

Contact

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WORKING METHODS

Talk with your partner about your learning experiences and decide on one or more working methods together.

Language switching

You can speak exclusively in one language during a meeting and switch to the other in the next meeting. Depending on the duration of the meetings, you can also switch halfway through. Allocate at least 30 to 45 minutes per language.

Error correction

Discuss how and when you want to be corrected. Focus on what your partner wants to say, not just on mistakes. Be patient and allow your partner time to correct themselves or find a mutually beneficial formula.

When to correct? Help your partner:

- If you didn't understand something.
- If you are asked to focus on a particular linguistic aspect.
- If they are searching for the correct word.
- If a mistake frequently occurs.

Too much correction can lead to forgetting corrections. Focus on aspects that can truly be improved.

How to correct?

- Ask if you didn't understand something.
- Repeat correctly without addressing the mistake.
- Explicitly point out mistakes (this interrupts communication briefly).
- Note typical mistakes and discuss them at the end of the meeting.

Try different correction methods and always remain positive.

Your role as language mediator

- Support your partner's learning process by considering their wishes, answering their questions when possible, and suggesting materials if required.
- Listen carefully and help with understanding, when necessary.
- Try to understand your partner.
- Provide constructive feedback.

Your role as a language learner

- Prepare for meetings by choosing topics and materials that interest you both and help you achieve your learning goals.
- Be active and learn with enthusiasm.
- Try to express yourself clearly.
- Define your needs.

Follow-Up

Reflect on the following points:

- What helped me progress?
- What was less helpful?

Apply your insights to future meetings and keep a log book.

Materials

Use all materials that help you practice, such as textbooks, podcasts, newspaper articles, games, etc. The Language Centre provides advice and resources for tandem work both in the media library and online. See also our event agenda.

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Language Tandem

LEARNING LANGUAGES TOGETHER

Guide

www.unifr.ch/unitandem



WHAT IS A LANGUAGE TANDEM?

A language tandem is an autonomous and flexible learning method, utilised to improve language skills. Both partners learn each others native language through reciprocal exchange deciding on what and how they learn.

FINDING A TANDEM PARTNER

The University of Fribourg is affiliated to the national platform edu.e-tandem.ch, through which you can find a tandem partner at the University of Fribourg or at another affiliated Swiss university or Higher education institution, for free. To find a partner with a suitable profile, use the filters provided for language level and learning objectives. More than 50 languages are on offer.



Register on edu.e-tandem.ch
via your AAI|SWITCH edu-ID account.

PLANNING THE TANDEM

To plan a successful tandem, it is advisable for both partners to agree on the following:

Frequency and duration

- Determine the frequency of your sessions and adhere to it, e.g. twice a week for 45 to 60 minutes.
- Agree on the duration of your tandem, e.g. 6 months or until the end of the academic year. After the set period, decide on whether you would like to continue, take a break, or stop.

Location

- Your meetings can take place in many locations, such as the media library of the Language Centre, the cafeteria (outside of break times), other freely accessible places at the university, a café, at home or online.
- At the beginning, choose a quiet location where you can concentrate.

Goals and motivations

In which areas do you want to improve your language skills?

- In studies or work: Participating in discussions, seminars or meetings, presentations, conversations, reading specialized texts, writing documents or emails, etc.
- In daily life: Communication in the city or with acquaintances, for administrative matters, museum visits, etc.

Set priorities

- Train oral skills and dare to make mistakes.
- Improve pronunciation, speak fluently.
- Expand vocabulary and linguistic expression.
- Improve your own texts.
- Get to know new cultural areas, e.g. music, cinema, theatre.
- Other motivational reasons.

Inform yourself about your partner's goals and motivations.

TANDEM RULES

Agree on a set of rules with your partner

- Spend equal time on both languages, alternating between being a learner and a teacher.
- Do not act as a private tutor, but as a native speaker or advanced speaker. It is acceptable not to have answers to all questions. Teaching a language increases sensitivity to it.
- Be responsible for your own learning and progress. Define goals and working methods at the beginning and discuss them with your partner.
- Respect your partner and their priorities, goals, and perspectives.
- Keep appointments and be punctual. Inform your partner in advance in case of cancellation.
- Sign a learning contract in which you agree on the various points of this guide.