

Unit 11 Knowledge and learning

11a Conserving languages

Reading enduring voices

- 1 Read a description of the work of Dr. K. David Harrison and the Enduring Voices team at National Geographic.

Dr. K. David Harrison believes that language diversity is just as important as biodiversity. He's part of a National Geographic project called "Enduring Voices," whose aim is to document languages which are little known and in danger of becoming extinct. It's estimated that over half the world's 7,000 languages will disappear by 2050 and so the race is on to trace and record these languages, and also to help keep them alive.

Diversity does not depend on the size of a territory or country. In Bolivia, which only has a population of twelve million, there are 37 different languages, belonging to eighteen language families. This is the same number as the whole of Europe.

Dr. Harrison seeks out these language "hotspots"—places where there is a great diversity of languages spoken and where some are in danger. Studies in the Oklahoma region of the US succeeded in discovering 26 languages, one of which, Yuchi, had as few as seven speakers. By highlighting this fact, researchers were able to help the community to keep this dying language alive.

- 2 Complete the sentences from the description using the correct form of these verbs.

document record seek out trace

- 1 He is part of a National Geographic project called Enduring Voices, whose aim is to _____ languages which are little known.
- 2 The race is on to _____ and _____ these languages.
- 3 Dr. Harrison _____ these language hotspots.

Grammar *could, was able to, manage to, and succeed in*

- 3 Complete the sentences about learning a language using *could, was/were able to, manage to, or succeed in* and the verb in brackets. Sometimes more than one answer is possible.

- 1 The video I got was in Turkish, but I _____ (find) English subtitles on the main menu.
- 2 My sister is an amazing linguist: she _____ (speak) four languages fluently by the time she was twelve.
- 3 Esperanto was invented to be a world language, but supporters of it _____ (never / convince) enough people to use it.
- 4 When I first moved to New York, I _____ (not / understand) native speakers because they seemed to mumble when they spoke.
- 5 I had a friend who was brought up speaking three different languages, but I was never sure if he _____ (express) himself clearly in any of them!
- 6 I spent eight years learning Italian, but when I tried to use it a couple of years ago, I found that I _____ (remember) the grammar but not the vocabulary.

Vocabulary learning

- 4 Match the expressions (1–8) with the correct definition (a–h).

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 pick up | a become involved in |
| 2 take in | b not know about |
| 3 learn by trial and error | c learn as you go along |
| 4 inspire | d understand simply |
| 5 have a basic grasp of | e know about |
| 6 engage with | f absorb |
| 7 be ignorant | g motivate |
| 8 be aware of | h learn by making mistakes |

- 5 Complete the sentences using a verb or expression from Exercise 3.

- 1 Don't worry about explaining. I'm sure I'll _____ it _____.
- 2 She's a great teacher. She really knows how to _____ her students.

11b Memory loss

Reading memory loss

1 Read about two types of memory loss.

1 Prosopamnesia

Prosopamnesia is an inability to remember faces. It is something that many people have in a mild form, but in severe cases sufferers can forget the faces of even close friends or associates. People can be born with this syndrome or it can be acquired during their lives.

Philippa's story: "I'm terrible at remembering faces. I recall being at a conference at UC Berkeley in California and another academic came up and started chatting to me. I would have asked his name, but knowing my inability to remember faces I didn't in case he was someone I was supposed to know. Anyway, it turned out that we had a friend and colleague in common. 'Oh yes, I know William Child,' I said. 'We collaborated on a research project last year. He came to dinner at my house many times. How do you know him?' 'I am William Child,' the man replied."

2 Source amnesia

Also called "memory distrust syndrome," source amnesia occurs when a person is unable to recall the context in which they learned about something. Subconsciously, they then attribute the fact to some other, usually reliable, source. This can happen when the real source is not reliable and the person very much wants to believe that the fact is true.

Jon's story: "I work as a lawyer, and in my line of work I often come across people who have persuaded themselves of a version of events that may not be true. I had a witness who was going to give evidence in court that her neighbor had thrown a brick at her car. She clearly believed that this had happened, and was determined that her neighbor wasn't going to get away with it. But it turned out that it was not her own memory of events, but what another neighbor had told her."

Grammar future in the past

2 There are four examples of the "future in the past" forms in the text. Underline the examples. Which of the other future in the past forms could be used in each case?

was/were about to do was/were going to
was supposed to would do would have done

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 _____

3 Complete the sentences using a future in the past form. Sometimes more than one form is possible.

- 1 "I'm so sorry. I _____ (write) you a letter, but I lost your address."
- 2 "I promised her I _____ (speak) to my boss about finding her a job, but I forgot."
- 3 "I _____ (take) my driving test sooner, but I didn't feel ready."
- 4 "That's funny. I _____ (just / ask) you exactly the same question."

11c Intelligent animals

Reading

- 1 Match the name of the animal with the correct picture.

Bonobo ape
crow

border collie
dolphin



1 _____



2 _____



3 _____



4 _____

- 2 Read a description of four intelligent animals. Write the number of the description (1–4) next to the intelligent behavior that this type of animal is known for.

- 1 Meg is a border collie, a smart breed of dog used by farmers because they understand instructions well and they like to be helpful. Their usual job is to round up and direct sheep. You can show Meg a picture of a toy and tell her its name (like a duck or a frisbee), then ask her to go and find it in a room full of toys. Once she has found it once and learned the name, all you have to do the next time is to ask her to fetch the the duck or the frisbee from the room and she will go and find it.
- 2 Betty is a New Caledonian crow. These animals are pretty inventive tool makers. In the wild, they use sticks, for example, to get insects out of trees. But what they found in the lab was that these birds were able to make tools from materials that they had never used before. Experimenters placed a piece of meat in a little basket and put it in a tube. Betty looked at the problem, then found a straight piece of wire, bent it into the shape of a hook using her beak and lifted the basket from the tube.
- 3 Maya is a dolphin. I think most people know that dolphins have incredible imitative abilities. They can see an action performed and then repeat it when ordered to. They also seem to understand spoken directions from humans very well. So

you can get two of them to leap out of the water and turn a somersault at the same time. But in fact they do these kinds of synchronized tricks in the wild anyway, because they're naturally playful creatures, but no one really understands how they communicate with each other to get the timing so perfect.

- 4 Kanzi is a Bonobo ape who has been taught sign language so that he can communicate with humans. One anecdote about his intelligence is that on a walk in the woods, Kanzi indicated that he wanted marshmallows and a fire. He was given the marshmallows and some matches. He found some twigs, broke them into pieces, built a fire, lit it with the matches, and then, most amazingly, toasted the marshmallows on a stick over the fire. Bonobos are known for being expressive and good communicators, but even experts who study them were surprised by this behavior.
- a They are good at copying what they see.
 - b They are good at communicating.
 - c They like to follow instructions.
 - d They make implements to get different jobs done.

- 3 Match the words from the descriptions with the adjectives below (1–4).

inventive smart expressive playful

- 1 intelligent _____
- 2 creative _____
- 3 fun-loving _____
- 4 communicative _____

Word focus learn

- 4 Complete the sentences using expressions with *learn*.
- 1 You have to learn to w_____ before you can run.
 - 2 It's never too l_____ to learn.
 - 3 In life, you have to learn from your m_____.
 - 4 I learned a few t_____ of the trade.
 - 5 Never again. I've learned my l_____.
 - 6 Just learn to l_____ with it!
 - 7 I learned the hard w_____.
 - 8 I've learned the whole poem by h_____.

11d Ask the teacher

Real life getting clarification

1 Complete these phrases with the correct verb.

- 1 What do you _____ by "difficult"?
- 2 Can you _____ up a little? I can't hear you.
- 3 Can you _____ what the test at the end of the course covers?
- 4 I'm sorry. I _____ not really with you.
- 5 Are you _____ that learning the historical dates isn't important?
- 6 Could you _____ me an example of an important historian of the last century?
- 7 There's a lot of information to _____ in.
- 8 I didn't _____ that last word. Can you repeat it?

2 Read a conversation between a student and a teacher. Answer the questions.

Student: Hi, have you got a minute? I just wanted to ask a bit more about what you covered in class.

Teacher: Sure, how can I help?

Student: Well, I don't really have the same background knowledge as some of the other students.

Teacher: Don't worry. I think a lot of people find it difficult at first. Things will become clearer.

Student: Well, can you explain what the course is going to be about, because I thought it was going to be about Roman history mainly.

Teacher: Well, it's a mixture of Greek, mainly Hellenistic, and Roman history.

Student: Sorry, I didn't catch that word. Helle-something?

Teacher: Hellenistic. Alexander the Great and so on.

Student: Oh, yeah... OK. And are you saying that no previous knowledge of ancient history is needed?

Teacher: Well, a little understanding of the geography of the Eastern Mediterranean is helpful, and if you've heard or read some Greek myths and legends, it helps too.

Student: Sorry, I'm not really with you. You mean stories like the Trojan War and so on?

Teacher: Exactly.

Student: OK, well could you give me an example of a book I could read now, outside class?

Teacher: Um, you could have a look at some texts by Herodotus. He was a historian of the 5th century BC and his histories read more like good adventure stories!

Student: Did you say Herodotus?

Teacher: That's right, H-E-R-O-D-O-T-U-S.

Student: OK, thanks. I'll do that.

- 1 What is the subject?

- 2 What is the student worried about?

- 3 What does the teacher recommend?

3 Grammar extra verbs with indirect objects

► VERBS WITH INDIRECT OBJECTS

Some verbs, e.g., *tell* and *show*, can be followed by an indirect personal object. Other verbs, e.g., *say* and *explain*, don't always need an indirect personal object. If you use an indirect personal object with these verbs, you must put *to* before the object.

He told me about the history course.

I showed him a copy of the lecture notes.

They explained (to me) that I could find the reading list online.

Look at the sentences below and write the pronoun *me* where necessary.

- 1 Can you tell _____ how many hours of study we're expected to do each week?
- 2 Do you recommend _____ that I should read Stephen Hawking's book?
- 3 She said _____ that I could get most of the books from the library.
- 4 She also explained _____ that the library was open until 10 p.m.
- 5 Can you show _____ how that works?
- 6 He taught _____ that I didn't always need to write such long essays.

11e A letter to a college

Writing an email about a misunderstanding

1 Match the two parts of the sentences about a misunderstanding over an application for a course. What seems to be the problem according to the writer?

- 1 The website said the deadline for applications was August 20.
 - 2 Despite the fact that my application arrived in time,
 - 3 I am not someone who does things at the last minute.
 - 4 While I appreciate that you have a lot of applicants,
 - 5 Whereas most colleges seem to select applicants on the merits of their application,
- a you choose people on a "first come, first served" basis.
 - b I cannot understand why you have chosen to ignore those people who applied after July.
 - c In fact, I sent in my application at the end of July.
 - d I am always careful to meet deadlines.
 - e I was told that I had missed the deadline.

2 Writing skill linking contrasting ideas

Rewrite these sentences from the reply to the applicant's letter using the words given.

- 1 We sympathize with your situation, but it is too late to do anything about it now. (while)
.....
.....
- 2 Despite the fact that you sent your form in before the deadline, we had already received too many applications. (although)
.....
.....
- 3 You say in your letter that we have no right to do this, but the college has the right to close the application process early. (in actual fact)
.....
.....
- 4 Most colleges would keep your application fee, but we are refunding it to you. (whereas)
.....
.....

3 Look at the notes and write a letter to a college. Include the following points.

- a Reason for writing: you can't attend the accounting class this semester.
- b Misunderstanding: you thought it was an evening class, but it's during the day.
- c Effort on your part: your company would like to give you time off, but they can't.
- d Apology: probably your mistake, but these things happen.
- e Action required: want the college to refund the money paid for the class.

Dear Sir / Madam:

a

b

c

d

e

I look forward to

Sincerely,

Wordbuilding idiomatic expressions

1 Read the story. What do the idiomatic expressions in bold (1–6) mean? Match the idiomatic expressions with the definitions (a–f).

I don't know when ¹ **it first dawned on me** that it would be a good idea to grow my own vegetables. I know ² **it struck me** some time ago that vegetables in the grocery store were getting very expensive. ³ **It occurred to me** that if more people grew their own, we wouldn't have to import so many. I ⁴ **didn't have a clue** about growing plants, but then I read a fantastic book written by woman called Joy Larkcom. The book really ⁵ **opened my eyes**. That was six years ago and it has become more than a hobby. ⁶ **It never crossed my mind** that I would become an expert, but now a lot of neighbors come and ask me for my advice.

- a I had a strong impression _____
- b helped me to see the truth _____
- c was ignorant _____
- d I realized _____
- e I had the idea _____
- f I didn't ever think _____

Learning skills techniques for memorizing

2 People remember things in different ways. Some remember better by hearing (auditory learners), some by seeing (visual learners), and some by doing or by action (kinesthetic learners). It is important to know how you remember things. What do you remember of the following items in Unit 11?

- 1 Maria Fadiman's work on conservation of plants. _____
- 2 How *could* is different from *managed to*. _____
- 3 The intelligence of Alex, the gray parrot. _____
- 4 Useful phrases for checking understanding. _____
- 5 Idiomatic expressions containing the word *learn*. _____

- 3 How did you remember the information? Was it through something:
 - a you heard? b you saw? c you did?
- 4 Look at these tips for memorizing. Check (✓) the one(s) you feel suit you best.

- a **Auditory:** Record five words that you need to learn, putting each into a sentence. Then listen to them again last thing at night.
- b **Visual:** Draw a picture of the words that you need to learn. Look at the pictures the following day and see if you can remember the words.
- c **Kinesthetic:** Work with another student and simulate a situation that illustrates the meaning of the word. Or think of an action that would help you remember the word.

5 Try to memorize these words and expressions from Unit 11 using the tips in Exercise 4.

absorb grasp gut feeling learn your lesson
a misunderstanding

Check!

6 Complete the crossword.

Across

- 1 Maria Fadiman's stories help students to _____ with the subject (6)
- 5 a _____ memory remembers only what it wants (9)
- 7 another word for advice (8)
- 8 the opposite of your "internal" memory (8)
- 10 "Sorry I didn't _____ your name." (5)

Down

- 2 if you understand something in a simple way, you have "a basic _____" of it (5)
- 3 you can _____ *in doing* something (7)
- 4 a person who studies plants (8)
- 6 the opposite of knowing is being _____ (8)
- 8 one way of learning is by trial and _____ (5)
- 9 "It's never too _____ to learn."

1		2							
					3				
4									
		5					6		
7									
			8					9	
									10