

## **Home assignments on different stages of foreign language acquisition.**

Different levels of learning a foreign language demand diverse approaches to the whole educational process and home assignments are not an exception.

At the beginning level students just start learning a foreign language. According to CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), the stage A (basic user) of learning a foreign language is divided into levels: A1 — breakthrough or beginner and A2 — waystage or elementary.

On A1 level students should be able to:

- understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases;
- introduce themselves and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where they live, people they know and things they have;
- interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly.

On A2 level students are supposed to:

- understand sentences and frequently used expressions;
- communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters;
- describe in simple terms aspects of their background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.

Unlike other stages of foreign language acquisition, on an elementary level the teaching process is going slowly due to learners' absence of basic knowledge of the language. The teacher working with beginners should form the learning process for students to study at a comfortable tempo. The organisation of methodological work is better to be based on a communicative approach, as learners do not have to be afraid of speaking a foreign language and understand not only separate words but the idea of said or written. At this stage the teacher should set a proper attitude to the language, inspire students to study more by themselves outside the classroom, as just a motivated student with a right approach to language learning is able to achieve impressive results in a short period of time in contrast to an unmotivated student for whom studying outside the classroom is rather hard. Lessons at this stage are characterized by games, interactive tasks and constant change between activities. Video materials seem to be very effective, as students receive information in a simple and illustrative manner; the material can be introduced or repeated via them.

Home assignments for basic level students cannot be huge due to the lack of basic knowledge. However, its absence would have a negative impact on students' achievements. That is why, homework for students of this level should be small, aimed at mastering the studied material. For instance, practising new vocabulary can be performed through such tasks as matching a foreign word and its translation, putting the letters in the correct order, etc. Reading little texts of a proper level with following questions would be effective for mastering reading skills. For writing skills, in case of a good academic performance, making up some sentences on a

particular topic could be offered as an extra activity. Listening tasks should not be given at this stage, as for the lack of sufficient lexical and grammatical basis.

At this stage home assignments play a role of practicing the studied material, the major part of communication between students takes place during the lessons.

After passing an elementary stage students become B-level (independent) users. This level is also subdivided into B1 — Threshold or intermediate and B2 — Vantage or upper intermediate.

On the B1 level students can:

- understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.;
- deal with most situations likely to arise while travelling in an area where the language is spoken;
- produce simple connected text on topics that are familiar or of personal interest;
- describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.

B2 level students should be able to:

- understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in their field of specialization;
- interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party;
- produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

At this stage students can express their opinion, desires, etc. almost fluently, so their vocabulary is rich enough: they are familiar with a wide range of grammatical constructions, they can extract needed information from audio and video materials. Nevertheless, they still cannot interact fluently; moreover, they may make frequent mistakes in grammar.

The practice of studied grammar in combination with new vocabulary would be efficient in the lessons of this level. It is significant to show students their progress, how far they advanced from the beginning of their educational process but also they should understand that there is a room for improvement.

Both practice and creative tasks would be applicable as home assignment for the students of this level. More than that, their mixture would be effective. For instance, firstly, some tasks to fill in the gaps can be given for students to get used to and remember the grammatical construction. Then, give the task in the form of translation, so students can understand its usage. Finally, ask them to write an essay or express their opinion on a particular problem, asking them to use new grammar and vocabulary as much as possible.

The highest C-level (proficient user) is subdivided into C1 — Effective operational proficiency or advanced and C2 — Mastery or proficiency.

On C1 level students can:

- understand a wide range of demanding, longer clauses, and recognize implicit meaning;

- express ideas fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions;
- use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes;
- produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.

On C2 level students can:

- understand with ease virtually everything heard or read;
- summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation;
- express themselves spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the most complex situations.

On this level students are familiar with all the grammar, possess extensive vocabulary, know a wide range of idioms and can easily express their thoughts, formulate them in a well-organised text and interact with native speakers.

Lessons of this level should be dedicated to the expanding of academic vocabulary, studying the synonyms, idioms and phrasal verbs in order to sound as native speaker. Reading scientific articles from newspapers and magazines can be used. Also, it would be useful to practice academic listening via authentic audio and video material. For speaking skills practice with native speakers, debates and brainstorming where students are offered to protect their point of view creating ideas for a particular task with groupmates would be useful.

Home assignment for the students of this level can be given in the form of creative tasks such as writing an essay, collaborative projects, reading authentic articles with the following exercises. Learners are able to expand the vocabulary by themselves via listening to podcasts, watching movies and series in a target language.

In conclusion, teachers should take into consideration students' level of the foreign language acquisition while preparing home assignments and vary it in accordance with students' performance.