

“Telephone Buddy”

We have set up a system of “Telephone Buddies” to help those who would like to practise their conversational skills in Esperanto but who have little opportunity to do so regularly. The system is very flexible and the rules minimal.

On applying to join the system, an applicant will be matched with a volunteer “buddy”.

Both the applicant and the “buddy” will receive an introductory email/letter from Viv containing respective contact details.

The applicant is responsible for making initial contact with his/her “buddy” which can either be by email or ‘phone and in English or Esperanto as the applicant wishes. We suggest that in this initial contact email/letter the applicant suggests suitable days and times for making a call and indicates an approximate length of conversation.

Regular conversation is most beneficial: aim to find a slot of time that you can both put aside each week for conversation. If weekly is not possible, aim to chat fortnightly.

We suggest a minimum of 10 minutes and a maximum of 30 minutes. 15-20 minutes is ideal.

The applicant is responsible for making all telephone calls at the agreed times and paying all telephone expenses. Telephone numbers and contact details of either applicant or “buddy” may not be passed on to a third party without prior consent.

Suggested structure:

In order to give the “conversation” some structure especially in the initial stages we suggest:

- 5 minutes reading aloud: agree to use a book or magazine that both applicant and “buddy” have so that the reading can be monitored. The applicant should indicate whether or not he/she would like his/her pronunciation “corrected”/helped.
- Ten questions: the “buddy” asks the applicant 5 questions which may be based on the text read aloud or may be general and open-ended. The applicant then reciprocates and asks 5 questions in turn which may relate to any aspect of world affairs, Esperanto history culture, literature, grammar etc. Please be sensitive about asking personal questions.
- General conversation: the above questions may lead to general conversation, if not the “buddy” will introduce a topic to explore certain vocabulary – eg weather, holidays, gardening etc. This topic may be agreed beforehand so that the applicant may learn appropriate vocabulary.

Please note the above structure is only a suggestion and “buddy” and applicant are free to converse as desired. Equally, length of conversation and time for calling may vary as both applicant and “buddy” wish. Please be considerate towards your “buddy” who is a volunteer and unpaid. If you cannot converse at the agreed time, or you wish to stop all future sessions, please do let your “buddy” know.