

Witsuwit'en Hibikinic bi Yets'olhdic

(Let's Speak Witsuwit'en)

Language Learning Tips

1. **With a fluent speaker's help, learn these basic sayings to ask for what you want in Witsuwit'en:**

Kwa zeh 'idinih. (Say it again.) **Neggus yez 'idinih.** (Say it slow.)

Ts'e'in sbe yelhdic. (Translate for me.)

Nts'en'a 'idinī _____? (How do you say - add English word)?

2. **Listen to fluent speakers as often as possible.** This will help you develop an ear for the sounds and cadence unique to Witsuwit'en. In time, with repetition, it will help you recognise individual words. This will make it easier to associate the meaning with the word later on.
3. **Learn 100 useful words and expressions for everyday activities.** This will make conversations easier. Practice until you are comfortable with them. **When you learn a new word, try to use it a few times right away.** When you stop and look up a new word in conversation, make a point to use it in the next two or three sentences you say.
4. **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat.** Repeat new words several times orally when you hear them and then many times in the days that follow. This helps build up your memory. Listen to fluent speakers, live or recorded, to help adjust your pronunciation.
5. **Conversation, Conversation, Conversation.** Use basic Witsuwit'en greetings everyday, even when you write (don't worry about spelling!). Replace English words with Witsuwit'en ones you know; this is one step towards conversation. This increases your ability to retain them.
6. **Focus.** Concentration and attention are key factors in learning. Eliminate music, television, texting and all other potential distractions while you are learning. This boosts your ability to hear, repeat and memorise sounds and words.
7. **Study and learn everyday.** Studying a language intensely for several hours every day is the most beneficial. If this is impossible, try an hour every day. The more time you spend, the faster you will become a speaker.
8. **You're going to make mistakes. Accept it.** There are many words

in Witsuwit'en that mean something else if you say them a little differently. Sometimes it'll be funny and sometimes embarrassing. That's part of learning.

9. **Aim for the brain melt.** When you work on language learning for hours on end and your brain feels tired, you are getting somewhere! You may even begin dreaming in the language or get a headache. In the beginning, you'll hit the mind-melt within an hour or two. This will hard on you brain for a while, but it will get easier over time.
10. **Find a mentor.** One-on-one learning is the best and most efficient use of time. If possible, ask a fluent speaker in your family to teach you for a few hours a week. You are likely to spend more time with family members. This will bring the language back in the home. If a family member is unavailable, ask a fluent speaker with whom you have a friendship, someone you already spend time with. This makes it easier than trying to fit it into your schedule.
11. **Find a language buddy.** It's helpful to share learning tips and new words with other people who are learning. A language buddy can be a good source of support.
12. **Most people are helpful, let them help.** Ask fluent speakers for help. Point to something and ask how to say it. Ask them questions. Most people are friendly and willing to help you out. Learning a language is not for shy people.
13. **Finally, find a way to make it fun.** As with anything, if you're going to stick to it, you have to find a way to make it fun. Find people you enjoy talking to. Go to events where you can practice while doing something fun.

Adapted from <https://markmanson.net/foreign-language>

For Witsuwit'en oral language practice and games please visit:

<http://www.firstvoices.com/en/Wetsuweten>



Witsuwit'en Language and Culture Society Office and Archive
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Open Tuesdays and Thursdays
8:30am to 4:30pm