

Common beliefs students express before departure.
But how true are they?



"I will be able to go out more often, I will study in the morning and relax in the evening, because here in my home university it seems we are working all the



"I think, it will be difficult to understand my lessons at university, but as the year progresses, I'll be ok" (168aEDR)



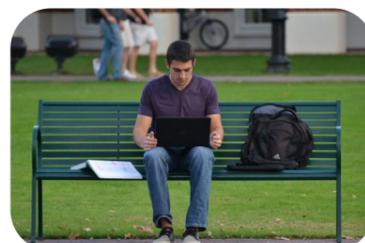
"I don't think [my life] will be too different because I will be a student at a university [...] it will be the same life, but in another language" (172aNTV)

Being an

International student

<http://langsnap.soton.ac.uk/>

Most students who embark in the adventure of studying abroad know there will observe cultural and/or linguistic differences between their host country and their own. But what are some of the challenges that an International student can face in the classrooms and lecture theatres at their host universities?



INTERVIEW AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT



AIM: To provide students with an opportunity to reflect on the possible challenges they may face as international students residing abroad.

PROCEDURE: Ask students to think of 5-7 questions they would like to ask to an international student. If you are using this activity as a follow up to the 'Being an International Student' Lecture, they can find some inspiration on the topics discussed there, or you can provide examples yourself: *What differences do they observe in the organization of the courses? How are they dealing with the linguistic difference?* Etc.



Get students to contact some international students doing courses at your university. This can be done through the Erasmus groups in your university, or via the International Office or through dedicated Facebook groups organized by and for visiting students.



Ask students to arrange a meeting with one or two international students and interview them using the questions they prepared. Remind them to record their interview or to take reliable notes.

FOLLOW UP: Students can either present their findings in class and/or write a short report of their findings, plus a reflective paragraph of what they have learned from this exchange.

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ORGANIZE A TEA PARTY TO MEET RETURNING STUDENTS



AIM: To provide students with an opportunity to meet returning students and listen to their experiences.

PROCEDURE: Contact or ask students to get in touch with as many returning students as they can. Ideally, a representative from each of the countries the future sojourners concerned will live in, should be represented. Book or get students to book a suitable room to share an informal meeting with the returning students. They should ask any questions they think would help, but encourage them to ask specific questions about the practicalities of being a student and about the organization of the university they visited. Can they gather 3-5 tips to share with their class? Ask them to think about a possible strategy they would use to minimize the negative impact such challenges could have on their perception of their life abroad.

FOLLOW UP: Get students to share the stories they heard and the conclusions they derive from this gathering. If they managed to learn the how-to for a specific task (eg. Choosing your modules) encourage them to create an infographic describing the processes step-by-step.

PRACTICE YOUR LECTURE LISTENING SKILLS



AIM: To provide students with some practice listening to lectures in a foreign language.

PROCEDURE: Ask students to look for examples of university lectures available on YouTube. (You could identify some good videos beforehand as well. One 15 to 20 minute session could work well, but a longer class could also test their ability to focus for a length of time that might be more similar to what they will get once they are abroad).

Ask students to choose a class to watch, (without stopping or pausing!) and to take notes about the content at the same time they listen to it. If they can't understand it all, they can then take notes about their feelings or thoughts instead: What do they think happened? Was it the accent of the lecturer? The ambient noise? The specialized vocabulary? How does this mini-exposure made them feel? Ask them to write it all down.

FOLLOW UP: In class, ask students to share their experience with the other students (or own their own time). What strategies can they put in place to reduce the impact of this challenge?