

Teaching Conversation Skills

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Using
conversation to
work on other
things

- Pronunciation
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Confidence
- Your relationship



Using
conversation to
work on other
things



Teaching
Conversation
Skills

Questions we will explore

- What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?
- What learning standards can we address through conversation-focused instruction?
- How can we help our students explicitly build & practice those skills?

What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

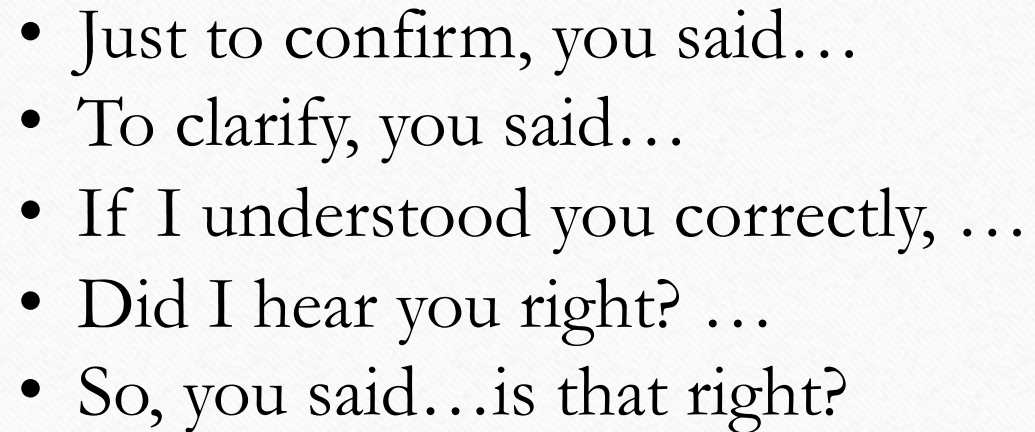
Using Exclamations



Asking Follow Up Questions



- Confirming your understanding and asking for clarification



What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

- Repeating or rephrasing what the other person said

“I got a new job.” → “You got a new job!”

“I’m going to visit my family next month.” → “You’re going next month?”

“My father fell last weekend.” → “Oh no - he fell?”

What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

- Making polite corrections if the person misunderstands you



WRONG!

- I am going to visit family next month.
- You're going next week?
- No - not until next month.

What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

- Making polite corrections if the person misunderstands you



WRONG!

- My address is 342 Valewood St.
- 342 Whalewort Street. And what is your zipcode?
- I'm sorry - it is Valewood. I can spell it for you...

What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

- Initiating Small Talk

- How was your weekend?
- Do you have any plans for...?
- What do you think about...?
- Have you heard...?
- How about this weather?

HOW TO MAKE SMALL TALK



What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

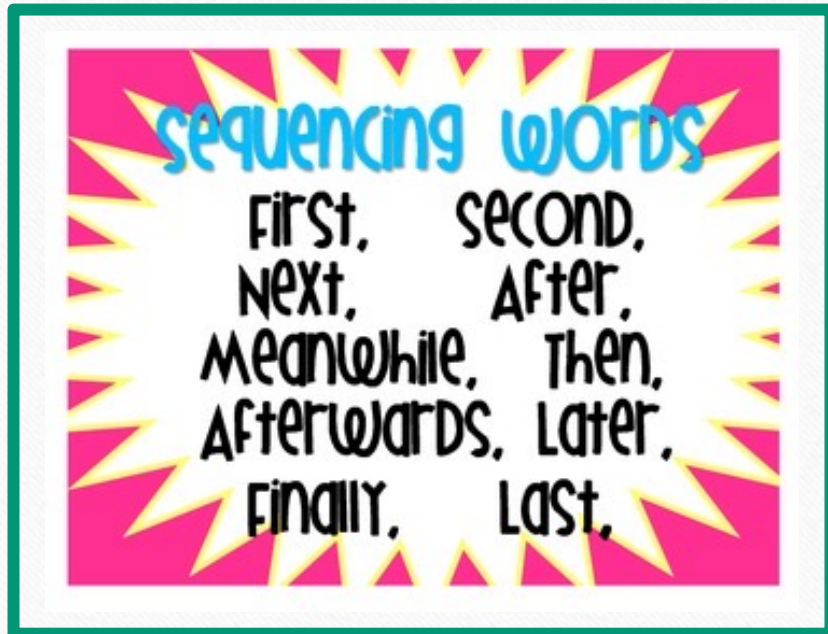
- Introducing a topic



- Last week you mentioned...How did that go?
- I meant to ask you...
- I wanted to tell you...
- I have some news.

What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

- Using sequence & time cues



- First...
- Then...
- Next...
- After that...

What conversational skills do strong English speakers use?

- Using body language to show interest



- Eye contact
- Facial expression
- Head position & movement
- Arm position
- Body position

- Making exclamations
- Asking follow up questions
- Confirming understanding & asking for clarification
- Repeating /Rephrasing what the other person said
- Making polite corrections
- Initiating Small Talk
- Introducing a topic
- Using sequence & time cues to share information
- Using body language to show interest

Standards in Conversation-Focused Lessons

1. Constructing Meaning

2. Exchanging Information

3. Speaking & Writing

4. Constructing Claims

5. Conducting Research

6. Analyzing Arguments

7. Adapting Language

8. Vocabulary

9. Clear Speech & Text

10. Conventions

Basic Level

2.1	Listening actively
2.2	Participating in short conversation
2.3	Sharing simple information
2.4	Responding to yes/no questions

Standards in Conversation-Focused Lessons

1. Constructing Meaning

2. Exchanging Information

3. Speaking & Writing

4. Constructing Claims

5. Conducting Research

6. Analyzing Arguments

7. Adapting Language

8. Vocabulary

9. Clear Speech & Text

10. Conventions

Level 2

2.1	Participating in conversations and discussions
2.2	Participating in written exchanges
2.3	Building on the ideas of others
2.4	Expressing his or her own ideas
2.5	Asking and answering relevant questions
2.6	Adding relevant information and evidence
2.7	Restating some of the key ideas
2.8	Following the rules of a discussion
2.9	Asking questions to gain information or to clarify understanding

Standards in Conversation-Focused Lessons

1. Constructing Meaning
2. Exchanging Information
3. Speaking & Writing
4. Constructing Claims
5. Conducting Research
6. Analyzing Arguments
7. Adapting Language
8. Vocabulary
9. Clear Speech & Text
10. Conventions

Level 4

3.3 Developing the topic with relevant details, concepts, examples and information

Standards in Conversation-Focused Lessons

1. Constructing Meaning
2. Exchanging Information
3. Speaking & Writing
4. Constructing Claims
5. Conducting Research
6. Analyzing Arguments
7. Adapting Language
8. Vocabulary
9. Clear Speech & Text
10. Conventions

Level 1

4.1	Constructing a claim about a familiar topic
4.2	Introducing a topic, experience, or event
4.3	Giving a reason to support a claim
4.4	Providing a conclusion

Standards in Conversation-Focused Lessons

Level 3

1. Constructing Meaning
2. Exchanging Information
3. Speaking & Writing
4. Constructing Claims
5. Conducting Research
6. Analyzing Arguments
7. Adapting Language
8. Vocabulary
9. Clear Speech & Text
10. Conventions

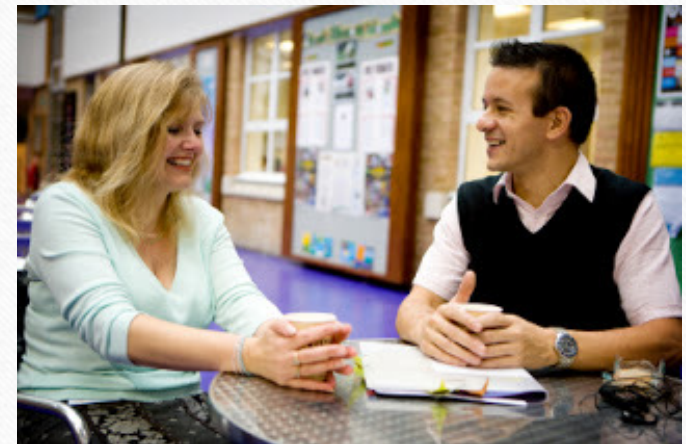
7.3 Adopting appropriate formal & informal style & tone in spoken language

9.1 Recounting longer, more detailed sequence of events

9.3 Using a variety of transitions in speech

10.3 Producing and expanding simple, compound and complex sentences.

How can we help our students explicitly
build & practice conversation skills?



How can we help our students explicitly build
& practice those skills?



Apprenticeship



Apprenticeship



Apprenticeship



- Making exclamations
- Asking follow up questions
- Confirming / asking for clarification
- Repeating / Rephrasing
- Making polite corrections
- Initiating Small Talk
- Introducing a topic
- Using sequence / time cues
- Using body language

I do



We do



You do

How can we help our students explicitly build
& practice those skills?



Scaffolding



Question &/or Sentence Frames

Question Frames

- What are your plans for _____?
- How many _____ do you have?

Sentence Frames

- I am going to _____.
- I have _____ children.



Chronology Frames

Chronology Question Frames

- What happened next?
- What did you do after that?

Chronology Sentence Frames

- First, _____.
- Next, _____.
- Then, _____.



Dialogue Scripts

Person A: I have a cold.

Person B: I am sorry. I hope you get better soon.

Person B: I have a sore shoulder.

Person A: Oh no! I hope it feels better soon.



Dialogue Scripts with Sentence Frames

Person A: I have a cold.

Person B: I am sorry. I hope you get better soon.

Person B: I have a _____.

Person A: Oh no! I hope you feel better soon.



Question Queue

The student has a list of questions to choose from that they can use during a conversation with you.

- Who are you visiting?
- Where do they live?
- What will you do while you are there?
- How will you get there?

(you can provide the list or you and the student can create the list together)



Word List

▼

Chat

Me to **Everyone**

10:10 AM

Word List:

school

teacher

online

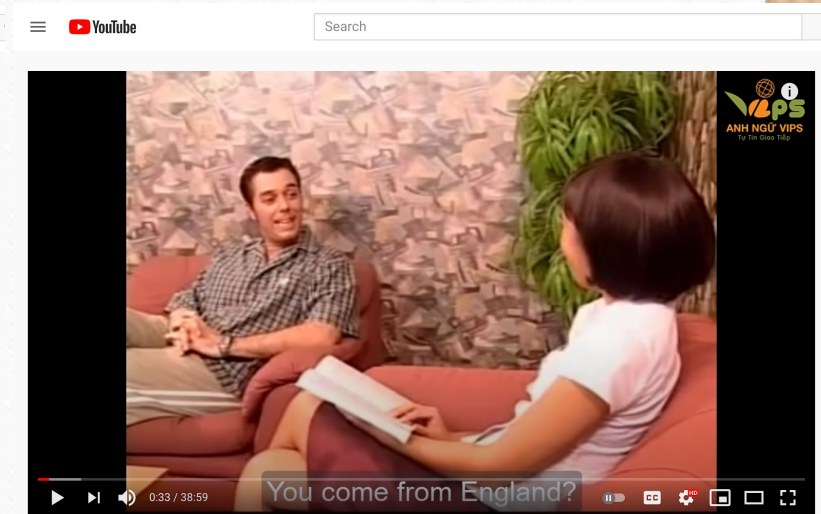
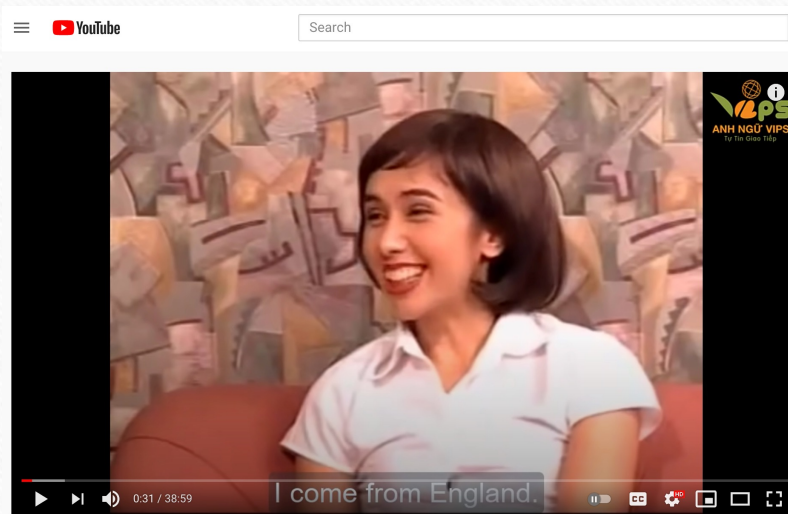
read

subject

- You agree on a list of 5 words related to a particular topic.
- Each of you has to use those 5 words during a conversation together.



Video Conversation Examples



Scaffolding



- Question Frames
- Sentence Frames
- Dialogue Scripts

- Question Queue
- Word List
- Video Conversation Examples

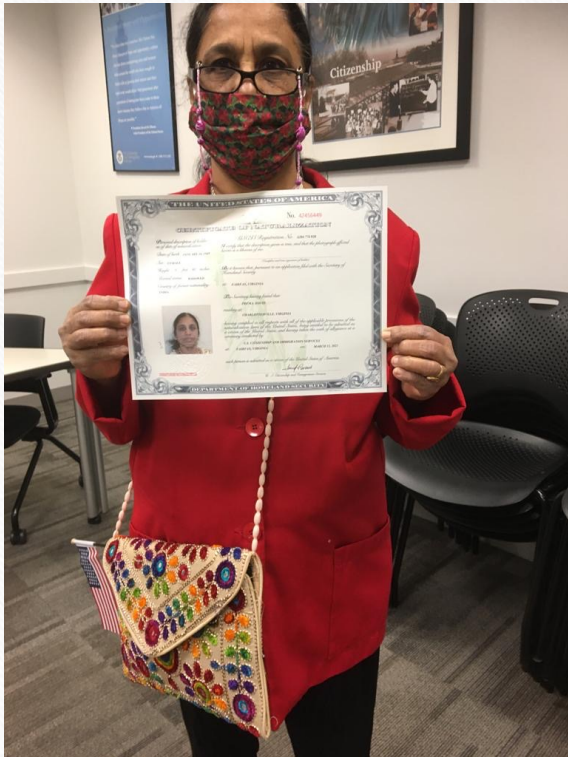
How can we help our students explicitly build
& practice those skills?



Talking!



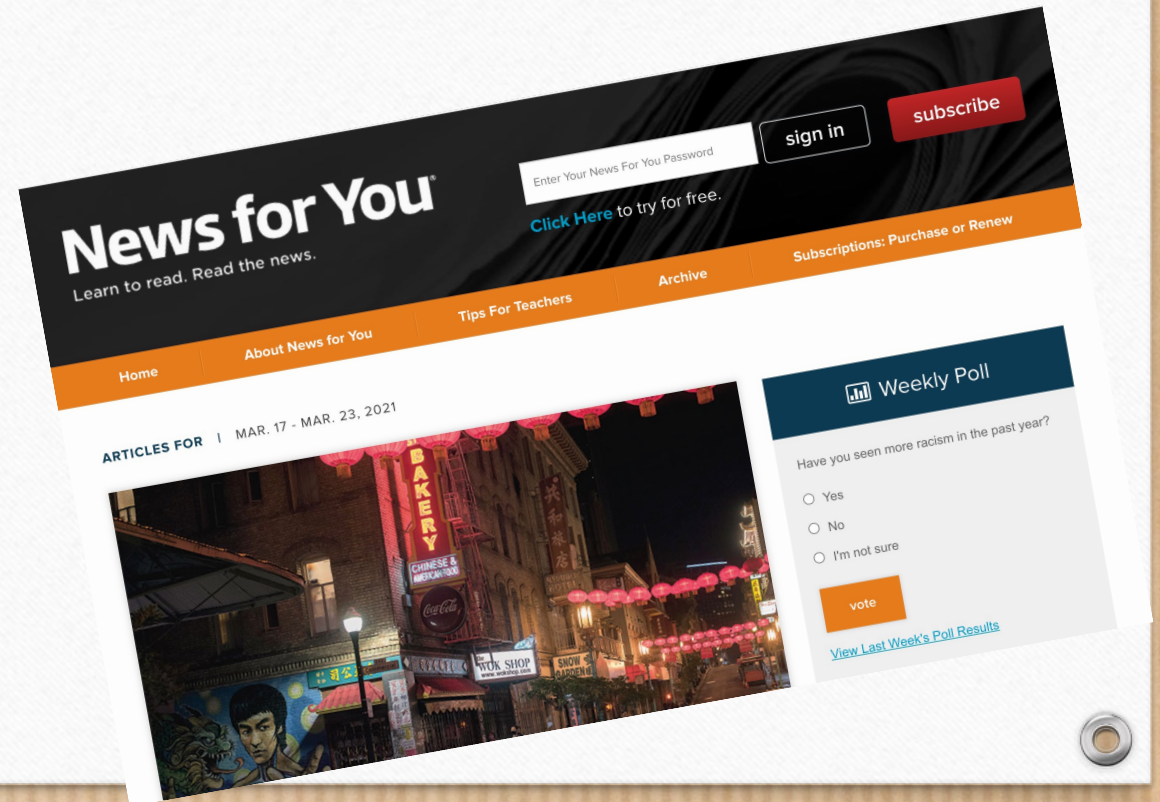
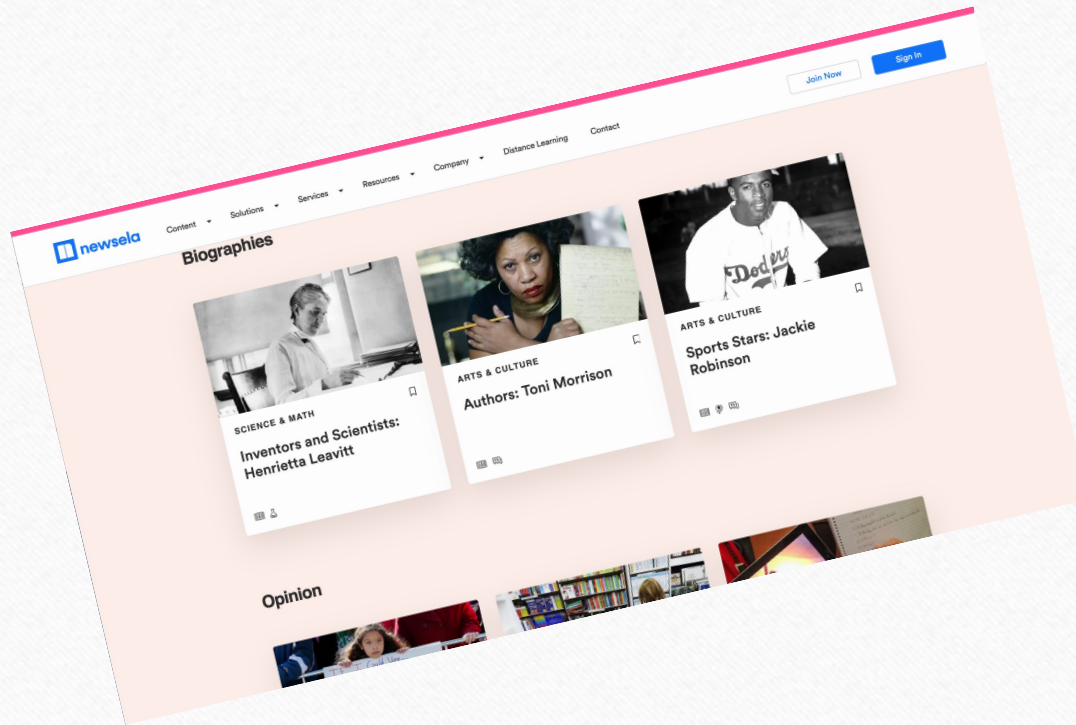
Photo Prompt



- Student Photo from that week
- Tutor Photo from that week
- Current events photo
- Topic-specific photo (nature, food, school)



Reading Prompt





Role Play



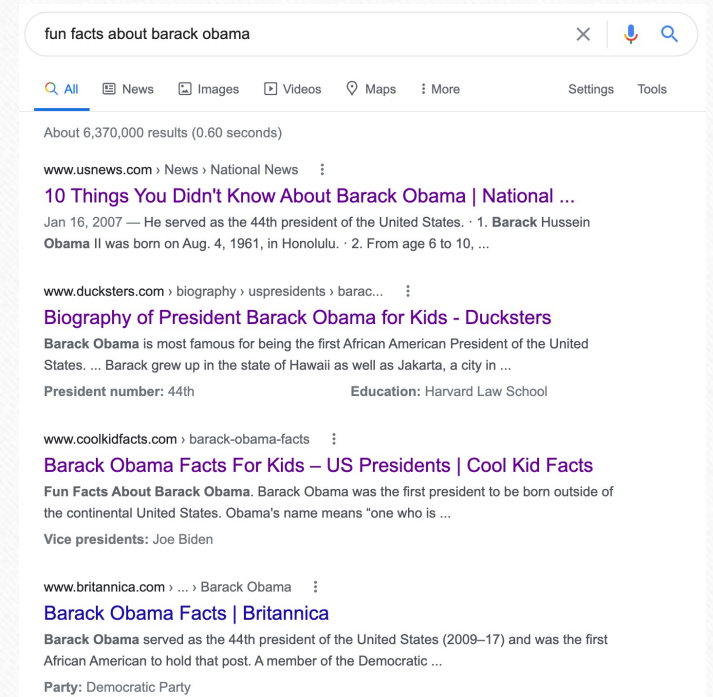
Role Play: Doctor Call





Famous Facts

- You and your student each gets a list of facts about a famous person or event (ideally, pick a logical pair and things of interest to your student)
- You have to learn about each other's topic by asking & answering questions about them.





Small Talk Topic of the Week

- Weather
- Arts/Entertainment
- Sports
- Family
- Food
- Work
- Travel
- Hobbies
- Hometown
- Holidays



Speaking & Listening Test Review

← → ↺ literacyforall.org/tutor-resources

- [Standards](#)
- [Ventures Resources](#)
- [Vocabulary](#)
- [Workshop Materials](#)

Universal Tutoring Tips:

Learning Styles

- [Learning Styles](#) - Behavioral characteristics and tutoring tips for three different learning styles: auditory, visual, and tactile/kinesthetic.
- [Teaching to the 8 Learning Styles](#) - Verbal, Bodily, Logical, Visual, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Musical, and Naturalist.

Guidelines Based on Learner Levels

- [English as a Second Language Learners](#)
- [Basic Literacy Learners](#)

[Speaking and Listening Practice for Beginners](#)

Speaking & Listening Test Information - Students should be able to answer the questions at the level they last tested into, all those before it, and the next level up that they will hopefully test into.

[Adult Education Acronym List](#) - An ongoing list of acronyms used within the Adult Education world. While this is not all-inclusive, it does include many of the most popular ones you will hear around our office.

[Digital Literacy Standards](#) - A list of standards for essential skills created by Northstar Digital Literacy, a program of Literacy Minnesota.



Directions: Practice asking your student these questions. They should be able to answer the questions at the level they last tested into, all those before it and the next level up that they will hopefully test into. Give them enough practice so that they answer with good grammar and pronunciation. You can even have them write down some of the answers for writing practice.

Level 0-1, Emergent Speaking and Listening Review

1. Where are you from?
2. What city do you live in now?
3. When is your birthday?
4. How old are you?
5. Are you married or single?
6. How many children do you have?
7. How do you spell your last name?
8. What is the date today?
9. What do you like about Charlottesville?
10. What is your favorite food?

Level 2, Low Beginning Speaking and Lis:

1. What is your address?

Level 5, High Intermediate Speaking and Listening Review

1. How long have you been in the United States?
2. Do you like it here? Explain.
3. Tell me about your last job. Why did you leave?
4. Compare housing in your country to where you've lived in Charlottesville?
5. What was school like for you in your country?
6. What is your opinion on the government in your country?
7. What do you think about the TV shows in this country?
8. What do you think about the health care system in this country?
9. Tell me about your last vacation.
10. What are you planning to do this weekend?

Level 6, Low Advanced Speaking and Listening Review

1. How long have you been in the United States?
2. Will you go back to your country? If yes, when?
3. Tell me about a few different jobs you've had.

Talking



- Photo Prompt
- Reading Prompt
- Role Play

- Famous Facts
- Small Talk Topic of the Week
- Speaking & Listening Review



- Apprenticeship



- Question Frames
- Sentence Frames
- Dialogue Scripts
- Question Queue
- Word List
- Video Conversation Examples

- Photo Prompt
- Reading Prompt
- Role Play
- Famous Facts
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