

Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Language Institute

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Guidelines for Distance Learning at MEDLI

The purpose of these guidelines is to give you an overview of what it would mean to be a distance learner at MEDLI, and to make sure you understand how distance learners will fit into our student body. Some college courses offer distance education options so that a student can study at his or her own pace, or at times most convenient to the student's schedule. We want to make sure you understand that this will not be the case at MEDLI. We do not believe that independent study works for learning a foreign language. In order to have an effective language learning experience, students must interact with teachers and fellow students. **Classes will be held from 8:30 am to 1:00 pm CST, Mondays through Fridays, during the eight-week summer program.**

We are planning on making a **maximum of one spot for distance learners available per class.** We anticipate that most students attending MEDLI will do so in person. Distance learners will participate synchronously in the classes electronically via a tablet. The distant student will be "present" on a desk in a language classroom via a tablet and will connect to the tablet in the classroom via a desktop or high-quality laptop computer. The distant student will be able to hear the instructor and see the blackboard, and the instructor and the rest of the students in class will be able to hear and see the distance student in real time. Distance students are expected to participate in as many aspects of the class as possible – and most aspects will be possible -- including participating in small group discussions, skits, attending your teacher's office hours, etc.

Our instructional staff are experts in language teaching, and many of them have decades of teaching experience. Distance language teaching, however, is a new experience for many of our instructors, and you should expect that teachers may occasionally run into software or equipment problems requiring technical support. MEDLI support staff will assist in resolving such problems as quickly as possible. Students should also expect to occasionally run into software or equipment problems on their end. In the months and weeks prior to instruction, MEDLI support staff will work with each individual distance student to work out as many technical glitches as possible and will similarly assist after classes begin.

Distance students will also need to give careful consideration to the location from which they'll be participating. **Participation from a distant location will require a high speed, wired connection in a location that is free from distractions such as background noise or foot traffic.** A cafe or location with background noise would not provide an appropriate setting, for example. We recommend that distant students utilize the language lab at their home college or university, if possible.

It is **imperative** that each distance student be at a **wired** broadband connection, so that all audio and video signals are as fast as possible. You will be expected to work with MEDLI support staff, prior to the beginning of classes, to test out your computer equipment and internet connection. It is extremely disruptive to the instructor and classmates when a distance student's signal is weak, choppy, or frozen. The distant student is responsible for maintaining adequate bandwidth and computer speed to ensure smooth, clear audio and video signals. **Distance students who fail to do so will be asked to leave the class until the technical issues are resolved, and no tuition refund will be given to distance students in this circumstance.**

The minimum requirements of your computer system for this mode of instruction are well beneath what most computers are typically capable of:

- 2 GB RAM minimum, more recommended
- 20 MB free disk space
- Soundcard
- Headset with microphone/headphones, or speakers and a good-quality echo-canceling microphone
- Webcam

If at all possible, we recommend that students take advantage of the resources available at local college or university language labs. A typical college language lab offers very high-speed internet connections, powerful computers, good-quality headsets, and an environment that is ideal for language learning.