

SEPTEMBER



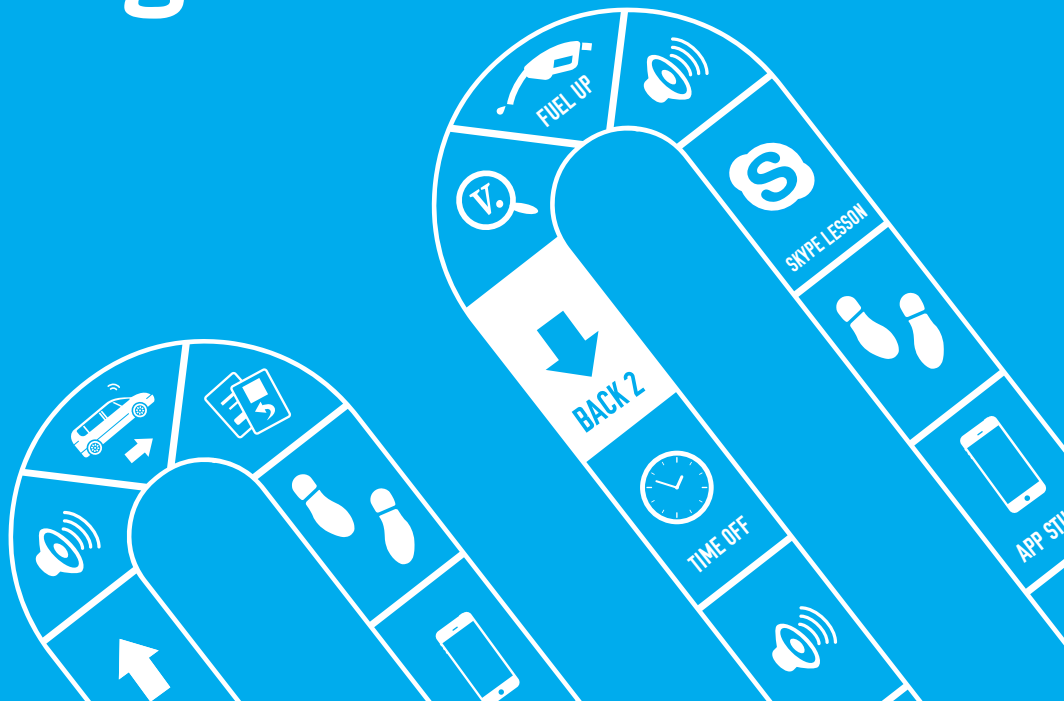
09

THIS MONTH

2 STEPS FORWARD, 1 STEP BACK.
LOSING LANGUAGE PROGRESS
& HOW TO BOUNCE BACK

Two steps forward, one step back:

Making progress in your language, and then losing it.



Welcome back!

In the previous Inner Circle, you learned that you can never be fully prepared when you immerse yourself in a language. No matter how much you study, new words will pop up. People will speak faster than you're used to. And you'll realize that the only way to succeed is to learn on the fly.

This time, we're covering the "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back" principle. Or, making progress in your language, and then losing it – either because you took a break or because life just got busy.

And of course, how to bounce back into your language learning routine.

I'll admit. This is something that's happened to me these past month.

In fact, this happens to every single learner. Life happens. Schedules get busy.

And not only is your recently earned language progress lost, but concepts you once knew – proper verb conjugations, words, and so on – get lost as well.

You'll find out why my trip to Italy set my Italian progress back, despite all the improvements I thought I made while on vacation.

More specifically, you'll learn...

1

Why you lose progress when you take a break from language

2

Why it's hard to get back into a routine after a break

3

How you can make a comeback and maintain your learning routines

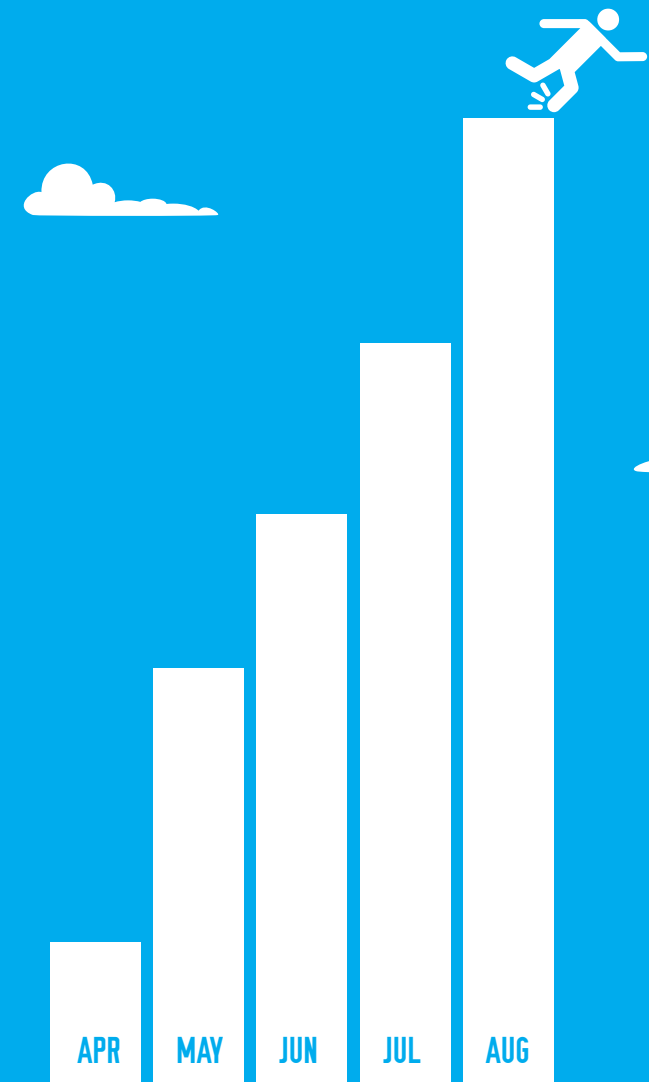
So, prior to the trip, or a little over a month ago, my Italian conversation reached a maximum of 25 minutes.

All of this is based on the timed tests with my tutor. My goal for August was to hit a solid 30 minutes. That didn't happen because of the Italy vacation. A passable excuse. No big deal.

Surely I could come back and hit it this month? Right?

Nope. I'm down to 20 minutes based on my timed conversation test. Down from 25 minutes. Talk about taking two steps forward and one step back.

How could this happen? Ironically, the trip to Italy, the country whose language I'm studying, is the root of the problem, believe it or not. But how? Let's get into it...



1

Why you lose progress when you take a break from language



Was i really taking a break from Italian?

Well, not really. But arguably, I was taking a two-week break from my lessons, textbooks and sessions with my Skype and in-person tutors.

With my tutors, the goal was to maximize conversation time while picking up new words and grammar. Italy was completely different. I wasn't thinking about maximizing conversation. I was in pick-up mode and I was learning on the spot. I was getting used to real-life speech. I was learning how to order food at shops and restaurants.

It sounds like progress was still made though, right? Sure. However, when compared to what I've been doing with my tutors, it's a whole different learning routine and angle.

So that's two different learning routines. And learning with tutors and being in Italy are two different situations.

If you think of learning routines as exercising a muscle, you can get a clear image of how progress is lost despite your efforts.

- > When you train a muscle, it gets stronger
- > When you neglect it to train another muscle, the first one will get weak

Now, apply that to language learning:

- > If you're focusing on improving your speaking skills and have a set routine going – for example – you're speaking with a tutor, your speaking skills improve
- > If you take a break, your progress will plateau and eventually go downhill
- > If you decide to scale down on your speaking routine and focus on grammar, you're exercising a different muscle. Your speaking skills will get weaker at the cost of your grammar gains

That's exactly why the Italian progress I made with my tutors suffered. I took a break from my Italian sessions and neglected my learning routines. And I took on Italian in real-life.

Of course, taking on Italian in Italy sounds a lot more practical, but this serves as an example of how progress is lost.

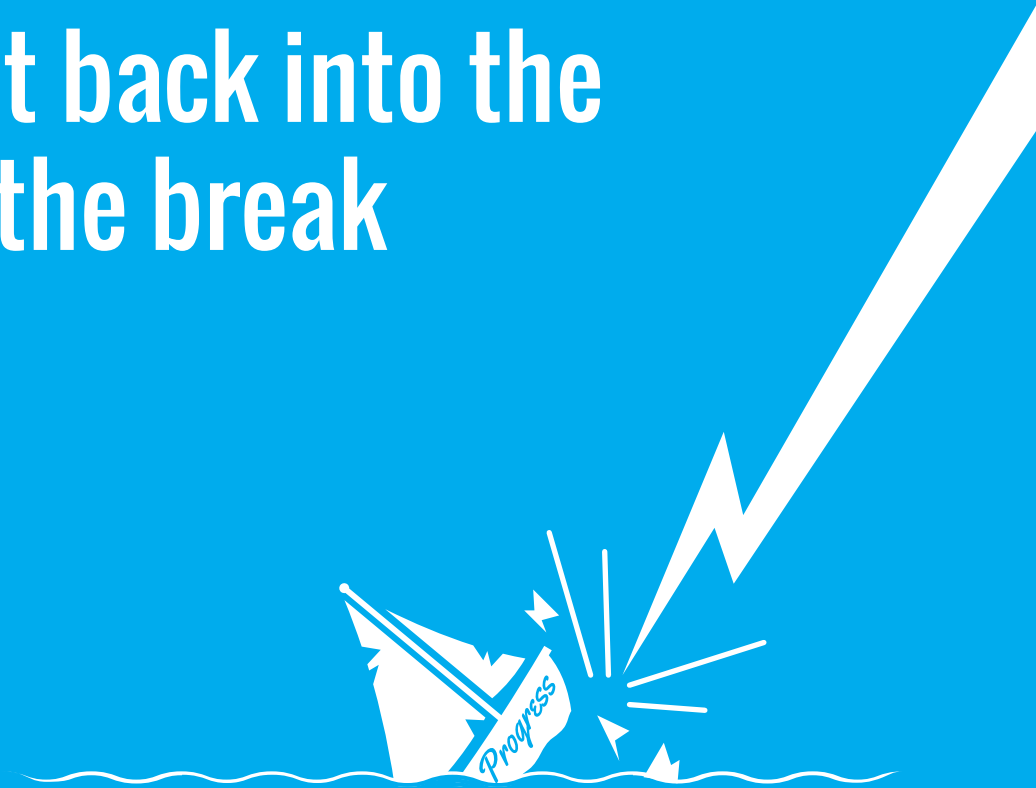
That being said, it's been over one month since I got back. Wouldn't that be enough time to get back into Italian and at least maintain 25 minutes of conversation?

Well, dear Inner Circle readers, many learners will agree that it's hard to get back into a routine after it's been broken. Especially for over a month.



2

Why it's hard to get back into the routine after the break



Have you ever taken a break from a language and found it hard to bounce back? Why does this happen? Usually, it's one of 3 reasons.

The first reason is something we just covered: comparing routines to muscles.

Sticking to a routine is also essentially working on your consistency or routine muscle. The longer you keep at it, the stronger your ability to be consistent gets.

When you stop doing a routine, it becomes harder to come back and stick with it. Your routine muscle gets weak. Which is why I couldn't really get back into it this month.

The second reason is something we can all relate to.

It's life. Life happens. In my case, I simply had no time.

Right after the vacation, we moved, my kids started school, and work piled up.

It was a perfect storm that sank my Italian learning ship. I ended up skipping several tutor sessions, which may also explain my dip to 20 minutes.

And with the move, my regular daily routines have changed as well. With the new apartment comes new rooms, new travel routes and different schedules – gone are my old learning routines of studying in my living room at 9PM.

My computer is in a different room.

My kids need help with homework in the evening now.

The old study spot I was used to isn't in the new apartment.

While it might sound minor, time and location are crucial to setting a routine. When one of these changes, a routine can easily fall apart.

And this goes into the third reason. New routines get in the way of old routines.

So, now that my kids are in school and I'm helping them with homework in the evenings, this is becoming a new evening routine.

This definitely affects my Italian studies.

As I mentioned earlier, the different routines in Italy affected the routines I'd set with my tutors.

And if you're taking a break, you're still breaking an old routine by doing something new – in other words – not learning language.

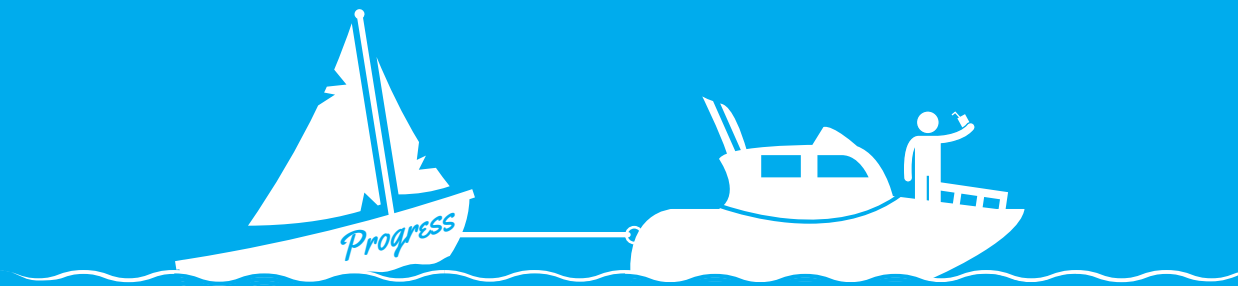
But, enough of the bad news. Just because you take a break doesn't mean you'll fail at your language. We all do it. Breaks are not bad. In fact, that can be an Inner Circle topic in itself!

Let's get into the final point.



3

**How you can make a comeback and
maintain your learning routines**



Coming back isn't easy when you have a heavy learning routine.

In my case, I had....

- > **Weekday Mornings:**
30-minute sessions with the Innovative Language 101 App
- > **Monday-Thursday Nights:**
1 hour of self-study with ItalianPod101
- > **Friday Nights:**
2-hour sessions with my Skype tutor
- > **Saturdays:**
1-hour sessions with my in-person tutor

Once again, similar to exercise, the best way to make a comeback and maintain is to start light. And once again, we come back to the ever recurring Inner Circle topic of adjusting your routines.

My adjusted routine will be...

- > **Weekday Mornings:**
30-minute sessions with the Innovative Language 101 App. I will keep this as it was easy to maintain.
- > **Monday-Thursday Nights:**
30 minutes of self-study with ItalianPod101 lessons. (*adjusted*)
- > **Friday Nights:**
1-hour sessions with my Skype tutor. (*adjusted*)
- > **Saturdays:**
1-hour sessions with my in-person tutor. This is also easy to maintain.

As you can see, I'm drastically cutting down on my self-study. That's a hard habit to maintain because it requires willpower and self-control. Learning with a tutor is easy because I'm held accountable. And learning with

ItalianPod101 on the Innovative Language 101 App on the train is easy as well.

So, remember: in order to bounce back, you need to know 2 things:

- > Realize that you must start small. Create new, lighter learning routines that you can actually maintain.
- > Remember, it should be small and easy enough to get you back into the language.

If you'd like to adjust your learning routines, I've provided you with a weekly plan to help you arrange your routines. You can find it on the last page of this Inner Circle Edition.

Now, whether my routine will work or not is a topic for the next Inner Circle!

So stay tuned for next month.



Goal-wise, I can't promise 30 minutes this month, so I'll aim for 27 minutes. Regaining my 25-minute mark shouldn't be hard with enough review.

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

I'd also like to know: have you ever taken a break from language? Why did it happen? Did you find it hard to get back into a routine?

Be sure to leave a comment or send me an email at:

inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com

To your fluency,
Peter Galante
Founder, InnovativeLanguage.com








Have you ever taken a break from language? you find it hard to get back into a routine?

Send me an email at:

INNER.CIRCLE@INNOVATIVELANGUAGE.COM



YOUR WEEKLY LANGUAGE LEARNING ROUTINE

 M	 Tu	 W	 Th	 F	 Sa	 Su

CURRENT MONTHLY GOAL

DATE