

Unit 1: Starting an informal conversation

SUMMARY

You can use this summary to guide the learning objectives and target setting for your class.

Can-do statements

By the end of this unit, students will be able to say:

- I can start an informal conversation.
- I can find something in common with someone else.
- I can match the mood of my interlocutor.
- I can ask questions to promote further conversations.

Vocabulary

Education: (secondary) school, (art) college, course, learn, practise

Employment: accountant, teacher, photographer, in advertising/sales

Travel: abroad, route, journey, that part of the world

Appropriateness

Sounding friendly

Pronunciation

Linking sounds – intrusion

Function

Greeting people: *Nice to meet you.*

Continuing the conversation: *Tell me (more) about it. I've heard so much about it. I'm ... What about you?*

CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

You can use some or all of these ideas to check and enhance your students' understanding as they work their way through *Unit 1 of Speaking B1+ Intermediate in class*.

Using Useful tips

Use this exercise to personalize the *Useful tips* section.

1. Ask students to think of an example of when they have used each of the tips, either in English or their native language.
2. Put students in pairs and get them to share their examples with a partner. What did they say, or what would they have said if the conversation had been in English?
3. Get each pair to write the phrases they used (in English) on separate bits of paper.
4. Pairs of students can then swap their phrases with those of another pair, who can decide which *Useful tip* they relate to.
4. Feed back and share the most interesting phrases with the whole group.

Using Conversations

Use the *Conversations* dialogues for a short reordering exercise.

1. Photocopy the *Conversations* dialogues, below, before the lesson and cut each conversation into individual lines.
2. Put students in pairs or small groups and ask them to reconstruct the conversation.
3. Play the CD as feedback and get students to check their answers as they listen.

Using Understanding

1. Ask students to identify the key phrases by which the speakers achieve their aims in the conversations:

Conversation 1, B: *Really?* Speaker A also tries to find something in common with speaker B by saying *What's it called? I'm from that part of the world, too.*

Conversation 2, D: *I'm an accountant. What about you?* and *I thought you were French! How long have you been in the country?*

Conversation 3, C: *About an hour. But it's a great route – it takes you right past the new Olympic Stadium.*

2. Get students to work in pairs to think of more phrases that achieve these aims:
Finding something in common: *Really? It's the same for me. / I like the theatre – what about you? / You like football, don't you?*
Matching a speaker's mood: *Um, I see what you mean. / Oh yes, I agree. / Same here.*
3. Feed back and share the most interesting phrases with the whole group.

The variety of short scripted conversations in these units give students the opportunity for tightly controlled practice. After completing the *Understanding* section, always ask the students to rehearse and perform one of the dialogues for the class. It is a good idea to get them to come to the front to perform rather than letting them do so from their chairs. There are four roles across the three conversations here; you can repeat one scene more than once if you have more students, but there are plenty of other opportunities in other units. You can also get the students to ad lib with personal information rather than use the information given in the conversations.

Using Saying it accurately

After *Saying it accurately*, you can use a mingle activity to practise the language for finding things in common – both question and response.

1. Look at the language for finding things in common, matching moods and asking questions used in the exercise. Ask the students to brainstorm some more.

2. Remind students what they might say to confirm that they have things in common (*me too, so do I*, etc.).
3. Identify the topics discussed in *Conversations* (*education, employment, travel*) and ask students to suggest further topics of conversation (e.g. places they've been, music/films likes and dislikes, food, what they did at the weekend, etc.).
4. Get students to each choose two or three topics they want to ask their fellow students about. Allow them five minutes or so to move around the room employing the strategies used in *Conversations* to find something in common with their peers in the topic areas they selected.
5. This exercise can also be used to practise different tenses and parts of language depending on how you ask students to define the topics. They can practise the past tense by finding things in common that they did last week, or the future tense by finding things in common about plans for next year.

Using *Saying it appropriately*

Saying it appropriately focuses on intonation for sounding enthusiastic and friendly.

1. Photocopy the *Sounding friendly* worksheet and give one to each student.
2. Get students to add five more sentences that they have learned during the lesson.
3. Put students in pairs.

4. Ask students to decide which sentences they will say to their partner with an enthusiastic tone, and which with an unenthusiastic tone.
5. Each student can then challenge their partner to guess which phrases they are saying with either an enthusiastic or an unenthusiastic tone.

Using *Get speaking*

Get Speaking is a role play activity that students perform with the CD, but the classroom environment allows you to make this an exercise for pairs and the whole group too.

1. Play the recording and allow time for students to think of answers to the questions.
2. Put students in pairs and get one student in each pair to give the cues from the audio script, and the other to practise the responses they have thought of.
3. Monitor as you allow the partners to change roles and think of multiple responses to the cues.
4. Come back to the whole group. Use a bean bag, or something you can safely throw, to get quick-fire answers from the students. Give a cue then throw the bean bag at a student, who catches it and responds. The same student then gives another cue and throws the bean bag to another student who responds on catching it, and so on. The cues can be the same as those from the audio script or the students' own adaptations.

PHOTOCOPIABLES

Conversations

Conversation 1

So, how do you and Jack know each other? Are you colleagues?

No, we've known each other since we were kids, actually. We went to school together.

Really? Where are you from?

Oh, a little village in Suffolk. Not many people have heard of it!

What's it called? I'm from that part of the world, too.

Conversation 2

Hi, I'm David.

Nice to meet you. I'm Harry. I work at the same company as Jack.

What exactly do you do?

I'm an accountant. What about you?

I'm a teacher. I teach French at a local secondary school.

I thought you were French! How long have you been in this country?

Oh, for about five years now. I love it here.

Conversation 3

Oh, that journey took me forever!

How did you get here?

By bus from Piccadilly Circus.

It's a long way, isn't it? How long did it take?

About an hour. But it's a great route – it takes you right past the new Olympic stadium. Have you seen it yet?

No, I've heard so much about it though. Tell me, is it really as amazing as they say?

Sounding friendly

Add five more sentences that you've learned during this lesson. Then decide which sentences to say with an enthusiastic tone, and which with an unenthusiastic tone. Challenge your partner to guess how you are saying each phrase.

		friendly / enthusiastic	unfriendly / unenthusiastic
1.	What exactly do you do?		
2.	This place is great, isn't it?		
3.	That looks interesting.		
4.	Where are you from?		
5.	How did you get here?		
6.	So, how do you and Mika know each other?		
7.	Nice to meet you.		
8.	I've heard about it. Tell me more.		
9.	I've never been to that part of the world.		
10.	How long have you lived there?		
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			