

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?



Use Exclamations

Ask Follow Up Questions



Confirm understanding and ask for clarification



- Just to confirm, you said...
- To clarify, you said...
- If I understood you correctly, ...
- Did I hear you right? ...
- So, you said...is that right?

Repeat or rephrase 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?”

Make polite corrections if the person misunderstands

WRONG!

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

Initiate Small Talk

HOW TO MAKE SMALL TALK



The weather is
really nice
today!



It is ! Much better
than all the rain
yesterday



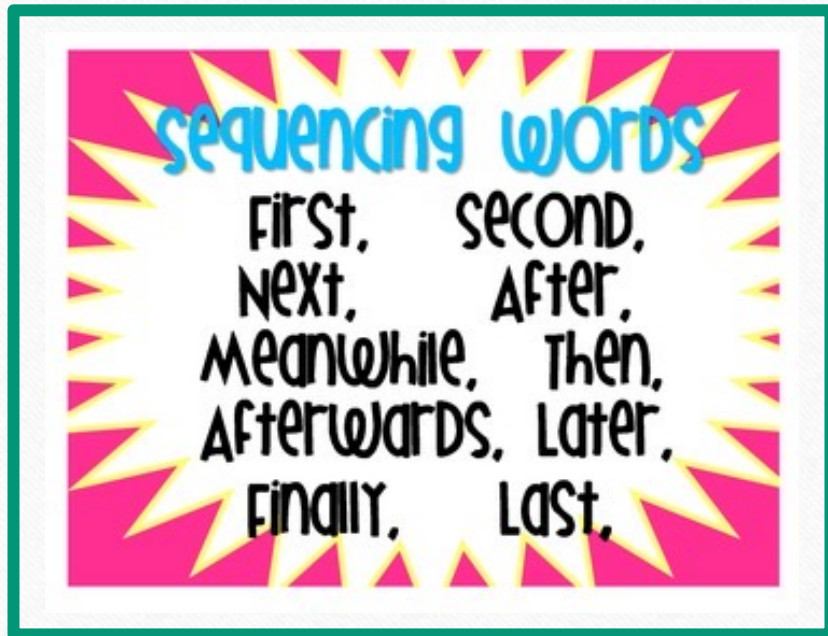
- How was your weekend?
- Do you have any plans for...?
- What do you think about...?
- Have you heard...?
- How about this weather?

Introduce a topic



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

Use sequence & time cues



- First...then...
- What happened next?

Use body language to show interest



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

Conversation Skills

- Making exclamations
- Asking follow up questions
- Introducing a topic
- Initiating small talk
- Using sequence/time cues
- Using body language
- Confirming understanding & asking for clarification
- Repeating / rephrasing what the other person said
- Making polite corrections if the person misunderstands you

What learning standards can we address through conversation-focused instruction?

My student can...

Level 2

Standard	Example	Dates Practiced
1) Determining the central idea (written or spoken)		
2) Analyzing key details		
3) Analyzing questions about key details		
4) Analyzing how the theme is developed by the details		
5) Analyzing part of the text		
6) Participating in conversations and discussions		
7) Participating in written exchanges		
8) Building on the ideas of others		
9) Expressing his or her own ideas		
10) Asking and answering relevant questions		
11) Asking relevant information and evidence		
12) Restating parts of the key ideas		
13) Restating parts of a discussion		
14) Following the rules of a discussion		
15) 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

Basic Level

2.4 Sharing simple 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 2

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
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6. Analyzing Arguments
7. Adapting Language
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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

4.2 Introducing a topic, experience or event

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 3

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

9.3 Using a variety of transitions in speech

How can we help our students explicitly
build & practice conversation 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

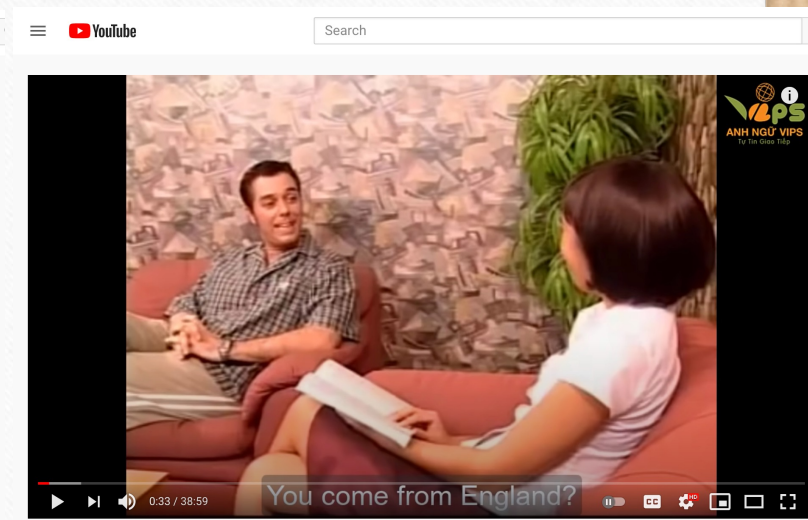
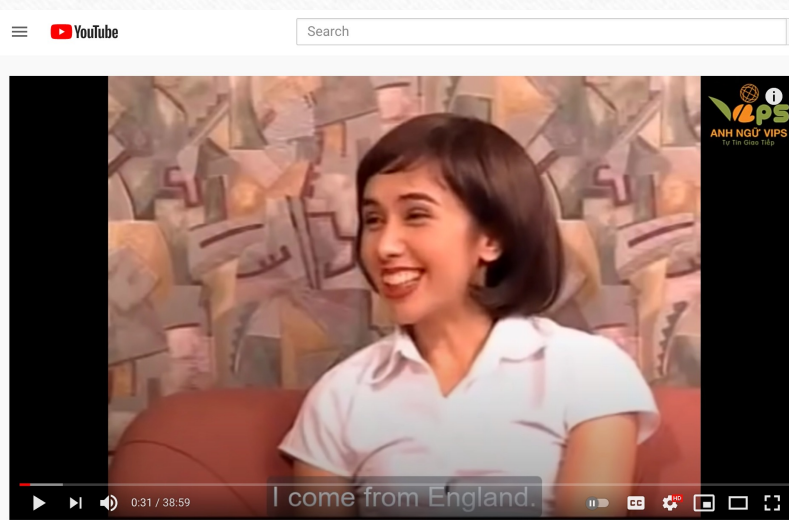
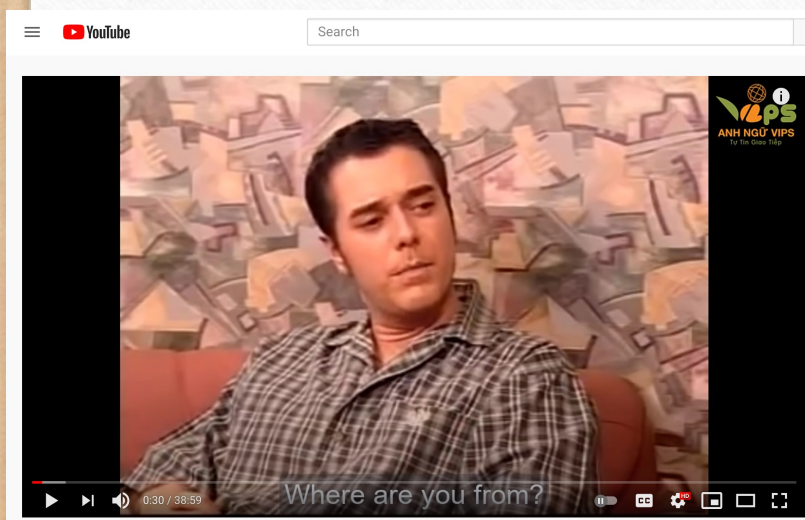
read

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



<https://eduteach.es/videos/english-course/english-conversation-1.html>

Scaffolds



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.



Question Queue

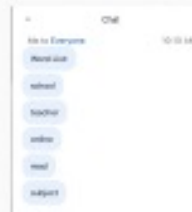
- The student has a list of questions to choose from that they can use during a conversation with you.



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



Word List



- 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



How can we help our students explicitly
build & practice conversation 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



How can we help our students explicitly
build & practice conversation 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

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ARTICLES FOR | MAR. 17 - MAR. 23, 2021

Weekly Poll

Have you seen more racism in the past year?

Yes

No

I'm not sure

[vote](#)

[View Last Week's Poll Results](#)



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.

fun facts about barack obama

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[www.usnews.com](#) › News › National News › **10 Things You Didn't Know About Barack Obama | National ...**
Jan 16, 2007 — He served as the 44th president of the United States. · 1. Barack Hussein Obama II was born on Aug. 4, 1961, in Honolulu. · 2. From age 6 to 10, ...

[www.ducksters.com](#) › biography › uspresidents › barac... › **Biography of President Barack Obama for Kids - Ducksters**
Barack Obama is most famous for being the first African American President of the United States. ... Barack grew up in the state of Hawaii as well as Jakarta, a city in ...
President number: 44th Education: Harvard Law School

[www.coolkidfacts.com](#) › barack-obama-facts › **Barack Obama Facts For Kids – US Presidents | Cool Kid Facts**
Fun Facts About Barack Obama. Barack Obama was the first president to be born outside of the continental United States. Obama's name means "one who is ...
Vice presidents: Joe Biden

[www.britannica.com](#) › ... › Barack Obama › **Barack Obama Facts | Britannica**
Barack Obama served as the 44th president of the United States (2009–17) and was the first African American to hold that post. A member of the Democratic ...
Party: Democratic Party



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



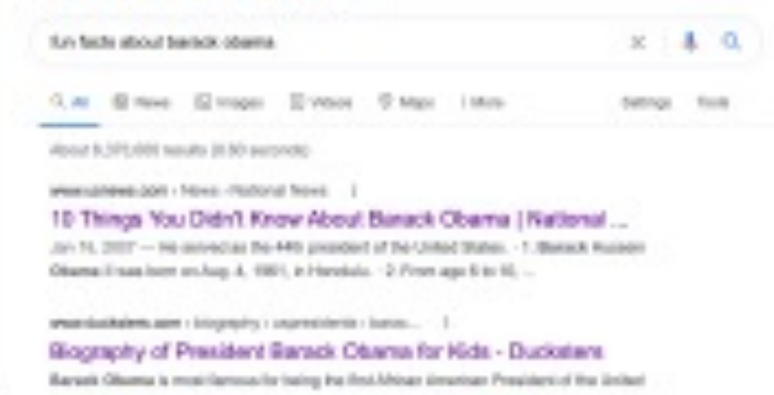
Reading Prompt



Role Play



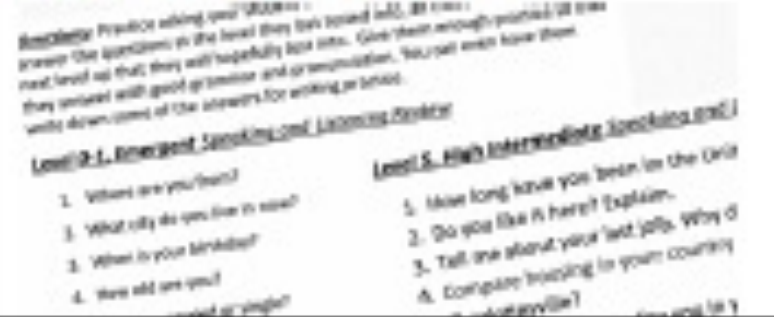
Famous Facts



Small Talk Topic of the Week



Speaking & Listening Test Review Questions





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



- Apprenticeship



- Photo Prompt
- Reading Prompt
- Role Play
- Famous Facts
- Small Talk Topic of the Week
- Speaking & Listening Review