

English for Life: Speaking (B1)

Unit	Topic	Key phrases	Language	Speaking tips	Cultural notes	Audio
1	Starting an informal conversation	So, how do you and X know each other? / Where are you from? / Hi, I'm X. / Nice to meet you. / What exactly do you do? / What about you? / How long have you been in this country? / Oh, that journey took me forever! / How did you get here? / ..., isn't it? / How long did it take? / Have you seen it yet? / I've heard so much about it. / Tell me ...	Using intonation to sound enthusiastic - connecting words	Tips for small talk: find something in common / match the mood / answer in longer sentences / ask questions too	Different ways of making conversation - pauses might be different lengths	5 tracks
2	Responding	What were you doing there? / How long have you been speaking ...? / Did you make any embarrassing mistakes? / I remember my last trip to ... / So you were saying ... / What's it like? / It's quite touristy, isn't it? / I love reading on holidays. / ...don't you think?	Tag questions after a statement / open-ended questions - <i>wh</i> -questions / intonation when asking a question	Tips for responding: expand on information the speaker gives you / echo the speaker's words / ask open-ended questions / ask for speaker's opinion / recount a similar experience	How to be an active listener and keep a conversation going - the importance of eye contact when listening	8 tracks
3	Interruptions	Hang on a minute. / Actually, can I just say ... / Okay, then. / Now where was I? / Anyway. / So you were saying ... / Excuse me, may I interrupt? / Excuse me, I haven't finished. / Anyway, as I was saying ... / Now, where was I?	Using intonation when politely interrupting / using <i>so</i> , <i>right</i> , <i>anyway</i> and <i>well</i> with emphasis to move conversation in right direction	Tips for politely interrupting: wait for appropriate time to add relevant information / apologise before making your point / make it clear you want the speaker to continue / try to get back to subject when interrupted	Different conversational customs in different cultures - be sensitive to the cultural context / if in doubt wait for a clear pause before interjecting	6 tracks
4	Exchanging information	You're ... aren't you? / I hear ... / between you and me ... / it seems that ... / I heard a rumour ... / Apparently ... / I overheard ... / I wonder how ... / according to ... / I suppose ... / so I'm told ... / I believe ... / According to ... / I'm sure that ...	Future predictions using <i>might</i> (speculation) and <i>will</i> (certainty) / using intonation to sound friendly	Tips for exchanging information: offer personal information to establish trust / ask questions indirectly / use listener's name and <i>we</i> , <i>us</i> and <i>our</i> to create friendly rapport	Find out the appropriate way for exchanging information in a specific cultural context - be aware of different attitudes towards privacy	7 tracks
5	What to say when you don't remember a word	You know, it's a ... / I know what you mean. / Yes, that's the word. / What's the word I'm looking for ... / It's the thing you use for ... / it's made from ... / I know what you mean. / I can't think of the word for it. / it's a sort of ...	Using intonation to sound polite / speaking clearly / helping the listener to understand the word you can't remember	Tips for when you've forgotten a word: use a simpler word / change syntax / explain the word / use opposites and comparisons / use examples to describe word	You can use 'fillers' such as <i>er</i> , <i>um</i> , <i>you know</i> , <i>sort of</i> , <i>I mean</i> ... when you can't find the words, but not too often	7 tracks
6	Changing the subject	By the way ... / speaking of ... / Sorry, this has nothing to do with what we're talking about but ... / I know what you mean. I had a similar experience ... / Before I forget ... / That reminds me of ... / While I remember ... / Talking of ...	Using intonation to sound polite, sincere, and diplomatic / changing the subject politely / pausing after introducing a new topic	Tips for changing the subject: interrupt yourself to change the subject rather than speaker / make sure the new topic is connected to what speaker was saying / if you need to change the subject make an apology first	Note which phrases mark the switch from small talk to the main subject of a conversation: right then ... / shall we ... / let's get down to business	6 tracks
7	Asking for clarification and checking understanding	Do you mean ... ? / No, what I mean is ... / I'm not quite with you. / Are you following me? / I've got it. / Does that make sense? / Let me just check that I've got it right. / Sorry you've lost me. / Okay, here's what you do. / I've got that bit. / ... just go over what I do next?	Using intonation to check understanding / using formal and informal phrases to check understanding depending on context	Tips for giving or following instructions: repeat complicated explanations / clarify that you have understood everything / confirm everything has been understood	None given	6 tracks
8	Showing interest in a conversation	You worked there? How interesting. / Really? That's amazing! / Oh dear, what happened? / So you're telling me that ... / That's right. / You're joking! / How terrible. / How interesting. / I can't believe it / That's dreadful.	Echoing speaker to show interest / using intonation to show interest / using intonation to express empathy	Tips for showing interest in speaker: echo key information / show empathy / paraphrase what has been said	In many cultures it is considered rude to sound disinterested in a conversation	9 tracks

9	How to end a conversation politely	Anyway, look, I really must go ... / Let's catch up soon. / I'd better let you go now. / I've been keeping you talking for ages. / I've got to go. / I've just remembered that ... / It's been good talking to you. / Sorry, I must be off. / I have to rush off now.	Using the appropriate tone to say no sincerely / using intonation to end a conversation politely	Tips for politely ending a conversation: recognise listener's body language / decide when you want to a conversation / explain why you have to go	body language can indicate if someone wants to end a conversation / body language and how it is read differs in different cultures	7 tracks
10	Making suggestions or proposals	I don't mind going out but ... / What about ... ? / How about ... ? / Here's an idea. / I'd rather ... / Do you feel like ... ? / I'd prefer ... / Why don't we ... / Let's ... / I suggest we ...	Using the -ing form after prepositions and verbs expressing likes and dislikes / the infinitive without <i>to</i> follows <i>I'd rather</i> / infinitive with <i>to</i> follows <i>I'd prefer</i> / relaxed pronunciation - elision / using intonation to sound polite	Tips for politely responding to suggestions: explain a negative response / make an alternative suggestion / state a preference for something else / sound positive when giving a positive response	None given	6 tracks
11	Making polite requests	Is there any chance I could ... / I couldn't ask you to ... Could I? / I'm really sorry to bother you, but ... / Would it be at all possible for you to ... ? / Would you mind if I ... ? / Would you be able to ... ?	<i>Do you mind if ...</i> followed by verb in present tense / <i>would you mind if ...</i> Followed by verb in past tense / <i>can</i> and <i>could</i> followed by verb without <i>to</i>	Tips for polite requests: use indirect and polite requests / use <i>could</i> rather than <i>can</i> / start a request with an apology	It is unusual for people to give orders in English / indirect requests and suggestions are used instead	6 tracks
12	Asking for and giving advice	Have you thought about ... ? / It might be an idea to ... / You could try to ... / Is that an option? / Can you give me some advice? / What do you think I should do? / What would you do in my situation? / The thing is ... / If I were you, I'd ... / If it was me I'd ... / I wouldn't mention ...	The pronunciation of 's', 'sh' and 'th' / using intonation to forceful or hesitant / using tone of voice to express empathy	Tips for giving and receiving advice: listen carefully / ask questions/ show empathy / think about consequences of taking-not taking advice / suggest alternatives	Make sure the other person wants advice / don't take offence if they reject your suggestions	6 tracks
13	Asking for and giving opinions	I think ... / What do you reckon? / I guess you're right. / If you ask me ... / The way I see it ... / In my view ... / What do you think about ... ? / I strongly believe ... / Personally ... / What's your attitude to ... ? / As far as I'm concerned ... / I really think ... / To my mind ... / I'm utterly convinced ... / I'm absolutely sure ...	Syllable stress in opinion phrases / using intonation and tone of voice to sound polite, interested, neutral or diplomatic	Tips for asking and giving opinions: ask for people's opinions / use neutral statements when giving opinion / give a strong opinion to make an impact	Different ways for politely disagreeing / agreeing to disagree when necessary	6 tracks
14	Agreeing and disagreeing	Up to a point but ... / That may be the case ... But ... / I disagree. / You can't actually mean that ... / I'm sorry, I can't agree with you there. / I couldn't agree more. / I'm sorry, I don't think that's right. / Tell me about ... / No way! / That's true, but ... / I'd go along with that. / Exactly. / We'll have to agree to disagree ...	Pronouncing 'ch', 'j', 's' and 'z' sounds / Using the right tone and register to disagree depending on the context	Tips for agreeing and disagreeing: non-aggressive tone of voice important / apologise before disagreeing politely / give opinion when disagreeing strongly	It is polite to acknowledge the speaker's opinion / it is okay to agree to disagree	6 tracks
15	Emphasizing what you say	I am! / I can't! / What I really love ... / He's always interrupting me. / I did phone. / I do eat fish. / I really want to ...	Putting stress on important words when speaking / using intonation and stress to sound enthusiastic	Tips for emphasizing: use short answers / use auxiliaries <i>do</i> and <i>did</i> to contradict/ introduce sentences with <i>it</i> and <i>what</i> / use <i>whatever</i> , <i>whoever</i> , <i>wherever</i> , <i>however</i>	None given	6 tracks
16	Giving and receiving compliments	You did a really good job on it. / That was lovely. / I'm glad you enjoyed it. / That's a very nice ... / You played well today. / I love your coat. / That's a gorgeous jumper. / That was very good.	Complimentary phrase: noun + is/look + (really) adjective / using intonation and tone to sound sincere	Tips for making compliments: make specific compliments / follow up with a reason / try to return compliment / don't over compliment	Make sure compliment is appropriate to given context / Reserve personal compliments for close friends	7 tracks
17	Encouraging and reassuring	Oh, come on! / It won't be as bad as all that. / You're doing really well. / There's no need to worry. / What have you got to lose? / It'll be fine. / It isn't as difficult as you think. / What's the worst that could happen? / Come on, just give it your best shot.	Using tone and intonation to sound reassuring / appropriate language for giving encouragement	Tips for encouraging: reassure someone / encourage them to try something new / encourage someone to persevere	Make sure your encouragement is appropriate for situation - context	6 tracks

18	Giving negative feedback or bad news	I've got something to tell you. I'm afraid ... / I know this is really disappointing for you but ... / I'm really sorry. / I feel awful having to tell you the bad news. / I'm afraid that I have some bad news for you. / You must be really disappointed. / If it's any help ... / The thing is ... / We've got to talk about that. / That's awful!	Using intonation to appropriately express bad news	Tips for giving bad news: introduce subject gently / show empathy / imagine how other person feels / offer to help	None given	7 tracks
19	Saying no politely	Do you fancy ... ? / I'm really sorry, but I can't ... / Thanks for asking. / It's really nice of you to offer but ... / It's just not for me, sorry. / Thanks anyway. / I'm so sorry, it's just not going to work.	Using intonation to politely say no / connected speech	Tips for politely refusing: include an apology / use emphasize with sorry / say <i>thank you</i> before refusing an offer	Directness can sound rude in some cultures / be clear about your intentions but remain polite	9 tracks
20	Complaining about something	I'm afraid there are a couple of problems with ... / I'm sorry to have to say this but ... / I'm really sorry, I can only apologize. / There may have been a misunderstanding. / I'll get on to that immediately. / I'm sorry if I didn't make that clear. / It won't happen again, I promise.	Stressing key words to make intention clear / using the appropriate tone of voice when complaining	Tips for making a complaint: apologize for having to complain / assume the problem wasn't intentional / explain the problem without blaming / suggest a way to solve the problem	People in Britain can be reluctant to complain to avoid conflict / complaints may need to be expressed indirectly	6 tracks