

MY GUIDE TO AUTONOMY WORK

FIRST TERM OF THE 2025–2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

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1. The Importance of Autonomy Work

1.1 How many hours does it take to move up a language level?

It takes approximately 200 guided learning hours for a language learner to progress from one level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CECRL) to the next.

⇒ It is essential to work autonomously, in addition to your language course, given the large number of hours required to move from one CEFR level to another.

1.2 How do I know my current language level?

Use one or more of these resources to determine your language level. Feel free to use them again at the end of the semester to see if anything has changed.

The CEFR language level descriptors and self-assessment grid: [coe.int CEFR Level Descriptions](https://coe.int/CEFR/Level-Descriptions)

- The test on Parlezvousanglais.fr: [Free English Level Test](https://www.parlezvousanglais.fr/)
- The Council of Europe's self-assessment questionnaire: [ecml.at Language Self-Assessment](https://ecml.at/Language-Self-Assessment)

1.3 The objectives of this course

Learning autonomy:

"Language learner autonomy" denotes a teaching/learning dynamic in which learners plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate their own learning (Little, 2022).

Language autonomy:

Language autonomy is the ability to take initiative, produce new utterances spontaneously, take risks, and sustain a conversation (Ciekanski, 2014).

1.4 Why is autonomy in learning important?

With your class, identify four reasons why autonomy in learning is important:

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1.5 Questionnaire about your autonomy

- Do you set goals in one or more of the subjects you study? What are these goals?

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- Do you find it easy to implement strategies to achieve these goals, or is this something you find difficult?

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- If you do not set goals for learning English, what is the reason? (e.g.: lack of motivation, confidence, ideas, time, feeling lost, difficulty determining what's relevant...)

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- If you do set goals, would you say you achieve them? If not, what prevents you from doing so?

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1.6 To improve my language skills, I must...

1. Set specific goals

e.g.: I want to improve my pronunciation because I feel self-conscious and hesitate to speak in public.

2. Define means to achieve these goals:

What time will I dedicate, how often, what tools will I use?

e.g.: To improve pronunciation, I'll use spoken corpora, sound discrimination tools, and listen to songs paying attention to sounds.

3. Self-assess:

Identify my strengths and weaknesses, which tools really help me, and which don't, what motivates me and what does not. If I fail, what happened and how can I fix it?

e.g.: I enjoyed using spoken corpora but felt less comfortable with songs. I noticed I struggle more with longer words. For next time, I'll focus on the pronunciation of long words and vowels using recommended corpora.

Note: If you have trouble identifying areas for improvement, feel free to ask your teacher for help!

2.1 How do you work on your English? Test: What kind of learner am I?

- ♦ I attend English class
- ♦ I take notes in class
- ♦ I ask questions in class when I want to clarify or delve deeper into a point
- □ I participate orally in English class
- □ I do homework given by the teacher myself
- ♦ I do homework with the help of someone I know
- ♦ I do homework with the help of an automatic translator (DeepL, Reverso, Google Translate, etc.)
- □ I do homework with the help of paper or online dictionaries
- ♦ I have an AI (ChatGPT, GPT-4, etc.) do my homework
- ♦ I study the brochure for assessments
- ♦ I study both the brochure and my class notes for assessments
- ♥ I listen to English songs and pay attention to the lyrics
- ♥ I listen to English songs and pay attention to pronunciation
- ♥ I watch films, series, and/or videos in English and pay attention to what is said
- ♥ I watch films, series, and/or videos in English and focus on pronunciation
- ♥ I read books, articles or other written English content
- ♥ I write in English: texts, or messages on forums, chats, instant messaging, emails, etc.
- □ When I hear or read a word or phrase I don't know, I look it up in a dictionary
- □ I am lucky enough to have English speakers around me with whom to practice
- □ I am lucky enough to travel to English-speaking countries and practice there
- ♥ I am enrolled in university tandem programs to practice English informally
- ♥ I use a tandem app to practice English with English speakers
- ♥ I do other things not listed here. Specify:

If you only have diamonds:

You are not autonomous in your language learning and tend to do the strict minimum. As a result, your level tends to stagnate, you do not see progress, and inevitably, your motivation is low. No worries, this guide contains everything you need to take control!

If you have more diamonds than squares and hearts:

You're trying hard and doing some autonomous work to progress, but results aren't what you hoped. The work you'll do using this guide and its resources will help you step up your game!

If you have as many diamonds as squares:

You're fairly involved in your learning, but missing some keys and resources for clear progress. Luckily, this guide has everything you need!

If you have diamonds, squares, and hearts:

You are very involved in your learning, using a wide variety of resources. All that's left is to set personalized goals and a plan for the semester—18/20 can be yours!

2.2 Self-assessment: answer the following questions.

- Are you surprised by your result in 2.1? Why?
- Are there any things you would like to improve? Which ones?
- Are there items on the list you don't do yet but would like to try?
- Do you know how to get started? Do you need help?

3 My logbook

In this course, you will have to create a logbook documenting your autonomous English work throughout the semester. This will be graded and worth **25% of your final mark**.

The logbook must cover **at least 10 hours** of autonomous English work undertaken during the semester. Studying your main English course and revising for assessments isn't included in those 10 hours.

You can make the logbook **in any format**: Word or PDF document, something more creative, an animated or non-animated PowerPoint, a scripted or non-scripted video, an oral presentation, a classic or creative paper format... Let your creativity speak if you feel like it!

A logbook generated by an AI (e.g., ChatGPT) or translated from French using an automatic translator (e.g., DeepL) will be given 0/20 at minimum. Don't even try—some tried before and were heavily penalized.

3.1 Logbook Content

No matter its format, the logbook must include:

➤ A first part with:

- An introduction to your experience with English up to now: your relationship with the language, positives and negatives, apprehensions and hopes for the year;
- A self-assessment of your level: what level do you believe you have? On what do you base this (cite your source)?
- A paragraph about your goals for your 10 hours of autonomous work;
- The program you want to set for your 10 hours of autonomous work.

➤ **10 entries**, one for every autonomous working session, each including:

- The date and time of your autonomous session
- What you did during this session
- A reflective comment on the session: what you liked/disliked, found easy/hard, what you want to change, keep, improve

➤ **A conclusion**, with a final assessment of those hours, answering:

- Did you learn things about yourself and your work ability? About language learning?
- Did you feel you did useful things?
- Did you feel you made progress?
- Would you say you met your goals? Why?
- How do you feel at semester's end? Are you in a different mindset than at the beginning?
- What did you think of this guide and these autonomous work sessions?

3.2 Logbook Evaluation Criteria

- At least 10 hours of autonomous work completed: 2 points
- All required entries present: 2 points
- Consistency between goals set, tools chosen, and program proposed: 2 points
- Quality of reflections and self-assessment: 14 points

NB: Be organized and take notes on your work session on the day itself, rather than weeks or months later, risking forgetting.

Due date for logbook: 1st December 2025

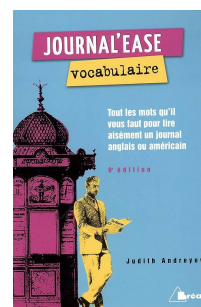
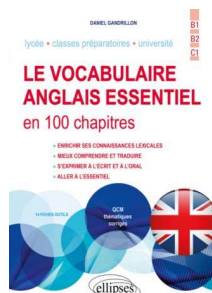
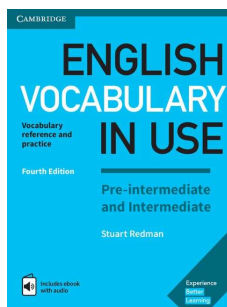
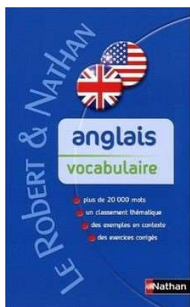
Late submission = minus 2 points per day

4 Resources: What can I use to work on my English?

Here is a list of resources to help you progress in English. Some will suit you, others not... Experiment, test things, see which help you progress.

4.1 Tools to improve your vocabulary

Vocabulary books: (some suggestions available at the CRL)



Online reference dictionaries:

- <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- <https://www.wordreference.com/fr/>

Paper dictionaries: Oxford English Dictionary, Collins English Dictionary (available at the CRL!)

Lextutor: Comprehensive tool to generate customised vocabulary lists
<https://www.lexutor.ca/>

...Via videos and/or audios (see below)

Free smartphone apps: Vocabulaire Anglais gratuit, Mosalingua, Memrise, Duolingo, Busuu (customised training), LyricsTraining (complete lyrics)

4.2 Tools to improve your spoken English

Spoken corpora:

Same as written corpora, but with audio files and transcriptions, letting you hear authentic English and follow the transcript.

- Buckeye Speech Corpus: American conversations on many topics
<https://buckeyecorpus.osu.edu/>
- English as a Lingua Franca in Academic settings (ELFA): recordings at European universities by non-native academic users
<https://www.kielipankki.fi/corpora/elfa/>

Phonetic alphabet and sound discrimination quizzes:

Help grasp and differentiate English sounds, improving both comprehension and expression.

- <https://www.ipachart.com/>
- <https://bilingueanglais.com/prototypes/audiocontrast/>

Suggested videos and audios:

- British accent: <https://www.youtube.com/c/BBCNews>
- American accent: <https://edition.cnn.com/audio>, TED talks on YouTube

Language exchanges:

- Dedicated apps: Tandem, Hello Talk ...
- Language cafés in Tours: Le café des Langues
- Tchateliers with tutors at the CRL

4.3 What about automatic translators and artificial intelligence?

Automatic translators like DeepL and generative AIs like ChatGPT or Bard can be used as **tools**, but not substitutes for true language learning.

For example, ChatGPT can be used to chat in English or generate variations of sentences to compare to your own, seeing different ways to express things.

It can be very useful to combine such a tool with a dictionary and a corpus, helping you understand differences in sample sentences!

A note on AI and honesty:

Pretending to be the author of a text you did not write is a risk—neither in academic nor professional settings should you do so. People are less likely to be fooled than you think, and it's not always acceptable...

Also, remember that these tools are currently free but may not always be so. There's a global race for AI legislation, and private users may not always have free and permanent access.

Don't become dependent on a single tool—variety is key!

References

Little, D. (2022). "Language learner autonomy: Rethinking language teaching". *Language Teaching*, 55(1), p.64-73.

Paris, J. and Ramos Ruiz, I. (2021). "Support for first-year students: what teaching practices?" "Success and autonomy for Level 1 students" study day, Oct. 2021, Université de Paris.