

## Approaches To Improving Discussions with the Students in the English Overseas Program – Particularly for Shy or Limited-English Students

<p><b>Goal:</b> To get students to communicate ideas successfully while minimizing unnatural pauses. Please note that fluency is more important than accuracy.</p> <p>Expect progress to be slow</p> <p><b>Long-term Goal:</b> Increase the length of responses to (hopefully) 1-2 minutes.</p>	<p><b>How Can We Get Students Talking?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create an environment that is comfortable and safe. In this way students feel free to experiment with the language</li> <li>● Make discussions engaging, interesting and fun</li> <li>● Keep the number of corrections to a minimum</li> </ul>
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### Discussion Techniques & Topics

Techniques	Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Model- Talk about a topic first, then ask your student to talk about it. For example, describe your grandmother, your favorite animal, your morning routine</li> <li>● Prompt - give clues to help student figure out word</li> <li>● Ask “Does that make sense?” Instead of “Do you understand?”</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Concrete discussion topics</u></b> – early on try to keep it simple and easy for them to speak instead of trying to translate word by word</p> <p><u>What do you see:</u>            What do you see in your room?            I see _____ (table, chair, wall, floor)            At the beach the girls hear            _____</p> <p>I have a book, The girls have a book, he has a book, they have a</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Repeat back what they say in proper English</li> <li>● Rephrase, don't directly correct. For example, if the student says, "sister 12," You can respond: "Oh, you have a 12-year-old sister."</li> <li>● If struggling with words/expressions, say something like "In English we would say...and model it for them."</li> </ul>	<p>book (Pronoun) (proper verb form) (activity)</p> <p>What do you see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What's in your room?</li> <li>-What do you see when you're riding on the bus (or train)</li> <li>-On your way to school</li> </ul> <p>E.g. She goes to the store We They He</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Some girls/boys go to the beach. What do the girls/boys see? Hear? The girls see...The girls are... (playing, laughing, etc.)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ask your student "how to:" For example, how do you prepare your favorite food, make a sandwich, get to their school, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Don't: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Insist"</li> <li>○ Make assumptions</li> <li>○ Give negative feedback</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If you introduce a new topic, make sure that the student is OK/comfortable with the topic.</li> <li>● At a point when student is comfortable talking, try "tell me in a sentence" if they are only answering in 1 or 2 words</li> </ul>

## Additional Topics

<b>Holidays Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How does your family prepare for Shabbat? What foods do you eat?</li> <li>● What is the Purim story?</li> <li>● What is the Passover story?</li> <li>● 10 plagues in Hebrew and English</li> </ul>
<b>Daily Routines</b>	<p>- I get up at—  I — have coffee, eat breakfast, get dressed, brush my teeth,  I go to —— work, food shopping, to babysit grandkids, tutor</p>
<b>Your Phones</b>	<p>What brand is your phone? My phone is ——  How long have you had your phone? I have had my phone for...  features -My phone has ... (a lot of memory, a great battery, and an excellent camera.)  What apps do you have on your phone? I have 20 apps, I have a music app, Google Translate, etc.  What is your favorite app and why? My favorite app is...Because...</p>
<b>Other Topics to Discuss</b>	<p>-Food and beverages- favorites, how to make, where they eat them, why they're their favorites  -Places they might like to visit and why  -An animal they would like to be and why, or animal they like and why (other than pets)  -Vacations</p>

	<p>-Other cities in Israel and why people might want to visit them what they would do there if they went there</p> <p>-Show them a picture which could be a photo, or something found online and have the student describe it</p> <p>-Ask them to tell you what they're learning in school:  (Tanach) Bible class  History or Math class</p> <p>-What they're reading in:  Literature (Hebrew) or English</p>
<p><b>Similarities and Differences: between our two communities</b></p>	<p>-What's dancing like in Israel?</p> <p>-How is it done?</p> <p>-What's a wedding like in Israel? Describe one that you've been to Who was at the wedding?</p>
<p><b>Idioms can be an interesting topic of discussion</b></p>	<p><u>Idiom Examples include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Raining cats and dogs</li> <li>● All thumbs</li> <li>● Ants in your pants</li> <li>● Back to square one, back to the drawing board</li> <li>● Backseat driver</li> <li>● When pigs fly</li> <li>● His/her bark is worse than their bite</li> <li>● Actions speak louder than words</li> <li>● On top of the world</li> <li>● It's a piece of cake</li> <li>● Butterflies in my stomach</li> <li>● Eats like a bird</li> <li>● On the same page</li> <li>● Saved by the bell</li> <li>● Better safe than sorry</li> <li>● A Picture is worth 1000 words</li> </ul>

**General Overall Tips:**

-A useful approach is to use the idea of “scaffolding” - meaning to meet the student where they are, utilize what they know, and then slowly build on it step by step.

-Even if it’s starting with 5 words, put it into chat so they can read it, and then speak about it.

-Students may be uncomfortable/scared/embarassed about their accent.

It’s important to be able to get them to feel safe, comfortable and break through their barriers – through conversation and being able to be understood, as well as hearing someone speak to them in English on a regular basis.

**General Final Tips:**

-Get them to say some words each time, even if they’re struggling. Also, get them to ask questions, so you can have a back-and-forth conversation. And listening is very important.

-If a student is struggling to stay on for 15-20 minutes, try starting with 5-10 minutes, and then build up.

-We also suggest sending an email or WhatsApp message during the week, every week (halfway or so between two meetings) to reinforce words or concepts discussed during the last zoom, and/or summarizing something that was discussed. Perhaps start with, “it was nice to speak with you” or if there is another compliment you can state that. And, ending with, “looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting.”