



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

### **Conversation Preparation Guides**

**Title: Renting a Room**

**Topic: Lodging**

**Level: Intermediate**

### **Practice on Your Own**

Imagine you will be studying or working in a country where the language is spoken. Before arriving, you need to contact some people to rent a room for your time staying there.

- Prepare full names and phone numbers of the people to whom you want to talk. There should be at least three phone numbers. Write them in the way they are usually written in the target language.
- Prepare the way you want to introduce yourself on the phone to a person that you've never met. What your name is, your general intention of traveling, your length of stay.
- In the next stage, you need to think of the questions that you may be asked. Where will you be studying or working? How old are you? Are you male or female? How much do you want to spend? Also prepare answers for these questions.
- Then it is your turn to ask questions of the other person. How big is the room (how many square meters)? How many people live in the house/apartment? How far it is from downtown? How much is the person's commission? Will you need to pay for electricity, heat, etc.? Is it possible to host a party there or have overnight guests? Does the owner live there? What is the neighborhood like – is it poor, middle class, conservative...?
- Write a short passage in which you describe your current living situation. Your description should mainly answer the questions posed above. Also practice talking about this out loud.
- Now write a dialogue that is compromised of all these inquiries. Pay attention to cultural elements – for example, is there a possibility of negotiating to bring down the price?

### **Practice in Conversation Session**

- Read the names and phone numbers for your conversation partner to make sure you pronounce the names correctly. Try to read the phone numbers with a natural speed.
- Now describe your current living situation (the passage you have prepared) to your conversation partner. Answer more inquiries by your conversation partner. Take note of your mistakes.
- Drawing on the materials you have prepared on your own, your conversation partner plays the role of the real estate agent or landlord in the host country and you are the person traveling

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there. Introduce yourself and then ask for information. Pay attention to the questions asked by your conversation partner. Are there cultural aspects that you were not aware of? What are the questions that you had not thought about but that are important when you are looking for a place to stay in that country?

- Now switch roles – you are the real estate agent or landlord and your conversation partner is the person who inquires about the room.
- Now do the same activities for the second and third people whose names and phone numbers you prepared. This time inquire about renting a whole apartment or house. Can you change your questions in order to make them relevant to renting an apartment/house?