When studying for a foreign language exam, there are certain ways to study smart. Some students think that just reading the book and taking notes is enough. However, with foreign languages you really have to actively study. This packet is designed to help you study smart, and hopefully get that A we all strive for. This packet was put together by the students in the profiles, we used these tips and got A’s and now we are passing them on to you!

Lesson 1: Note Cards

Some people don’t like to study with note cards, but when it comes to foreign languages it is a MUST. This takes the information and condenses it into an easy to use, handheld study tool. Also, this is the best way to memorize information, because it forces you to recall the information on the back when you see the word or clue on the front. If you don’t know how to use note cards, here are some examples using Spanish concepts. If you are in a different language, that’s ok, these concepts work for many foreign languages, you just need to substitute the words for your chosen language.

Vocabulary

***My tip: When studying, vocabulary, give your friend the book and have them call the words out to you and you translate. Also, don’t just translate from Spanish to English, try it both ways, the information will stick in your head better.
Verbs

***Note: These note cards are intended to help with verbs that have irregular conjugations. Since ir does not follow the normal pattern, you simply put the pattern on the back and it is easier to memorize and learn.

Verb Conjugation

***Note: These note cards are intended to help you learn the conjugation endings of regular verbs in different tenses. For example, regular verbs in the Pretérito tense use these endings.
Lesson 2: Websites

When studying, if you come across a concept you don't understand then you should try to get help with understanding that. A convenient way to learn or freshen your memory on different concepts are to Google it, there are many websites that can help you with verbs, vocabulary, and grammar points. Here are a few that we language tutors have tried and liked.

**Spanish**

For help with verbs: [http://users.ipfw.edu/JEHLE/VERBLIST.HTM](http://users.ipfw.edu/JEHLE/VERBLIST.HTM)

For help with grammar and vocab: [http://www.studyspanish.com/](http://www.studyspanish.com/)

**French**

For general help with everything: [http://learnfrench.elanguageschool.net/](http://learnfrench.elanguageschool.net/)

**German**

For general help with everything: [http://learngerman.elanguageschool.net/](http://learngerman.elanguageschool.net/)

***Note: If you are having problems with translations, or you don't know a word, use the Google language tool:***

Lesson 3: Using Your Textbook to Study

What to look for:

- The breakdown: Foreign Language Texts normally separate several sections dedicated to a specific language area. Examples are contextual meaning (like vocabulary), structural usage (like grammar), and cultural understanding.

- Each chapter has an introductory page. This will give you an overview of where the focus will be.

- Following the introduction, lots of vocabulary is thrown at you. Based on your personal learning style, begin to develop a system to get these words engrained in your mind efficiently. These words will be used for the whole chapter!

- Do not let the quantity of exercises be overwhelming. Whichever activities the professor emphasizes, review them & note how they work. There could be a similar exercise on a test.

- When focusing on one exercise, follow the model! They are almost always accurate and help you get an idea of what you are to do.

- Anytime there is a chart, write it down and put it to memory. Most likely, it is a grammatical chart and may have some special cases (i.e. irregular verbs) listed on it.

- Then find the examples that correlate with the chart. Now you know how to use what is in the chart.
My experience with Spanish is that learning a foreign language brings up a greater level of understanding concepts and ideas, as well as various cultures. Practice is important. It might not make me perfect, but it does make the process run smooth.

*** My Tip: The best way to put a language to memory is exposure. Study for 30 minutes over 4 days rather than cramming for 2 hours the night before!

Also, “pop-up” notes in the margins are always helpful and reiterate the current topic. It is not good to overlook the little things.

Lesson 4: Ask Your Professor

Do not be afraid to go to your professor and ask for help. That is the best person to go to because they will be making out your tests and quizzes.

Matt went to a professor and this is what he found out:

There are two simple actions that will help you through a foreign language course:

1. Show Up: Exposure to the target language and interaction with fellow students is one of the best ways to grasp more difficult grammatical concepts and develop vocabulary.

2. Practice, practice, practice: Do not expect to pass with flying colors if the only time spent on this course is in class. Make note cards, use the examples provided, and repeat the activities that are most effective. Get together with a classmate. You can make conversation, quiz each other, and improve upon the difficult grammatical topics. No matter what, do not be
idle. More will be retained from class if it is viewed repetitiously outside of class.

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Lesson 5: Using Past Tests to Study for the Final

- Foreign language finals are usually in the same format as the regular exams, so past tests can serve as a study guide for your final.

- When you study your past exams, you should be able to do everything that is on the tests. Especially concentrate on things that you got wrong, but make sure that you actually know how to do what you got right and that it wasn’t actually just a lucky guess.

Lesson 6: Using Homework to Study

- DO YOUR HOMEWORK!!! This is very important—possibly the most important thing to do if you expect to succeed in a foreign language class.

- Homework assignments are intended to give you extra practice with concepts that you learn in class. Use this opportunity to your advantage!

- When you look back at past homework to study, as with tests, you need to make sure that you can do all of it, including things that you got correct when you first did it.
A Few Final Tips:

- When completing homework, if there is one section you are unsure about do more work here and worry less with concepts you more easily grasp.
- Specifics are important, but don’t get caught up with every single word!
- Outside of class, listen to the language being studied. Find an online streaming radio or a television channel that uses the language being studied.
- Visit the professor during office hours. Their availability is a huge resource!! They know the focus of the course. They know the guidelines for tests. And they can evaluate your work and provide you feedback.

Congratulations you have just passed Studying for a Foreign Language Exam 1001! You will now be more prepared than ever to study for your foreign language tests and exams, no matter what level class you’re in.