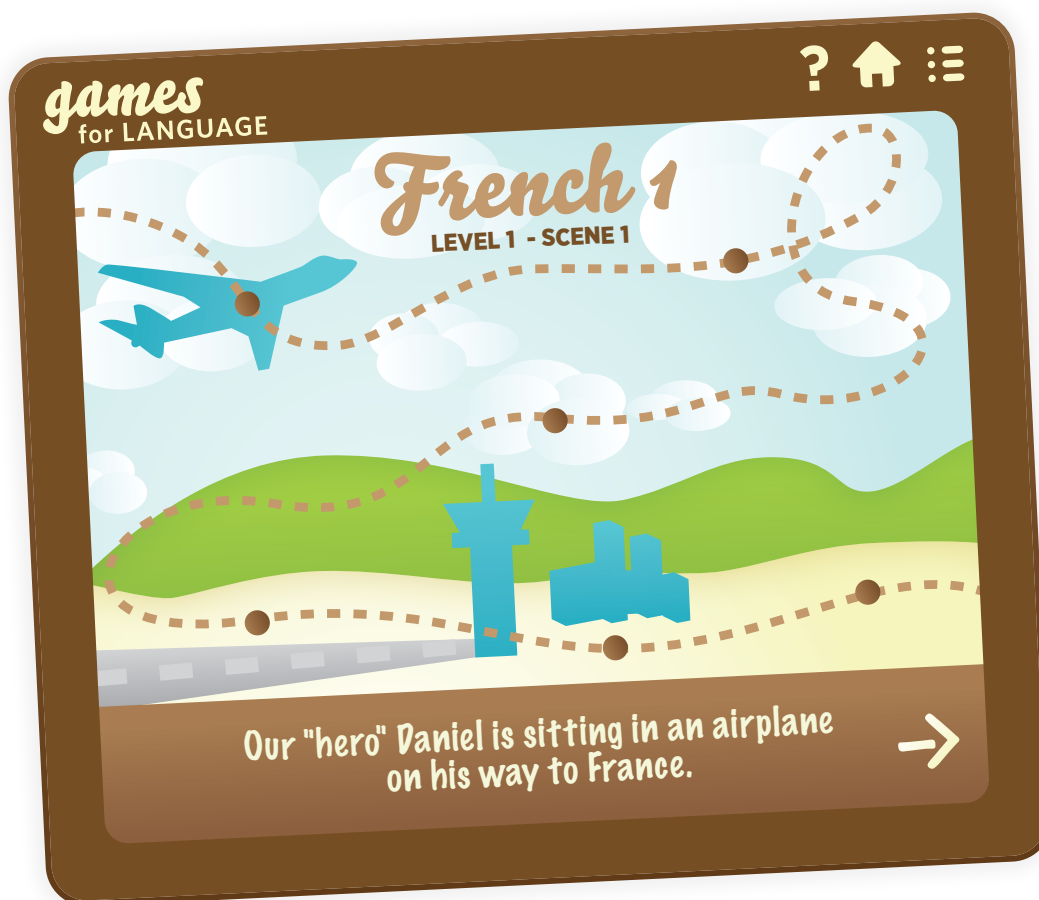


the games for language system

Self-teaching language programs are available as books, CD's, DVD's, and direct downloads. Some of the better known names are Assimil, Rosetta Stone, Pimsleur, Fluenz, Michael Thomas. While all programs help motivated learners improve their language skills, their effectiveness for learning to understand, speak, read, and write a language varies greatly.

The Games for Language System has been designed so teach all four (4) skills. Using games not only makes language learning more fun, but it also incorporates key findings by researchers who study how people learn and how adults acquire a second language.



See Kathy Sierra's "[Crash course in learning theory.](#)"

See also National Science Foundation's Special Report on "[Language and Linguistics.](#)"

Entertaining digital games have auditory (spoken language, sounds) and visual features (text, colors, images, design), as well as kinesthetic elements (writing against the clock, clicking on moving images, etc). By engaging multiple senses, digital games enhance a learner's ability to recall and retain new words and expressions. Language learning is about message decoding and communication, and this is not a straightforward process. Learning a language involves trial and error, a certain amount of confusion, but also plenty of insightful "aha!" moments.

Games for Language Goals

The Games for Language System works for beginners without any prior knowledge of the foreign language, as well as for learners with some language background. While beginners will spend more time on each scene, advanced players may be able to move through the scenes more rapidly. Throughout each of the courses, a player accumulates over 8,000 points playing various language games. At the same time he or she acquires a working vocabulary of about 650 essential words and many idiomatic expressions. At the end of a course, the learner will also be able to read and understand the entire travel story, which consists of about 1800 words.

The Games for Language System

Each course consists of six (6) levels, with six (6) scenes per level for a total of 36 scenes (or lessons).

So far, the most effective approach has been for learners to do one (1) scene per day (which should take less than 15 minutes) and to review an earlier scene for extra recall. For each course, there's a dictionary on the site of all words, phrases, and sentences learned.

The Story

Each scene begins with "The Story," a dialog and/or narration of 6-12 lines. The full 36 scenes tell the story of a young man who travels to the foreign country. From a conversation with his neighbor in the airplane, to being picked up by his aunt at the airport, to asking for directions to a friend's house, to exploring the old town, the vocabulary will be useful to anyone who travels to a foreign country. The travel story engages the learner, provides relevant vocabulary, and creates a framework that ties everything together.

When first hearing "The Story," the learner will probably not understand it fully. However, the story context plus some familiar words will help him or her to guess the basic meaning. This may well replicate the experience of more advanced learners traveling a foreign country. (For the impatient player, a roll-over option also provides the full translation right away).

Breaking up "The Story" and putting it together again.

Each of the 36 scenes has a structure that is similar to an "hourglass." The learner first hears and sees the 6-12 lines of "The Story." In the games that follow, the text is broken up into parts to let the learner practice the sound and meaning of individual words, phrases, and expressions. Because everything is part of a meaningful context, the learner will remember and retain the words and phrases more easily. The games near the end of the scene have the learner put "The Story" back together again.

Memory Games

An initial "Memory Game" shows key words and short phrases just heard in "The Story." The learner clicks on a card or tile in the set of English words, and then matches it with the correct foreign word. In later levels similar games teach longer phrases in a similar way. With these games, the learner acquires new vocabulary and gains a better understanding of "The Story."

Listening Games

In these games, the learner hears a foreign word (from "The Story") and - without necessarily knowing its meaning - clicks on the corresponding text, choosing from three similarly spelled words. They "train the ear." A person's brain is tuned to the sounds of his or her native language. The listening games teach a new and different correlation of sound and spelling.

Say-it Games

Here, the learner hears and is asked to repeat selected phrases of "The Story" before the text appears briefly on the screen. When learning a new language, a person must learn to pronounce new sounds

and different letter combinations, and get the timing of the foreign speech right. The Say-it games allow the learner to focus on hearing and reproducing the melody of the foreign language without worrying about meaning.

Word Games

These require the learner to identify the correct story words in different games and settings. By switching between native and foreign translation, the player is challenged again and again to produce the right answer. At the same time, the he or she assimilates the meaning, spelling, and essential grammar of the foreign words.

Translation Games

In these games, the learner chooses the correct translation of each of the sentences, and thereby comes to fully understand the details of "The Story." Relevant points of grammar or culture are briefly explained, providing further insights into the new language.

Word Order Games

Here, the learner is asked to reassemble the sentences (from "The Story") and is guided by an English translation and specific choices. When a correct word is selected, it is spoken again. These games draw attention to idiomatic expressions and highlight the difference between English and foreign word order.

Writing Games

Considered often the most difficult task in any foreign language, writing here becomes a fun game. The learner is asked to translate and write out foreign words and short phrases in an effort to beat the clock.

Recall Games

In these recall-games, the learner practices the vocabulary and short phrases from the previous scene or scenes.

Record it

Here, all individual sentences from "The Story" are spoken and the learner can record his or her own voice. A playback button allows the learner to compare his or her pronunciation with that of the native speaker. This can be done as many times as desired to improve the pronunciation. Beyond that, it is an excellent way to internalize and memorize the phrases and sentences of "The Story."