



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Ordering in a Café

Topic: Food in Restaurants

Level: Novice

Practice on Your Own

- Imagine you are in a cafe with a friend. This is your friend's first time in a cafe and you need to give him/her some detailed information about the place. Prepare a list of the items served in a typical cafe. Your list should include the drinks (and their ingredients) and some snacks such as cookies, cake, chocolate...
- Imagine a conversation like this with your friend for several items on your list:
 - **Friend:** What is this?
 - **You:** This is hot chocolate.
 - **Friend:** What is in it?
 - **You:** It has chocolate and milk and sugar. It is hot.
 - **Friend:** How does it taste?
 - **You:** It is sweet. At some cafes the hot chocolate is sweeter; at others it is less sweet. This cafe has very sweet hot chocolate.
- Now think of the process of ordering in a cafe in the country/ies where the language is spoken. Is it similar to the U.S. in that people go to the counter and order? Do they take people's orders at their tables? Look it up or prepare questions to ask your conversation partner.
 - Prepare appropriate greetings. How do people greet in a setting like a cafe or restaurant? A friendly formal greeting is probably what you need to prepare.
 - How do people order drinks or food? Write down sentences and practice them out loud. For instance, "Excuse me, I would like to have a coffee?" "Can I please have some coffee?" "Do you have espresso?"
 - Then think about asking for the price. "How much is it?" "I don't have cash. Can I use my card?"
- You should also prepare to play the role of a barista in a coffee shop. How does a barista greet his/her customers? How does he/she respond to inquiries? How does he/she tell the cost – does he/she directly express the number or are there other formalities? Prepare for all these tasks as a barista.
- It is important to pay attention to cultural aspects. For instance, if two friends go to a coffee shop, who pays? Does age matter?

Practice in Conversation Session

- First read out loud the items that you have listed for your conversation partner. Make sure that you pronounce them correctly.
- Your conversation partner will play the part of your friend. He/she will ask you about the items that you have listed. You should respond to his/her inquiries in as much detail as you can. Pay attention to how your conversation partner forms questions and also whether he/she corrects your responses in terms of sentence formation or cultural matters.
- It is time to order. In this stage, your conversation partner will play the role of the barista. As in the previous activity, pay attention to the cultural aspects of how your conversation partner plays this role. Are there any differences from what you are used to seeing in cafes in the U.S.?
- Now you will play a barista and your conversation partner will play the role of a customer. Try to imitate the way that your conversation partner played this role.
- Reflect on the cultural elements in these simple cafe scenes. Cultural nuances are critical to understanding the language and making connections with people who speak it.