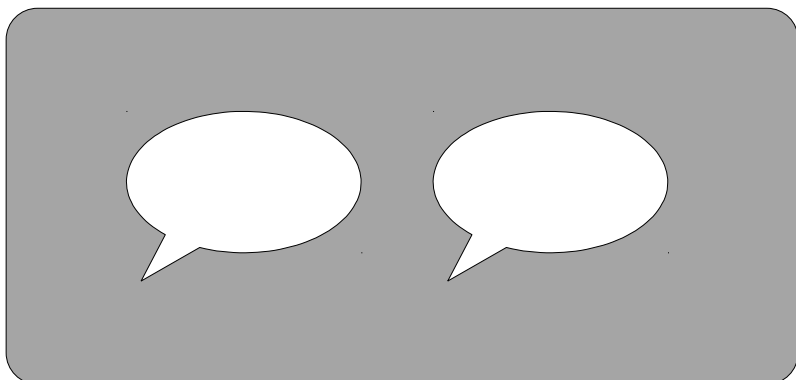


# Conversation Partner Program

Information for International Students



Contact information:

[eslvolun@mun.ca](mailto:eslvolun@mun.ca)

864-8054

Revised September 2014

## **What is a Conversation Partner?**

A Conversation Partner is an English speaker who meets with you to help you practice your spoken English.

## **What happens on the program?**

Each student is matched with one volunteer. Students and volunteers meet for a minimum of an hour a week to practice conversational English.

## **How will the volunteer help me?**

The main goal for the meetings is to TALK as much as possible. This is a great opportunity to practice your English speaking skills and develop fluency. Partners will not correct every small mistake that you make but only provide correction if they cannot understand you. Volunteers are not tutors. They are not required to help you with their homework.

## **What should I do if I can't meet with my partner?**

If you cannot meet, you **must** contact your partner in advance to let him or her know.

## **What is the Conversation Partner Volunteer Time Log?**

Your volunteer is required to keep track of how much time is spent with you on the Conversation Partner Volunteer Time Log. Your volunteer may ask you to sign this log at the end of the semester to validate that you and your partner met during the semester at the times indicated.

## **When and where should we meet each week?**

It is a good idea to meet with your partner at the same time and place each week so it becomes a part of your routine. You can meet anywhere on campus at a time that is good for

both of you. Keep in mind that you might want to choose a quiet place to meet so that you can focus more easily on what your partner is saying.

### **What if I have problems meeting with my partner?**

If you have any problems, please email [eslvolun@mun.ca](mailto:eslvolun@mun.ca) or call Carolyn at 864-8054.

### **What should we talk about during our first meeting?**

During the first meeting you should exchange telephone numbers and email addresses. You should also discuss:

- where you will meet
- when you will meet
- what your expectations of the meeting are
- any specific goals that you would like to reach by the end of the semester (e.g. fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary development, less hesitation, etc.)

### **What should we talk about during our regular meetings?**

Here are some topic ideas to get you started:

- Talk about your home, the members of your family, your upbringing, etc.
- Compare and contrast birthday traditions, coming of age celebrations, marriage and wedding customs etc.
- Discuss special food, clothing, rituals, beliefs, superstitions and so on associated with each occasion.
- Answer questions that your partner may have about your country.
- Tell each other which places (countries, cities, tourism spots) you have toured and visited.

- Compare and contrast common holiday observations (New Year, Valentine's Day, etc.)
- Discuss what food is served during a traditional/typical breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
- Discuss what special foods are prepared on holidays, birthdays, weddings.
- Talk about rituals, etiquette/manners, eating utensils, etc. associated with food.
- Discuss language and translation challenges, alphabets and writing (script or characters), pronunciation etc.
- Talk about how various emotions are expressed and which of them are culturally and socially acceptable/permitted.
- Talk about primary and secondary schooling, the ages when children begin their education, the length of the school day and year, teaching methods, and preparations for university.
- Discuss university life, the lecture system, typical course assignments, workload in your degree program or your favourite course.
- Discuss what people enjoy doing as pastime when not working or studying.
- Introduce each other to favourite hobbies.
- Explain the basics of popular national sports.
- Engage in activities such as board games, grocery shopping, ordering food, playing sports.

### **My Conversation Partner:**

**Family Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Given Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_