

Communication Partner Strategies

1. Ensure you are facing your partner and maintain eye contact during conversation.
2. Orient your partner to the topic by repeating key words several times. Repeat and rephrase sentences. Use nouns and specific names (instead of “that” or “him”).
3. Continue the same topic of conversation for as long as possible. Restate the topic throughout the conversation. Indicate that you are introducing a new topic.
4. Keep sentences short, simple, and direct. Put the subject of the sentence first.
5. Structure your questions so that your partner can recognize and repeat a response (e.g. “Would you to watch a movie or the news?”). Use **Yes/No** questions, or questions with choices. Avoid **open-ended questions** without a choice (e.g. “What would you like for dinner?”).
6. Encourage the use of gestures, visuals/written communication, or other non-verbal strategies to aid in communicating (e.g. tone of voice, touch, and eye contact).
7. Avoid asking *test* questions. Encourage your partner to engage in meaningful conversation (e.g. discuss topics of interest to both partners).