



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Rural and Urban Houses

Topic: Homes

Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Practice on Your Own

Imagine that you are a student studying architecture. In your class you have just learned about homes in cities and in rural areas. Your class has students from different parts of the world. You also are learning a new language, and you have a classmate from a country where that language is spoken. The two of you are talking at the dinner table. You want to find out from your classmate about homes in the country/ies where the language you are learning is spoken.

- Familiarize yourself with words for home, construction, materials for construction, stone, iron sheet, cement, wall, roof, floor, water, dirt/mud, grass, poles, apartment, room, kitchen, bathroom, porch, driveway, stairway, bedroom, dining room and living room. Read the materials available to you and also listen to audio recordings on the topic.
- Make a list of questions to ask your classmate about homes in his/her country. Questions should be on:
 - What materials are used to construct houses in rural areas and in cities or towns?
 - Who does the construction work, and is the labor division based on gender?
 - What are the sizes of the homes?
 - What time of year is the construction work done?
 - How long does the construction work take? Is it the same in rural areas and in cities?
- Practice these questions for your conversation session.
- Do you know the answers to any of these questions? If not, maybe you can find some information online.

Practice in Conversation Session

- Be prepared to tell your conversation partner and fellow students what you already know about homes in the country/ies where the language is spoken and what you do not know yet. Think about the differences between urban and rural houses, the construction materials used, the sizes of the homes, the labor division if any and the time of year that the construction work is carried out.

- Consult with your conversation partner and fellow students about anything else that should be discussed that you might have forgotten.
- Be prepared to role play the situation where you are talking to your classmate who is from a country where the language is spoken. Your conversation partner will play the role of your classmate. Ask your classmate questions about homes in the country/ies where the language is spoken. Listen carefully to the answers, especially for the topics that you did not already know about.
- Be prepared to look at pictures of homes together and to describe in detail what you see in the pictures.
- Now role play a situation in which you are a host in a country where the language you are learning is spoken. Your conversation partner is your guest and is a student of architecture. After culturally appropriate greetings, have a conversation in which you respond to your guest's questions about homes in that country. Do this in the language you are learning using vocabulary you already knew as well as any new vocabulary you have acquired. This will enhance your fluency and also help you with your vocabulary.
- Follow-up conversation. Suppose you get an opportunity to visit a country where the language is spoken. Say where you would like to live, in a city or in a rural area. State reasons for your answer around the topic of homes. Check your fluency and how well you can articulate yourself in the language you are learning. Ask your conversation partner and fellow students the same question.