

Mediation

The importance of mediation

« Mediating » between people who speak and write different languages constitutes a growing activity in a world in which languages and cultures encounter each other. You might also have to help somebody to understand texts, or to mediate between conversation partners.

Your actions will depend on the people and the situation.

Mediating can therefore mean:

- helping to eliminate difficulties in communication between people who do not understand each other
- describing other people's ideas or intentions in appropriate form
- taking cultural differences into consideration
- translating from one language into the other
- ...

The following strategies can be helpful in doing so:

- choosing linguistic forms that are appropriate for the conversation partner
- choosing linguistic forms that are appropriate to the context
- thinking about the presumed knowledge of the participants
- thinking about possible communication problems and paying attention to them in advance
- eliminating communication problems
- ...

What follows is a list of situations or examples of mediation.

Should you find yourself in one of these situations, how would you behave? Which mediation strategies would you use?

A friend who has never been to Cartagena before comes to visit me. I take him for dinner to a typical restaurant but on the menu, there are dishes my friend doesn't understand. I explain them to him.



At the EOI somebody gives a very interesting talk. The talk is in English, but I take notes in Spanish for classmates who couldn't come to the talk.



We are celebrating "Cartagineses y Romanos": I bump into a tourist from a cruise ship and he asks why people are dressed like that.



My mum has a new phone. I try to explain to her some of the apps she doesn't know.



- ✓ Talk/write about an experience where mediation was successful.
What contributed to the positive outcome? What was your contribution?
- ✓ Talk/write about an experience when mediation was not successful, and communication problems appeared.
Analyse the reasons for the negative outcome.