



## WRITING IN A SECOND LANGUAGE

Writing in a second language can be frustrating and overwhelming. When I lived in Brazil, I took classes that required me to do some writing in Portuguese. This experience, along with interviewing some of my friends who are English Language Learners (ELL), gave me insight into the obstacles many students face when navigating a second language.

### Here are some things I found helpful:

- ◆ I tried to stay focused on the big ideas of my paper
- ◆ I battled my perfectionism and simply began inserting articles where I thought they might go—corrective feedback is a great way to learn.
- ◆ I kept a [grammar log](#), which was an excellent reference and helped me see how far I'd come. My ELL friends say that grammar logs also help them remember the exceptions to the rules of the English language. The truth is, many native English speakers also struggle to remember all the exceptions!
- ◆ I made sure to take breaks. Translating in my head and grappling with the rules of a new language was exhausting. Taking a few minutes to go for a walk or engage in another activity helped refresh my brain and made it easier to focus.

My writing in Portuguese was far from perfect, but the growth I saw in myself as a writer was well worth the effort. Whatever their background, I believe people have a wealth of ideas, metaphors, and phrasings they bring from their first language that can contribute to the richness of their writing in the new language. I hope these writing tips can help others push through the obstacles, so they can share their unique voices with the world.

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