

# Encourager Guidelines/Suggestions

1. **Please do not use your cell phone unless absolutely necessary.** The Student needs to know you are giving your full attention to him/her. If you must make or receive a phone call, please leave the room. (Students will use theirs, but we are trying to curb that as much as possible.)
2. Since **the first goal is to build relationships and become friends**, be friendly, smile a lot, and use first names often.
3. The **second goal is to help the student speak, listen, read, and write English** – in that order. To do that your roles are:
  - a. **Encourage** – say “Good!” or “Yes!” whenever appropriate.
  - b. **Keep the student accountable.** For example, if the student is supposed to speak aloud, remind him/her to speak aloud.
  - c. **Offer help when appropriate** – for example, with pronunciation.
4. Since we want to help the student practice speaking English as much as possible, try to find ways that you, as the Encourager, **speak as little as possible. Whenever you are speaking, the student is not.** Therefore:
  - a. **Use as few words as possible** to explain a word the student may not understand. Maybe a simple hand gesture will be enough, or it may take a game of Charades. Remember, it is not effective to use words they don’t understand to explain another word they don’t understand!
  - b. However, **engage in conversation as much as you can**, often piggy-backing on something that was just read. To help with this, remember that all the students are refugees from some country. This means they have all been forcibly removed from their homes and country, probably separated from family members, and perhaps have experienced violence and death. Some will be able to talk about these experiences, and others not, particularly to a stranger. So, in conversation, at least **begin by talking about the present.**
5. When helping a student understand the meanings of words, **don’t ask, “Do you know what this means?”** If the student says “yes” you won’t know whether that is true, so that question has no value. Instead, **simply ask, “What does this mean?”** If you get a blank stare, go on to explain. If the student tries to explain, you will soon learn whether or not he actually knows.
6. When within hearing of the student, **say aloud only those things you want him/her to hear.** He/she probably understands far more than the ability to speak indicates.
7. Body language is important. **Pull your chair up and move right in.** Get as close to the screen as the student. To be able to look the student in the eye fairly easily, you must be at least even with the student, if not just a bit ahead. (Don’t take it personally if the student doesn’t immediately turn in toward you. Give it some time.)
8. Comments reflecting **personal political opinion** are not appropriate in this context.
9. **Sharing your personal faith** as it relates to what is being read is always appropriate.
10. **Relax and have fun!** Laughter is good. The more fun you both have, the better.