

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Talk with your Tandem partner about the following points:

Time: How often will you meet, for how long and when?

Place: Where will you meet?

Motivation: What do you want to achieve? How are you going to work on it?

TIME

Begin by discussing when you will meet, how long the sessions will be, and how long you intend the Tandem to last.

- Try hard to commit to a time and to keep that commitment.
- Together, decide on how long your Tandem should last (e.g. until the end of the semester or year) and set a date to end it. Then you can decide together whether you want to continue, take a break or end your Tandem.

PLACE

There are many places where you could meet:

The Self-Access Centre, which has learning materials for around 60 languages; public seating areas around the university; classrooms not in use; the student cafeterias or the mensa, which is empty except around lunch time; cafés; or at home.

Not all of these places lend themselves to concentrated work, and not all are suitable for the first session. We recommend beginning with a neutral venue – you can always switch later to a more relaxed environment, if you so desire.

MOTIVATION, OBJECTIVES, WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER

With the UniTandem system you have complete autonomy. So seize the opportunity to decide for yourself what and how to learn!

We recommend having an initial discussion which covers the following areas:

Why are we doing this? Is it to ...

- improve your speaking?
- become more fluent?
- expand your vocabulary?
- speak more confidently?
- learn about another culture?

Are there particular situations or contexts in which we expect to use the language we are learning?

- For study purposes (e.g. seminars, presentations, reading, or writing)
- For everyday life (e.g. shopping or friends)

Try to be as specific as possible about identifying your needs – this will help you greatly to plan your work.

Set goals. Ask about your partner's goals. Plan the work you do together.

How do I learn efficiently?

It is very useful to talk about your past language learning experiences and how you think you learn best. Tell each other what works and what doesn't. Avoid working in ways that your partner would not enjoy or find useful.

Remember:

■ Responsibility

You are responsible for your own learning. You, not your partner, have the task of determining what you wish to learn and how. You must succeed in communicating your goals and the way you learn best to your partner. Make sure that you prepare for your Tandem sessions.

■ Respect

Keep all appointments and be on time. Show respect for your partner and his or her wishes, opinions and attitudes.

■ Avoid mixing the languages

If your session is for an hour or less, work on one language only at each time, alternating between the two. If you meet for a longer period, consider splitting the time between the two languages. Try each option and see which suits you best.

THE TANDEM RULES

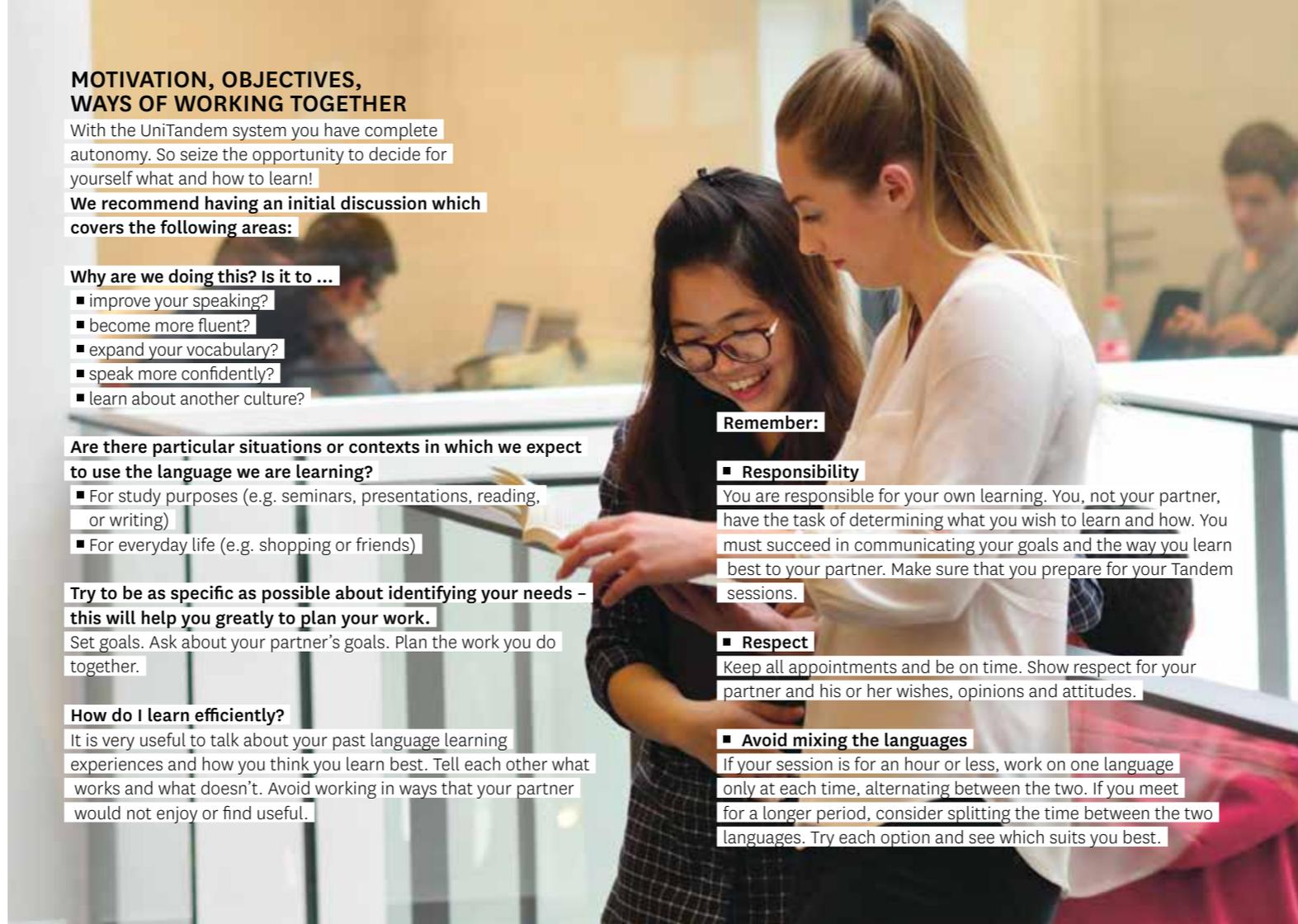
With your registration for UNITandem you agree to the following terms and conditions:

- We meet regularly.
- We use both languages: first I am the expert, then the learner.
- We try to avoid mixing languages and we share the time evenly.

IMPORTANT: ROLES

We all remember being in school where teachers decided what and how we would work. The teacher planned and ran each lesson and the learners had to follow the plan.

Tandem is quite different: you, the learner, take your learning into your own hands. You decide what and how to work, and you are responsible for your progress. Your partner is not your private teacher.





CORRECTIONS

Talk to each other about what you prefer as well as how and how often you wish to be corrected.

As you talk, try to focus mostly on what is being said and not to become too concerned about the mistakes that may be made.

Some examples of when to offer help or corrections:

- When your partner is not able to say what she/he wants to say.
- When your partner is searching for the right word.
- When the mistake is very frequent.

Give your partner the chance to ask for corrections.

HOW SHOULD I OFFER CORRECTIONS?

Here are some possibilities:

- Simply ask for clarification or repetition.
- Repeat the correct words without drawing attention to the error.
- Draw attention to the error. In this case, the conversation is briefly interrupted.
- Note down some points for later discussion.

Try to use the full range of strategies and not to correct in a way which inhibits your partner.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS IN MORE DETAIL

- ways of optimising your Tandem sessions, and/or
- how to choose materials,

then please contact:

unitandem@unifr.ch

Language learning advice at the Self-Access Centre
University of Fribourg/Switzerland

www.unifr.ch/unitandem

IN YOUR OWN LANGUAGE, YOU ...

- accept your Tandem partner's wishes,
- go with the flow,
- listen and help to understand,
- try to understand,
- give feedback, and
- act as an expert of the language and a helpful colleague.

IN YOUR TARGET LANGUAGE, YOU ...

- decide what will happen in the session,
- are prepared,
- are active,
- try hard to communicate,
- ask your partner when you need help, and
- are motivated to make progress.

REVIEWING YOUR WORK TOGETHER

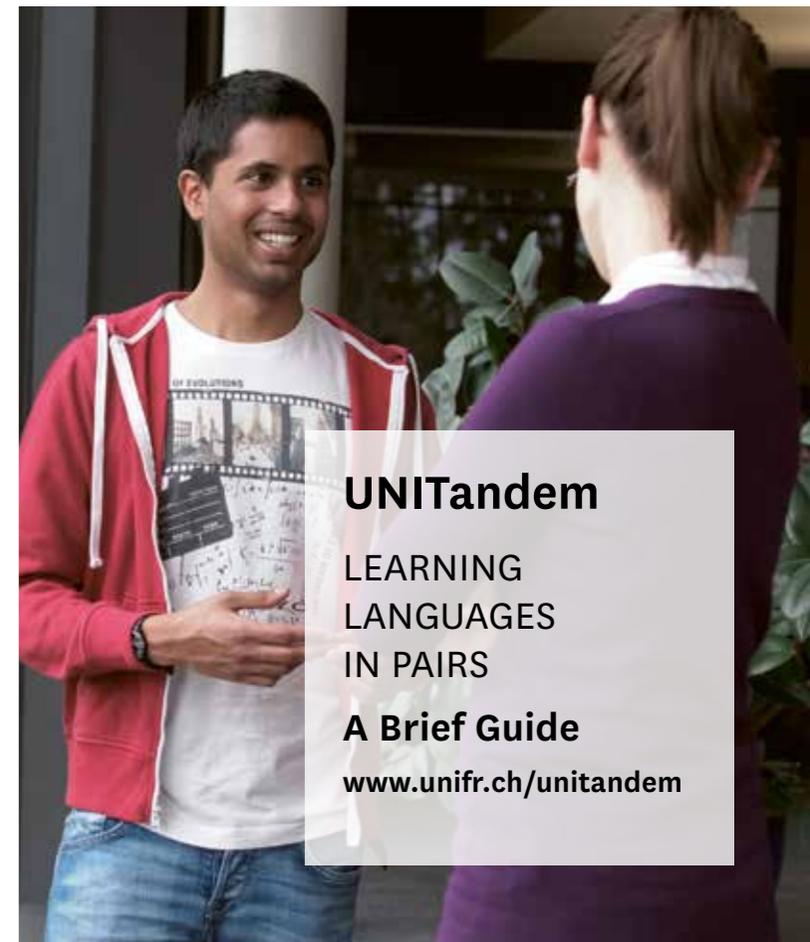
On occasion, especially in the earlier sessions, leave time to review what was more successful and less successful in each session. Try to apply what you have learnt in later sessions.

MATERIALS FOR LEARNING

No type of material should be excluded if you feel that it helps you to learn. If you are a beginner, we recommend that you use a course-book for your Tandem sessions. This can be especially helpful where grammar is a problem.

**UNI
FR**

UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG



UNITandem

LEARNING
LANGUAGES
IN PAIRS

A Brief Guide

www.unifr.ch/unitandem