Turn and Talk

Timed partner talk that changes the idea: every student writes first, talks, listens with a job, and then revises their own answer.

What it is

Every student puts an idea into words at the same moment. The routine stays the same every time, so students stop thinking about the procedure and think about the idea. It ends with each student rewriting their own answer, which shows what the talk changed.

The steps

1. **Think and write first.** One to two silent minutes. Every student writes a tentative idea and one piece of evidence. “I think this source suggests…” is enough.
2. **Ask a question that needs a partner.** If it has one right answer, it is a check, not a conversation. Ask students to explain, choose, rank, or evaluate.
3. **Same roles, same time.** Partner A talks and B listens, then they switch.
4. **Give the listener one job.** Paraphrase (“So you're saying…”), ask for evidence (“Which detail makes you think that?”), or ask for clarity (“What do you mean by…?”). One job at a time.
5. **Finish alone, in writing.** Each student revises their own answer: “I changed my answer because…” or “I kept my answer, but now I can explain…”

When to use it

Use it any time a source needs a first interpretation, or before students write. It works when the question has more than one defensible answer. For multilingual learners it is rehearsal before speaking to the whole class, and students may work out the idea in their home language first.

Quick tip. While students talk, circulate and listen. Do not rescue every conversation. Bring two ideas you heard back to the class and ask how they differ.

Turn and Talk is a generic partner-talk routine. This format draws on Walqui (2006) and Zwiers.

STUDENT ORGANIZER

Turn and Talk

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Period:** _____

Question: _____

Listener's job: So you're saying… Which detail makes you think that? What do you mean by…?

MY FIRST IDEA

Write before you talk. I think… because…

MY EVIDENCE

WHAT MY PARTNER SAID

Say it back first: “So you're saying…”

MY REVISED ANSWER

I changed my answer because… or I kept my answer, but now I can explain…