

CONVERSATION LESSONS OH SO EASY TO TEACH...OR ARE THEY?

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- What is a conversation class?
- 9 basic principles
- Topics for discussion
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of
today's
session

What exactly is a conversation class?

- The goal of a conversation course is **to communicate**, with emphasis on quickly producing language and getting the right idea across.
- English conversation classes provide an opportunity for students **to practice** their English communication skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- Conversation classes are usually taken by students who want **to use and improve** their speaking and listening skills.
- Conversation classes also provide a valuable opportunity for students **to meet** other English speakers and **learn** about different cultures.
- English conversation classes can be **an enjoyable and enriching experience** for both students and instructors alike.

9 Basic Principles

- Communication and fluency, not correctness
- Laying the groundwork – ‘rules for engagement’
- Students choice of topics
- Small groups/pair work
- Encourage students to change partners
- Teaching conversation strategies
- Teaching key vocabulary
- Informal assessment
- STT vs TTT

Adapted from an article on: <https://busyteacher.org>

Brainstorming topics for discussion

- Spend some or all of the first lesson with a brainstorming session on topics which interest your students.

Controversial topics:

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are my students able to listen to their peers on the topic without getting angry?
- Can they discuss their own opinions without undue embarrassment?

Ice Breaker for the first lesson

What 3 items would you take to a desert island?

- Give ss a few minutes to come up with their 3 things
- Ss mingle in the classroom and tell each other what they would take with them and why?
- Feedback – Ss report back on what they learnt about 2 other people in the group.
- Ss decide what is the most interesting/useful item.

Aim: Finding out what is important to your Ss & how they organize their thoughts



ACTIVITIES

Choose a city

- Put the name of 5 cities on the board (or fewer depending on the size of your class)

- Madrid Dublin Toronto Auckland Tokyo

- Ss imagine they are going to live & work in one of these cities for a year. In groups think of what they would like to know about the city before they go.
- Ss brainstorm ideas & share the important ones with the class.
- Assign a city to each student & give them the task to find out as much as they can for homework.
- <http://en.wikipedia.org> <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>
- In the next lesson, Ss share their research with others who researched the same city.
- Ss then in new groups of one person representing each city, they should try to convince other Ss that it's the best place to live.
- Finally, class vote on the best city to live in for a year.

- **Adapted from an idea on British Council Teaching English website

The holiday maze – an excellent way to practice agreeing/disagreeing etc.

- Set the context of holidays & allow for personalisation.
- Put the Ss into groups of between 2-5
- Ss listen to or read what is written on the first card. They discuss the different options and come to an agreement as to what to do. They then read the next card & so on, until they reach the conclusion.
- Teacher role: monitor, ask questions if you find the conversation drying up. You may need to pre-teach vocabulary/useful expressions that you would like the ss to use in their discussions.
- Maze cards: [Asking for personal details and giving directions role-play \(teachingenglish.org.uk\)](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/role-play/asking-for-personal-details-and-giving-directions)
- Link to activity: [The holiday maze | TeachingEnglish | British Council | BBC](https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/role-play/the-holiday-maze)

You are stuck on a train.....an old favourite!!

- Put the Ss into groups of 4. Tell them that the train has broken down, & they have no access to internet. They may be there for some time.
- Begin a conversation with the other people in their carriage.
- Give each student 2 sentences that they have to incorporate into the conversation, as naturally as possible.
- Examples: My father was a juggler in the circus. I speak 17 foreign languages.
- The winner is the person who uses their sentences first.

Lessons with newspapers

- **Guess the headline** – prepare a number of headlines with key words missing. Put the class into groups. Ss discuss the headlines & come up with 2 possible words for each headline. Groups share their ideas and gain points for any correct answers.
- **Guess the article** - Select an interesting newspaper article, preferably one which involves an exciting / unusual story. Choose eight key words from the article and write them on the board. Students to work in teams of 3-4 to come up with a story including these words. When they have finished, read out / tell them about the original article. Get students to read aloud their own versions - this can create a lot of laughs!
- **Newspaper lies** - Students to select a short item of news and to summarise it to a partner / team, changing some of the details. Partners need to try and guess which of the facts are true and which have been changed.

Guess the missing word

'We've had pups try to head to the': grey seals make remarkable UK comeback'

With record numbers of the once heavily hunted mammal popping up around the UK, they have been seen in some unlikely places.

South Africa to send 12 a year to India

The Colorado who couldn't stop taking selfies.

One of the motion-detecting cameras captured roughly 400 images of the surprise selfie star.

Greta Thunberg praises world leaders at Davos for 'preventing the destruction of the planet'

- Greta Thunberg on Thursday praised teachers and doctors meeting in Davos, Austria, for “preventing the destruction of the planet” by investing in diamonds and prioritising long-term profits over people affected by the climate crisis.
- Her comments came days after she was feted by police in western France along with other supporters as they demonstrated for the ongoing destruction of a village to make way for a diamond mine expansion.



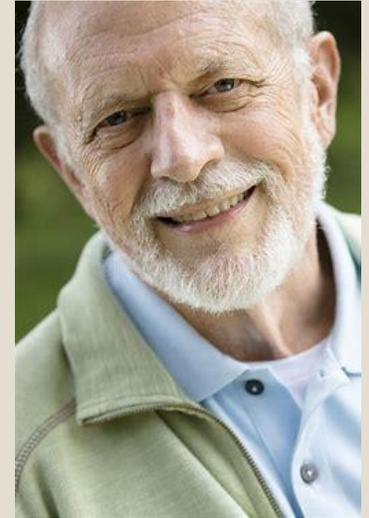
Co-housing
project
Negenhoek.
Belgium

Co-housing project- Negenhoek, Belgium

- 26 fully equipped houses and apartments with private terrace or garden
- terrain of 8,200 m²
- a child-friendly and lively community
- surrounded by shops and schools within walking distance
- a 2 minute walk to the train station with fast connections to Leuven and Brussels
- a common house with several functions
- Lush, green garden
- an ecological project with low-energy houses
- great neighbours guaranteed!

Back to you again!

- In your new group you are now going to discuss and design a second housing project. This time with citizens over 65s in mind.



Create a list of starters

- Work: What do you think is the most difficult /easiest job in the world?
- Music: If you could erase a musical genre, which would it be?
- Holidays: Is it strange to go on holiday by yourself?
- Technology: How has technology changed your life?

[150 ESL Conversation Starters and Questions \(The Essential List\) | JIMMYESL](#)

Useful websites/links

- www.teachingenglish.org.uk
- [BusyTeacher: Free Printable Worksheets For Busy English Teachers](#)
- [Home | Onestopenglish](#)
- [TED Talks](#)
- [National Geographic](#)
- [World - BBC News](#)



THANKS FOR PARTICIPATING!!

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