

Teaching Methods Used

The course materials on ReadyRussian.org refer to and make use of a number of accelerated language learning techniques. These techniques are described briefly below.

Bibliographic Database

This is a formulaic conversation exercise. Students learn phrases such as “What is your name?” or “How many brothers and sisters do you have?” They then go and ask someone the question and write his answer in a notebook as part of a “biographical database”. During a later classroom exercise they turn the questions into statements and insert the answers received in order to tell others about their new acquaintance.

Dialog Practice

The instructor uses Echo Reading to teach students to pronounce the words of a dialog. He then acts out the dialog with one student. When the students become sufficiently proficient, he has then act it out together. Participants switch roles so that each learns all the parts.

Echo Reading

Students who know how to sound out words but lack fluency improve their reading by imitating an instructor’s pronunciation and intonation. The instructor slowly reads a word or two out loud while the students follow closely in the printed text. At his signal they read it out loud as he did. As the students become more fluent the instructor quickens the pace and reads longer segments of the text.

Educational Exercise

Students perform rote memorization tasks while engaging in a physical activity such as tossing a balloon back and forth or juggling scarfs. The physical activity improves learning, perhaps by increasing blood flow to the brain. See the *New York Times* article [How Exercise Could Help You Learn a New Language](#).

Idea Mapping

Students improve understanding of what is heard by writing words and drawing pictures to represent the core things, persons, and ideas. He arranges the words and pictures in logical groups and draws lines to connect related clusters. For further information see the *Wikipedia* article [Mind Map](#).

Language Generator

A language generator (often called a universal language generator) is a template for generating valid sentences in the target language. It takes the form of a chart with rows and columns. The user chooses a word from each column to make a sentence. As long as any accompanying instructions are followed, the resulting sentence will be valid. By using a language generator the student learns how words are fitted together to form an intelligible sentence. For further information see our video [What is a Language Generator](#).

Personal Phrasebook

Student keeps a notebook of useful phrases in the new language.

Picture Flashcards

Student is shown a visual depiction of an object or a concept. The goal is to immediately name it in the target language. Pictures are used as cues rather than English words since the purpose of the exercise is to create a direct connection between the object or idea depicted and the word for it in the target language.

Total Physical Response

Instructor gives commands, such as “Brush your teeth!”. Students immediately perform or mime the action. Students who do not understand the command may look to their peers. Pace and complexity of the commands are increased as the students become more proficient. This exercise teaches students to associate words and expressions in the new language with objects and ideas rather than words in their native language. For further information see the *Wikipedia* article [Total Physical Response](#).