

Help Llaw – tips dysgu Cymraeg



To learn a new language successfully, you need to spend as much time as possible in contact with the target language. Remember, the more you do, the better you'll do. Go all in, and enjoy the journey!

Free Welsh!

*When you're out and about, listen to people speaking in Welsh. Look at the signs and posters around you. Can you guess what some of them say? Can you get the gist? Watch **S4C**, listen to **Cymru.fm**. Get used to the sound and rhythm of the language and try and pick out some of the words you have learned. Most supermarkets have bilingual signs, make sure you get your five a day!

*Carry a notebook or record a new word or phrase in your phone. There are lots of good online dictionaries, **geiriadur.net** and **ap geiriadur** can help you understand new words straight away!

Use it or Lose it

*Practise the Welsh you have learned. Take every opportunity you can to speak to people in Welsh – including others on the course at *amser coffi*! Have a go!

Mistakes

*Perfectly imperfect! Be willing to make mistakes. Accept that you are going to say things wrong sometimes and sometimes say funny things! Making mistakes is how we learn.

*Don't compare yourself to others. People come to the course with different backgrounds. Some know a bit of Welsh before starting, some know only a little. Some have a lot of free time to study, some have less. Some can remember things easily, others have to put in more effort to retain the same information. Work at your own pace.

*Find Welsh activities in your local area. There are lots of Welsh learning groups on social media which could help you make links outside the class in the language. The **Siarad** scheme helps people find a Welsh speaking friend to practise with. Practise, practise, practise!

Supplement your classes! dysgucymraeg.cymru has free Welsh courses. *Say Something in Welsh* and *Duolingo* can improve vocab and help you practice.

Vocabulary

You need to learn as many words as possible. Here are some tips:

***Flashcards**: Whether using old-fashioned index cards, or online tools like **Quizlet.com** or **byki.com**, make flashcards of new words you need to learn. It often helps to associate a new word with a picture (even a hand-drawn picture!) so that when we try to recall a word's meaning we see the picture in our minds. Remember to say your word out loud with gusto!

***Recency and Frequency**! You need to see a new word or phrase often in order to move it from your short term memory to your long term memory. Revisit new words on flashcards, posters etc. as often as possible.

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*Use the link to the ‘**Quizlet**’ website, many of the units’ vocabularies and key phrases are on Quizlet already. Search for *Sylfaen: Uned...* You can learn these words and phrases through the flashcard section or through playing games. You can also create your own Quizlets to practise new words that you need to concentrate on.

* Learn words in **context**: instead of just learning the word, put it in a sentence, try it out in various ways. Give it meaning.

***Reading**: This will reinforce words already known to you, giving meaning and context and will also introduce you to new words. Again, note new words and try to learn them. Once you have a new word, try it out!

***Writing**: You’ll be surprised as to how quickly your bank of knowledge develops. Very soon you will be able to write a basic diary entry. Try writing a few lines everyday.

***Mnemonics**: This is sometimes known as the “keyword” or “linkword” method. The Welsh word for “fine” weather is “braf”, think of the Costa Brava; the Welsh word for dog is “ci”, think of a dog with a key; a builder is an “adeiladwr” which sounds a bit like “had a ladder”! Memrise.com is a good way to create these links. Often the silliest connections are the most effective!

*Similar to Mnemonics is **Aid Memoire** or **Method of Loci**, where you create for example a memory palace, where your new words can be placed and contextualized. Learning vocabulary through story telling works in a similar way. Some people colour code these rooms to help remember feminine and masculine nouns.

***Making connections**: We learn new information by connecting it to other information we already know. We look for similarities. Do the same with Welsh. Can you pick out familiar elements in new words and work out the meaning? Some words (cognates) might sound similar to words in other languages: *braich* (Cymraeg) > *braccio* (Italian); *ffenest* (Cymraeg) > *fenetre* (French); *llyfr* (Cymraeg) > *livre* (French) etc. Does the context help you? Make connections, these deduction skills will make you a more efficient learner.

***Singing**: You will do a lot of singing on this course! Songs are often repetitive and allow you to feel and sing the rhythm of words effectively. Many of the language songs on this course reinforce a particular language pattern or set of vocabulary, but listening and singing along to any music in Welsh will help. Try listening to Cymru.fm online. Ask your tutors who their favourite bands are! You’ll be learning new vocabulary without realizing and it doesn’t matter that you don’t understand every word. A good example of this is the English alphabet, no child sits and learns the alphabet but very early on can sing the 26 letters perfectly!

***Chanting and movement**: Like singing, listen to the rhythm or musicality of a new word. “Cyfrifiadur” is a long word but can be chanted or rapped “Cyf-rif-ia-dur”, clapping the syllables.

Keep in mind **why** you are learning Welsh. When the going gets tough, remember the personal and professional reasons that brought you here.

Dive in! Use what you’ve got. Be Brave! Give it all you’ve got for the next year. Pob lwc!