



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Chatting on a Bus or Train

Topic: Getting Acquainted

Level: Intermediate

Practice on Your Own

Imagine you are studying or traveling in a country where the language is spoken. You take a bus or train to go visit another city. On the way, you have a conversation with the person in the seat next to you.

- First imagine the person is the same age as you or younger. How will you greet her/him and introduce yourself? What will you talk about?
 - What can you tell the person about yourself (where you are from, what you study, what you are doing in this country, how long you are there, why you are traveling to this city, etc.)?
 - What questions can you ask the person about her/himself?
 - What other topics can you discuss (the weather, popular foods in the country that you like, places to visit in the country, etc.)?
- Now imagine it is an older person sitting next to you. How will the conversation be different?
- There may be cultural differences in terms of the topics that are common or acceptable to discuss with someone you are meeting for the first time. For example, in the U.S. it is very common to ask someone about their job (“What do you do?”), but in other cultures there may be more focus on family and less on work. If you are not sure what is appropriate or typical in the country/ies where the language is spoken, you can ask your conversation partner.
 - Pay particular attention to any questions that may be considered rude or taboo. (Should you avoid asking about age, etc.?)

Practice in Conversation Session

- Warm up by telling your conversation partner and fellow students the country you are studying or traveling in and the city you are going to visit.
- Be prepared to role play conversations with a person sitting next to you on a bus or train. You should do at least one situation with a person your age or younger and one with an older person.