

## HSWT LANGUAGE TANDEM PROGRAMME

### GENERAL INFORMATION

The Language Tandem programme at HSWT follows the idea that two students with different native languages meet regularly to improve the knowledge of the other respective language in exchange with each other. Simultaneously, the students may be in contact with each other by means of electronic media such as e-mail, Instant Messenger or Skype.

A tandem partnership can be a useful addition to a language course or can be conducted quite independently from this. The success crucially depends on your mutual commitment, since both of you are free to arrange the collaboration with the tandem partner.

### REGISTRATION

Please submit the completed registration to the International Office at HSWT.

The International Office endeavours to provide all interested students with a suitable tandem partner. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that enough interested parties can be found for every language combination.

In case an arrangement is not immediately possible, we will regularly examine the entries in our database and if necessary enquire whether your registration is still valid.

### HELPFUL TIPS FOR WORKING IN TANDEM

It goes without saying that language learning in tandem should be fun!

To also make it a successful learning experience, we have compiled a few guidelines for you:

- » During the initial meeting you should **discuss what you expect from the collaboration** with your tandem partner. Talk to each other about which purpose and to which extent you would like to improve your knowledge of foreign languages, whether specific subject areas particularly interest you and whether there are specific skills which you would particularly like to train (reading, listening, speaking and writing).
- » If the meetings take place **regularly**, they can be integrated easier in the schedule. We advise you to **get together at least once a week** for a specified period so that you do not get rusty. Naturally the meetings can be prolonged at any time by mutual consent.
- » Meetings can be held at a **place of your choice**. The only important thing is that a good working atmosphere prevails there. But we advise you to hold the initial meeting in a public site, for instance at the university or in a café.
- » Roughly the **same amount of time** should be spent for **both languages** so that both tandem partners benefit equally. While doing so, it is up to you whether each meeting focusses on one language or half the time is expended for one and the other language. But the languages should be practiced separately from each other.
- » Insofar as your foreign language is concerned, you determine yourself which **topics and exercises** are important to you. If it concerns learning your mother language, allow your partner to choose the learning method. It is best to discuss the topics beforehand in order to be able to work productively.

- » By specifying **learning objectives**, for each meeting you can review how successful it was and whether there is a need for improvement. For instance, a learning objective can be to learn a specific number of new words or to confidently use grammatical structures.
- » **Prepare the meetings well.** For instance, bring along books, magazines, music or a task from the course of studies to meetings. As a result, not only everyday communication situations can be practiced within the framework of the tandem programme, but you can also obtain tangible support, for instance with regard to writing texts or applications in the foreign language. Grammar and vocabulary can be trained with the help of textbooks or exercises from the Internet.
- » Practice the **pronunciation** of unknown or complicated words together. Your tandem partner can also indicate in which cases your pronunciation sounds particularly “strange” to a native language ear.
- » **Calling attention to each other’s mistakes** is an important tool for improvement of competence in the respective foreign language. Discuss beforehand **how corrections should occur**. For instance, will mistakes be directly called to attention, or will feedback only occur after some time? Which mistake (vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc.) should your tandem partner particularly pay attention to?
- » Therefore, **be prepared to make mistakes!** Avoid always using only simple sentence constructions or known vocabulary, and deliberately take advantage of meetings to practice new grammatical structures and terms.

#### ADDITIONAL SOURCES AND TIPS:

On numerous other sites in the Internet you will also find materials which you can excellently include in your working in tandem. Among other things, a glance at the [Language Centre’s self-study options](#) is worthwhile. Below we have compiled additional information on how to structure a language tandem:

#### TANDEM LANGUAGE LEARNING TIPS (1)

*(Source: Fachsprachenzentrum der Leibniz Universität Hannover)*

In a Tandem partnership, both reciprocity and independence are important for language learning.

##### Time

- » Meet at least 1-2 times weekly for one to two hours throughout the semester.
- » Arrange specific times to meet.
- » Both partners should benefit from Tandem learning, thus time should be divided equally - speaking one language half of the time and then switching to the other. Do not mix languages.

##### Place

- » Choose a neutral, quiet place to meet (no pubs).

##### Aims

- » First discuss your targets with your Tandem partner and how you would like to achieve these
- » Establish an aim for each session. Following each meeting, evaluate whether you were able to achieve your aims.

##### Tandem Roles

- » Each Tandem partner alternates between teacher and student.
- » The student determines their learning activities.
- » Be accepting of your Tandem partner's needs.
- » Both Tandem partners are equally responsible for mutual arrangements and learning.

### Work and Materials

- » Take your own material to Tandem meetings. These should correspond to your language level.
- » The material and exercises should be appropriate to your targets.
- » Experiment with different learning methods.
- » Following each session, evaluate whether the chosen material and learning method was beneficial to you reaching your targets.

### Correction

- » Discuss how you would like your partner to correct your mistakes.
- » Allow your Tandem partner time to correct their own mistakes.
- » Make a note of your Tandem partner's mistakes and discuss them at the end of the session.
- » Try to encourage each other. Acknowledge your partners progress

### TIPS FOR TANDEM LEARNERS – NOT ONLY FOR BEGINNERS (2)

*(Source: Universität Zürich, Sprachenzentrum der Universität und der ETH Zürich)*

If you start a tandem partnership as a complete beginner, we recommend that you do a language course, either in class or as self-study, at the same time. This will ensure a continual progression in your learning. However, tandem learners tend to learn things that they would not find in books. This is one of the advantages of tandem learning: You learn precisely what you need to know. However, learning in a tandem partnership is a lot less structured than in a conventional language course.

### Preparation

In order to get the full benefit of tandem learning, tandem learners at all levels need to prepare well for their meetings. If you are a beginner in your target language, the need for preparation is even greater, because without it, you will not be able to communicate.

- » Think about what you could do during the next session, for example:
  - Practice numbers or spelling words
  - Read a text or dialog from a text book
  - Tell your partner what you are planning for the weekend or for after the tandem meeting (if you have the language skills to talk in simple terms about the future)
  - Tell your partner what you did last week (if you have some basic language skills to talk about the past)
  - Prepare a chapter from the text book that you'd like to look at with your partner
- » Think about which vocabulary or which structures you might need for such exercises. You could ask your partner for help, but if you think this through yourself, you will activate language skills you already possess. You can then ask your partner about points you are unsure of or were not able to find out by yourself.
- » Look for and prepare suitable materials

### Material

Visual materials can help your tandem partner to understand and support you. They can act as prompts to help you to remember what you wanted to talk about. When your vocabulary is limited, visuals can also help you stay on topic. Visual materials don't need to be prepared in advance – during the tandem session, you can draw pictures to support and explain what you want to say. Here are some ideas on how to use visual materials:

- » Using maps, you can talk about other countries (where they are, what the capital cities are, neighbor countries, and which languages are spoken where). You could also describe your holidays (We went to Spain for a week. We went to X... . Here it is.).

- » Photographs can be used to introduce your family, where you live, or your favorite holiday destination. Talking about your life also allows you to practice talking about places and people.
- » Sketches and drawings can help you to describe what your apartment looks like, how you get to work, or where your favorite restaurant is.

Tables and lists can be created individually and then discussed together. For example:

- » Both partners draw up their schedule for the following week and then – without showing the other their timetable – try to find a time to meet (for the next tandem meeting or to go to the movies, etc.). Practice the times of day and the days of the week in advance.
- » Both partners write questions together (e.g. What's your favorite food? Do you like chocolate? What time do you normally go to bed? etc.). Each then answers the questions, and the native speaker helps the learner with vocabulary. Then the partners interview each other.
- » Each partner imagines 3 fictional (or famous) people and takes notes on when they get up in the morning, when they go to work, when they eat lunch, etc. Then the partners exchange the names and ask each other questions about the people they've imagined.

Tandem beginners need to have realistic expectations and select tasks they can realistically achieve. If you have been learning a language for only a few weeks, you most likely won't be able to give a 10-minute presentation. Some topics are intrinsically difficult – don't expect to be able to explain your country's political situation straight away. However, you should be able to explain some key facts about your country (number of inhabitants, how big it is, the capital city, places of interest, etc.) fairly soon.

The following exercise is realistic and useful in real-life situations. Try to write some simple questions that occur repeatedly in your tandem sessions in your target language, for example:

- » How do you say ... in ... ?
- » What does ... mean?
- » What's the opposite of ... ?
- » How do you pronounce that?
- » I have a question.
- » I don't understand.
- » Ah, I see.
- » Is that correct?
- » What's the difference between ... and ... ?

Knowing these sentences will allow you to communicate more easily in your target language. They are also useful in everyday situations. Start with a small pool of simple sentences and gradually add more questions and common sentences.

**For questions or support, please contact us:**

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