



CHARM-EU

Language Tandems

for students and staff

A cross-border initiative

GUIDELINES



Co-funded by
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What is a tandem?

A tandem is a language-learning project in which two participants help each other develop their language skills through regular conversations.

No prior experience is needed, just motivation to learn a new language in a supportive environment!

Why join?

- Connect with students and staff across CHARM-EU
- Improve your communication skills
- Discover new cultures
- Learn by sharing
- Build confidence in speaking
- Expand your international network

With CHARM-EU's Language Tandems, you have two options:

- **You are paired with someone who wants to practise your language, and you want to practise their language. You will communicate in two languages.***

Example: A Hungarian student who wants to practise Spanish and is paired with a Spanish student who wants to practise Hungarian.

- **You are paired with someone who wants to learn the same foreign language as you. You will communicate in one language.***

Example: A German professor and a Norwegian professor both want to practise French.

**Beginners are encouraged to start conversations in English until they feel comfortable communicating in their target language.*

How does it work?

1. **Assess your language proficiency** using the CEFR self-assessment grid or a language test like Lengua, Linguaverse, Strømmeninc, and Duolingo (only available in English)
2. **Sign up** by filling out a short form and help us pair you with your future Tandem partner.
3. **Get matched**: You will be paired with a Tandem partner based on your preferences. You will receive their contact details by email.
4. **Have your first contact with your Tandem partner**: Send a short message to introduce yourself and suggest a first meeting date and format (video call, messages, etc.)
5. **Start your exchange**: Organise regular sessions together.

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A good rhythm is:

30–60 minutes per session.

At least 1 session every 1–2 weeks.

For a 60-minute session: 30 minutes in Language A, then 30 minutes in Language B.

Session guidelines

Session 1

- Present yourself and your institution.
- Describe your language learning project (*Why do you want to practise this language? Have you started to learn by yourself? Did you learn this language at school? Do people around you speak it?*).
- Share your expectations with your tandem partner.
- Agree on meeting frequency and dates.

Following sessions

- Conversation around a topic (see the examples below and on page 3).
- Meaningful object: Bring an item that is meaningful to you, that represents part of your culture, if possible (a childhood toy, a book, etc.).
- “*This or that?*” Ask your tandem partner if they prefer coffee or tea, city or countryside, etc.
- Teach each other 3 useful phrases (slang, polite expressions, etc.)

Some conversation ideas (A1/A2)

Daily life and interests

- What do you usually do in your free time?
- What kind of music do you like?
- What is your favorite restaurant? And why?
- What did you last see in the cinema?
- What do you do to relax?
- What do you do after work/class?
- Do you play sports? If yes, which ones?

Academic and career

- What do you study?
- What is your job?
- What subjects do you like
- What do you like in your job?
- Why are you learning this language?
- Do you work with other people?
- What is your favorite part of your studies / job?

Travel and cultures

- What is a typical food in your country?
- What is your city like?
- Where do you usually go?
- Do you prefer cities or nature?
- What is your favorite place?
- Do you like trying new food when you travel?
- Do you take photos when you travel?

Some conversation ideas (B1/B2)

Daily life and interests

- Can you describe a typical day in your academic or professional environment?
- How do you organise your time between responsibilities?
- What kind of tasks do you usually focus on?
- How do you collaborate with others in your institution?
- What helps you stay productive or motivated?

Academic and career

- What made you choose your field or job?
- What do you like most about it?
- What are your goals for the future?
- What skills are essential in your field?
- Would you like to change something in your path?

Travel and cultures

- What is a typical food in your country?
- What is your city like?
- Do you prefer cities or nature?
- What is your favorite place?
- Do you like trying new food when you travel?

Some conversation ideas (C1/C2)

Daily life and interests

- How do your daily routines affect your well-being?
- What role do hobbies play in your life?
- How do you find a balance between responsibilities and free time?
- Do you think people have enough time for themselves today?

Academic and career

- How has your experience shaped your choices so far?
- What motivates you in your work or studies?
- How do you see your future evolving?
- What advice would you give to someone starting in your field?

Travel and cultures

- What is your best travel experience?
- What country would you like to visit and why?
- Do you think it is important to live abroad at some point?
- How does language influence communication between cultures?

Good tandem etiquette

- Be punctual.
- Let your partner know if you need to cancel.
- Give both languages equal practise time.
- Correct each other kindly.
- Respect different cultures and opinions.

Challenges

As with any activity involving two participants, tandem exchanges may encounter challenges, such as differences in expectations, communication difficulties, or changes in availability.

Identifying these situations in advance can help prevent them and ensure that participants know how to respond if they arise.

It is normal to
Search for words
Make mistakes
Speak slowly



You can
Use simple words
Ask for help
Mix in body language or examples

Click [here](#) to learn more about **CHARM-EU Dignity and Respect Statement**.

Keep it up!



Use small moments to learn

Even outside your sessions, take advantage of short breaks to review vocabulary with apps like Drops or similar tools.



Set simple goals

For example: learn 5 new words per session or practise one specific grammar point.



Write things down

Keep a notebook or notes app for new words, corrections, and useful expressions.

Requirements

Eligibility

Participants must be affiliated with one of the nine CHARM-EU partner universities.

Language recommendation: Beginners are encouraged to start conversations in English until they feel comfortable communicating in their target language.

Application

Fill out the form [here](#).

Contact

charm-eu-mobility@umontpellier.fr

Fall semester: Applications are open from 1st to 22nd of October 2026

Spring semester: Applications are open from 14th January to 4th February 2027