

# Learning Latvian

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Latvia is a distinctly multi-ethnic society. Integration of its various ethnic communities is an essential prerequisite for the country's stability and prosperity. Societal integration is built on fostering understanding and respect among different ethnic communities. In Latvia, this also involves the willingness and readiness to learn the Latvian language. Knowledge of Latvian helps non-Latvians integrate socially, culturally, economically and politically and contributes to their competitiveness in the labour market. Knowledge of Latvian is one of the preconditions for obtaining Latvian citizenship

In 1995, a steering group was established for the project of National Programme for Latvian Language Training, duly approved by the Government of Latvia. Its aim was to assist with the teaching of Latvian as a second language to non-Latvian-speaking adults and students in the schools of ethnic minorities. On October 12, 2004 the name of the language training programme was changed to the National Agency for Latvian Language Training (NALLT). Latvian is taught in the context of actual life situations. The teaching methodology employed is based on contemporary theories of second language acquisition that are widely accepted internationally. The NALLT focuses on four main areas:

- Methodology and teacher training;
- Preparation of teaching and methodological literature;
- Acquisition of Latvian as a Second Language (LSL);
- Establishing links with society and fostering of political dialogue.

More information about NALLT: <http://www.lvava.lv/>.

State Language Agency (SLA) is a state institution, which is operating according to the Law On Public Agencies of the Republic of Latvia and under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. Its aim is to strengthen the status of the official language and foster the sustainable development of the official language. The tasks for the State Language Agency are to:

- analyze the situation with the official language and the dynamics of sociolinguistic processes;
- set up the network of consultation service and provide consultations on the issues of the official language;
- facilitate the learning and use of the official language;
- organize development and publishing of methodological and informative materials;
- facilitate the development of the official language in the field of information technologies;
- facilitate development and publishing of modern and updated sources of the official language norms (e.g. dictionaries, manuals), as well as publish them;
- implement the project "European Language Portfolio in Latvia";
- ensure the development of the official language terminology by creating databases and combining existing translation databases of public authorities.

More information about SLA: <http://www.valoda.lv/>

The level of language skills required for a foreigner is determined by the Official Language Law. The purpose of this Law is to ensure:

- the maintenance, protection and development of the Latvian language;
- the maintenance of the cultural and historic heritage of the Latvian nation;
- the right to freely use the Latvian language in any sphere of life within the whole territory of Latvia;

the integration of members of ethnic minorities into the society of Latvia, while observing their rights to use their native language or other languages;

the increased influence of the Latvian language in the cultural environment of Latvia, to promote a more rapid integration of society.

Latvian language teaching is the activity of many language schools, cultural associations, town and district councils, vocational training centres. At the successful completion of the course, a statement is issued to rate the student's Latvian language knowledge level. Specific information can easily be obtained from the 1188 Yellow Pages web site (<http://www.1188.lv/>).

<https://www.viaa.gov.lv/en/learning-latvian>