



How to #3: Learn Welsh the SSiW Way

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Say Something in Welsh (SSiW) is a very different way of learning, so you may take a short while to get used to it. Be patient – it's worth it. Here are a few tips so that you can really get the benefit of SSiW right from the start.

1. **Beginners:** Where to start is easy. Start at lesson 1, and work through.
2. **Experienced Learners:** It's just as simple: Start at lesson 1, and work through! Here's why:
 - a. SSiW is very different from any other course you've ever done. If you can get used to the course while covering material that you already use in conversation, then you will hit the new material flying. It will make things a whole lot easier.
 - b. The Welsh we teach may differ slightly from what you've learnt previously. To start with you may find this off-putting. Don't worry – you will soon get used to it, and it will increase the amount of other people's Welsh that you are able to understand.
 - c. Finally, however much Welsh you know, unless you use it a lot, there's a good chance that it's just not quite on the tip of your tongue. With SSiW you use what you learn naturally from the start. Even advanced learners may struggle to keep up in lesson one. Don't panic – you haven't forgotten your Welsh, you are just experiencing “real life conversation panic” in a much safer environment. This is a good thing, honest!
3. **Do a little bit every day.** We recommend 20 minutes, but you can do as much or as little as you want, as long as it is done often. It does take a bit of work to find time for regular learning / practice, but there are plenty of tips on “How To #4: Make Time to Learn”. Many people find that it helps to download the mp3 lessons onto an mp3 player (you can get them for as little as £15 in big supermarkets), so that you can listen as you do something else, like gardening, running or ironing.
4. **Lesson Format:** We will tell you something in English, pause, and then you will hear it said twice in Welsh. You **must** try to say the Welsh in the pause, but you don't need to get it right in order to learn. In fact...
5. **Don't try to get everything perfect.** In fact, don't try to get *anything* perfect. If you were somewhere close with what you said in Welsh, congratulate yourself and move on. The course is called Say Something in Welsh, not Say Something Perfect in Welsh – you will learn far more from saying things wrong than from staying quiet, or pausing for 5 minutes while you check your grammar books. Relax, laugh at your mistakes (especially if you have said something really odd!), and be pleased with anything you get right. Enjoy the process.
6. **Don't make written notes.** You will not take your notes to a conversation session, or to the

pub, so don't get used to relying on anything other than your innate ability to speak a language (and yes, if you already speak one, for instance English, you have that ability). If you are really stuck with what sounds are in a word after a few goes through a lesson, there is a list of vocabulary included on each lesson page. Use it as little as possible.

7. Re-do lessons as little as possible. In a perfect world, you won't ever go back over a lesson, but very few people are able to stop themselves. The course is designed to practice everything that you've learnt in a lesson over the following lessons, so if you're just not quite getting the Welsh out in time, or having difficulty remembering certain phrases, then just plough on. Of course, if you suddenly realise you fell asleep, or weren't really listening to the lesson, then re-do it. But the chances are, if you were saying the Welsh in the pauses, even if it wasn't 100% right, then the material is in the box, and the practice over the next few lessons will make it settle in nicely!

8. Don't be a perfectionist! If you know the words but keep getting mutations wrong, don't worry – they will come. Move on! (BTW If you don't know what a mutation is, don't worry. Most from-birth Welsh speakers don't either.)

9. Ah, yes, mutations, or any other grammar. It doesn't matter, we don't specifically teach it. You'll hear correct Welsh, and you will naturally use it yourself from constantly hearing it. If you mutate wrongly, no-one will misunderstand you, become insulted or confused, so go with the flow, and don't worry about it. If you do worry, they'll be frustrating little b***ers, so let them look after themselves!

10. Take advantage of the community. If there's something you want to know, something you're not sure about, something that interests you, or something that you would like to celebrate, then you need to connect with other Welsh learners. Do that on our forum. When you're ready to use your Welsh (or if you're not sure if you're ready yet!), come and find a practice partner, ask about local practice sessions, or just test the waters to see whether you are ready for the big launch yet (Tip: You probably are!)

Summary: If you are frightened by all the above suggestions, or can't be bothered to read them, then here is the briefest summary:

- Enjoy yourself;
- Congratulate yourself;
- Don't try to be perfect;
- Accept that sometimes you'll get stuck;

Once you can make your own sentences in Welsh, then you are a Welsh speaker. From then on in, you just need to increase the range of things you can say.

Enjoy your new language!

Iestyn

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