>

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Five Keys to Developing Learner Independence

🔑 Purpose

🔑 Structure and Strategies

🔑 Goal setting

🔑 Reflection

🔑 Decision Making

Further Reading and Resources

Bibliography

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Apps / Websites

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English Corpora Website: <https://www.english-corpora.org/>

Macmillan Dictionary: <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

Teaching English: <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/>

Thank you

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