

English for Life: Speaking (B2)

Unit	Topic	Key phrases	Language notes	Speaking Tips	Cultural notes	Next steps	Audio
1	Bumping into people	Hi John, fancy seeing you here! / Long time, no see! / How have you been? / How did that go? / Oh, no major news really. / Hey, we should go for a coffee sometime ... / Definitely. Give me a ring ... / Hi! How are you? / What are you up to? / Do you fancy getting some lunch? / Sorry, can't stop. / Where are you off to? / You'd better get off then. / It's Yana, isn't it? / You know, same old same old. / Listen, nice to see you again but I'd better be off. / See you around. / The problem with you is you're too sensitive. / The problem with winter is the cold.	The problem with X is Y			Learn one phrase every day / Try to use it as soon as you can	6 tracks
2	Talking about yourself	I've got a background in ... / I work well in high pressure situations and I've been told that I'm particularly good at ... / Generally, when I've been in that situation in the past, I've ... / I take a lot of pride in ... / I'm hopeless at ... / Yeah, but I'm not the kind of person who ... / That isn't really my strong point. / I wouldn't say that I ... / I tend to ... / But I'm really into it now. / I'm a bit of a couch potato really. / I can't get enough of it.	Using chunks instead of full sentences			Practise answering interview questions for a job you would like to do	3 tracks
3	Telephone and communication problems	I'm getting a delay ... / I didn't get most of what you just said. / You're breaking up. / You keep coming and going ... / Sorry, my connection went ... / I don't know why we got cut off. / Yeah, sorry, the reception here's terrible. / And my battery's low ... / What are they saying? / I didn't hear a word of that! / But I didn't catch ... / Did you get that?	Memorize a few different ways to ask someone to repeat what they said			Try calling friends / Practise speaking in English	4 tracks
4	Exchanging information	So I've had a chance to go through the contract in detail and I've got a couple of questions. / Can you shed some light on ... / I take it ... / I'll need some time to digest all this. / I don't suppose you know ... / So you're saying ... / Have you got any idea ... / Thanks, that's very helpful. / Can you give me any idea how long it'll take? / Sorry, can you run that by me again? / ... and then what? / Okay, I get it now, I think. / Have you got any idea what ...?	Use indirect questions to ask for information in polite situations			Practise by calling telephone information lines in English-speaking countries	3 tracks
5	Negotiating	But the price is higher than I was looking to pay. / What did you have in mind? / Well, what could you come down to? / Well, I might be willing to drop the price by a hundred. / Okay, go on then. I think you've got a deal. / So what if ... / How about if we ... / I think we should both both chip in for that stuff. / You'd be looking at about ... / That seems like a lot. / Is that a fixed price? / So what's the best price you can do it for? / Will you meet me in the middle? / Okay, done.	Price negotiation, be less direct			Try searching online to find clips from TV shows in which people buy and sell things	4 tracks
6	Interrupting and letting others speak	Sorry, can I say something? / Sorry, what were you saying? / Go on. / If I can get a word in edgewise ... / Go ahead. / Sorry, got carried away there. / I was just wondering ... / Sorry, can I just ask a question? / After you, sorry. / No, no, after you. / I just wanted to say ...				Try watching political debate programmes on YouTube	4 tracks
7	Showing interest	Oh, exhausting! / Yeah. / Of course, 15 hours ... / Aaaw! How cute! / No way! Wasn't there some kind of keeper or someone? / Ah, right! Did you get them back? / Hundreds, yeah ... / Mmm. Suburbs or city centre. / Mmm. A list ... yeah that's not a bad idea. / Are you? Really? Why's that? / Yeah. Disconnecting from work. / Thoughtful? / Oh, flowers! / Yeah. Red and purple, your favourite.		Strategies for showing interest / asking questions to get more information / using short questions / echoing by repeating part of the other speaker's		Watch TV interviews where two people are talking and showing interest	5 tracks
8	Being supportive	Uh oh, is something wrong? / Maybe it's not as bad as you think. / Something's bound to work out sooner or later. / Are you okay? You don't seem your usual self, Scott. / Everyone feels like that sometimes. / Just keep busy and do something to take your mind off it. / Exactly. You'll feel much better then! / Really? sorry to hear that. / Look on the bright side. / It's a nightmare. / Maybe speaking to an accountant would set your mind at rest. / Then try and put it out of your mind. Don't worry. I'm sure it'll all get sorted out in the end.		Asking questions / keep your questions general, or express sympathy		Record TV chat show hosts / Practise some of the language	3 tracks
9	Persuasion	It's not really my thing. / How do you know if you've never tried? / I just know, okay, so there's no point trying to talk me into it. / But you have to admit ... / Will you at least think about? / Okay, have it your own way. / Oh, go on! / Yeah, but you might not get the chance again. / Well, I suppose it can't hurt ... / 'When in Rome ...' ('... do as the Romans do.') and 'Every cloud ...' ('... has a silver lining.')	Some sayings are so well known that you don't need to finish them, because everyone will understand		Using questions makes the persuasion feel less strong	Think of sayings you know in English / See if there is a logical way to cut them in half	4 tracks
10	Being tactful	Well ... I'm not sure it's your colour. Or it's not quite the right style for you or something. / It's not that. I just think ... / It's not that burnt. / It smells lovely but ... / It's ... got an interesting flavour ... / Not bad for a first attempt, Martin! Maybe it's a tad salty though. / It's really none of my business ... / He's just not exactly who ... / I wouldn't say rude exactly, but he is quite, er ... forceful, let's say. / Ah ... yeah. There are plenty of positive things in it. / It's nothing major but there are some parts that need a bit more work. / That's not quite right.			In British and American culture for example, it is usually acceptable to say 'You look tired' but it would be seen as tactless to comment if a friend had gained weight or was dressed in a	If you have English-speaking friends, ask their opinions about your clothes	2 tracks
11	Admitting and denying	Don't look at me. Listen, I wasn't the last one to come in here! / Well, it's not all my fault. I mean, I'm not the one who ... / Do you think I should just own up now? / I'd never have thrown them away if I'd known. / I'd just come clean ... / Uh oh. I hold my hands up. Those were mine. / In my defence ... / I mean, I'm not trying to get out of it, but ... / It's not how it looks! / Yeah, I know, but I can explain! You see, the thing is ... / No! I was just trying them on.				Find a show that appeals to you / Listen out for interesting language while you watch	3 tracks

12	Gossiping	Have you heard about Jeff? / Apparently, he's been taking conference calls from his sickbed ... / You'll never guess what I heard! / Well, I'd never have expected that. / Well, I'm not one to gossip but ... / Between you and me ... / Don't tell anyone but ... / Guess what! / She's the last person I'd have expected to ... / I was like, 'I don't think so' / I went, 'You must be joking!'	Don't use reporting verbs in an informal conversation			Watch soap operas and reality TV shows to hear people sharing gossip / Listen to people talking on the bus	4 tracks
13	Handling difficult conversations	Well, I'd rather not say, actually. / Ah ... Let's change the subject, shall we? / Look, if you don't mind ... it's really, I mean ... er ... I'd really rather not discuss it so let's leave it there. / Okay then! / Sorry, but I think that's a bit harsh! / That's really out of order. / Right, well, everyone's entitled to their own opinion, I suppose, but let's just drop it, shall we? / Fine. / So anyway ... / Sorry, but I'd rather you didn't speak to me like that.	Agreeing and disagreeing / unwilling to argue		Use humour to deflect the other person in a conversation / In English, it's common to apologize before saying something direct, rude or potentially shocking	Use some of the language from this unit to express how you feel in a conversation	4 tracks
14	Talking about money	This one's on me. / No, no I'll get this, I insist. I owe you for the other week anyway. / I'm feeling quite flush at the moment! / If I'd known you were loaded I would ... / I just had to fork out for ... / That thing costs me a fortune. / I can't live off that! / I was barely making ends meet then. / They must be rolling in it ... / So money's a bit tight at the moment ... / You're doing alright for yourself, it looks like? / I was up to my eyes in debt!	Phrasal verbs	Exaggeration / use exaggeration when you want to be humorous	When talking about money, think about who you're talking to - their nationality, whether you're having a personal or a professional conversation, how old he or she is in	Find websites and forums talking about personal finance	4 tracks
15	Talking about stress	Man, someone got out of bed on the wrong side this morning. / Sorry, it's just I've had the day from hell ... / Things are getting me down. / Maybe ... I'll snap out of it by tomorrow. / Sorry, it's really not my day today. / Happens to us all! / It's just been one thing after another, honestly! / Sorry, again ... my head's all over the place today. / Nah ... I'm a bit down today, that's all. / Er ... thanks but I'm not in the mood for company. / Argh ... ! What is it with me and computers today? / I'm completely snowed under at the minute. / Oh yeah? Anything I can do to help? / Things are just getting on top of me. / Well, we've all been there.		When someone is having a bad day, you might want to show support / Think about how well you know someone before putting everything you feel into the phrases		Try dramas set in hospitals or police units	4 tracks
16	Showing that you're sceptical	Mmmm, but I don't see how it follows that ... / That doesn't make much sense. / Hmmm, I'm not convinced. I mean, is there any evidence to back that up? / How can you be so sure? / Where's the proof? / That argument doesn't hold water at all. / That's hardly likely to happen, is it? / Really? What makes you think that? / There's no chance of ... / I wouldn't put money on it! / I'm not buying it. / Are you sure that's right? / That doesn't prove anything! / There could be any number of reasons for that meeting.			Be respectful of each other's views / Ask for evidence or further arguments / Don't criticize the other person for their views	Watch or listen to debates on websites / Notice how the speakers show that they're sceptical of what other people are saying	3 tracks
17	Sounding confident or hesitant	All in a day's work. / I can do this stuff in my sleep. Should be a piece of cake! / But I'm not exactly an expert at presentations. It's not the speaking that worries me, it's ... / But I'm not brilliant with ... / It's all a bit beyond me, to be honest. / I'm a whizz with PowerPoint. / You've got it in the bag! / I think it's not looking good. / I can't see it happening. / You're bound to get the job.			Confidence in one culture can be interpreted as arrogance in another / Sounding too hesitant can give the impression that you lack ability	Watch films and TV shows for ideas on how confident people sound according to their job or social group	3 tracks
18	Sounding excited	I wish they'd hurry up and post them ... / I can't believe it! / Oh! Congratulations! That's the best news ever! / I can't wait to tell my mum! / I'm so excited for you! / You must be over the moon! / Yeah, it's amazing. I'm still pinching myself! / Well, I couldn't be happier for you, darling. / Yep. I'm really looking forward to ... / They're dying to do ... / It hasn't really sunk in yet but of course I'm thrilled to bits!	Exaggeration		British people will often sound less excited than Americans when reacting to good news	Watch news coverage of big sporting events or awards ceremonies to hear people sound excited	4 tracks
19	Showing annoyance and anger	I don't believe it! Again? This is absolutely outrageous! / Yeah, the trains are driving me crazy. / That's it! I've had it up to here with commuting. / I'm sick of ... / Just take a deep breath ... / Argh! This is the last thing I need! / Your constant complaining's really getting on my nerves. / Okay, okay, keep your hair on! / Why can't he just clear up after himself for once? / It's really bugging me now! / Steady on! / This is the last straw! / Charlotte, chill out! I'll wash up! Just count to ten and remember ...		Find listings of offensive language online	Remember that anger at situations rather than people might be more acceptable in some cultures	Look at TV soap operas and dramas to hear people expressing annoyance and anger / Search for videos or recordings online of real people losing their temper	6 tracks
20	Using sarcasm	Oh fantastic! What perfect weather for a day at the beach. / Yeah, I'm so glad we came today instead of yesterday ... / So it's lucky we're back at work. / No, it's the Queen. / Ha ha! Very funny! / Oh well, if you read it on the internet, it must be true. / Alright, Mr Negative! / Oh, very practical. / Oh, look who's suddenly the road safety expert! / Just a couple of miles under the speed of light would still get us there on time, you know.	Sarcasm	Use sarcasm to make a joke or to hurt someone / Use exaggeration with sarcasm		Find examples of sarcasm in comedy on the internet or on Dvd	3 tracks