

## Home Versus Travel-based Language Learning

by Michael Gabrikow When you have set your mind on learning a new language, you are in the position to choose how to start learning it. You basically have three options: starting a practical home-based language learning course (possibly an online one), starting a so-called "travel-based" learning experience that would have you travel to a country speaking the language you intend to learn for at least a couple of weeks, or a combination of the two. We will try to dissect these two language learning methods and compare them to see which one is best (or which one is more appropriate for you).

First of all, home-based language courses have two great advantages: they are cheaper and they are more comfortable. Regardless of the language you are learning, you will most likely find dozens of "Learn it yourself" course books as they are in high demand. If they are structured correctly, these courses can actually build a solid foundation for the foreign language you are learning if you can spend enough time and energy to truly focus on each lesson and tackle any problems you might be hindered by. If you prefer, you also have the option of taking a free online language course provided by one of the many sites focusing on language learning (such as Internet Polyglot for example). These free online courses are even more comfortable (and cheaper of course) than if you would learn from a course book but they can sometimes be less structured, which makes it extremely important to focus on finding an excellent course to take on, rather than simply start with the first one that turns up in your search engine for the phrase "free online language course". If possible, find an online language course that offers both written lessons and spoken ones (through E-media). They are extremely useful in correlating spelling with pronunciation and generally getting you used to the language you are about to learn (not to mention that stimulating two senses, hearing and seeing, doubles the effect of the learning process). Travel based language learning methods on the other hand are definitely more expensive and they might disrupt your daily routine. They are usually taken in vacation periods, but if you work online for example, you might even set up a small "office" in the country you're aiming to learn the language of. This way you can keep to your daily duties and start learning at the same time. The advantage of a travel based language is obvious. By getting plunged straight into an oasis of foreign words, your brain will focus on adapting and understanding the new language a lot better. Correlations between images and words are made a lot easier in this case and even a short trip to the supermarket for example, will get you to learn a few words and get you used with the new language. In a couple of weeks, you will already be able to say some of the basic words and some phrases and if the travel period is longer you have every chance of being able to conduct a short conversation with basic words successfully. To conclude, it must be said that neither of these methods can guarantee you will be a fluent speaker of the new language after they are "complete". Their purpose is solely to create a basic foundation for the new language, a foundation that will be useful later on if you want to further focus on the language and actually learn it in detail. Each method has some strong points (grammar and spelling for home-based, pronunciation for travel-based) and some weak points (pronunciation for home-based and spelling for travel-based for example), which may lead to the idea that a combination of the two is the best way to go, since they complement each other quite well.

## About the Author

Michael Gabrikow has spent all his life learning languages, he knows all about language learning. <http://www.InternetPolyglot.com> - find out how you and your children can expand your horizons in language learning.

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