

Warm up

Ask students if they have ever been in a situation where they wanted to speak, but someone else was speaking. How did they feel? Ask them to suggest ways in which they could interrupt. Elicit various phrases that speakers use to do this. Prompt, if necessary, with some obvious ones. For example: *Yes, but ... Excuse me, but ... Let me interrupt you for a minute ...* Students will encounter many more on the Worksheet, so this list can be kept short for now. You could introduce one or two bad examples and point out that they are seldom, if ever, acceptable, e.g. *I want to speak! Stop talking! OK. That's enough!*

Next, remind students that they sometimes need to speak on their own, such as when they deliver a speech or a presentation. Ask them how they might link the different topics they want to talk about. Elicit phrases that speakers could use. Prompt, if necessary, with some obvious ones. For example: *So, we've covered this subject; let's move on to ... Moving on, ... Now I'd like to talk about ...*

Finally, mention that there is more to speaking than the words we choose. Explain that we have to remember to pause, adjust our tone of voice, change speed and smile. These all form part of the non-verbal communication that takes place whenever two or more people meet.

Using the Factsheet

Either give students the Factsheet before the lesson (so they can read it at home and come to the lesson having prepared it), or give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with them.

Theory to practice

Answers

- 1
 - a acknowledges what the other person says, but suggests that another topic is more important
 - b openly admits that he/she is changing topic
 - c recognizes that he/she might appear rude
 - d is most likely giving a prepared presentation
 - e casually introduces a completely new topic

2 Students' own answers

Using the Worksheet

- Students are familiar with the Factsheet, so ask them for the two main situations where we might need to change topic (when we are talking, or when someone else is talking and we want to contribute). Remind students that they looked at some linking phrases on the Factsheet, and explain that they are going to look at more. Check that everyone understands before moving on to the exercises.

Practice

1 Choose the correct phrase to complete the sentence.

- This first task will help students focus on getting the linking phrases grammatically correct.
- Do the first item together with students so that everyone knows what to do. Point out that the introductory phrase *Could I ...* indicates the need for an indirect question.
- Allow a minute or two for students to do the other items, working alone.
- Elicit answers from the class, encouraging students to explain why they are correct.

Answers

- a we are
- b Allow
- c In case
- d that
- e haven't yet
- f to do

2 Match the phrases below to phrases with a similar meaning in Exercise 1. Write the letter of the sentence.

- Begin by asking students to isolate the key linking phrases in Exercise 1. They are:

- a** *Could I just talk about ...*
- b** *Allow me to (stop you there) ...*
- c** *In case I forget (we need to remind everyone that ...)*
- d** *Interesting that you should mention ...*
- e** *We haven't yet talked about ...*
- f** *This has nothing to do with what we were talking about, but ...*

Students might like to underline these introductory phrases. Tell them they are going to look at some phrases that perform the same functions.

- Allow a few minutes for students to work alone and try to match the phrases. If, after a period of time, students seem to be having difficulty, allow them to compare notes with a partner.
- Check answers.

Answers

- a** c
- b** f
- c** a
- d** e
- e** d
- f** b

3  Working in pairs, take turns to role-play the situations. In each case, the person changing the topic should begin with a phrase from Exercise 1, Exercise 2 or the Factsheet.

- Explain that students are going to practise interrupting in order to change topic. You can do the first item as an example if you want to.
- Put students in pairs. Tell them to decide who is A and who is B. Point out that they will take turns to start the dialogue.
- Point out that, in the first item, person A doesn't need to do anything except read out the sentence. Person B needs to prepare a response, first by choosing a phrase to interrupt with (from Exercise 1, Exercise 2 or the Factsheet), and second by changing topic as indicated in the instructions. Person B needs to prepare responses for items a, c, e, while person A needs to prepare b, d, f.
- Tell students that the person responding does not need to say more than one or two sentences.
- Allow 5–10 minutes for pairs to prepare. They can make notes if they want to.
- Ask a variety of pairs to act out each dialogue. Give advice in cases where something doesn't quite work.

Possible answers

- a** **A** So, I think it's really important to finalize the cost of the project.
B Interesting that you should mention the project, because I think we need to focus on finding the right people for it.
- b** **B** I would like to see more of these skyscrapers being built.
A Forgive me for interrupting, but I think we need to address the lack of jobs in rural areas first.
- c** **A** This new method will help people learn a foreign language in less time.
B Allow me to stop you there, because I think there are issues that need to be addressed with regard to people learning their native language.
- d** **B** With a few simple changes to our diet, we can prevent a great many of these diseases.
A Could I just talk about the dangers of smoking for a moment? Surely that's a greater problem?

- e **A** In this way, we can increase the potential earnings of each worker.
 B In case I forget, would this be a good time to bring up the factor of job satisfaction? Surely that is as important as money?
- f **B** In this vision of the future, there is very little that technology will not be able to do for us.
 A Let's discuss personal happiness, shall we? How does that fit into such a vision of the future?

4  **Look at the phrases that you could use in order to change topic in a monologue. Prepare a short talk on a subject you know something about.**

- Firstly, point out that up to now students have worked on dialogues. Tell them that they are now going to practise monologues. Explain that some of the linking phrases they have learned in Exercises 1–3 could be used for monologues as well. Ask them which ones they could use in a monologue (e.g. *Could I just talk about ...? We haven't yet talked about ... On the subject of ...*).
- Go through the phrases in the box and make sure students understand them.
- Explain that students are going to prepare a short talk on a subject that they choose.
- Go through the example, pointing out that students will need to supply a little more information in order to make three or more short paragraphs. Explain that the point is to find three different but related topics, as in the example. They will then link them as shown.
- Allow 5–10 minutes for students to work on their own talk. They could write about something that they are studying, a hobby, aspects of their own country, etc. You can go round and prompt with ideas if necessary.
- When they are ready, students give their talks to their partners. Try to listen in to as many as possible, giving advice where necessary. You could choose some students to repeat their talks for the whole class to hear. If you do this, see if the class can identify the changes in topic.

Students' own answers

Reflect

5 **After working with the phrases in this unit, do you feel more confident about changing the topic? Write a list of five phrases that you could use in your own speaking.**

- Ask students if they now feel better equipped to change topic. Ask them whether they think it is harder to change topic in discussions or monologues, and why.
- Allow a few minutes for students to review the material they have covered, and to write down phrases they might like to use in future.