

Improving Speaking Skills and Pronunciation

- ✓ Concentrate on the message you want to convey and don't worry about every little word or grammar error.
- ✓ Find someone to practice with outside of class so you can practice your pronunciation and hear yourself speak. Read dialogues from the book, write and read your own dialogues, have conversations with the vocabulary and grammar you know, write short sentences and dictate to each other (one student reads her/his sentence, and the other student writes it down, then roles change. This way, you can both practice pronunciation/speaking and listening skills, as well as review vocabulary.)
- ✓ Read aloud. If you are somewhere that makes this difficult or embarrassing, try subvocalizing: speak in a very low whisper, and plug your ears, so you can hear yourself clearly. If that's not possible, just read to yourself while making the mouth movements, so you can get your body used to making the movements involved in speaking French.
- ✓ Participate actively in class. The more you try to speak French, the easier it will become, just like with any skill. Make sure you have reviewed materials from the previous class, read assigned material, and prepared your homework, so you are ready to volunteer or to be a leader in group work.
- ✓ Arrive early in class and have a conversation with classmates in French. (You won't be able to say much at first in 1101, but making the effort to use what you know will help build your skills.)
- ✓ For pronunciation, when doing lab work, pay special attention to the phonetics/pronunciation segments. And be sure to not just listen to the lab tapes, but to repeat what is said, imitating the pronunciation as closely as possible, or answer questions out loud (or subvocalizing or mouthing the words, as above).
- ✓ Record yourself speaking French, and listen to the recording. Compare what you hear to what you hear from me in class, or on the lab CDs. Often, we can think we're pronouncing something correctly, but when we listen to ourselves, we can hear our mistakes better.
- ✓ If you are an intermediate or advanced student (2201 or higher class), attend the weekly French Table, where you can hang out and chat in French without worrying about grammar!