

## MAIN PRINCIPLE:

### RECIPROCITY

Both tandem partners should benefit equally from the cooperation. This means you must devote the same amount of time to each language and make the same commitment to each other.

## SIDE EFFECTS

- ↳ A tandem can be an ideal preparation for a stay abroad or a way to integrate into the Belgian culture.
- ↳ You improve your capability for independent learning.
- ↳ You get to know fellow students, exchange ideas on interesting topics and expand your intercultural horizons.
- ↳ You are part of the international community of our faculty and university.
- ↳ You develop your intercultural communication skills.

## WHERE TO FIND US

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# Language Tandem

FOR  
**DUMMIES**



Picture © Sarah Defever

## THE BASICS

### What?

A language tandem is a learning partnership between two fellow students who want to learn each other's native language.

### Who?

The language tandem is open to all international students (both degree and exchange students) studying at UGent, and to all 'home' students from the Faculty of Arts.

### Why?

You improve your foreign-language skills with the help of a native speaker, who is able to concentrate on you and your wishes individually, unlike in a traditional language course. And most importantly: it is great fun!

### Where and When?

With the words of Shakira: whenever, wherever!

A language tandem is hassle-free: together with your tandem partner, you arrange when, where and how often you want to meet.

### How?

You register your native language and your 'target' language. We try to match your needs with another student, who is a native speaker of your 'target' language and who wants to learn your native language.

- ☞ Don't worry about making mistakes. Your tandem partner is a fellow student who wants to improve their skills in your native language and, in doing so, makes mistakes – as you will too, presumably.
- ☞ Make sure that learning stays fun: cook, play sports, go out, go on trips, walk around in Ghent, etc.
- ☞ Decide beforehand how much time you will spend on each language and stick to it.
- ☞ Consider your tandem meeting to be just as obligatory as a seminar. Arrange a time and day of the week to meet with your tandem partner (ideally a permanent appointment).
- ☞ Mutual patience and understanding are basic requirements for a successful tandem. Bear in mind that your tandem partner is a native speaker but isn't a trained language teacher. They can give you feedback on whether what you're saying is correct from a linguistic point of view, or can tell you how to say things the right way. You cannot, however, expect them to give you grammar explanations. Your tandem partner also won't be an expert in every aspect of their culture and won't know every piece of factual knowledge about their country off the top of their head – just as you wouldn't either.
- ☞ The more often you meet, the better you will learn. You should, however, be aware that tandem learning requires both preparation time and follow-up time: consider what you want to work on before each meeting and how your tandem partner can help you with it. You could make a habit of keeping a learning diary in order to document your progress.
- ☞ Experience shows that most tandems meet once a week for 1–1.5 hours.