Recommended website

Bab.la: Loving languages

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bab.la, created by Andreas Schroeter and Patrick Uecker, is a free online language portal comprising 40 dictionaries for 28 languages, a language forum, vocabulary lessons, language games, quizzes, verb conjugation for 11 languages and phrase books for university, business or travel among a number of other language-related products.

The bab.la dictionaries (Fig, 1) offer the possibility of entering a word or browsing through the letters of the alphabet to see all the entries for a given letter. Users can also suggest new translations. In order for new user-contributed phrases or words to be permanently included, they have to be approved. Users can vote on these contributions and specify whether they think they are correct or incorrect and suggest changes to the spelling, grammar or wording. By registering, users become members of the bab.la community and can earn points by contributing to the dictionaries and participating in forums. The words in the dictionaries are sound-enhanced with native pronunciations.

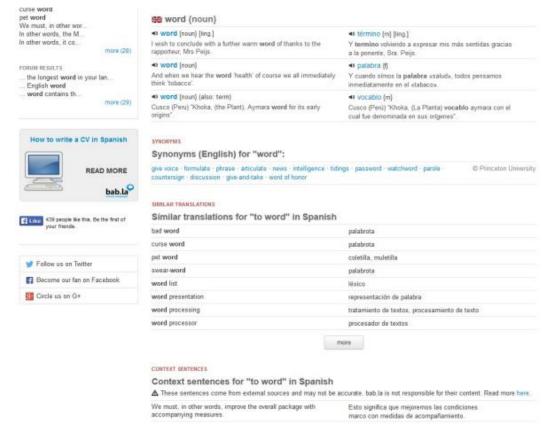


Figure 1. bab.la dictionary interface.

The bab.la Phrase Dictionary (Fig. 2) includes translations of common phrases and expressions organised into 6 categories: applications and résumés; academic discourse; business; personal correspondence; travel, and immigration. Each category is in turn divided into comprehensible subcategories to narrow down the context. Each phrase includes a description to aid in situating its context. Some of the categories provide links to other sites where templates are available. Additionally, each of the subcategories can be downloaded as a PDF file.

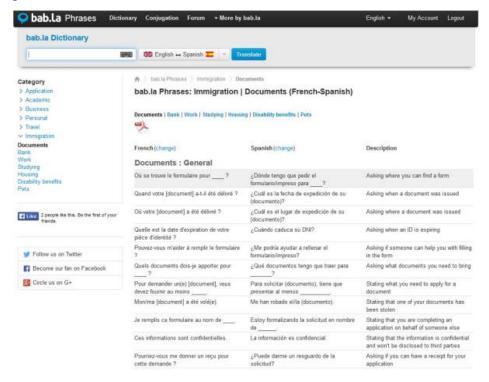


Figure 2. bab.la phrase book interface.

The verb conjugator (Fig. 3) provides quick access to all the tenses for a given verb, providing also synonyms, translations and sample sentences.

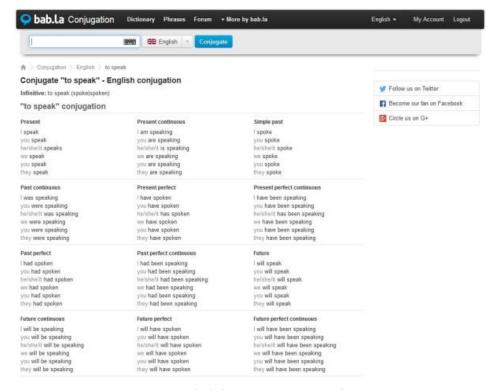


Figure 3. bab.la conjugator interface.

Each of the 28 languages included in *bab.la* has its own forum, where users can post any type of question relating to a given language, enquiring about the meanings of words, seeking advice on a particular translation, etc.

The section called Wording allows users to search for correct sentence structures. The wording tool acts as a correct sentence structure checker, e.g. by associating correct examples of prepositions with common language usage to provide suggestions for the proper preposition.

Bab.la offers a number of other tools such as quizzes, word games, grammar explanations, vocabulary lessons, a world language map (Fig. 4), etc., all of which have been designed to help language learners and language enthusiasts from around the world.



Figure 4. World language map in English.