

## How to find the right speaking partner

*What makes practice conversations actually work — and where to find them*

### WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

Not a list of apps.

A guide to what makes a speaking partner useful — and how to structure a conversation that actually helps you improve.

## THE REAL PROBLEM

Most learners who try speaking practice with a partner give up within a few weeks. Not because they did not find anyone — but because the conversations felt awkward, unproductive, or too easy.

The reason is almost always the same: there was no structure. They met, they talked, they said goodbye. Nothing was learned. Neither person knew how to push the other forward.

A good speaking partner is not just someone who speaks English. It is someone with the right attitude, the right level gap, and a shared sense of what the conversation is for.

### KEY IDEA

A speaking partner is not a conversation buddy. They are a practice partner. The goal is not to chat. The goal is to get better.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

### Level — slightly above you, not native

Talking to a native speaker sounds ideal. In practice, it is often the least useful option. They correct less, slow down more, and the gap can feel too big.

A partner who is one level above you — B2 if you are B1 — challenges you without losing you. They have recently solved the problems you are stuck on. That is more useful than someone who solved them twenty years ago.

### Attitude — someone who will actually correct you

Most people are too polite to correct. They nod, they understand, and they never tell you that you said something wrong.

You need a partner who will tell you. Not interrupt every sentence — but someone who, at the end of a thought, says: 'just so you know, we say it like this.'

Ask for this directly at the start. 'Please correct me if I use the wrong word or structure.' Most partners will, once you have asked.

## Structure — a topic and a goal, not just chat

Every session needs a topic decided in advance. Not 'let's just talk.' A topic. A question you will both answer. A situation you will practise.

Examples: describe your week in five sentences. Talk about something you are worried about. Explain your job to someone who has never heard of it.

A topic gives you something to prepare, a direction to push toward, and a way to measure whether the conversation was useful.

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## WHERE TO FIND A PARTNER

The community you already have access to is the best place to start. Discord, language exchange apps like Tandem or HelloTalk, local expat groups, colleagues who are also learning.

The platform matters less than the commitment. One partner you speak to every week for three months will do more for you than ten partners you spoke to once.

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## PRACTICE

Read each scenario. What would you do?

#	Situation	Response
1	Your partner never corrects you and just agrees with everything.	<i>Ask directly: 'Can you tell me when I use the wrong word?'</i>
2	Your sessions feel aimless — you chat but nothing improves.	<i>Set a topic before you meet. One question you both answer.</i>
3	Your partner speaks much better than you and you feel embarrassed.	<i>That gap is useful. Tell them your level. Ask them to slow down once, not repeatedly.</i>
4	You cannot find anyone at your level to practise with.	<i>Look one level above you. A B2 speaker is more useful than a native.</i>
5	Your partner cancels and you end up practising alone.	<i>Record yourself on the topic you planned. It still counts.</i>

### TODAY'S SMALL ACTION

Today, send one message to someone asking if they want to practise English together. One message. That is it.

*Want to go deeper? The members edition has 20 speaking partner conversation starters and a self-check quiz.*