

MEMBERS ONLY

# AUGUST

INNER  CIRCLE

08

THIS MONTH

YOU'RE NEVER FULLY  
PREPARED UNTIL YOU IMMERSE  
YOURSELF IN LANGUAGE

innoVative  LANGUAGE.COM

# You're never fully prepared until you get in the game and immerse yourself.



Welcome back!

In the previous Inner Circle lessons, you learned about the importance of preparation in language learning. And you got to know about some effective tools, Custom Lists and the Innovative Language 101 App, which you have free access to.

This time, we're going in the complete opposite direction. We're exploring one undeniable fact of language learning that you can use to your advantage:

**You're never fully prepared until you get in the game and immerse yourself.**

*And this is something I experienced first-hand during my trip to Italy this month.*

Most learners fail at languages because of this fact. They prepare, study, take lessons and study some more. Then, when they're faced with the language in real life, they realize it's spoken a lot faster, there's a ton of words they've never encountered...and they're simply unprepared.

# Smarter learners use this fact to their advantage.

How? This is what we talk about in this month's Inner Circle. We'll cover the three main points below, based on my experience in Italy. You'll learn...

1

**Why You're Never Fully Prepared Until You Get Into The Game**

2

**How You Can Take Advantage Of This Fact And Succeed**

3

**How You Can Do So With The Premium Custom Lists App**



# So, let me give you a rundown of my family trip to Italy

AND EXPLAIN HOW THE FIRST POINT CAME UP...



AEROPORTO

CAGLIARI

# 1

## Why You're Never Fully Prepared Until You Get Into The Game And Immerse Yourself

Prior to the trip, I prepared with my Skype tutor, my in-person tutor and used ItalianPod101 and Custom Lists.

I made sure I knew the necessary Italian Survival Phrases. In short, like any other language learner visiting a certain country, I was on a study spree.

...And it all helped at some point.

However, once my family and I landed at Cagliari Airport in Sardinia, Italy, I realized that despite my preparations, there were things I simply could not anticipate and prepare for until I was there.

The Italians there spoke faster than my Italian tutors. There were lots of

people, lots of speaking styles, lots of opinions, lots of words I've never heard before...and they were all coming at me with rapid-fire speed. And they all confused me very rapidly too!

The first half of the vacation took place in Sardinia, an island off the west coast of Italy. Not exactly a tourist hot-spot like Venice or Rome. Not a lot of English. And not many tourist-friendly stores. We did a house-swap at HomeExchange.com and traded homes with an Italian family.

The goal was to live like locals for the first half in Sardinia, and then enjoy the touristy Rome, Venice and Florence for the second half the trip.

Sardinia, being off the beaten tourist

path, was the perfect example of why you'll never be totally prepared. In the town I stayed in, there weren't any modern supermarkets. Just small mom and pop shops, bakeries, butchers and vegetable stores.

For example, when you're buying bread at a bakery, you're dealing with an older shopkeeper who has a completely different speaking style than standard Italian. Then, the buying process was different! You have to order by grams! You need to know the weight! It was similar to buying meat at the butcher shop. At the bakery they would cut the bread, weigh it and bag it for you. I know the word for "bread" and how to buy things in general. You walk in, take what you want, pay and leave. This, I had no clue about.

A typical Italian Phrasebook with phrases like “I’d like that please” would not work. It won’t account for cultural differences, especially in non-tourist spots.

In fact, my own Italian tutors didn’t prepare me for this. This is so ordinary to them that they hadn’t even thought of it.

**A second example of why you can’t be prepared is because of the evolution of language.** Simply, language changes with the times. Phrases from the 50s aren’t used nowadays.

So, after the first week in Sardinia, we spent some time in Rome, Florence and Venice. I had an easier time checking into hotels and ordering

at restaurants in Italian and got to use what I already knew.

But there was still one thing tripping me up. It has to do with the evolution of language.

Big cities in Italy are becoming very eco-friendly. And with the eco movement comes a whole set of vocabulary that is not in textbooks.

The perfect example of this happened at a supermarket in Rome. The cashier asked me if I wanted to buy something and I had no idea what they were talking about.

As it turns out, you have to pay for plastic grocery bags. So they actually asked me a word that I never encountered that is specific to Rome,

because I asked my tutor about it later. It was a word for the “*plastic bag you buy to put your groceries in.*” I know the Italian words for “*bag,*” “*groceries,*” “*put,*” and “*buy.*”

But this word was new.

Again, something that you can’t prepare for until you immerse yourself.

Finally, there’s just the simple fact that for you, as a learner, there’s always a new word or grammar that you won’t be prepared for. This isn’t a good or a bad thing. It’s just a reality of language learning. So, you shouldn’t wait until you’re perfect, but learn it on the fly when you hear it.

**Let’s get to the second point** >



# 2

## You know you can't be fully prepared. So, how can you take advantage of this fact and succeed?

Accept that you're never going to be fully prepared.

Most language learners do not.

They study and hold off real-life conversation so they can reach perfection. They're afraid of making mistakes. But the irony is that they won't reach perfection, and they're putting off valuable practice that will help them immensely.

And if they make one mistake, they'll clam up and avoid speaking again.

Let me share an experience from Italy.

I made a very big mistake at a pizza shop in Florence. Instead of asking for

a piece of pizza, I asked the shop owner for sex. Yes. I accidentally propositioned an honest pizza worker by mistake. This is easy for you to read but very hard for me to remember. Luckily, he knew I was making a mistake and corrected me and I did it right.

It took me a little while to get my confidence back after that mess-up, but you can bet I won't be making that mistake again.

**And here's the golden rule:** Making mistakes is the fastest way to improve. You instantly know what you're doing wrong and can get instant feedback.

Propositioning a pizza worker was a harsh mistake. Tough to recover from.

And you probably won't commit as severe language butchery as I did.

However, making mistakes is the fastest way to improve. And if you can keep going, improving on the fly is crucial to serious progress.

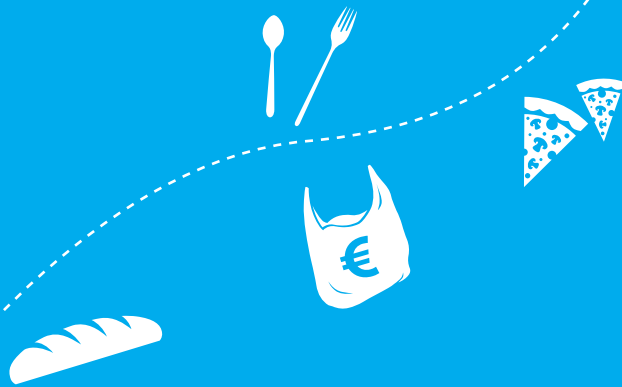
This is where preparation can't and won't help.

So, being open to mistakes and learning from them sounds good, right? But it's common advice that nobody takes. And you're probably wondering (and rightly so): how do I follow this advice in real life?

**Is there a step-by-step process?  
Let's get to the third point >**

3

## Take advantage of the Custom Lists App.



This was my go-to App during my trip to Italy.

Every mistake that I made and every new word went right into the Custom Lists App and I would create my own lists and add my own words.

What would happen was that the first time I went to a shop or a restaurant, it often didn't go smoothly. Then I'd make my list with corrections. And then, before I went back to the shop, I'd review the correct phrases.

Also, after going to the shop a few times, they would allow me to take pictures. And I would take a picture of something I didn't know, ask them how to say it, and add what they said to my list.

Here's how my learning process went:

1. I would go to the shop.
2. I would say a phrase I learned beforehand. This would be in one of my Custom Lists.
3. I would mess up.
4. The nice people would correct it. And if they gave me a funny look, I'd ask for a correction.
5. I would quickly add it or correct my current Custom Lists entries.

The proper way to buy bread?  
I noted it down in my Custom Lists App.

The proper way to buy pizza?  
Noted it down in my Custom Lists App.

The plastic grocery bag I had to buy?  
I noted that down as well.



As a Premium member, you already have access to this exclusive App. So, if you haven't taken advantage of Custom Lists, do so now.



- 1 Open up Custom Lists at [customlists.innovativelanguage.com](https://customlists.innovativelanguage.com) on your computer or smartphone.
- 2 Create a list based on a theme or topic you're interested in or that you need for real life such as shopping or ordering at restaurants. Things that you do on a regular basis, like I did in Italy.
- 3 Keep updating your lists with every new phrase and word you come across.
- 4 Share your Custom Lists with other users.

**And Custom Lists will help you note down and improve every mistake you'll ever make.** It's a great tool for preparation and, since you can't always fully be prepared, for adding new vocabulary and learning from your mistakes on the fly.

When you come across a new word or phrase, add it!

Create your own Custom Word Lists with your own images and audio pronunciation and review anywhere, anytime, on any device. Remember, you can also take advantage of other users' lists by searching for themes and keywords!

**And don't forget your monthly goal for September.** I want to hear about your next goal. Remember to keep it specific, realistic and measurable and have a deadline.

My monthly goal was on a bit of a vacation due to the Italy trip, but that doesn't mean my Italian was on a break! I'll be aiming for 30 minutes' pure Italian conversation next.

**I'd also like to know how you're using Custom Lists to your advantage.** If you haven't done so yet, access the App for free and let me know if it helps you!

Send me an email at:

[inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com](mailto:inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com).

To your fluency,

Peter Galante

Founder, InnovativeLanguage.com

# My monthly goal was on a bit of a vacation but that doesn't mean my Italian was on a break.

