

Unit 1: Starting a conversation

Useful tips

1. Go through the four points with the learners, clarifying any difficulties, e.g. *conviction*.
2. Get learners to discuss the first two points in pairs and then report back to the whole class. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary, but don't interrupt if they are working well. You might need to help learners by pointing out that often the answer is 'it depends'. There is also the question of degree: you might want to show enthusiasm, but don't over-do it – this can be culture-dependent. (For example, some British people might find other English-speaking cultures over-enthusiastic.) In addition, there is the question of appropriacy – you want to match the mood of the person you are talking to if this is appropriate, but not if it is inappropriate, for example, if you think they are being humorous when the situation does not justify it.
3. Ask if small talk is the same all over the world, for example, if talking about the weather is considered an interesting topic of conversation in their country.
4. Get learners to come up with exchanges for the last two points. They can do this in parallel pairs and then give demonstrations for the whole class. This will prepare them for what follows.

01 Conversations

1. As a pre-listening activity, ask learners to look at the rubric and predict what they might hear in the context of people talking at a professional conference (small talk, technical discussions, price negotiations ...).
2. Tell them to close their books and to listen to the first conversation. Ask if they think it was a successful interaction, and if not, ask them why. ('Forensic auditor' is the sort of job title that people might not understand. Speaker A does not explain what their job involves, making for an unsatisfactory end to the conversation. Learners will have a chance to 'improve' on the conversation later in the lesson.)
Note: You might like to point out to any puzzled French speakers that in English, unlike in French, Marseilles has an 's' at the end.
3. Get learners to listen to the other conversations, still with books closed. Ask them what is being illustrated in each conversation, either by its presence or absence, anticipating the 'Understanding' exercise that follows.

Understanding

1. Explain the idea of strategies: techniques used by speakers in the conversations to achieve particular communicative intentions.
2. With books open, get learners to read the conversations in parallel pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary, but don't interrupt if they are working well.
3. Ask each pair to give their version of one of the conversations.

Saying it accurately

Exercise 1

1. This can be done as a quick-fire whole class activity. (Draw learners' attention to the expressions in bold in the Conversations box on page 4.)
2. Ask learners to repeat the phrases to practise intonation.
3. In parallel pairs, instruct learners to say each utterance, with the other responding appropriately. The person responding can make up information – it doesn't have to be from the previous conversation.
4. Ask particular pairs to perform their exchanges to the class, and correct any remaining difficulties.

Exercise 2

Ask learners to work on this in parallel pairs.

02 Exercise 3

Play the recording and ask learners to check their answers. Clarify any remaining difficulties.

Exercise 4

1. Tell learners to work on the activity in parallel pairs. Circulate, monitor and assist if necessary, but don't interrupt if they are working well.
2. Get them to read the complete conversation, still in parallel pairs. Circulate and assist if necessary.
3. Ask one or two pairs to read the conversations for the whole class, making sure they integrate any corrections and improvements you made earlier.

03 Saying it clearly

Exercises 1 & 2

1. Ask learners to anticipate what they will hear in the recording by reading the two utterances on the page and 'connecting' the words in bold to create new sounds, e.g. 'So, what d'you do exactly?'

2. Play the recording and ask the learners to see if what they anticipated was along the right lines.
3. Ask them to repeat what they hear.

Saying it appropriately

Exercise 1

Play the recording for the whole class and ask them to say what exactly makes each utterance friendly or unfriendly – particular combinations of intonation (rise and fall) and stress (emphasis on particular syllables and words).

Exercise 2

1. Play the recording once with the learners listening only.
2. Play the recording again, with individual learners repeating.
3. If the learners need further practice on the past simple vs. the present perfect simple, get them to do the exercises in *Collins Intermediate Business Grammar & Practice*, Units 3 and 5, for example, for homework.
4. As an optional extension activity, you could ask learners to work in pairs, with one learner asking the questions from this exercise in a friendly manner, and the other answering them in an equally friendly way, 'making up' their responses as they go.

Get speaking

Exercise 1

1. Play the recording right through to give learners the idea. Then stop at each cue, getting individual learners to respond.
2. Suggest any improvements that need making.

English for Business: Speaking

Exercise 2

1. Tell learners to look back over the dialogues in *Saying it accurately*, Exercises 3 and 4.
2. Ask them to construct similar conversations, with new places, journey times etc. Get learners to do this in parallel pairs, and then ask one or two pairs to give performances to the whole class. If they have access to recording equipment, get them to record their conversations, which can then be played to everyone.

Extended Learning through COBUILD

Bring your learners' attention to page 84 of the book. Go through the examples and collocations (=typical word combinations) for *exactly*, concentrating on any that have caused particular difficulty during class. You can tell them to look for further information online in the *COBUILD Advanced Dictionary*: www.collinsdictionary.com/COBUILD.

Homework task

For homework, get learners to write another conversation similar to those they wrote in Exercise 2.

When allocating Conversation 1, ask learners to 'improve' it. Tell them to choose an unusual profession, getting Speaker A to explain it and Speaker B to respond with 'I see. How interesting!' or words to that effect.

When allocating Conversations 2–4, get learners to work on parallel situations, changing the places in Conversation 2, substituting *fish* for another food in Conversation 3, and changing the activity in Conversation 4, for example *swimming* instead of *running*.

Ideally, learners will record their conversation with a partner, ready to play in the next class. Otherwise, get learners to read their conversations with a partner in the next class.