



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

### **Conversation Preparation Guides**

**Title: Responding to Formal Invitations**

**Topic: Social Invitations**

**Level: Intermediate**

### **Practice on Your Own**

Imagine you are studying or living in a country where the language is spoken. You may already be comfortable responding to casual social invitations from friends, but you also need to know how to politely accept or decline more formal invitations.

- Think about the types of invitations that might require a more formal response. They may vary depending on the cultural situation. Perhaps you are invited to a wedding, a formal dinner party, an academic conference or ceremony, a particular religious or cultural event, etc. Would you likely be invited in person, by mail, or over the phone?
- Think about how you could accept a formal invitation and clarify the details (date, time, location, etc.).
- What if you already have other plans? How can you politely tell the person who invited you that you are not available on that day?
- Also think about a scenario where you do not want to accept an invitation because you do not feel comfortable with the situation. Perhaps you do not know the person well, or maybe it is a religious event and you do not feel comfortable attending because it is not your own religion. How can you politely refuse the invitation? What reasons could you give? (Your host family will not allow you to go, you have to study for a test, you do not have a way to get there...)
- Review dates, times, transportation vocabulary, and anything else that you need to brush up on.

### **Practice in Conversation Session**

- Be prepared to role play situations in which you accept a formal invitation. You may do this in person, over the phone, or in writing, depending on the situation. Make sure you have all the information you need about date, time, place, etc.
- Now role play scenarios in which you decline a formal invitation. Politely explain why you cannot attend the event.
- Your conversation partner may share some relevant cultural information. Is there any etiquette around responding to invitations in that culture that is different from American culture? If someone tells you that an event starts at 6:00pm, does that mean that you should actually arrive at 6:00? Or should you plan to arrive at 6:30, 7:00, or later?

Online at: [langmedia.fivecolleges.edu](http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu)

© 2015 Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and Five Colleges, Incorporated.