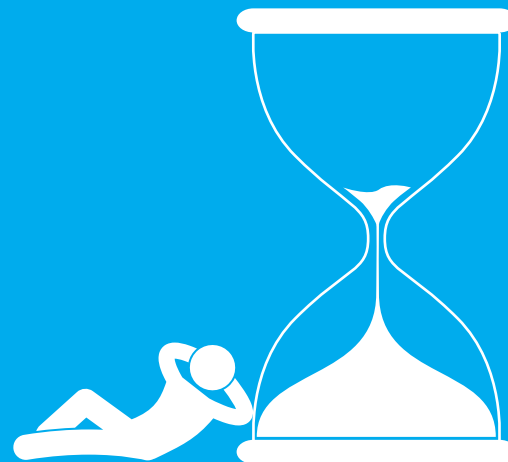# OCTOBER

INNER CIRCLE

10

THIS MONTH
THE POWER OF A DEADLINE
AS A STRATEGY TO MASTER
A LANGUAGE

innoVativeLANGUAGE.COM

Most of us do it wrong. We wait until the last minute to get something done.

Welcome back!

In the previous Inner Circle, you learned how to bounce back from losing progress. Life happens. Schedules change. And progress gets derailed. All language learners experience this.

Now that you know how to bounce back, it's time to ramp things up. **This time, we're talking about the power of deadlines to help you learn a language.** They're motivating. They're effective. Successful language learners use them all time.

Yet most of us do it wrong. We wait 'til the last minute to get something done.

In this Inner Circle, you'll find out why deadlines work and how I'm focusing on deadlines as a learning strategy.

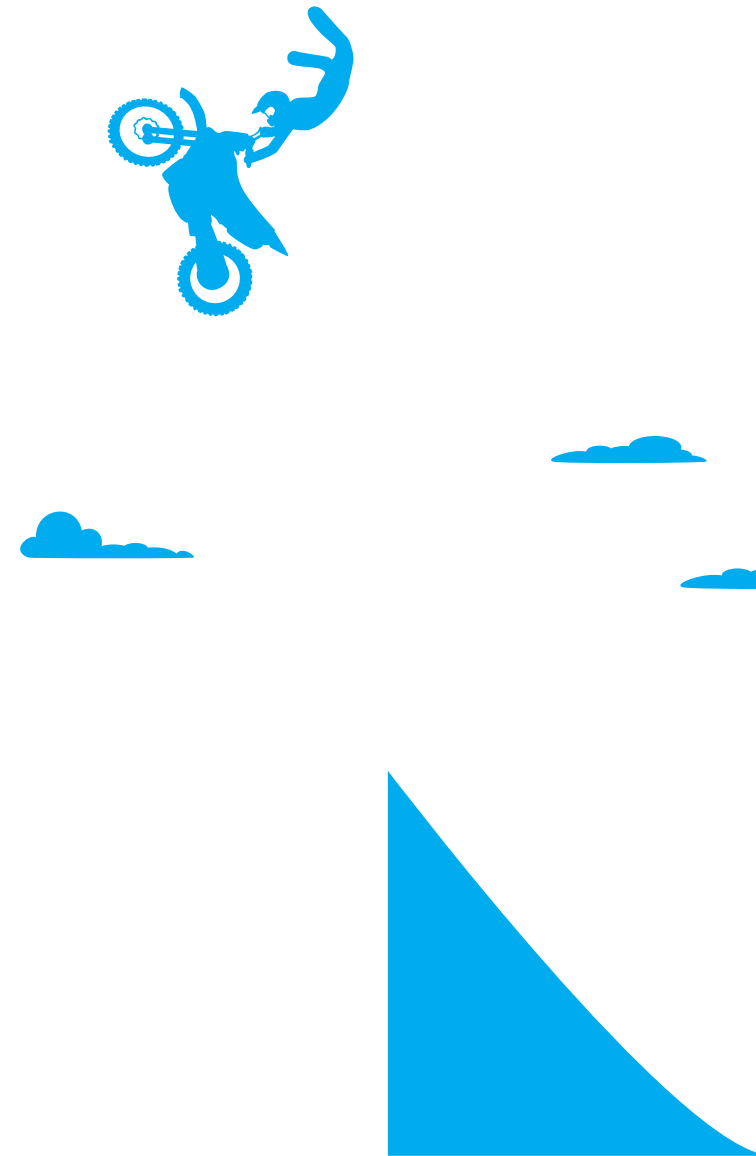**More specifically, you'll learn...**

1 Why successful learners use deadlines to ramp up progress

2 How I'm ramping up my Italian learning to meet my deadline

3 How you can set your own, achievable deadlines

So, Why Deadlines Exactly?

Back in January, I set a yearly goal of 30 minutes of Italian conversation. If you remember, I asked you to set a yearly goal as well. Then, we started setting monthly goals that'd bring us to the yearly goal. You can go back and re-listen to that lesson.

But Now It's The End Of October

I lost progress. Life got in the way. I promised 27 minutes as my October goal. I only got up to 25 minutes of Italian conversation this month.

So, that leaves me with 2 months to reach my goal by December 31st. And we all know that time flies. I *feel* the pressure already.

I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound
they make as they fly by.

DOUGLAS ADAMS

This Is Where Deadlines Come In

A DEADLINE IS THE LATEST TIME BY WHICH SOMETHING MUST BE COMPLETED.

FOR EXAMPLE

A teacher assigns you homework due by Friday

You must file your taxes by April 15th

Yes, deadlines add "pressure," but not the *"oh no, I'll never achieve my goal"* pressure that most non-deadline-using learners have.

They add the *"let's get this done"* pressure. The good kind.

AND THIS BRINGS US TO THE FIRST POINT ›

1

Why Successful Learners Use Deadlines To Ramp Up Progress

IN OTHER WORDS, WHY DEADLINES ACTUALLY WORK.

Before we get into the successful part, we need to know why most people are awful at deadlines. For example, if I gave an assignment - *learn 100 new words by November 30th* - 95% of learners would wait until the last day or last few days to memorize all 100 words. Why?

Parkinson's law: Work expands to fill the time available for its completion.

You have a whole month, so between receiving the task and finishing it, you "use" or "procrastinate" the whole month. It's a lot of time, you think, after all.

The downside of this with language learning?

> Cramming in the final days guarantees you'll forget the words soon after.

> Great for tests, bad for long-term memory and actual mastery.

> Language learning is a long-term process.

So, why do deadlines work?

Deadlines are clear indications of whether you reach your goal or not.

Either you know all 100 words by November 30th or you don't. Either you reach it or you fail. The possibility of reaching it is very motivating.

And ultimately:

> When a teacher assigns you a project due next Friday

> When a boss assigns you a task due tomorrow at 2PM

> Or when your taxes are due April 15th

It has to be done. There's pressure and motivation. So it gets done.

Successful learners take advantage of this. Except, to avoid extra pressure, they start with **small goals** and use the entire time available. Why? Small goals are not overbearing. Little to no pressure. They can be easily reached.

This is why I often remind you to set small, measurable and actionable goals with a deadline. With the 100 word assignment, you could easily split it up into 25 words a week or 5 words per weekday. And that's easier than studying all 100 the night before.

Once you've reached your goal by the deadline, you can start a new one, and aim a little higher. And make even more progress.

2

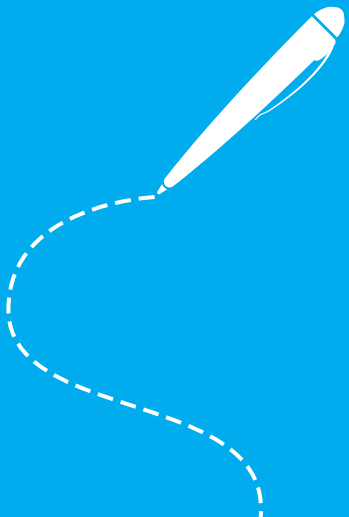# How I Am Ramping Up My Italian Learning To Meet My Deadline

Using the power of motivation from deadlines, I've been able to bounce back from 20 minutes to 25 minutes. December 31st isn't far away, after all.

However, this month, I've implemented 3 new methods that really ramped up my Italian progress. Perhaps they can help you too.
And the first method is super simple...

Writing Every Day

The goal is to maximize my Italian speaking time. So why writing, you wonder? Well, writing allows you and I to actively engage with language. This is something that can't be done by listening or reading. Plus, Italian speaking is not too far off from writing, so what I write can easily be used in conversation.

Let me explain the process:

A) Every day, I'll write a journal entry in Italian. Now, because I'm talking about my day... like *"Today I went shopping. I played with the kids. And I didn't get enough sleep last night."* I'm essentially writing about things that I talk about in real life anyway. This is useful for conversations.

B) When I don't know how to express something, I'll use Google Translate or a dictionary to help me out. As a result, I pick up new Italian words, phrases and grammar and increase my range of expression.

C) This process is great because it fits into my schedule and I can take 5-10 minutes out anytime to write.

D) As you might expect, there will be lots of mistakes in the writing. Google Translate isn't perfect. And this is where ItalianPod101 comes in.

E) When I'm done, I send it over to my ItalianPod101 teacher for corrections. By the time she replies, I'll be already working on a new entry.

F) Finally I receive the corrected versions from her, which I can use during conversations with my Skype and in-person tutors.

And overall, I have 7 days of corrected speaking material I can put to use. This really adds up. This is how I was able to reach 25 minutes.

Now, the second method is related to the first one...

Premium Plus
My Teacher

My Teacher is a brand new Premium PLUS tool we have on our 101 language sites. It puts a learner into direct contact with a teacher. You can contact them, submit your writing and a recording of yourself speaking and get feedback and corrections on them. And they provide you with a personalized learning course based on your learning level and assessment test.
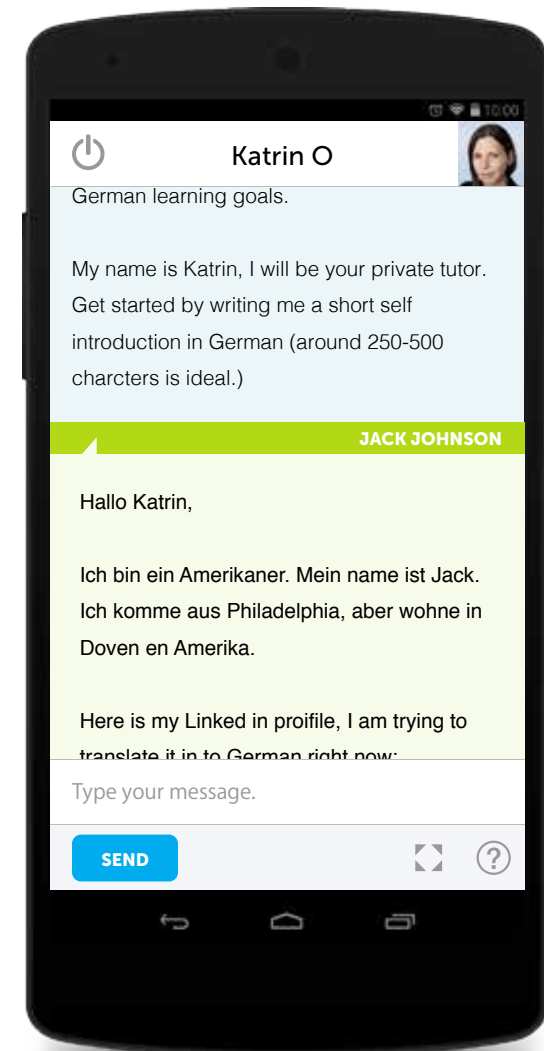
Basically, any language question or problem you'll ever have, they'll answer it. It's 1-on-1 learning. This is how I submit my daily writing to my ItalianPod101 teacher.

It takes about 24 hours for her to respond, and by then I'm working on new material. So as you see, there's a cycle here:

Write a journal entry > Receive Corrections > Use the corrected Italian in conversation.

Except, I have 7 days worth of speaking material on my hands. That's a lot of speaking material that I can now use.

And the third method is a really popular one with our users....

Katrin O

German learning goals.

My name is Katrin, I will be your private tutor. Get started by writing me a short self introduction in German (around 250-500 charcters is ideal.)

JACK JOHNSON

Hallo Katrin,

Ich bin ein Amerikaner. Mein name ist Jack. Ich komme aus Philadelphia, aber wohne in Doven en Amerika.

Here is my Linked in proifile, I am trying to translate it in to German right now:

Type your message.

SEND

The Progress
Tracking Dashboard

Given that I'm pressed for time, I don't want to worry about what to study next. This is where the ItalianPod101 Dashboard comes in. It's available on all 101 language sites.

The Dashboard does 2 crucial things:

> **Tracks my learning progress** with every ItalianPod101 lesson I finish. This is important as seeing my progress is motivating. Plus, I know how many lessons I have left in a series, and...

> **It tells me what lessons to study next.** Know how most learners get stuck? They don't know what to study next. The Dashboard feeds me the next lessons seamlessly. All I have to do is complete them.

Writing daily, getting corrected and using the Dashboard - all 3 of these methods are things you can do right now to ramp up your language progress if you have a deadline in mind.

LET'S GET INTO THE THIRD POINT >

NEXT LESSON

REVIEW

COMPLETE

IN PROGRESS

3

How You Can Effectively Use The Deadline

THIS IS THE PART THAT SEPARATES SUCCESSFUL
LEARNERS FROM UNSUCCESSFUL ONES.

Remember, It's OK to miss your goal by a bit.

It might mean that the goal was a bit heavy and you need to go lighter. And as I mentioned earlier, unsuccessful learners...

> Don't set goals because they feel it's too much pressure...

> Or they set them and forget them...

> Or, even worse, they wait until the last minute.

So, again, this is why we suggest that your monthly goals are...

...small, measurable, actionable and have a deadline.

Here's what this means. Let's go with the "learn 100 words by November 30th" example ⟩

Small, meaning that this goal is very realistic and doable. Learning 100 words in 30 days is a very light goal as opposed to saying "I want to be fluent this month." If you do 5 words per week day, for 4 weeks, you'll easily master 100 words in 1 month. No serious pressure.

Measurable, meaning that you'll know if you reached 100 words or not. These goals are a lot more definite than something vague like "I want to be fluent."

Actionable, meaning you'll know exactly when, where and how to do it. For example...
> I'll learn 100 words using the Top 100 Core Word List and Flashcards.
> I'll study 5 words per weekday, for 4 weeks until November 30th.
> I'll study for 10 minutes a day at 9PM on my laptop in my room.

Finally, the deadline is the final indicator of whether you reached your goal or not. It ramps up your progress because either you can learn 100 words by next month and move on, or you can spend forever on those 100 words and never actually get anywhere. Simply put, a deadline brings your goal to reality faster.

If you follow this approach with your monthly goals, then you're already effectively putting deadlines to use.
If not…well, there are 2 months left in the year and you have a bit of time to squeeze out some extra language learning progress.

For next month, I'm aiming for 28 minutes of Italian conversation. That'll leave me with 1 month and 2 minutes to go.

What about you?

Don't forget your monthly goal for November. 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: do you use deadlines for your language learning? Or have you shied away from them as most learners do?

Be sure to leave a comment or send me an email at inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com.

To your fluency,
Peter Galante
Founder, InnovativeLanguage.com

Do you use deadlines for your language learning?

Send me an email at:
INNER.CIRCLE@INNOVATIVELANGUAGE.COM