



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Discussing Disasters and Attacks

Topic: Complex Topics

Level: Advanced

Practice on You Own

- Read about current events in online newspapers in the language you are learning. Let's say a natural disaster or terrorist attack has just taken place. Carefully take note of what the newspapers are reporting and what concerns people have.
- Listen to news on the radio or on the internet in the language you are learning. This will help you to correctly pronounce the relevant vocabulary.
- Read the material available to you about the topic so that you familiarize yourself with the vocabulary.
- Imagine you are living in a country where the language is spoken. You have a guest who wants to know more from you about the newspaper and radio reports.
- Prepare for a conversation with your guest. Make a list of the things you will say in regard to what the media is reporting, and think of questions that your guest may ask, as well as your own opinions on the issue. Your list may include the following items:
 - What day and time did the event take place? Was it in a major city, some other town or in a rural part of the country? What group of people was targeted or effected? How many people died, and how many were injured?
 - What kind of security or safety precautions were in place there? How fast did the government move in to rescue people or combat the attack? Was there support from another place? If there was, where did it come from and how fast did it get there? Mention the type of support.
 - How well are hospitals equipped to handle such emergencies?
 - Have there been similar disasters or attacks before, and were they by the same group or different groups?
 - What concerns do people have now?
- Be prepared for the guest to ask your opinions on the matter. This will be on the basis of what the two of you have discussed so far.
 - Why do you think the attack took place? Or the natural disaster was so bad?
 - Was the situation handled well by the government? What does this mean for the safety and security of the country?

- Why do you think people have the types of concerns that they have?
- What can the international community do to help curb it security attacks or help in times of natural disaster?

Practice in Conversation Session

- To warm up, have a discussion with your conversation partner about different news sources that are available online in the language you are studying. What sources have you found? Which ones do you prefer? Does your conversation partner know of other news sources that you were not aware of?
- Be prepared to role play being a host in a country where the language is spoken and talking to a guest about a recent natural disaster or terrorist attack. Your conversation partner will play the role of the guest. Answer his/her questions about what the media is reporting and about your own opinions on the matter.