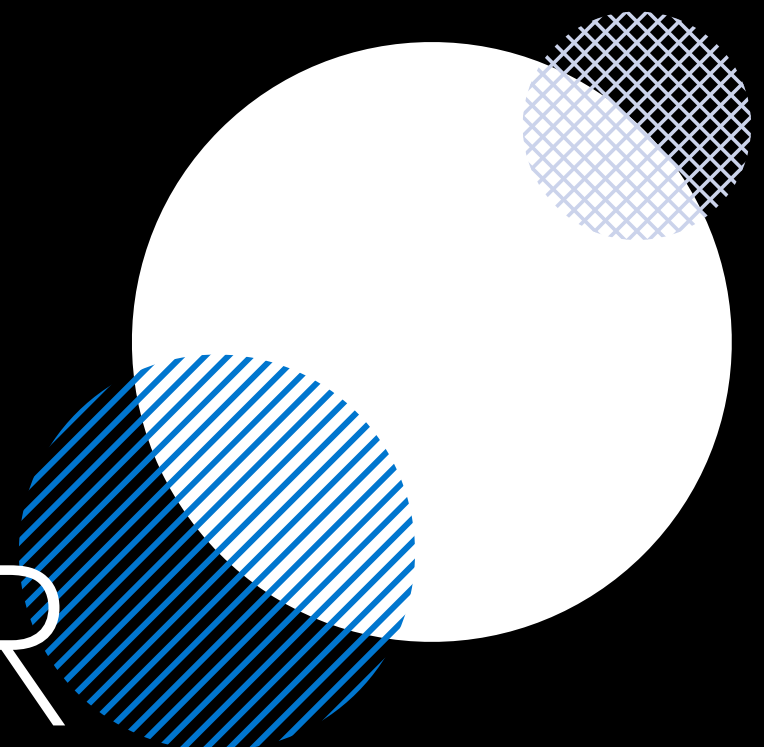
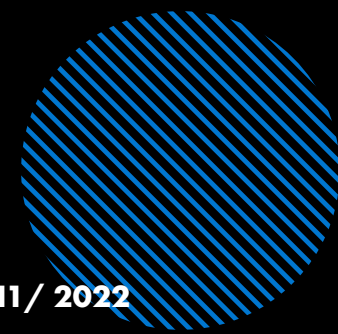


An abstract graphic in the top right corner featuring a large white circle, a smaller circle with a blue diagonal line pattern, and two small circles with a white grid pattern. The background is black.

INNER CIRCLE

NOVEMBER

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#11 / 2022

This month

Can Busy People Actually Learn
a Language?

innovative LANGUAGE.COM

WELCOME BACK TO THE INNER CIRCLE

Last time, you learned about the power of speaking out loud, recording yourself, and listening to yourself speak the language as a way to practice input and output.

And I set a goal of fifteen minutes of Hindi conversation. I barely squeezed by. November and December are my busiest work months, so there were quite a few days when I'd be studying from 9:30 PM to 10:30 PM at night.

I'm guessing most of you can relate. We're all always kind of busy, right? It's probably a big part of why many people shy away from trying to learn, even if they're interested.



PART 1: ARE YOU TOO BUSY TO LEARN A LANGUAGE? THE MINDSET NEEDED

INNER CIRCLE 3

You may be wondering whether busy adults can learn a new language.

I want to say yes, but it's more of a yes or no, depending on the person.

It's not impossible. I've done it. Many of our members are busy and are learning with our system. But it depends on the person because of their mindset.

Either you think you have time, or you don't.

Either you think you can learn or you can't.

And I think many of our members fall into the group of knowing they can learn and can find the time. If someone thinks they can't learn or they don't have time, they won't even try.

But if you're busy and still want to learn, you can always find 5 or 10 minutes a day, like on your commute. You can even find a passive way to learn, like listening to an audio lesson.

We talk quite a bit about ways to start learning in the Inner Circle; setting small measurable goals, piggybacking, the two-minute rule, and more. All of which you can use to build a language-learning routine even if you're busy.

But for busy people who say they don't have the time, you can show them the easiest way to start, and they still won't do it. It comes down to mindset, but you can also say it also depends on your mental bandwidth too.

Think back to university and the few days before exams, when it got really busy, and you had to stop everything to study.

You were probably thinking, *"If I can just get through studying this week and take the test, then next week, I can finally start relaxing and doing other things."*

If someone asked you to do something that week, you'd say no. But... you might still have taken thirty minutes to watch TV and relax, right?

There's nothing wrong with that. It's an issue of mental bandwidth.

Technically, you can find time if you try, but you don't have the mental bandwidth to take on an activity because you are overwhelmed. The test, or whatever else is occupying your mind, is taking up all that bandwidth. In your mind, you don't have time, even if there are thirty minutes you could use.

How do I manage my time? Honestly...

Looking at my phone's app usage... It doesn't look like I know how to manage my time. I just sacrifice a lot of

sleep. I think it comes down to — I set that hard deadline, I procrastinate a bit, but at the end of the day, I end up getting it done.

And I've always been this way - procrastinate but follow through.

That being said, I do have "rules" that have shaped my mindset and helped me reach these language goals. And if you've been paying attention to our Inner Circle, you've heard them many times.



PART 2: HOW TO DEVELOP THE MINDSET FOR MORE TIME

When you're too busy, it feels like you're overwhelmed. It feels like you don't have control of your time. But there are a few things you can do to gain some control over your time, get some breathing room, and maybe even learn a bit of language.

So, here are my go-to rules.

First, I always set small measurable monthly goals.

We talk a lot about that here. And this spills over into small, daily routines, like learning with HindiPod101 for 10, 15, or 20 minutes a day.

The mindset behind that is just being realistic with goals and what you can do. Because if you're busy, you may not have the time or energy for an hour or two, but you can handle ten minutes. This is a strict rule, especially when starting out with new goals and languages, and I

developed this mindset through... failure.

Failed goals. Failed New Year's Resolutions year after year.

I started thinking I was doing something wrong. The big goals weren't working out for me... and once I started aiming for smaller, more realistic goals than "I want to be fluent this year," I started hitting goals and progressing. Check out our earlier Inner Circle lessons on setting small, measurable, monthly goals to learn how to do this, too.

Second, lowering your goals and expectations is okay when things get super busy.

Again, that's something we talk a lot about here. You'll hear me do it. If I didn't hit my November goal, I would adjust and reach it in December, and that's fine. So, it's

not a big issue for me, although it used to be.

How did I develop this mindset? Well...

Each day, I would write down all the goals I wanted to achieve. It ended up being a lot. And not being able to cross off many things on that list was very frustrating. So by understanding my limitations and saying, "I can't achieve all of these things," it made sense to reduce the list. And this actually gives you clarity and helps you achieve what you write down.

Third, it's okay to shift priorities and put language on pause if life gets in the way.

Like with that last point, you can always come back and reach your goal a little later.

Fourth, think about the routine you use to slow down and relax. In my case, making coffee in the morning, which takes an excessive amount of time. Another way is by going to a cafe and doing nothing for a bit. You can

sit there on your own, even if it's just 10 or 15 minutes. Also, taking some time to just read or write makes you feel like time has slowed down, and that lets your mind settle down. If you're settled, you start feeling in control. At that point, you have some mental bandwidth. You can start doing some time management and plan your week out. You can put in a few minutes of language learning. But, if you don't slow down and if you continue to feel overwhelmed, you could have the easiest possible way to learn a language, and you still wouldn't do it.

Fifth, I like to have an on-and-off mindset, which helps a lot. Kind of like a light switch. Think about those light switches where they have one, two, three, four, five, and six light switches all lined up. You turn five off and leave one on... and just focus on it.

This was the hardest skill for me to develop: The ability to just shut off work when leaving work or compartmentalize a problem. Because if you can lock in on one thing, productivity shoots through the roof. But we're always thinking about something else. So think

about six light switches - the ability to shut off the other five and have one on and be able to switch like this. This is such a powerful technique.

When you're super busy, and life happens, I think it's fine to shift priorities, set goals aside, or aim lower.

Now let's talk about goals. My small, monthly, measurable goal is 18 minutes.

The deadline is December 31st. There's one month left to go in the year.

Let us know what your measurable monthly goal is.

Email us at inner.circle@innovativelanguage.com, and stay tuned for the next Inner Circle.