

3. Correcting each other in a tandem

- Talk about how and when you would like to be corrected.
- Take your partner seriously as a person and learner!
- Concentrate on WHAT your tandem partner wants to say instead of concentrating on their mistakes only! It is important to see each other first and foremost as partners in communication.

When to correct – Examples

There are plenty of different ways of correcting each other:

- Being the native speaker you do not understand what your partner wants to express and ask.
- Your partner has made a mistake and you repeat the sentence correctly. You do not point out the mistake explicitly.
- You point out mistakes explicitly. In this case your communication is interrupted and your partner might grow unsure.
- As you communicate, make a note of typical mistakes and go through your notes at the end of the meeting.

The best way to correct each other depends on your tandem aims.

- Talk about HOW you want to correct each other.
- If your partner is afraid to talk, it is better to correct implicitly (that means you should repeat the incorrect sentence correctly).
- Don't be afraid of making mistakes. If you want to improve your language skills intensively, you should ask your partner to make notes of your typical mistakes. Go through them at the end of the meeting.

- It is important that both of you feel comfortable during your meetings and that you see being corrected as a means of improving your own language skills

4. Evaluating your tandem work

When you finish your tandem partnership, talk about what went well, where and why difficulties occurred and how you overcame them. Would you participate in a tandem again? If so, what would you do differently? What proved to be successful?

5. The tandem certificate

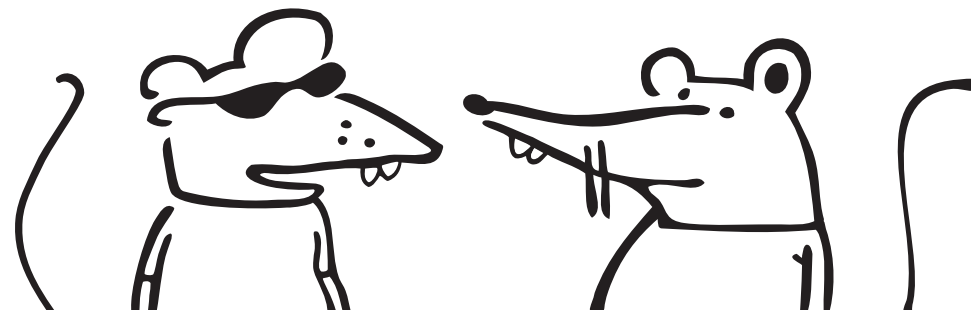
Furthermore, you can receive a tandem certificate that certifies you have participated in your tandem meetings. This requires you to keep a written record of your meetings **from the beginning**. This means:

- Arrange an initial interview (mueller.karabil@uni-bremen.de)
- Do a self-assessment test, set your learning goals and enter them in your tandem diary
- Enter your tandem meetings in your diary on a regular basis, including:
 - Duration of language use (e.g. French, 45 minutes – German, 45 minutes)
 - Topics that you discussed (e.g. favourite food, hobbies, specific vocabulary)
- Materials used (newspaper articles, course)

Do you have any further questions?

Send us an email:

tandem@uni-bremen.de

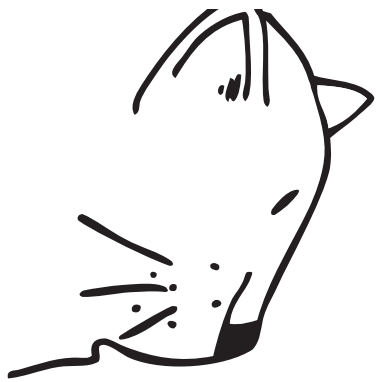


A short guide to learning languages in a tandem

This guide gives you advice and hints on each of these phases and on how to organise your tandem successfully.

Phases of tandem work:

1. Starting a tandem
2. Tandem work itself
3. Correcting each other in a tandem
4. Evaluating your tandem work
5. The tandem certificate



1. Hints to start with: Setting of on your tandem

WHERE to meet

- There is a variety of places where you can meet: quite corners of the university, empty seminar rooms, coffee shops, or at home. However, some are more suitable and better equipped than others for a concentrated working session, and not all of them are appropriate for a first meeting.
- Some tandems prefer "neutral" places like seminar rooms or other quiet corners of the university and stick to these meeting points during their entire tandem relation. Others prefer more "personal" environments such as one partner's flat. We would advise you to choose a neutral place in the beginning and only change into more personal surroundings once you have got to know each other. It is also possible to arrange virtual meetings and meet online.

WHEN and HOW OFTEN to meet

- Use your first session to determine when you are going to meet, how long each meeting should be and how long the tandem partnership is going to last.

- Keep to fixed time and date for your meetings.
- Don't meet too often in the starting phase of your tandem – have a maximum of two sessions a week. Once you've found your rhythm you can still increase the frequency.
- Discuss how long both of you want to work and can work in your tandem (i.e. until the end of the semester). You can agree on a specific date for the last meeting. Once that date has come you should agree on whether to continue or stop the tandem or have a break.

WHY, WHAT and HOW: What to expect of a tandem

Learning languages in a tandem gives you complete autonomy. It is up to you to decide on what and how to learn. Make the most of this opportunity. Be focused when designing your tandem. You can, of course, go straight ahead and start, trusting that everything is going to work out. Often enough this strategy does work, but usually it is better to talk about issues such as your motivation, aims and way of working in the starting phase of your tandem. On the one hand, it is important to be aware of your own motivation and aims. On the other hand, this information will support your partner in supporting you. Talk about these items:

Why did you decide to start a tandem?

- Opportunity to talk
- Speak more fluently
- Expand your vocabulary
- Lose your inhibition to speak
- Get to know a different culture...

Are there particular situations or contexts in which you would like to use or might have to use a foreign language?

- At university: discussions in seminars, presentations, etc.

- Reading technical texts, writing essays, etc.
- In everyday life: in the city, with friends,...

*What do you want to improve or achieve?
What is of particular importance for you?*

- Set your goals.
- Find out about your partner's aims.
- Plan your mutual tandem work.

How do you study most effectively?

- Talk about your experience with learning foreign languages.
- Talk about what you like and what you dislike.
- Talk about how you learn best.
- Talk about your anxieties and fears, too.
- What do you not want under any circumstances? (See section below on correcting each other's mistakes.)

Tandem material

- You can use all kinds of material that you think will help you.
- When you are just beginning to learn a foreign language, you could use a textbook parallel to your tandem partnership.
- When you have already achieved a certain level in a foreign language, you can use anything you like and think will help you.
- Each partner decides which material to use for their target language.

2. Tandem work

The 5 basic rules for improving your language skills in a tandem:

1. Tandem partners meet on a regular basis.
2. Partners use their mother tongues alternately: Do not switch languages continuously within one session – split

each meeting into two parts and stick to one language only in each part.

3. Once in a while you should talk about how the tandem has been working and how it could be improved in the future:

- What have we done? Was it good/helpful?
- What problems did we have?
- What can we learn from them for future meetings?

4. Each partner is responsible for their own learning. This means I am responsible for my own learning. I will therefore give serious consideration to what I want to learn and how I want to learn it. I will tell my partner about my aims and way of working and prepare for meetings if necessary.

5. Responsibility for constructive communication: I will respect my partner and their decisions, opinions and points of view and try to understand them. I will keep appointments and arrive at meetings punctually or inform my partner of any delay or cancellation in good time.

These five commitments are the basis of learning languages in a tandem.

