



Quick Tips

for English Language Development

WAYS TO GET STUDENTS TALKING

As you're working on speaking with your students, you may find that it's hard to get discussions going. Do students just sit and stare at each other? Start talking in their native language? Here are some tips to help get them started talking!

- **Include some thinking time:** Before students have to talk to each other, give them time to think about what they will say. You may have them draw a picture that represents what they want to talk about, write a few notes (not full sentences), or just think about what their answer will be.
- **Turn discussions into a game:** If you have an activity or game planned for the discussion, students will naturally have a place to start. See below for some speaking game ideas!
- **Encourage fluency vs. accuracy:** Tell your students that the point is to communicate, not to get everything exactly right! Encourage them to have conversations without a translator to practice getting their point across.

CHAT ACTIVITIES IN VISTA

The Vista online platform has 3 options for chat activities. Look for these icons in the Assign > Activities tab to assign them to your students.



Video Virtual Chat (student chats with AI avatar)



Partner Chat (student chats with another student who is online)



Group Chat (students chat in groups of 3-4)



GAME EXAMPLES

- **Just a Minute:** Write a list of topics on the board. In small groups, students number off (1-2-3 etc.). Have one student throw a paper airplane at the board - all students with number 1 must talk about that topic for 30 seconds to 1 minute (depending on the proficiency level).
- **Flashcard Sentences:** Start by making (or finding) a set of flashcards with vocabulary words for students to use. In partners, students show each other the flashcards and make sentences for each word. If the sentence is correct, they get to keep the card. The partner with the most cards wins!

Ideas in this tip are adapted from eslspeaking.org. Check it out!