




# THE SECRET AGENT'S HANDBOOK OF LANGUAGE CHALLENGES



EN



# TACKLE UP TO 50+1 LANGUAGE CHALLENGES IN YOUR TRAINING TO BECOME A TOP AGENT

## DEAR AGENT,



As an international agent you are going to visit new places and foreign lands. It will be challenging. A good agent needs to be confident about his/her language skills to ensure never to reveal their identity! Therefore you will need to be able to speak foreign languages as fluently as possible. This handbook has been developed to help you become a top agent.

The language challenges contained in the following pages mostly relate to authentic, everyday communication tasks that agents need to be prepared for.

Research has shown that some learners hesitate to take risks and do not always take opportunities to practise a language they are learning outside the language classroom.

Real-life communication in a foreign language is not stress-free, especially when you are on a mission. It may involve making mistakes, being misunderstood, misunderstanding others, taking on a different identity, changing the way you use language.



This secret agent's handbook will prepare you for these situations. Taking as many language challenges as possible will, all importantly, help to boost your confidence on a mission.

Good luck, agent!

### EDL chief agent

Your agent code name:

Your real name:

Agent's division/school/institution:

Finger prints:

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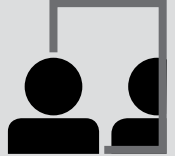
# YOUR MISSION

Take as many challenges as possible from the list provided.

Write in the corresponding fields each time you undertake a challenge.

You are free to use the space provided at the end of the document to propose your own additional challenges.

Count the challenges you have undertaken. Once you have completed at least 20 you are eligible to receive a certificate from the EDL website [edl.ceml.at/languagechallenge](http://edl.ceml.at/languagechallenge).



**Attention: this handbook will not self-destruct after you have completed all the challenges!**



# WHY 50+1 CHALLENGES?



First and foremost the challenges should be fun! We call them challenges as they encourage you to do something new - that you probably would not normally do and indeed to go a little beyond your comfort

zone. Some involve an element of risk – but as the saying goes – nothing ventured, nothing gained!

The 50+1 challenges offer a varied range of possibilities, which you can pick and choose from according to whether you are applying them on a mission, in a classroom setting,

on your own, or with friends or family. Some are more difficult than others (with the most difficult indicated by an icon) but the majority are intended to be flexible and adaptable to different ages, contexts, languages and levels of language proficiency.

We hope that you will be inspired by some of the challenges and, as a result, will develop your own which you are then welcome to add to the list.

# THE 51<sup>ST</sup> CHALLENGE

The '51<sup>st</sup> challenge' is a special one, where you can truly unleash your creativity and show to the world (or at least a small part of it!) what you can do in one or more foreign language/s. It is simply called 'What do you dare to do in a foreign language?'

# 50 + 1

In this challenge, you are invited to post a short video clip (no longer than 30 seconds) to the European Day of Languages' website around this motif. It can be based on one or more of the challenges in the handbook, or can be entirely your own idea.

However, please do not do anything that will endanger either your own or anyone else's health in the process! A video of the most creative entries will be compiled on the European Day of Languages' website.



# CHALLENGES INVOLVING SEVERAL LANGUAGES

1. I greeted someone (e.g. saying "hello", etc.) or even said 'I love you!' in 5 different languages within 1 minute.



speaking

Date accomplished

Signature

2. I identified 5 languages (correctly!) in the *Which language is it?* game on the European Day of Languages' website.



listening

Date accomplished

Signature

[edl.ecml.at/whichlanguage](http://edl.ecml.at/whichlanguage)

3. I counted from 1-10 in 3 different languages within 1 minute.



Date accomplished

Signature

4. I greeted 3 people in their own language (which is different from your first language!).



Date accomplished

Signature

5. I wrote a word in 3 languages which use different alphabets (such as Greek, Cyrillic and Latin).



writing

Date accomplished

Signature

6. I learned how to sign 2 words and spell my name in a sign language (International Sign or a national sign language).



signing

Date accomplished

Signature

7. I identified 5 words in my own language that are the same as/borrowed from other languages.



reading

Date accomplished

Signature

8. I wrote down my favourite colour/sport/hobby/animal in 3 different languages.



Date accomplished

Signature

9. I identified and wrote down 3 words in my own language that mean very different things in other languages (false friends!).



Date accomplished

Signature

10. I found a polyglot who speaks at least 5 languages and discovered why he/she speaks so many languages.



Date accomplished

Signature

11. I listened to 5 songs in different languages.



Date accomplished

Signature

## CHALLENGES INVOLVING AT LEAST ONE FOREIGN LANGUAGE

12. I wrote down my 3 favourite words in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

13. I read a comic book in a foreign language.



difficult!

Date accomplished

Signature

14. I introduced myself in a video using a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

15. I made a phone/skype call in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

19. I listened to an audio book in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature



16. I switched the language of my phone or tablet to a foreign language for one day (or longer!).



Date accomplished

Signature

20. I listened to a radio station in a foreign language for one hour.



Date accomplished

Signature

17. I read a magazine or news article in a foreign language and summarized it for a friend.



Date accomplished

Signature



21. I posted a message on an online forum or social media platform in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

18. I sent a text message in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

22. I watched a movie in a foreign language (with subtitles).



Date accomplished

Signature

23. I watched a movie in a foreign language (without subtitles).



Date accomplished

Signature



27. I went to a karaoke session and sang a song in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature



24. I met a new person who has a different first language and spoke to them in their language.



Date accomplished

Signature



28. Together with a friend I wrote the words to a song/rap in a different language.



Date accomplished

Signature



25. I used a dictionary, or another source, to look up and learn 10 new words in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

29. I used a recipe in a foreign language to prepare a food dish (without burning the kitchen down/poisoning anyone!).



Date accomplished

Signature

26. I watched my favourite sport on television in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

30. I translated a song in a foreign language into my own language.



Date accomplished

Signature



31. I completed a quiz in a foreign language.

Date accomplished

Signature



35. I borrowed (and read!) a foreign language book from a library.

Date accomplished

Signature



32. I told a joke in a foreign language (and someone laughed!).

Date accomplished

Signature



36. I downloaded (and used!) a free language learning app on my phone/tablet.  
(see [www.ecml.at/ICT](http://www.ecml.at/ICT))

Date accomplished

Signature



33. I wrote a message to congratulate someone on a special occasion (birthday, passing an exam etc.) in a foreign language.

Date accomplished

Signature



37. When on holiday in another country, I used the language/s of the country to greet people/order food and drinks/perform other everyday tasks.

Date accomplished

Signature



34. I told a short story in a foreign language.

Date accomplished

Signature



38. I told a friend about the language challenge in a foreign language.

Date accomplished

Signature



39. I wrote a short postcard to a friend sending a holiday greeting in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

40. I used the *Self-evaluate your language skills* tool to help assess my level of proficiency in a language/languages I know. [edl.ecml.at/languageetool](http://edl.ecml.at/languageetool)



Date accomplished

Signature

41. I completed the *EDL Brain game* using the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets in less than 5 minutes. [edl.ecml.at/braingame](http://edl.ecml.at/braingame)



Date accomplished

Signature

42. I kept a journal in a foreign language for one week.



Date accomplished

Signature

43. I played a 'speak dating' game with foreign languages.



Date accomplished

Signature

44. I participated in one of the many taster courses offered around the European Day of Languages to discover a new language.



Date accomplished

Signature

45. I memorized and recited a short text (poem/song/story) in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

46. I wrote a shopping list in a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

47. I played a board game with my friends speaking a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

48. I found out how many different languages are being spoken in my class/school/organization.



Date accomplished

Signature

49. I played a sport with my friends for an hour only speaking a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

50. I spent an afternoon with my friends only speaking a foreign language.



Date accomplished

Signature

# THE 51<sup>ST</sup> CHALLENGE

Congratulations, you are now ready for the completion of your mission. Show us what you are capable of!

51. Create a short video showing 'What do you dare to do in a foreign language?' – either based on the above challenges or one of your own invention!



Date accomplished

Signature

Following the online instructions, upload your video here: [edl.ecml.at/languagechallenge](http://edl.ecml.at/languagechallenge)



listening



speaking



signing



reading



writing



difficult!

# YOUR OWN CHALLENGES



# YOUR NOTES



52.

Date accomplished

Signature

53.

Date accomplished

Signature

We are always looking for new challenges to be included in our future *Handbook of language challenges*. Please send us your ideas: [edl.ecml.at/languagechallenge](http://edl.ecml.at/languagechallenge)

I completed a total of  challenges.



# BACKGROUND

The European Day of Languages is an initiative of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, celebrated each year on 26 September.

The main aims of the Day are:

- to raise awareness of the importance of language learning;
- to promote the rich linguistic and cultural diversity present in Europe;
- to encourage lifelong language learning in and out of school.

In developing the language challenges contained in this handbook, we have sought to fully reflect these objectives.

[www.coe.int/edl](http://www.coe.int/edl)



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



# ACKNOWLEDGE- MENT

The idea of the challenges is based on the Linguistic Risk-Taking Initiative, developed at the Official Languages and Bilingualism Institute of the University of Ottawa, Canada.



uOttawa

Institut des langues officielles  
et du bilinguisme (ILOB)  
Official Languages and  
Bilingualism Institute (OLBI)

We are most grateful to Prof. Nikolay Slavkov and the LingRisk Team for the permission to adapt their concept and content for the European Day of Languages.

[ccerbal.uottawa.ca/linguistic-risk](http://ccerbal.uottawa.ca/linguistic-risk)



The European Day of Languages  
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EDL website: [www.coe.int/edl](http://www.coe.int/edl)



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR  
MODERN LANGUAGES



CENTRE EUROPEEN POUR  
LES LANGUES VIVANTES

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE