Bilingual Buddies factsheet

Information for students:
One of the best things about living in International House is the day-to-day interaction with students from all over the world, so why not utilize that access and learn another language! Whether you're a beginner, know the basics but need help mastering local slang, want to prepare for study aboard or just want home with your language homework, the ‘Bilingual Buddies’ language exchange program is for you! Bilingual buddies will also give you the opportunity to develop language-teaching skills and make new friends!

How it works
• Fill in the registration form, selecting the language you’re fluent in and the language you wish to learn (beginner) or continue practicing (intermediate)
• IH will match students based on preferences and availability.
• You meet for an hour a week (except during exam times) for a minimum of 10 hours per semester (more is always welcome!)
• You spend half of the time speaking your native language and the other half in your partner’s native language.
• At the end of the semester, you and your partner may continue language exchange into the following semester, or you may be assigned a new partner as necessary.
• Depending on the needs of languages, you may not be matched with a language partner immediately.

FAQS

• How do I know what level I am?
  o Beginner: new to the language or have been learning for less than a year
  o Intermediate: Can speak comfortably in the language, have more than a year’s experience

• What if I speak more than one language?
  o There is space to put this information in the registration form. Please only note down languages that you can speak fluently.

• What if I want to learn more than one language?
  o You will only be able to learn one language at a time using the program. If you are flexible with which language you want to learn, there is space to put this information in the registration form. Selecting more than one language will give you a greater chance of being matched.

• What happens after I apply?
  o You will be put on a waitlist until a partner is available, hopefully this will not be a long wait, however it depends on the language you want teach/ learn

• When and where should my partner and I meet?
  o This should be decided by you and your partner. We suggest meeting somewhere quiet in IH to begin with. As the semester progresses, you could choose to go out to a café or perhaps a restaurant that serves you or your partner’s local cuisine!
What should we do at our first meeting?

- Your first meeting is a chance for you to get to know each other, decide on a regular meeting time and set goals and expectations for the semester. What do you want to be able to say/write by the end of the semester?

What should I do if I no longer want to be with my language partner?

- Please email the Residential Life Officer at your partner’s name and why you would like to switch.

What should I do if I no longer want to participate in the program?

- Please email the Residential Life Officer if no longer wish to participate in the program.

Key tenants for a successful exchange

- Be respectful of your partner.
  - Give them warning if you need to re-schedule your meeting.
  - Consider cultural differences and recognise that this is an opportunity for you to not only learn a language learn but also about different cultural perspectives.

- Make your goals as clear, realistic and specific as you can.
  - For example, I want to be able to count to 100 in Mandarin, receive a distinction in my Spanish exam, write a letter to my Grandma in Arabic, book a flight on a Korean website.

- Spend equal time on each partner’s language.