



Five College Center for World Languages

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## Using Description to Elicit Speech

There is no end to the descriptions students can make up in a conversation session. Description allows students to experiment with a variety of vocabulary, to include their understanding of the target culture in the exercise, and to use their imagination. It is an effective way for the conversation partner to verify that the students have internalized the week's vocabulary, and is an easy exercise to tack on at the end of a session when 5 minutes remain or it can form the core of the session.

### Using Description to Elicit Speech I (Pashto)

Here the conversation partner asks the student to describe an imaginary character:

### Using Description to Elicit Speech II (Pashto)

Bringing pictures or photos to class – either in paper form or on the computer – is another way of exposing students to the target culture. It is much more effective to have a student use Persian to describe a house in Iran than to try to use Persian to describe a house in Amherst. Here is an example of the conversation partner's using an image on the computer. Note how he continues to press the student to give more information.

### Using Description to Elicit Speech III (Arabic)

Here the conversation partner is asking students to describe the weather in Amherst and in other cities. She uses the students' answers to carry questions to other students.

### Using Description to Elicit Speech IV (Turkish)

Here the conversation partner hands out pictures to pairs of students who are working together. The students must each describe their picture to their partner and from these descriptions, the students must figure out how the pictures are different.

### Using Description to Elicit Speech V (Arabic)

Here the conversation partner has students describe cities they like or do not like. Notice that even though books are open, the exercise is completely extemporaneous.

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