

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Worksheet

Maintain and develop a conversation

Student name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

When you have a conversation in English, you don't want it to suddenly come to an end because you don't know what to say or because you say the wrong thing. There are various strategies you can use to keep a conversation going and make it more interesting.

Practice



Read the advice about conversations. Is it good or bad? Tick for each sentence.

	Good advice	Bad advice
a Don't look at the other person. It will make them nervous.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b Talk as much as possible. The other person will think you're interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c Don't ask too many direct questions. It can make the other person uncomfortable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d Short questions like <i>How about you?</i> sound rude.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e Use exclamations like <i>Wow!</i> and <i>That's fantastic!</i> to sound really interested.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f Don't change topic. The other person might get confused.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Read the sentences. Are they appropriate ways of starting a conversation with someone you don't know? Work in pairs to decide, and tick your answers.

	Appropriate	Inappropriate
a Hi! How old are you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b You study biology with Alana, don't you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c Hello, I'm Abdul. Did you watch that new crime drama on TV last night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d Oh, hi, I've seen you at the gym near the library. I go there, too.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e It's a great party, isn't it? Have you been to Misha's house before?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f Hello, there ... erm ... who's your favourite actor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g I love those shoes. Where did you get them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Read the sentences. Are they responses to good news or bad news?

	Good news	Bad news
a Wow! Really?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b Did you really?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c That's a shame.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d Oh, that's great news.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e Oh no, that's bad luck.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f Oh dear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g An A grade! Well done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h I'm sorry to hear that.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4  Practise in pairs. One student gives good or bad news. The other responds using a phrase from Exercise 3. Then swap roles.

5  Read the five conversations (a–e). What might person B say in each space? In pairs, think of possible follow-up comments or questions.

a **A** I've known Tim since we were at secondary school.
B Really? _____

b **A** We've just come back from two weeks in Bali.
B Bali! Wow! _____

c **A** Actually, I didn't do as well in the exams as I was hoping.
B I'm sorry to hear that. _____

d **A** I went to see that new Aladdin movie last night.
B Did you? _____

e **A** I got to the concert late and missed the first three songs.
B Oh, that's a shame. _____

6 Put the responses (1–5) into the correct spaces in the conversations in Exercise 5.

- 1 I bet it was hot out there.
- 2 Did you enjoy the rest of the evening?
- 3 Is it as good they say?
- 4 Were you in the same class?
- 5 Will it affect your choice of university?

7   **02 Listen to check your answers to Exercise 6. Then practise the conversations with a partner.**

8   **03 Listen to the start of a conversation and talk in pairs.**

- a** Note the questions, responses and follow-up questions.
- b** Check the transcript.
- c** Discuss how the conversation could continue. Should Mia change topic and invite Jack to say more?

Transcript

- Jack** What do you do in your free time?
Mia Well, I play sudoku quite a lot.
Jack Sudoku, really?
Mia Yes, I'm in the university sudoku club.
Jack Oh yeah? When do you meet?
Mia Every Thursday at seven. On Saturdays we play in sudoku tournaments, too.
Jack Wow! That's great! Do you ever win?
Mia All the time! We're one of the best teams in this region.

9 The next part of Jack and Mia's conversation is below, but the lines are in the wrong order. Write the name of the speaker (Jack or Mia) next to each line, and number the lines in the correct order (1–6).

- _____ And say what you think of it. Where do you meet?
- _____ Actually, I do. I belong to a book club.
- _____ In the library, at 7 p.m. on a Tuesday.
- _____ We all read the same book and then meet once a week to discuss it.
- _____ What about you? Do you belong to any clubs?
- _____ Do you? That sounds interesting. What do you do, exactly?

10  **04** Listen to check your answers to Exercise 9. Then practise the full conversation in pairs. Cover the Worksheet and try to remember it.

11  Work in pairs. Invent a conversation in each of the situations below.

- a** You are introduced to a friend's friend at a party.
- b** You are waiting in a queue to get coffee with a classmate you have never spoken to.
- c** You are talking to a student you have never met while you are both waiting for a seminar to begin.

Reflect

12  Discuss the questions.

- Do you feel more confident starting a conversation?
- Do you feel more confident responding to what the other person says?
- Can you judge when it is appropriate to change topic?
- What aspects of having a conversation do you need to work on and improve?