

Conversation Partner Program: Guidelines for ESL Students

WHY SHOULD I SIGN UP FOR A CONVERSATION PARTNER? You can meet with a DU student who is around your age and ask them questions about American culture. You can practice speaking English face to face with one person.

DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR THIS? DO I GET PAID? No, this is a volunteer program. Do not sign up if you do not have an hour a week to spend with your partner.

WILL MY CONVERSATION PARTNER HELP ME WITH GRAMMAR AND MY HOMEWORK? No! Conversation partners are to help you practice conversational skills. Just talk!

WHAT IF I WANT MY CONVERSATION PARTNER TO HELP ME WITH MY PRONUNCIATION? Maybe they will help you if you ask them to, but they may not know how to help you. And, remember that when someone keeps correcting your pronunciation, you may feel shy about speaking in front of them.

WHAT IF I DON'T HEAR FROM MY PARTNER? You should email your partner three different times. If that doesn't work, try to call them. If that doesn't work, email the program manager at Niko.Kirby@du.edu and tell her the problem. She'll try to help.

WHEN DO WE MEET? You and your partner will choose a time and place to meet with each other that works for both of you. You may need to be ready to meet at times that are not convenient for you if your partner's schedule is too busy.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I MEET MY PARTNER? You should meet once a week for an hour. If both you and your partner agree, you can meet more often. Conversation partners are to help you practice speaking English one hour per week. Most DU students are busy with classes and jobs, so you should not push them to meet more often than they can. **REMEMBER!** It is considered rude in American culture to agree to meet someone and then not go there. In the beginning, it is sometimes hard to meet your partner. Make sure you know the gender of your partner and the difference between Tuesday and Thursday. Go to the place on time. Please be patient!

HOW DO I COMMUNICATE WITH MY PARTNER? You will spend the whole hour speaking with your partner in English. Half the time you might talk about your culture, and half the time about American culture.

WHAT SHOULD I TALK ABOUT? You will be sent an email with a weekly conversation theme. You are also welcome to talk about any shared interests; the weekly theme is a guide and not a required conversation topic. You could also ask your partner questions about their family, major, friends, the weather, university, culture, language, favorite music and movies, etc.

If you cannot continue for any reason, please write your partner and the program manager ASAP.

Please contact the program manager right away if there are any problems at Niko.Kirby@du.edu. Thank you for your participation in this program. We hope you will enjoy the experience