



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Comparing and Contrasting

Topic: Descriptions in Conversation

Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Practice on Your Own

You have learned how to give basic descriptions of people, places, and objects. You are ready to practice giving more detailed, in-depth descriptions. One way to work on this is to practice comparing and contrasting.

- Think about a place where you lived or traveled in the past. How would you describe that place? What were your first impressions?
- Now compare that place to where you currently live. Try to be as detailed as possible. Think about different aspects such as the weather, the size of the place, the types of houses/buildings/cars/geographical features, the activities people enjoy there, etc.
- What other things can you compare? Can you compare two of your professors or classmates? Can you compare your school to one of the other Five College campuses? Can you compare two grocery stores or restaurants? Practice different comparisons out loud, using as much detail as you can.
- Also think about comparisons between your country and the country/ies where the language is spoken. What similarities and differences are you aware of in terms of weather, geography, transportation, family life, the school systems, etc.?

Practice in Conversation Session

- Be prepared to tell your conversation partner and fellow students about a place where you lived or traveled in the past. Then compare and contrast that place with where you live now.
- Practice other comparisons as well. These may include topics that you practiced on your own as well as new ones.
 - Your conversation partner may bring images for you to compare and contrast, such as pictures of two different places.
- Have a discussion with your conversation partner and fellow students comparing the United States and the country/ies where the language is spoken. What similarities and differences do you already know, and what questions can you ask your conversation partner or fellow students?