



Five College Center for the Study of World Languages

Conversation Preparation Guides

Title: Buying a Plane Ticket

Topic: Transportation

Level: Intermediate-Advanced

Practice on Your Own

Imagine that you are studying or living in a country where the language is spoken. You are planning a trip back to your home country to visit your family, and you want to buy a plane ticket. You need to either call the airline or go to the airport.

- Review dates and times, numbers and prices, transportation vocabulary, etc.
- Decide what dates you will travel to and from your country and which airline you will fly on.
 - If you prefer, you can book your flights through a travel agent instead of buying the tickets directly from the airline. In that case you will visit or call the travel agency.
- Plan ahead for what you need to say to the airline employee (or travel agent). How will you greet her/him? Be prepared to say where you are traveling and the dates of your trip. You will also need to ask about departure and arrival times and prices. Can you think of other questions you can ask, such as how many bags you can bring and the weight limit?

Practice in Conversation Session

- To warm up, tell your conversation partner and fellow students where you are flying to (country and city) and the dates of your trip.
- Be prepared to role play buying a plane ticket. Remember to use culturally appropriate greetings and polite expressions and be clear about details like locations, dates, times, and prices. Ask any other questions you can think of, such as questions about baggage limits. Then switch roles and repeat the conversation.
- If the first role play was easy for you, you might try a more complicated situation. Imagine you have already booked your flights, but now something unexpected has happened and you need to make a change. Call the airline or go to the airport and explain the situation (illness/injury, family emergency, change in school or work schedule, etc.). Change the dates of your reservation. Try to convince the airline employee to waive the change fee due to the circumstances.