

APSU Writing Center

Writing in a Foreign Language

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- Instead of writing in your native language and then translating, try composing in the intended language first. With each language being different, not every word or phrase can translate directly.

Strategies

- **Allow for more time to write.**
 - Acknowledge that writing in a second language will take more time than in your first language.
- **Do not translate.**
 - Try not to translate word for word from your native language into another language. Write as much as you can in the intended language first then go back and go over you grammar and sentence structure.
- **Read in the intended language first.**
 - Consider how the writing is organized and if the voice is formal or informal. Read different styles of writing to get an idea of how native speakers express themselves in different contexts.
- **Ask a native speaker to revise your writing.**
 - Working with a native speaker can be a great way to improve sentence structure and catch writing errors.
- **Make a list of words and phrases you overuse.**
 - Revise your first draft and keep track of words and phrases you use often. Write down mistakes that you make often in a list and use it as a checklist to avoid repeating errors.
- **Consider grammar and style.**
 - When you write, try making an effort to write grammatically correct sentences. This can help you improve your overall knowledge of the language.
 - Practice writing in formal and informal language along with using the past, present, and future tenses in order to improve your writing.
- **Keep your writing simple.**
 - Find creative ways to express yourself using what you know to make short, clear sentences.
 - Writing is very important for improving other language skills, especially when it comes to accuracy. It lets you focus on using language correctly and avoiding future mistakes.
- **Revise your writing.**
 - Once you have written your first draft, use language dictionaries, and grammar books to clarify your writing and ideas.
- **Be kind to yourself.**
 - Recognize that you are writing in this language to communicate with your audience. Being fluent in another language will take time and practice. You will improve your writing the more you practice.

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References

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