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THE MOSALINGUA GUIDE TO KEEPING YOUR RESOLUTIONS



A FREE EBOOK BY

MOSAlingua



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Learn a new language or smash your New Year's Resolutions with these 5 pro tips.

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TIP #1:

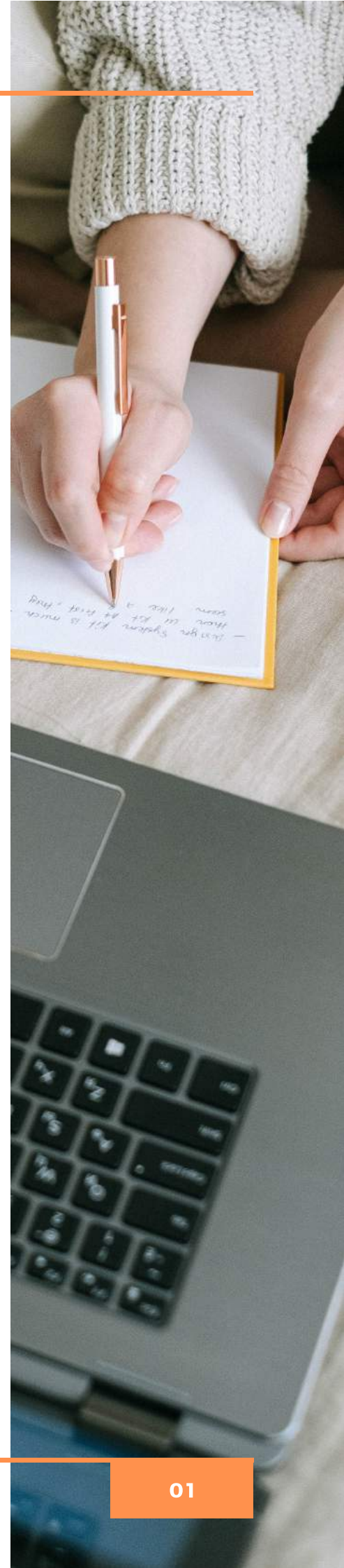
TAKE A MOMENT TO EVALUATE YOUR CURRENT SITUATION (LINGUISTIC OR OTHERWISE)

Each new year, during the first week of January, we take the time to look over our current situation.

This helps us see things more clearly, especially regarding all the progress we've made and where there's still room for improvement. Our self-evaluation covers all the key areas of life: family, health, work, personal development, and learning (especially languages).

We highly recommend this practical exercise, at the very least for any languages you're learning. Are you satisfied with your progress? Were you as focused and diligent as you'd hoped? If your answer to either of these questions is **no**, try to figure out the root causes and any obstacles you encountered, to keep from repeating the same mistakes twice.

With your 2020 self-evaluation ready at hand, you'll be well on your way to smashing your goals for 2021!



A pink calendar for January 2021 is shown on a clipboard. The calendar is partially visible, showing the days of the week and the numbers 1 through 31. A gold-colored pen lies across the bottom of the calendar, and a gold-colored paperclip is attached to the bottom edge of the clipboard. The background is a solid pink color.

TIP #2:

SET YOURSELF A 30- TO 90-DAY CHALLENGE

You might be surprised what you can accomplish in as little as 12 weeks.

90 days, 12 weeks, 3 months... When it comes to setting (and reaching) realistic goals, experts in personal development agree that planning around a shorter period is typically better than a full year. In fact, this is one of the key takeaways in "The 12 Week Year," a New York Times best-seller and one of our personal favorites.

The book's authors explain that you'll have better success meeting your goals if you work in chunks of 12 weeks, rather than 12 months.

This falls right in line with another approach that's near and dear to our heart, the 90-Day Challenge (which we spoke about often in 2020). So, what makes it so effective and, more importantly, why should you adopt it? There are three main reasons:

- 1. Linguistic goals set over a 12-week period will be more specific, concrete, and achievable.**

The problem with New Year's Resolutions is that they're usually too optimistic. What's more, it's difficult to lay out a game-plan for the whole year. A lot can happen, and it's easy to get derailed. With a 12-week plan, however, it's much easier to stay on track.

For language-learning, this might translate to a challenge like, "Study every day for 12 weeks"; or for something more concrete: "I'll memorize 10 words or phrases per day, for 12 weeks (840 total)."

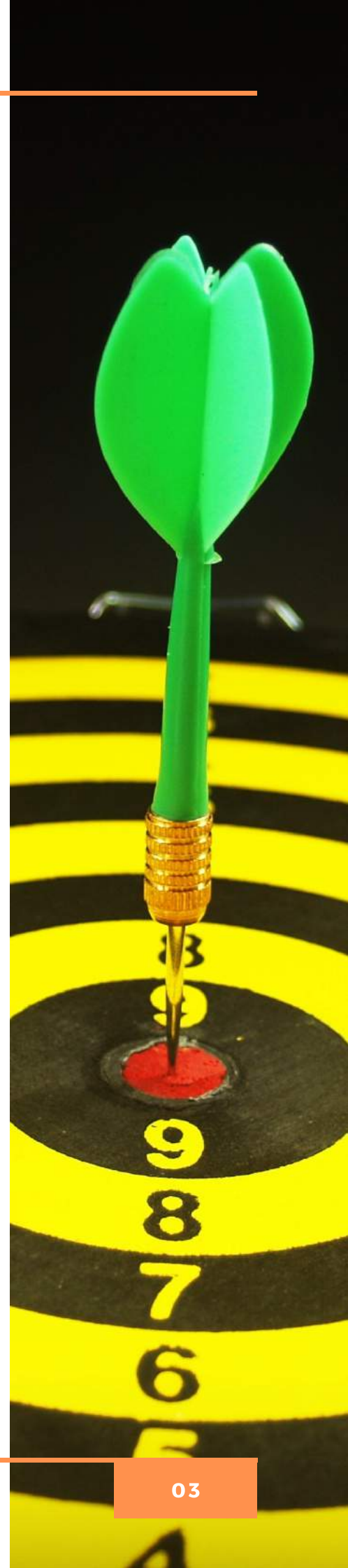
2. It's much easier to stick to your resolution if it's over a short period.

You can probably tell instinctively that it's much easier to stick to a challenge like, "Studying every day for 12 weeks" than it would be for 12 months. The longer the period, the greater the demands on your motivation and organization.

3. Having only 12 weeks to complete your goal forces you to work at it regularly.

The due-date is a powerful thing. The farther away a due-date is, however, the more freedom we seem to feel to procrastinate and forgive our lapses in motivation. But with just 12 weeks to complete your goal, even just one or two days can make a big difference.

The difference between those who accomplish their goals and those who give up is simply that those in the second group **fail to act**. This technique will help you do what's necessary to achieve your goals much more easily.





So, get to it! Put down your challenge or objectives in writing and, starting in the new year, work at them just a little bit each day. It's as simple as that!

One very useful way to go about your challenge is to divide it up into 3 mini-challenges of just 30 days apiece.

Our language teacher Abbe, for example, just set a 30-day challenge for herself: "I'm American, I speak French well, but I've always wanted to learn Spanish. So for 2021, I decided to really improve my level of Spanish, because as soon as things get back to normal, I want to travel to Spain and Argentina. So, who wants to join me?"

You can follow Abbe's progress on our YouTube channel and set your own 30-day goal for yourself.

We've given you a head start with this ready-made challenge template [that you can download here](#) and use to follow along on our channel. We describe how on the next page.

THE CHAIN TECHNIQUE

One very effective and useful technique for developing a regular rhythm is the **chain technique**.

For example, imagine you've decided to learn 10 new words every day, or to watch the news in your target language each day. If you manage to do that for three months, believe me, you'll have made *considerable* progress.

The incentive that comes from not "breaking" the chain is powerful. Plus, not only will you see how effectively you've been able to learn new words, but also how easily you've been able to integrate a new habit into your daily routine.

To help you stay on track, grab a calendar and put an X through each day where you've used your MosaLingua app to learn new words (or watched the news, etc.).

Bit by bit, you'll see a long chain of X's appear on your calendar, and each day, you'll be aiming to beat your record for consecutive days of practice. Your goal is to keep the chain growing by practicing every day.

It may seem simplistic, but I assure you, it's very effective. Be sure to put your calendar in a place where you'll see it every day, so you never lose track of your goals.



A hand holding a wooden toothbrush over a glass of other toothbrushes.

TIP #3

TRANSFORM YOUR LEARNING GOALS INTO HABITS

Why?

1. Humans have a limited capacity for motivation, and building a new habit is the best way to ease that demand.
2. It's the best way to make sure you study regularly, every day (which is key for learning well and learning quickly).
3. You can start learning on "autopilot," without having to force yourself.

In his book, *The Power of Habit*, Charles Duhigg explains how 40% of our daily actions are really a matter of habit. A habit is any action we do without specific intention or power of will. It's simply part of your daily routine, one of the many actions you perform without a second thought.

For example, brushing your teeth in the morning. This is something we do every day that requires little thought or reflection. That's because it's part of your morning routine — something you do each and every day.

So what if you could transform your learning goals into habits? It's entirely possible if you know exactly how habits are built.

How can you apply the power of habit to languages?

Let's look at another common habit: checking your phone.

- The habit is built from a **signal**: your phone makes a sound or vibrates.
- It's accompanied by a **desire**: to know who sent the message and what it contains. It's a "routine-breaking" habit: you stop everything else you're doing to look.
- Lastly, you get a **reward**: the need to read the message is satisfied, and often (particularly where social media is concerned), it's associated with a positive signal, like a Like or a new friend request.

Now, let's see how you can use this same principle to improve your language skills:

- **The Signal**: a language-learning book left in plain sight; a challenge calendar like the one described above; setting MosaLingua as your homepage.
- **The Desire & Reward**: You need to put into place some kind of reward associated with accomplishing your goals. It can be immediate, like eating a piece of chocolate after your study session, or long-term, like a picture of the city or country you'd like to visit once you can speak the language. The image itself is not a reward, but a placeholder for the real reward: everything your new knowledge can bring you.
- By repeating this routine every day, each time you see your "signal," you'll start to associate it with your reward. This will help reinforce your motivation, augmenting it with that feeling of need or desire.

If you repeat this process for 30 days, the habit will eventually become so solid that it will no longer be a question of motivation, but of simple routine.





TIP #4

FOCUS ON YOUR TOP PRIORITIES

Why?

1. There will always be (too) many things to do, and you can't do everything all at once.
2. Instead of wanting to do *more*, focus instead on doing *better and concentrating on what's important*.
3. This way, you have more time to dedicate to the goals that matter to you, including learning a new language.

How?

As Stephen Covey said in his famous book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*: "Put first things first."

That is, always focus on working towards your goals before doing other things in the day that are less important. For example, do a quick learning session with MosaLingua over breakfast, or study during your morning commute.

TIP #5

LEVERAGE THE POWER OF "DEEP WORK" TO STAY LASER-FOCUSED

This fifth and final tip comes from Cal Newport and his fantastic book, *Deep Work*. "Deep work" refers to any activity undertaken in a state of extreme concentration, without distraction, and pushing our capacity for cognition to its limits.

The author makes reference to certain professional activities, but "deep work" is a particularly versatile approach. And, as it happens, it's also very useful for learning languages. The best way to learn a language is to practice every day, with short study sessions during which you're highly focused.

HOW TO STAY FOCUSED DURING YOUR STUDY SESSIONS

In order to maintain your focus while practicing, you should:

- Avoid multi-tasking. If you're going to study for 15 minutes, then concentrate only on this task for optimal performance and efficiency.
- Avoid distractions. Turn off your notifications and put your phone on silent or airplane mode.





- You can further extend your period of concentration, but don't go overboard. Concentrate your energy on the task of language-learning for as long as you can *without* tiring of it. We recommend 10-15 minute study sessions each day. Short sessions are more effective because they're easier to manage and you're unlikely to feel overwhelmed. If you'd like to work for an hour each day, consider taking a break every 20 minutes or so.
- Set aside specific moments during the day for language learning. In Luca's case, for example, the morning is the best time for him to fully concentrate on learning a language and avoid interruptions. You'll need to find your own time: perhaps the morning, or at lunchtime, or right before bed. Note this time in your agenda or calendar so you can stay on track.

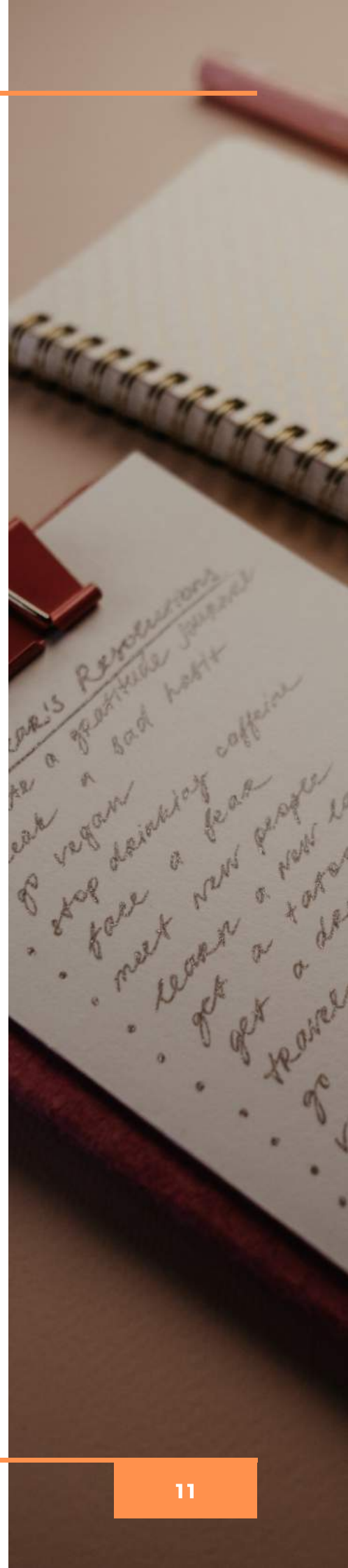
CONCLUSION

This concludes our guide to New Year's Resolutions. We're confident that by using these tips, you're sure to achieve your goals for 2021. Now it's time to take action with our Action Plan.

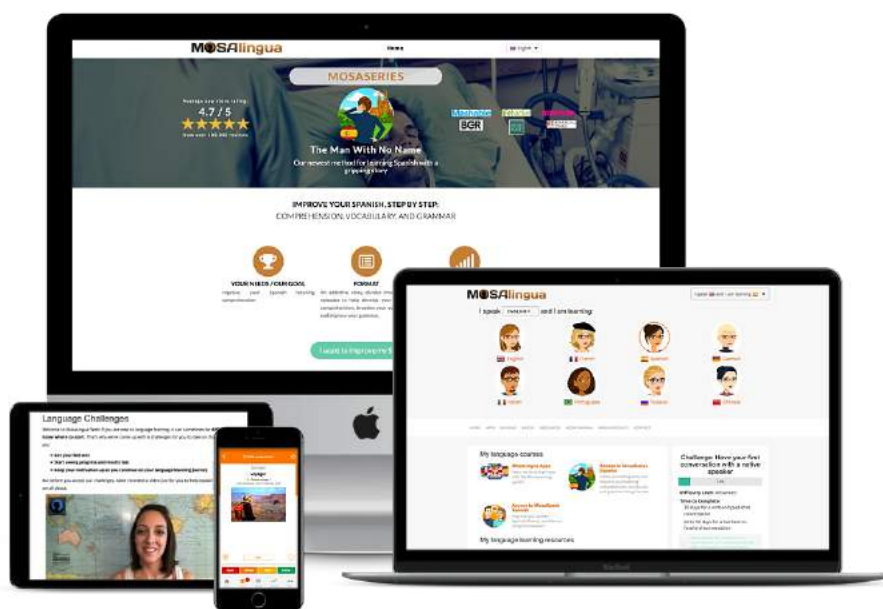
ACTION PLAN

Check off each task as you complete it:

- ☐ Assess your language level from 2020 and define linguistic objectives for the first quarter or half of 2021.
- ☐ Set yourself a 30-day challenge to follow along with Abbe.
- ☐ Make a learning habit of practicing your target language each day. Use Tip #3 and the power of habits to achieve your goals.
- ☐ Make learning one of your top priorities. Set aside a specific time for language learning, and do so each day.
- ☐ Avoid distractions by scheduling "deep work" learning sessions.



TO GO EVEN FURTHER...



You can learn more about all our courses and applications at www.mosalingua.com/en/mosalingua-products/

We'll help you find the right course for your level and learning objectives.

Get Started

Happy New Year and happy learning!
The MosaLingua Team