

REAL-LIFE ENGLISH · SPEAK WITH
CONFIDENCE

Speak English with Confidence

*50 Real-Life Conversation Dialogues for
Everyday Fluency*

BEGINNER → ADVANCED

THE PRACTICAL CONVERSATION COURSE

Dialogues · Key Vocabulary · Useful Phrases · Role-Play Practice

Speak English with Confidence

50 Real-Life Conversation Dialogues for Everyday Fluency

A practical, speak-out-loud course for learners who want to move from the classroom to the real world. Every dialogue uses the natural language people actually speak, with vocabulary, reusable phrases, language tips, and role-play practice built into each unit.

First edition, 2026.

This book is designed to be used aloud. Read it, repeat it, role-play it — and above all, speak. The five levels (Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, and Advanced) progress gradually, so you can start where you are and grow from there.

Created as a complete self-study and classroom resource for English conversation practice.

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Welcome — Read This First

Welcome, and congratulations on taking a real step toward speaking English with confidence. If you have ever studied for years, passed the tests, memorized the grammar tables — and then frozen the moment a real person asked you a real question — this book was written for you. You are not alone, and you are not the problem. The method you were given simply asked you to do the wrong thing.

Here is the truth that changes everything: fluency does not come from *knowing* the language. It comes from *using* it. Speaking is a physical skill, like swimming or playing the piano. You cannot learn to swim by reading about water, and you cannot learn to speak by silently studying rules. You learn by moving your mouth, hearing your own voice, and producing real sentences out loud, again and again, until they stop feeling foreign and start feeling like you.

That is exactly what this book gives you: fifty real-life conversations — ordering coffee, making small talk, handling a job interview, dealing with a problem at a shop, catching up with a friend — the moments that actually fill an English-speaking day. Each dialogue uses the natural language native speakers really use, not the stiff, textbook sentences nobody says. Your job is not to memorize them. Your job is to **speak them aloud**, make them your own, and practice until the words arrive without effort.

Grammar still matters, and you will absorb plenty of it here — but you will absorb it the natural way, through patterns you have spoken so many times that they simply sound right. Trust the process, be patient with yourself, and above all, use your voice. Open your mouth, make a few mistakes, and keep going. Your confident English self is closer than you think. Let's begin.

How to Use This Book

Each of the fifty units is built to be worked through actively, out loud, in a single short session. Here is the most effective way to use them.

1. **Read the scenario first.** Each unit opens with a short description of the situation — who is speaking, where they are, and what they want. This sets the context so the language makes immediate sense before you read a single line.
2. **Read the dialogue aloud.** Don't read it silently. Say every line out loud, playing both speakers. Hearing your own voice form the words is where the real learning begins, even if it feels strange at first.
3. **Study the vocabulary and expressions.** Review the highlighted words, idioms, and useful phrases. Notice *how* they are used in the dialogue, not just what they mean — context is what makes vocabulary stick.
4. **Shadow and repeat.** Go back through the dialogue and copy it closely: match the rhythm, the speed, and the melody of each line. Repeat the trickier sentences several times until they flow smoothly and feel comfortable in your mouth.
5. **Do the role-play.** Now cover one speaker's lines and respond in real time, or practice with a partner. Try changing a few details — the place, the name, the order — so you are producing your own English, not just reciting.
6. **Answer the practice questions.** Work through the comprehension and speaking questions at the end of the unit. Say your answers aloud in full sentences to turn passive understanding into active speaking ability.
7. **Review regularly.** Come back to finished units after a few days and again after a week. A quick re-read aloud takes only minutes and moves the language firmly into your long-term memory, ready to use when you need it.

The units are organized by level, progressing gradually in difficulty: **Beginner, Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, and Advanced.** Early units use shorter sentences and the most common everyday language, while later units introduce longer exchanges, faster turns, more idioms, and more nuanced, sophisticated expression. You can work straight through from start to finish, or jump to the level that fits you best — but try not to skip ahead too quickly. Each level quietly builds the foundation for the next.

A Quick Guide to Sounding Natural

Native speakers don't pronounce every word neatly and separately — they blend, shorten, and stress words in ways that give English its natural music. Understanding these five features will help you both sound more natural *and* understand fast speech far more easily. Read every example aloud.

1. Contractions

In everyday speech, words are almost always squeezed together. Saying every word in full sounds oddly formal or robotic. Use contractions freely when you speak. For example, say “*I'm ready*” rather than “*I am ready*,” “*she's not coming*” rather than “*she is not coming*,” and “*we'd love to*” rather than “*we would love to*.” In casual conversation you'll also hear relaxed forms like “*gonna*” (going to), “*wanna*” (want to), and “*gotta*” (got to), as in “*I'm gonna call you later*.” Recognize these when listening, and use the standard contractions confidently in your own speech.

2. Linking Sounds

English flows because words connect to each other. When one word ends in a consonant and the next begins with a vowel, the sounds link together: “*an apple*” sounds like “*a-napple*,” and “*turn it off*” becomes “*tur-ni-toff*.” Speakers also slide a tiny /w/ or /j/ sound between vowels — “*go on*” sounds like “*go-won*,” and “*I agree*” sounds like “*I-yagree*.” Don't try to separate every word; let them run together and your speech will instantly sound smoother.

3. Word Stress and Sentence Stress

Every English word of more than one syllable has one stressed (stronger, longer, clearer) syllable: *PHO-to-graph*, but *pho-TO-graph-er*. Getting the stress wrong can make a familiar word hard to understand, so learn the stress along with each new word. Sentences have stress too: we emphasize the *important* words (nouns, main verbs, adjectives) and lightly skip over the small ones (a, the, to, of). In “*I'd LIKE a CUP of COFFEE*,” the capitalized words carry the beat, while the rest stay short and quiet. This rhythm is the heartbeat of natural English.

4. Intonation

Intonation is the rise and fall of your voice, and it carries real meaning. Your voice usually *rises* at the end of yes/no questions — “*Are you coming?*” — and *falls* at the end of statements and wh-questions — “*I'll see you tomorrow.*,” “*Where do you live?*” A gentle, varied intonation also makes you sound friendly and engaged; a flat, monotone voice can sound bored or even rude, even when your words are perfectly polite. Compare a warm, rising “*Really?*” (interested) with a flat “*Really.*” (unimpressed) — same word, opposite message.

5. Fillers and Thinking Time

You don't have to speak in a perfect, unbroken stream — native speakers certainly don't. When you need a moment to think, use natural fillers instead of falling silent or panicking: “*um*,” “*well*,” “*you know*,” “*let me think*,” “*that's a good question*,” or “*how can I put this...*” For example: “*Well... let me think. I'd probably say the food was the best part.*” These small phrases buy you valuable time, keep the conversation flowing, and make you sound relaxed and genuinely fluent rather than rehearsed.

Eight Golden Rules for Confident Speaking

- 1. Don't fear mistakes — welcome them.** Mistakes are not failures; they are the sound of someone learning. Native speakers care about your meaning, not your grammar, and they will almost always understand you. Every mistake you make and move past is one less mistake standing between you and fluency.
- 2. Speak in chunks, not single words.** Learn and use ready-made phrases — “*Could you say that again?*”, “*I'd love to,*” “*to be honest*” — rather than building every sentence word by word. Speaking in chunks is faster, sounds more natural, and frees your mind to focus on what you actually want to say.
- 3. Aim to be understood, not to be perfect.** Communication is the goal, not flawless performance. A simple sentence said clearly and confidently beats a complicated one you get tangled in. Say what you can with the words you have today.
- 4. Keep going when you get stuck.** If you forget a word, don't stop — talk around it. Describe it (“*the thing you open bottles with*”), use a simpler word, or use a filler to buy time. Staying in the conversation matters far more than finding the perfect word.
- 5. Ask follow-up questions.** Conversation is a two-way street. Show interest with questions like “*Oh, really? What was that like?*” or “*And then what happened?*” This keeps the other person talking, takes the pressure off you, and gives you natural time to listen and learn.
- 6. Practice out loud, every single day.** Ten focused minutes of speaking a day will take you further than hours of silent reading once a week. Talk to yourself, narrate what you're doing, repeat dialogues aloud. Your mouth needs the exercise as much as your brain does.
- 7. Listen actively and imitate.** Copy the people you want to sound like. Notice their rhythm, their favorite phrases, and their intonation in films, songs, and real conversations — then repeat after them out loud. Good speakers are first and foremost good imitators.
- 8. Be patient and celebrate small wins.** Fluency is built one conversation at a time, and progress is often invisible day to day. Notice the moment you understood a fast reply, or said a sentence smoothly for the first time. Confidence grows from these small victories — keep collecting them.

First Contact

Greetings, introductions, and the small talk that opens every conversation.

1 Saying Hello and Goodbye

BEGINNER

Scenario: Anna runs into her neighbor Ben in the lobby of their apartment building on a weekday morning. They stop for a quick chat before each heads out.

Oh, hi Ben! Good morning.

Morning, Anna. How are you doing?

I'm good, thanks. A little tired, but okay. How about you?

Not bad, not bad. Just heading out to work.

Same here. It's so early, right?

Tell me about it. I can barely keep my eyes open.

Ha! Well, at least it's almost Friday.

True. Hey, did you have a nice weekend?

I did, thanks. Pretty relaxing. You?

Yeah, it was great. Anyway, I'd better run or I'll miss my bus.

Of course. It was nice seeing you!

You too. Have a good one, Anna.

Thanks, you too. See you later!

Bye! Take care.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
How are you doing?	A friendly way to ask how someone feels.
Not bad	A casual way to say "I'm okay" or "pretty good."
heading out	Leaving to go somewhere.
Tell me about it	An expression that means "I agree completely."
I'd better run	A polite way to say you need to leave quickly.

Have a good one	A casual way to say "have a nice day."
Take care	A warm goodbye, like "stay safe."
See you later	A friendly goodbye when you may meet again soon.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Good morning / afternoon / evening." — a polite greeting depending on the time of day.
- "How are you doing?" — to ask how someone is in a relaxed way.
- "I'm good, thanks. How about you?" — to answer and return the question.
- "It was nice seeing you." — a warm thing to say before saying goodbye.
- "I'd better run." — to politely end a conversation when you're in a hurry.
- "Have a good one!" — a casual, friendly goodbye for almost anyone.

LANGUAGE TIP

In everyday English, "How are you?" is often just a greeting, not a real question. A short answer like "Good, thanks — you?" is usually all people expect. Save the longer answers for close friends.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Imagine you meet a neighbor in the morning. Greet them, ask how they are, make one short comment about the day, and say goodbye politely.

1. What greeting would you use at 8 a.m.? What about at 7 p.m.?
2. Why does Ben say "I'd better run" before saying goodbye?
3. Name three different ways to say goodbye from the dialogue.
4. How do you usually greet people in your own language? Is it similar or different?

2 Introducing Yourself and Others

BEGINNER

Scenario: At a friend's barbecue, Maria meets David for the first time. A few minutes later, Maria introduces David to her brother, Tom.

Hi, I don't think we've met. I'm Maria.

Nice to meet you, Maria. I'm David.

Nice to meet you too. So, how do you know Sara?

Oh, we work together. And you?

We went to school together, actually. We go way back.

That's cool. So you've known her a long time.

Years and years. Oh, here's my brother. Tom, come say hi!

Hey there.

David, this is my brother Tom. Tom, this is David, a friend of Sara's.

Good to meet you, David.

You too, Tom. So you're the famous brother Maria talks about?

Ha, all good things, I hope!

Mostly. David works with Sara at the office.

Nice. Well, welcome. Can I get you guys a drink?

That'd be great, thanks.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
I don't think we've met	A polite way to start talking to a new person.
Nice to meet you	A standard, friendly thing to say when you first meet someone.
How do you know...?	A question to find a shared connection with someone.
We go way back	We have known each other for a long time.
This is...	The phrase used to introduce one person to another.
Good to meet you	A casual version of "Nice to meet you."
a friend of Sara's	Someone who is Sara's friend.
you guys	An informal way to say "you" (plural), common in American English.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Hi, I'm [name]." – the simplest way to introduce yourself.
- "Nice to meet you." – the safest, most common reply when meeting someone.
- "This is my friend / brother / colleague [name]." – to introduce one person to another.
- "How do you know [host's name]?" – a great question to start small talk at a party.
- "We go way back." – to say you've known someone for a long time.
- "Nice to meet you too." – to return the greeting warmly.

LANGUAGE TIP

When you introduce two people, say the names clearly: "David, this is Tom." It helps to point or gesture gently toward each person. After "Nice to meet you," it's natural to add a small question to keep the conversation going.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: With a partner, introduce yourself at an imaginary party. Then introduce your partner to a third person (real or imaginary), giving one detail about them.

1. What does Maria say to introduce David to Tom?
2. What does "we go way back" mean?
3. What are two different ways to say "Nice to meet you"?
4. How would you introduce your best friend to someone new?

Scenario: On the first day of a language course, Kenji and Lucia sit next to each other and start chatting about where they come from.

Hi, is this seat taken?

No, go ahead. I'm Lucia.

I'm Kenji. So, where are you from, Lucia?

I'm from Spain — a small town near Valencia. How about you?

I'm from Japan, originally. From Osaka.

Oh, nice! I've always wanted to visit Japan. Is Osaka a big city?

Pretty big, yeah. It's famous for its food.

That sounds amazing. So how long have you been here?

Just two weeks. I'm still getting used to everything.

Same. The weather here is so different from home.

Right? Much colder. Do you miss Spain?

A little, especially the food. But I love it here so far.

Me too. Maybe we can practice English together.

I'd love that. Let's do it.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
Is this seat taken?	A polite way to ask if you can sit somewhere.
go ahead	A friendly way to say "yes, you can."
Where are you from?	A common question asking about someone's home country or city.
originally	From the place where you were born or grew up.
famous for	Well known because of something special.
How long have you been here?	A question asking the amount of time someone has been in a place.
getting used to	Slowly becoming comfortable with something new.
miss	To feel sad because someone or something is not with you.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Where are you from?" — to ask about someone's home country or city.
- "I'm from [country], originally." — to say where you were born or grew up.
- "How about you?" — to return a question politely.
- "How long have you been here?" — to ask how much time someone has spent in a place.
- "I'm still getting used to it." — to say something new still feels unfamiliar.
- "I've always wanted to visit [place]." — to show interest in someone's country.

LANGUAGE TIP

Use "from" with places: "I'm from Spain." Use the present perfect for time that started in the past and continues now: "How long have you been here?" / "I've been here for two weeks." Avoid "I'm here since two weeks" — say "for two weeks."

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Sit with a partner and pretend it's your first day in a new class. Ask where they're from, what their city is famous for, and how long they've been in town.

1. What city is Kenji from, and what is it famous for?
2. How long have Kenji and Lucia been in the new place?
3. What does "getting used to" something mean?
4. Where are you from, and what is one thing your hometown is famous for?

4 Talking About the Weather

BEGINNER

Scenario: Grace and Sam are waiting at a bus stop on a grey, rainy afternoon. They make small talk about the weather to pass the time.

Ugh, what a miserable day, isn't it?
I know, it hasn't stopped raining all morning.
And it's so cold for June. I forgot my umbrella, of course.
Oh no. Here, you can stand under mine if you want.
Oh, thank you! That's really kind.
No problem. They said it might clear up later, though.
Really? I hope so. I'm so tired of this grey sky.
Same. Apparently it'll be sunny and warm by the weekend.
That would be lovely. Fingers crossed.
Are you doing anything if it's nice out?
Maybe a picnic in the park. You?
Probably just relax in the garden. Oh, here's the bus.
Finally! Thanks again for the umbrella.
Anytime. Stay dry!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
miserable day	A very unpleasant day, usually cold or rainy.
clear up	When bad weather ends and the sky becomes clear.
grey sky	A cloudy sky with no sun. (US spelling: "gray")

Apparently	According to what people say; it seems that.
Fingers crossed	An expression meaning "I hope it happens."
nice out	Good, pleasant weather outside.
They said...	A casual way to mention the weather forecast.
Stay dry!	A friendly thing to say in the rain, like "don't get wet."

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Lovely / miserable day, isn't it?" — a classic way to start small talk about weather.
- "It hasn't stopped raining all day." — to complain gently about the rain.
- "They said it might clear up later." — to mention the forecast casually.
- "Fingers crossed." — to say you hope something good happens.
- "Are you doing anything if it's nice out?" — to move from weather to weekend plans.
- "Stay dry / stay warm!" — a friendly weather-related goodbye.

LANGUAGE TIP

Weather is the most common small-talk topic in English. The tag question "..., isn't it?" invites the other person to agree and keeps the chat friendly. Notice how the conversation naturally moves from weather to weekend plans — that's a smooth way to keep talking.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: With a partner, imagine you're waiting somewhere on a rainy day. Comment on the weather, mention the forecast, and then ask about weekend plans.

1. Why is Grace cold and wet at the start of the conversation?
2. What does Sam say the weather will be like by the weekend?
3. What does "fingers crossed" mean?
4. What's the weather like where you live today? Describe it in two sentences.

5

Making Small Talk at a Party

BEGINNER

Scenario: At a colleague's birthday party, Olivia and Raj are standing near the snack table. They don't know each other well, so they make light, friendly small talk.

This is a great party, isn't it?

Yeah, really fun. The food is amazing.

I know, right? Have you tried these little pizzas?

Not yet — but now I have to. By the way, I'm Raj.

I'm Olivia. So, do you work with Daniel?

Yeah, we're on the same team. What about you?

I'm his neighbor, actually. We walk our dogs together.

Oh, nice! What kind of dog do you have?
A little beagle. He's a handful but I love him.
Ha, I bet. So, have you lived around here long?
About three years now. It's a nice neighborhood.
It really is. Anyway, I'm going to grab one of those pizzas.
Go for it! It was nice chatting with you, Raj.
You too, Olivia. Enjoy the party!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
small talk	Light, friendly conversation about simple topics.
I know, right?	A casual way to strongly agree with someone.
By the way	A phrase to add new information or change topic slightly.
What about you?	A quick way to return a question.
a handful	Someone or something that is difficult to manage (but often in a fun way).
I bet	A way to say "I'm sure that's true" or "I can imagine."
grab	To get something quickly and casually.
It was nice chatting with you	A polite way to end a friendly conversation.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Great party, isn't it?" — an easy way to start talking to someone.
- "Have you tried...?" — to start a conversation about the food or drinks.
- "So, how do you know [host]?" — a reliable small-talk question at any party.
- "I know, right?" — to agree enthusiastically and sound natural.
- "It was nice chatting with you." — to end a conversation politely.
- "Enjoy the party!" — a warm, friendly way to say goodbye at an event.

LANGUAGE TIP

Good small talk is about asking easy questions and showing interest. When you don't know what to say, comment on the surroundings (the food, the music, the party) or ask "How do you know the host?" Ending politely with "It was nice chatting" lets you move on without being rude.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: With a partner, imagine you've just met at a party. Start with a comment about the event, exchange names, find a connection to the host, and end the chat politely.

1. How does Olivia know the host, Daniel?
2. What does "I know, right?" tell you about how Olivia feels?
3. What does Raj say when he wants to leave the conversation politely?
4. What is one easy question you could ask a stranger at a party?

6 Exchanging Contact Information

BEGINNER

Scenario: After a fun conversation at a coworking space, Emma and Leo decide to stay in touch and exchange phone numbers and social media.

This was such a great chat. We should keep in touch.
Definitely! Let me give you my number.
Perfect. Let me grab my phone. Okay, go ahead.
It's 555 — 0182.
555... 0182. Got it. Let me text you so you have mine.
Great. What's your name again — Emma with an "a" at the end?
Yes, E-M-M-A. I just sent you a message.
Got it, thanks. Are you on Instagram, by the way?
I am. My username is just "emma.makes."
Cool, I'll follow you. Mine is "leo.designs."
Found you! Followed. Maybe we can grab coffee sometime.
I'd like that. Just send me a message whenever you're free.
Will do. It was really nice meeting you, Leo.
You too, Emma. Talk soon!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
keep in touch	To stay in contact with someone over time.
give you my number	To share your phone number with someone.
Got it	A casual way to say "I understand" or "I have it."
text you	To send someone a phone message.
username	The name you use on a social media account.
follow	To subscribe to someone's posts on social media.

grab coffee	An informal way to say "meet for coffee."
Talk soon	A friendly goodbye that means "we'll speak again soon."

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "We should keep in touch." — to suggest staying in contact.
- "Let me give you my number." — to offer your phone number.
- "Let me text you so you have mine." — to share your number back easily.
- "Are you on Instagram / WhatsApp?" — to ask about social media or messaging apps.
- "Maybe we can grab coffee sometime." — to suggest meeting again, casually.
- "Talk soon!" — a warm, open-ended goodbye.

LANGUAGE TIP

When you say a phone number in English, say the digits one by one, and pause in small groups: "five-five-five... oh-one-eight-two." The number 0 is often said as "oh." To spell your name, say each letter clearly: "E-M-M-A."

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: With a partner, pretend you just met and want to stay in touch. Exchange (made-up) phone numbers, spell your names, and suggest meeting again.

1. How do Emma and Leo decide to stay in touch?
2. Why does Leo ask "Emma with an 'a' at the end"?
3. What does "grab coffee" mean?
4. How would you say your own phone number out loud in English?

Around Town

Shopping, eating out, and handling everyday services with ease.

7

At the Supermarket

ELEMENTARY

Scenario: Maria is doing her weekly shopping. She can't find one item and asks a store assistant for help, then pays at the checkout.

Excuse me, could you help me? I'm looking for the rice.

Of course. It's in aisle four, next to the pasta.

Aisle four. Thank you. Do you have brown rice too?

Yes, it's on the same shelf, on the bottom.

Great. And where can I find fresh milk?

The dairy section is at the back, near the eggs.

Perfect. Are the strawberries on sale today?

Yes, they are. Buy one box, get one free.

Oh, nice. I'll take two boxes then.

Good choice. Anything else?

No, that's everything. Thanks for your help.

Hi there. Did you find everything okay?

Yes, thanks. Just these, please.

That's eighteen pounds fifty. Are you paying by card or cash?

By card. Do you need a bag?

We have bags for ten pence each. Would you like one?

Yes, one bag, please. Here's my card.

Thank you. Here's your receipt. Have a nice day!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
aisle	a long passage between shelves in a shop
shelf	a flat board where products are placed

dairy section	the area with milk, cheese, and yoghurt
on sale	sold at a lower price than usual
buy one, get one free	a deal where you pay for one and get a second free
checkout	the place where you pay for your shopping
receipt	a printed paper showing what you paid
by card	paying using a bank or credit card
fresh	recently made or picked, not old

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Excuse me, could you help me?" — a polite way to start asking for help
- "I'm looking for the rice." — to say what product you want to find
- "Where can I find...?" — to ask the location of an item
- "Is this on sale?" — to ask if something has a lower price
- "That's everything, thanks." — to say you have finished shopping
- "Are you paying by card or cash?" — to ask how a customer wants to pay

LANGUAGE TIP

To ask where something is, use "Where can I find...?" or "Where's the...?" Both are polite and natural. Adding "Excuse me" at the start makes it even friendlier.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is a shopper looking for three items; the other is a store assistant. Then swap roles and act out paying at the checkout.

1. What three items would you look for in a supermarket?
2. How do you politely ask where something is?
3. How do you ask if a product is on sale?
4. What does the cashier usually ask before you pay?

8 Ordering at a Restaurant

ELEMENTARY

Scenario: Tom and Lisa are having dinner at a restaurant. A waiter takes their order, brings the food, and later gives them the bill.

Good evening. A table for two?

Yes, please. By the window if possible.

Of course. Here are your menus. Can I get you something to drink?

I'll have a sparkling water, please.

And an orange juice for me, thanks.

Great. Are you ready to order, or do you need a few minutes?
 We're ready. I'll have the grilled chicken, please.
 Good choice. And for you?
 Could I have the vegetable pasta? Is it spicy?
 Not really, but I can ask the chef to make it mild.
 Yes, please. That would be great.
 No problem. I'll bring your drinks right away.
 Here you are. Enjoy your meal.
 Thank you. This looks delicious.
 Is everything okay with your food?
 It's lovely, thank you. Could we have the bill, please?
 Certainly. Will you pay together or separately?
 Together, please. Can we leave a tip on the card?
 Of course. I'll bring the machine over.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
a table for two	a place to sit for two people
menu	a list of food and drinks you can order
to order	to ask for the food you want
spicy	food with a strong, hot flavour
mild	not spicy or strong in flavour
the bill	the paper showing how much your meal costs
tip	extra money you give for good service
separately	each person pays for their own food
Enjoy your meal	a polite phrase said before you eat

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "A table for two, please." — to ask for seating for two people
- "I'll have the grilled chicken." — to say what you want to order
- "Could I have...?" — a polite way to order food or drink
- "Is it spicy?" — to ask about the flavour of a dish
- "Could we have the bill, please?" — to ask to pay at the end
- "Will you pay together or separately?" — to ask how a group will pay

LANGUAGE TIP

When ordering, "I'll have..." and "Could I have...?" both sound natural and polite. Avoid "I want..." on its own – it can sound a little rude in English.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is the waiter and one is the customer. Order a drink, a main dish, and ask for the bill. Then swap roles.

1. What would you order for your main meal?
2. How do you politely ask for the menu or the bill?
3. How can you ask if a dish is spicy?
4. Do you usually leave a tip? How much?

9

Buying Clothes and Asking for a Different Size

ELEMENTARY

Scenario: Daniel is shopping for a jacket. He tries one on, but it's too small, so he asks a shop assistant for a bigger size.

Hi there. Can I help you find anything?

Yes, I'm looking for a blue jacket like this one.

Nice choice. What size are you?

I think I'm a medium. Can I try it on?

Of course. The fitting rooms are just over there.

Thanks. ... Hmm, it's a bit too tight.

Would you like to try a large?

Yes, please. Do you have this in large?

Let me check. ... Here you go, this is a large.

That's much better. It fits perfectly.

It looks great on you. Do you like the colour?

I do. How much is it?

It's forty-five pounds, and it's on sale this week.

Great. I'll take it. Can I pay by card?

Yes, of course. Would you like a bag?

Yes, please. And can I return it if it doesn't fit at home?

Sure. You can return it within thirty days with the receipt.

Perfect. Thank you very much.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE

MEANING

size	how big or small a piece of clothing is
to try on	to put on clothes to see if they fit
fitting room	a small room where you try on clothes
too tight	too small or close to the body
to fit	to be the right size for you
medium / large	common clothing sizes (M / L)
on sale	sold at a lower price than usual
to return	to bring something back to the shop
receipt	proof of payment needed to return items

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'm looking for a blue jacket." — to say what you want to buy
- "Can I try it on?" — to ask to test clothes before buying
- "Do you have this in large?" — to ask for a different size
- "It's a bit too tight." — to say something doesn't fit well
- "It fits perfectly." — to say the size is just right
- "Can I return it if it doesn't fit?" — to ask about the return policy

LANGUAGE TIP

To ask for another size, say "Do you have this in (a) large/small?" To describe a poor fit, use "too" + adjective: "too tight," "too big," "too long." "A bit" softens it politely.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is a customer trying on clothes that don't fit; the other is the assistant offering a different size. Then swap roles.

1. What clothes do you often buy?
2. What is your size for shirts or jackets?
3. How do you ask to try something on?
4. How do you ask for a bigger or smaller size?

10 At the Coffee Shop

ELEMENTARY

Scenario: Sophie orders a coffee and a snack at a busy café. The barista asks about her order and whether she wants it to take away.

Hi, what can I get you today?

Hi. Can I have a medium latte, please?

Sure. Would you like it hot or iced?
 Hot, please. Can I get oat milk instead of regular?
 Of course. That's a small extra charge, is that okay?
 Yes, that's fine.
 Anything to eat? Our muffins are fresh today.
 Oh, I'll have a blueberry muffin, please.
 Is that to have here or to take away?
 To take away, please.
 Great. Can I have a name for the order?
 It's Sophie.
 Thanks, Sophie. That's five pounds twenty altogether.
 Here you go. Can I pay with my phone?
 Yes, just tap here. ... Perfect, it's gone through.
 Thank you. How long will it take?
 Just a couple of minutes. I'll call your name when it's ready.
 Great, thanks a lot.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
latte	a coffee drink made with lots of milk
barista	a person who makes coffee in a café
iced	served cold with ice
oat milk	plant milk made from oats, not from cows
extra charge	a little more money you pay for something
to take away	to take your food or drink out of the shop
to have here	to eat or drink inside the café
to tap	to touch a card or phone on the card reader to pay
it's gone through	the payment was successful

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Can I have a medium latte, please?" – to order a drink with a size
- "Can I get oat milk instead?" – to ask for a different kind of milk
- "To take away, please." – to say you want your order to go
- "To have here, please." – to say you'll eat or drink inside
- "Can I pay with my phone?" – to ask about a payment method
- "How long will it take?" – to ask when your order will be ready

LANGUAGE TIP

"For here or to take away?" is a very common café question (Americans say "to go"). Answer simply with "To take away, please" or "To have here, please."

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is the barista and one is the customer. Order a drink with a special request (milk, size, hot or cold) and a snack. Then swap roles.

1. What is your favourite coffee or tea order?
2. Do you usually take your coffee away or have it there?
3. How do you ask for a different type of milk?
4. How do you ask how long your order will take?

11 At the Bank

ELEMENTARY

Scenario: Ahmed visits the bank to open a new account. A bank clerk explains what he needs and helps him get started.

Good morning. How can I help you today?

Good morning. I'd like to open a bank account, please.

Of course. Is it your first account with us?

Yes, it is. What do I need to bring?

Just some ID and proof of address, like a utility bill.

I have my passport and a recent bill here.

Perfect, that's everything we need. Would you like a current account?

Yes, please. Does it come with a debit card?

Yes, it does. The card will arrive in about five days.

Great. Is there a monthly fee?

No, this account is free. There's no monthly charge.

That's good to hear. Can I use online banking too?

Yes. You can set up the app once your account is open.

Wonderful. How long does it take to open?

Only about fifteen minutes. Please sign here.

Sure. Should I make a first deposit now?

You can, but it's not required. Welcome to the bank!

Thank you so much for your help.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE

MEANING

to open an account	to start a new account at a bank
ID (identification)	a document that shows who you are, like a passport
proof of address	a paper showing where you live
current account	an everyday account for spending money
debit card	a card that takes money straight from your account
monthly fee	money you pay each month to keep the account
online banking	using the internet or an app to manage your money
deposit	money you put into your account
to sign	to write your name on a document

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'd like to open a bank account, please." — to say why you came
- "What do I need to bring?" — to ask which documents are required
- "Does it come with a debit card?" — to ask what the account includes
- "Is there a monthly fee?" — to ask about regular charges
- "Can I use online banking?" — to ask about managing money on an app
- "How long does it take?" — to ask how much time something will need

LANGUAGE TIP

"I'd like to..." is a polite, formal way to say what you want — perfect for banks and offices. It's softer than "I want to..." and works in almost any service situation.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is the bank clerk and one is a new customer opening an account. Ask about documents, cards, and fees. Then swap roles.

1. What documents do you need to open a bank account?
2. How do you ask if there is a monthly fee?
3. Do you prefer online banking or visiting a branch? Why?
4. How do you politely say what you want at a bank?

12 At the Post Office

ELEMENTARY

Scenario: Elena goes to the post office to send a parcel abroad. The clerk helps her choose a postage option and weighs the package.

Hello. Who's next, please? How can I help?

Hi. I'd like to send this parcel to Spain, please.

Sure. Let me weigh it for you. ... It's two kilos.

Okay. How much will it cost to send?

Standard post is twelve pounds, and it takes about a week.

Is there a faster option?

Yes, express is eighteen pounds and takes two to three days.

Let's go with express, please. It's a birthday gift.

No problem. What's inside the parcel?

Just some books and a scarf.

Thanks. Would you like to track it online?

Yes, please. Tracking would be great.

Here's your tracking number on the receipt.

Thank you. I also need some stamps for letters.

How many would you like?

A book of six, please.

Here you are. That's twenty-three pounds altogether.

Here's my card. Thank you for your help.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
parcel	a package you send by post
to send	to make something go to another place by post
to weigh	to measure how heavy something is
postage	the cost of sending mail
standard post	the normal, slower way to send mail
express	a faster, more expensive delivery
to track	to follow where your parcel is online
tracking number	a code used to check where your parcel is
stamps	small printed labels you stick on letters to pay for postage

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'd like to send this parcel to Spain." — to say where your package is going
- "How much will it cost to send?" — to ask the price of postage
- "Is there a faster option?" — to ask for quicker delivery
- "Let's go with express." — to choose a service
- "Can I track it online?" — to ask about following your parcel
- "I need some stamps, please." — to ask to buy stamps

LANGUAGE TIP

To choose between options, you can say "Let's go with..." or "I'll take the...". For example: "Let's go with express." This sounds natural when you've made up your mind.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is the post office clerk and one is a customer sending a parcel. Discuss the weight, price, speed, and tracking. Then swap roles.

1. What would you send in a parcel, and to whom?
2. How do you ask the cost of sending something?
3. How do you ask for a faster delivery option?
4. When was the last time you sent a letter or parcel?

On the Move

Directions, airports, hotels, taxis, trains — the language of travel.

13 Asking for and Giving Directions

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Maria is lost in an unfamiliar city and stops a friendly local, Greg, on the street to ask how to reach the central library.

Excuse me, sorry to bother you. Could you help me out for a second?

Of course, no problem. What are you looking for?

I'm trying to find the central library. Do you know where it is?

Yeah, it's not far at all. It's about a ten-minute walk from here.

Oh, great. Could you tell me the way?

Sure. Go straight down this street until you reach the traffic lights.

Straight ahead to the traffic lights. Got it.

Then turn left and walk past the bank. You'll see a big square.

A square, okay. And the library is on the square?

Almost. Cross the square and take the second right. It's right on the corner.

So, left at the lights, across the square, then second right. Did I get that right?

Exactly. You can't miss it. It's a big grey building with steps in front.

Perfect. Is it open right now, do you know?

I think so, until about six. If you get lost, just ask again — people are pretty friendly here.

Thank you so much. You've been a great help.

Don't mention it. Enjoy your day!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
go straight (ahead)	to keep walking forward without turning
traffic lights	the red, yellow, and green signals that control cars
turn left / right	to change direction to one side
walk past	to walk by something without stopping

square	an open public space, often with shops around it
on the corner	at the point where two streets meet
you can't miss it	it is so easy to find that you will definitely see it
a ten-minute walk	a distance that takes ten minutes on foot

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Excuse me, could you help me out for a second?" — a polite way to start asking a stranger
- "Do you know where the ... is?" — to ask for a location
- "Could you tell me the way?" — to ask someone to explain a route
- "Did I get that right?" — to check that you understood the directions
- "It's about a ten-minute walk from here." — to describe how far something is
- "You've been a great help." — a warm way to say thank you

LANGUAGE TIP

When someone gives you directions, repeat the key steps back to them ("So, left at the lights, then second right?"). This confirms you understood and gives them a chance to correct you before you walk off the wrong way.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: A tourist stops you near your home and asks for the way to the nearest train station. Give clear directions step by step.

1. What is a polite phrase you can use to stop a stranger and ask for directions?
2. How would you tell someone to keep walking forward and then turn at the lights?
3. What can you say to check that you understood the directions correctly?
4. How do you ask how long it takes to get somewhere on foot?

14

At the Airport Check-In

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Daniel arrives at the airport for an international flight and checks in at the airline desk with the agent, Priya.

Good morning. Where are you flying to today?

Good morning. I'm flying to Madrid.

Could I see your passport and booking reference, please?

Here you go. The reference is on my phone — is that okay?

That's fine. Thank you. Are you checking any bags today?

Yes, just one suitcase. And I have this backpack as carry-on.

Could you put your suitcase on the scale for me, please?

Sure. Is it within the limit?

Yes, it's twenty-one kilos, so you're fine. The limit is twenty-three.

Oh good. I was worried it might be overweight.

No problem at all. Would you prefer a window or an aisle seat?

A window seat, please, if there's one available.

Let me check... Yes, I've got 23A for you. Here's your boarding pass.

Thanks. What time does boarding start?

Boarding is at 10:40 from gate B12. Please be there at least thirty minutes early.

Great. And where do I go through security?

Just follow the signs to your left. Have a pleasant flight!

Thank you very much.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
check in	to register for your flight and hand over your luggage
booking reference	the code that identifies your ticket reservation
check a bag	to give a bag to the airline to put in the hold
carry-on	a small bag you take into the cabin with you
overweight	heavier than the allowed weight limit
aisle seat	a seat next to the walkway in the plane
boarding pass	the ticket that lets you get on the plane
gate	the place in the airport where you board the plane
security	the area where bags and passengers are checked

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'm flying to ..." — to say your destination
- "Yes, just one suitcase to check." — to state how much luggage you have
- "A window seat, please, if there's one available." — to request a seat
- "Is it within the limit?" — to ask if your bag is the right weight
- "What time does boarding start?" — to ask when you can get on the plane
- "Where do I go through security?" — to ask for directions inside the airport

LANGUAGE TIP

At check-in, staff often ask yes/no questions ("Are you checking any bags?"). A short, natural answer works best: "Yes, just one" or "No, only carry-on." You don't need full sentences — clear and friendly is enough.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: You are checking in for a flight with one suitcase and a backpack. Ask for an aisle seat and find out your gate number and boarding time.

1. How do you tell the agent where you are flying?
2. How do you say you have one bag to check and one carry-on?
3. How do you ask for a specific type of seat?
4. What questions can you ask about boarding time and the gate?

15

Checking Into a Hotel

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Sofia arrives at a hotel in the evening and checks in at the front desk with the receptionist, Tom.

Good evening, and welcome. How can I help you?

Hi, good evening. I have a reservation under the name Sofia Rossi.

Let me check... Yes, I have it here. A double room for three nights, is that right?

That's right. Three nights, checking out on Friday.

Perfect. Could I see your passport or ID, please?

Of course. Here you are.

Thank you. And could you fill in this form while I prepare your key card?

Sure. By the way, is breakfast included?

Yes, it is. It's served from seven to ten in the restaurant on the ground floor.

Great. And is there free Wi-Fi in the rooms?

Yes, the password is on this card. It's free throughout the hotel.

Wonderful. What time is check-out?

Check-out is at eleven. If you need a late check-out, just let us know.

Good to know. Which floor is my room on?

You're in room 304, on the third floor. The lift is just behind you.

Thank you so much. Do you need a deposit?

We've already taken the card on file, so you're all set. Enjoy your stay!

Thank you. Have a good evening.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
reservation	a room booked in advance
under the name ...	booked using a particular person's name
double room	a room with a bed for two people
check out	to leave the hotel and pay at the end of your stay

key card	a plastic card used to open your room door
breakfast included	breakfast is part of the room price
deposit	money paid in advance as security
lift	a machine that carries people between floors (US: elevator)
you're all set	everything is ready; nothing more is needed

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I have a reservation under the name ..." — to start checking in
- "Is breakfast included?" — to ask what comes with the room
- "Is there free Wi-Fi in the rooms?" — to ask about internet
- "What time is check-out?" — to ask when you must leave
- "Which floor is my room on?" — to ask where your room is
- "Do you need a deposit?" — to ask about advance payment

LANGUAGE TIP

Notice that "check in" and "check out" are two words when used as verbs ("I'd like to check in"), but "check-in" and "check-out" with a hyphen when used as nouns ("What time is check-out?"). This small difference helps your writing look polished.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: You arrive at a hotel with a reservation for two nights. Check in, and ask about breakfast, Wi-Fi, and check-out time.

1. How do you tell the receptionist you have a booking?
2. How do you ask whether breakfast is part of the price?
3. How do you ask what time you need to leave the room?
4. How do you ask which floor your room is on?

16

Taking a Taxi or Rideshare

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Ahmed takes a taxi from the city centre to the airport and chats with the driver, Linda, about the route and the fare.

Hi there. Where would you like to go?

Hi. To the airport, please — Terminal 2.

No problem. Are you in a hurry, or shall I take the scenic route?

I'm a bit in a hurry, actually. My flight's at one.

Okay, I'll take the motorway then. It's faster at this time of day.

Great, thanks. Roughly how long will it take?

About twenty-five minutes if the traffic's light. We should be fine.

Perfect. How much will it cost, more or less?
 It's metered, but it's usually around thirty dollars to the airport.
 Okay, that's fine. Can I pay by card?
 Yes, card or cash, whatever's easier for you.
 Card, please. Oh, could you drop me at the departures level?
 Sure, I'll pull up right at departures. Anything else?
 No, that's all. Could you let me know when we're close?
 Of course. Here we are — that'll be thirty-two dollars on the meter.
 Here's the card. Keep the change as a tip.
 That's very kind, thank you. Have a safe trip!
 Thanks a lot. Take care.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
in a hurry	needing to do something quickly; short on time
the scenic route	a longer, prettier way to a place
motorway	a large, fast road for long distances (US: highway)
metered	charged by a meter that measures the distance and time
fare	the price you pay for a ride
drop (someone) off	to leave a passenger at a place
departures	the part of the airport where flights leave
keep the change	let the driver keep the extra money as a tip

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "To the airport, please — Terminal 2." — to tell the driver your destination
- "Roughly how long will it take?" — to ask about the journey time
- "How much will it cost, more or less?" — to ask about the price
- "Can I pay by card?" — to ask about payment options
- "Could you drop me at the departures level?" — to ask for an exact stop
- "Keep the change." — to leave a tip

LANGUAGE TIP

Use "Could you ...?" to make polite requests to a driver: "Could you drop me here?" or "Could you take the motorway?" It sounds friendlier and more natural than "I want you to ..." which can come across as rude.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: You take a taxi to the train station and you're slightly late. Tell the driver where to go, ask how long it takes, and ask to pay by card.

1. How do you tell a driver your destination?
2. How do you ask how long the journey will take?
3. How do you ask about the price before you arrive?
4. How do you ask to be dropped at a specific spot?

17 Buying a Train Ticket

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Yuki buys a train ticket at the station ticket office and asks the clerk, Marco, about times, prices, and platforms.

Hi, I'd like a ticket to Manchester, please.

Sure. Single or return?

Return, please. I'm coming back tomorrow evening.

Okay. And what time would you like to travel today?

As soon as possible, really. When's the next train?

There's one at 10:15 and another at 10:45. The 10:15 is direct.

The direct one sounds good. How much is that?

A return is forty-eight pounds in standard class.

Okay. Is there a cheaper option if I travel later?

Yes, off-peak after nine-thirty is a bit cheaper – that's actually this fare.

Great, I'll take the 10:15 then. Which platform is it?

Platform 4. It's straight ahead and up the escalator.

Do I need to change trains anywhere?

No, it's direct, so you stay on all the way.

Perfect. Can I pay by card?

Of course. Here's your ticket and your receipt. The train leaves in twenty minutes.

Thank you so much for your help.

You're welcome. Have a good journey!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
single (ticket)	a ticket for one journey, in one direction (US: one-way)
return (ticket)	a ticket to go and come back (US: round-trip)
direct train	a train that goes without changing

standard class	the normal, cheaper class of seat
off-peak	at quieter times, usually cheaper to travel
platform	the area where you wait to get on the train
change trains	to get off one train and onto another to continue
fare	the price of the ticket

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'd like a ticket to ..., please." — to start buying a ticket
- "Single or return?" / "Return, please." — to choose the ticket type
- "When's the next train?" — to ask about departure times
- "Is there a cheaper option?" — to ask about saving money
- "Which platform is it?" — to find out where to wait
- "Do I need to change trains anywhere?" — to ask about connections

LANGUAGE TIP

In British English you ask for a "single" or a "return"; in American English it's "one-way" or "round-trip." Both are widely understood, but using the local word helps the clerk answer you faster.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You want a return ticket to a nearby city for today, coming back tomorrow. Ask about the next train, the price, and the platform.

1. How do you ask for a return ticket to a destination?
2. How do you ask when the next train leaves?
3. How do you ask whether there is a cheaper option?
4. How do you ask which platform your train goes from?

18

Renting a Car

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Elena picks up a rental car at an airport branch and goes over the details with the rental agent, James.

Good afternoon. Do you have a reservation with us?

Yes, I do. It's under Elena Petrova, for three days.

Let me find it... Here we are. A compact car for three days, returning Sunday.

That's correct. Could I see what's included in the price?

Of course. It includes basic insurance and unlimited mileage.

Good. Is there an option for full insurance? I'd feel safer with that.

Yes, full coverage is fifteen dollars a day extra. Would you like to add it?

Yes, please add it. And what about fuel?

The tank is full now. Please return it full, or we charge a refuelling fee.

Understood. Here's my driving licence and a credit card.

Thank you. We'll hold a deposit on the card, which is released when you return the car.

That's fine. Where do I pick up and drop off the car?

It's in bay 12 in the car park outside. Just bring it back to the same spot.

Great. Is there anything I should check before I drive off?

Yes, walk around the car and note any scratches on this form. Then you're good to go.

Perfect. Thank you for your help.

My pleasure. Drive safely!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
compact car	a small, economical car
insurance	protection that pays for damage or accidents
unlimited mileage	no limit on how far you can drive
full coverage	insurance that protects against most damage
refuelling fee	extra charge if you return the car without a full tank
driving licence	the official document that allows you to drive
deposit	money held as security and returned later
drop off	to return the car at the end of the rental

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I have a reservation under ..." — to start picking up your car
- "Could I see what's included in the price?" — to ask what you get
- "Is there an option for full insurance?" — to ask about extra coverage
- "What about fuel?" — to ask about the fuel policy
- "Where do I pick up and drop off the car?" — to ask about location
- "Is there anything I should check before I drive off?" — to be careful before leaving

LANGUAGE TIP

Before driving away, always ask "Is there anything I should check?" and note any existing scratches on the form. This protects you from being charged later for damage you didn't cause — and it's a great phrase for taking responsibility politely.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You pick up a rental car for a weekend trip. Confirm your booking, ask what's included, add full insurance, and check the fuel policy.

1. How do you tell the agent you have a reservation?
2. How do you ask what is included in the rental price?
3. How do you ask to add full insurance?
4. How do you ask about the fuel policy and where to return the car?

Home & Daily Life

Routines, neighbors, invitations, hobbies, and the rhythm of everyday living.

19 Talking About Your Daily Routine

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Two coworkers, Maya and Tom, are chatting in the office kitchen during a coffee break. They start comparing what their typical weekdays look like.

Morning, Tom. You look exhausted already and it's only nine!

Honestly, I am. I've been up since five thirty.

Five thirty? Wow. What on earth do you do that early?

I go for a run before work. It's the only quiet time I get.

That's impressive. I can barely drag myself out of bed by seven.

It took me ages to get used to it. What's your morning like?

Pretty rushed, to be honest. I shower, grab a coffee, and run for the bus.

Do you skip breakfast, then?

Most days, yeah. I just have a banana on the way. I know, I know — bad habit.

Mine used to be the same. Now I make time for a proper breakfast after my run.

And what about the evenings? Do you crash early?

Usually. I cook dinner, watch a bit of TV, and I'm in bed by ten.

That sounds so organised. My evenings are all over the place.

Maybe try going to bed half an hour earlier. That's what worked for me.

I might give it a go. Right now my routine is basically chaos!

Small changes, that's the trick. You'll get there.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
exhausted	very tired
drag myself out of bed	to get up when you really don't want to
rushed	done quickly because there isn't enough time
skip breakfast	to not eat breakfast

bad habit	something you do regularly that isn't good for you
crash (early)	to go to sleep, often quickly, when very tired
all over the place	disorganised; with no clear order
give it a go	to try something
get used to	to become familiar with something over time

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I've been up since five thirty." — saying how long you've been awake
- "What's your morning like?" — asking about someone's routine
- "To be honest, ..." — introducing an honest opinion
- "I can barely drag myself out of bed." — saying it's hard to get up
- "I'm in bed by ten." — describing a regular bedtime
- "I might give it a go." — saying you'll try something

LANGUAGE TIP

Use the present simple for things you do regularly (*I go for a run, I cook dinner*) and add adverbs of frequency like *usually, most days, and always* to sound more natural when describing routines.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: With a partner, take turns being Maya and Tom. Describe your real morning and evening routines to each other and suggest one small change.

1. What time do you usually get up on a weekday?
2. What's the first thing you do in the morning?
3. Do you ever skip breakfast? Why or why not?
4. What does a typical evening look like for you?

Scenario: Friends Olivia and Daniel are texting and then talking on the phone on a Thursday evening, trying to decide what to do together over the coming weekend.

Hey Daniel, are you doing anything this weekend?

Nothing fixed yet. Why, what did you have in mind?

I was thinking we could do something on Saturday. The weather's supposed to be lovely.

Oh nice. We could go for a hike if it stays sunny.

I'd love that. There's a new trail just outside town I've been wanting to try.

Perfect. How about we meet around nine so it's not too hot?

Nine works for me. Should we pack a picnic?

Definitely. I'll bring sandwiches if you bring drinks.
 Deal. And what about Sunday — any plans?
 Not really. I might just take it easy and do some chores.
 Same here. Although Mia mentioned brunch on Sunday morning.
 Brunch sounds great. Count me in. What time were you thinking?
 Around eleven? I'll check with Mia and let you know.
 Sounds good. So, hike Saturday, brunch Sunday. Busy weekend!
 The best kind. I'll text you the trail location tonight.
 Great. Can't wait. See you Saturday!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
nothing fixed yet	no firm plans so far
have in mind	to be thinking of (a plan or idea)
trail	a path for walking or hiking
pack a picnic	to prepare food to eat outdoors
take it easy	to relax and not do much
chores	regular jobs around the house
count me in	I want to join / include me
let you know	to tell someone later
can't wait	to be very excited about something

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Are you doing anything this weekend?" — asking about someone's plans
- "What did you have in mind?" — asking for the other person's idea
- "How about we meet around nine?" — suggesting a time
- "That works for me." — agreeing to a suggestion
- "Count me in." — saying you want to join
- "I'll let you know." — promising to confirm later

LANGUAGE TIP

To make suggestions, use *How about...?*, *We could...*, or *Why don't we...?* For plans you've already decided, use *going to* or *will* (*I'll bring drinks*). Mixing these makes your conversation flow naturally.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: With a partner, plan a weekend together. Suggest an activity for Saturday and one for Sunday, agree on a time, and decide who brings what.

1. What do you usually do on weekends?
2. Suggest an activity to your partner using "How about...?"
3. What time would you prefer to meet, and why?
4. How do you usually confirm plans with friends?

21

Chatting with a Neighbor

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Sophie has just moved into a new apartment. She meets her neighbour, Frank, in the hallway by the mailboxes, and they have a friendly first chat.

Hi there! You must be the new neighbour. I'm Frank, from flat 3B.

Oh, hello! Yes, I'm Sophie. I moved in last weekend.

Welcome to the building! How are you settling in?

Pretty well, thanks. There are still boxes everywhere, though.

Ha! That always takes longer than you expect. Where did you move from?

From the other side of town. I wanted to be closer to work.

Makes sense. It's a quiet, friendly building, so you'll like it here.

That's good to hear. Is there anything I should know about the area?

There's a great bakery just around the corner, and bin day is Wednesday.

Good to know. I'll write that down before I forget!

And if you ever need a hand with anything, just knock. I'm usually home.

That's really kind of you. Thank you.

No problem at all. Oh, and the parking out front fills up fast in the evenings.

Thanks for the heads-up. I'll keep that in mind.

Anyway, I'd better let you get back to your boxes. Lovely to meet you, Sophie.

You too, Frank. I'm sure I'll see you around!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
settle in	to get comfortable in a new place
flat	an apartment (British English)
makes sense	that is logical / I understand why
bin day	the day rubbish is collected
give a hand	to help someone

heads-up	a helpful warning or piece of advance information
keep in mind	to remember something for later
see you around	a casual way to say goodbye to someone you'll meet again
around the corner	very near / close by

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "You must be the new neighbour." — guessing who someone is
- "How are you settling in?" — asking how someone is adjusting
- "Is there anything I should know about the area?" — asking for local advice
- "If you ever need a hand, just knock." — offering help
- "Thanks for the heads-up." — thanking someone for a warning
- "I'll see you around." — a friendly, casual goodbye

LANGUAGE TIP

With neighbours, keep it warm but light. Open with a friendly observation (*You must be...*) and offer help (*just knock*). Small phrases like *good to know* and *thanks for the heads-up* show you're listening and make a great first impression.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One of you is a new neighbour, the other has lived there for years. Introduce yourselves and share two useful pieces of local information.

1. How would you introduce yourself to a new neighbour?
2. What's one useful thing to tell someone new to your area?
3. How do you politely offer help to a neighbour?
4. What's a friendly way to end a short chat?

22

Inviting a Friend Over for Dinner

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Raj calls his friend Emma to invite her to his place for dinner on Friday. They sort out the time, the menu, and whether she can bring anything.

Hey Emma, are you free on Friday evening?

I think so. What's going on?

I'm cooking dinner and I'd love it if you could come over.

Aw, that sounds lovely! I'd really like that. What time?

Around seven? That gives me time to get everything ready.

Seven's perfect. What are you making, if I may ask?

I was thinking a homemade curry. Is that okay, or are you not keen on spicy food?

No, I love curry! Just not too hot, if that's alright.

No worries, I'll go easy on the chilli. Any allergies I should know about?
 None at all. Can I bring something? Dessert, maybe?
 That would be great, actually. Dessert isn't really my strong point.
 Leave it to me. I'll make my famous chocolate cake.
 Now I'm really looking forward to it! A bottle of wine wouldn't hurt either.
 Consider it sorted. Red or white?
 Red goes better with curry, I think.
 Red it is. See you Friday at seven!
 Can't wait. Thanks, Emma!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
come over	to visit someone's home
what's going on?	an informal way to ask what's happening
homemade	made at home, not bought ready-made
keen on	liking or enjoying something
go easy on	to use less of something
not my strong point	something you're not very good at
leave it to me	I'll take care of it
consider it sorted	it's arranged / it's done
looking forward to	feeling happy about something coming up

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Are you free on Friday evening?" — checking someone's availability
- "I'd love it if you could come over." — inviting warmly
- "Any allergies I should know about?" — checking dietary needs
- "Can I bring something?" — offering to contribute
- "Leave it to me." — taking responsibility for something
- "I'm really looking forward to it." — showing excitement

LANGUAGE TIP

Invitations sound warmer with *would* and *could*: *I'd love it if you could come over* is friendlier than *Come to dinner*. When you accept, show enthusiasm with phrases like *that sounds lovely* or *I'd really like that*.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: Invite your partner over for a meal. Agree on a day and time, decide on the food, check for allergies, and let them offer to bring something.

1. How would you invite a friend to dinner at your home?
2. What would you cook for guests, and why?
3. How do you politely ask about allergies or food preferences?
4. What do you usually bring when invited to someone's home?

23

Talking About Hobbies and Free Time

PRE-INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: At a friend's birthday party, Lucas and Nadia have just been introduced. To break the ice, they start talking about what they like to do in their free time.

So, Nadia, how do you know the birthday girl?

We met at a pottery class, actually. What about you?

We work together. Wait – pottery? That sounds fun. Are you any good?

Ha, I'm getting there. My first few bowls were a disaster, honestly.

I bet it's relaxing, though.

It really is. It's my way of switching off after work. Do you have any hobbies?

I'm really into cycling. I try to get out every weekend if the weather's good.

Nice! Long rides, or just around town?

Long rides, usually. There's nothing like being out on the open road.

That sounds amazing. I've always wanted to take up cycling properly.

You should! It's a great way to clear your head. What else do you do for fun?

I read a lot, and lately I've gotten into cooking shows. A bit lazy compared to your cycling!

Not at all – everyone needs to unwind their own way.

True. Maybe I'll join you for a gentle ride sometime, though.

Definitely. I'll start you off nice and easy, I promise.

Deal. And maybe you can come to a pottery class in return!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
break the ice	to start a conversation in a relaxed way
getting there	making progress but not finished yet
switch off	to relax and stop thinking about work
into (something)	very interested in or enthusiastic about
take up	to start a new hobby or activity

clear your head	to relax so you can think more clearly
for fun	for enjoyment, not for work
unwind	to relax after a busy time
gotten into	started enjoying or doing regularly

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Do you have any hobbies?" — asking about free-time activities
- "I'm really into cycling." — saying what you enjoy
- "It's my way of switching off." — explaining why you like a hobby
- "I've always wanted to take up..." — expressing an interest you haven't started
- "What else do you do for fun?" — keeping the conversation going
- "Maybe I'll join you sometime." — suggesting a future activity together

LANGUAGE TIP

To talk about interests, use *be into* (*I'm into cycling*) for current hobbies and *take up* (*I'd like to take up pottery*) for new ones. Asking *What about you?* keeps the conversation balanced and shows genuine interest.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Imagine you've just met at a party. Ask each other about your hobbies, react with interest, and suggest doing one activity together in the future.

1. What do you like to do in your free time?
2. Is there a hobby you've always wanted to take up?
3. How do you usually relax after a busy week?
4. What hobby would you recommend to a friend, and why?

Scenario: Grace has a leak under her kitchen sink. She phones a local plumber, Mr. Bell, to explain the problem and arrange a visit.

Good morning, Bell Plumbing Services. How can I help?

Hi, yes. I've got a leak under my kitchen sink and I'm not sure what's causing it.

Okay. Is it a slow drip, or is water pouring out?

It's a steady drip, but the cupboard underneath is getting soaked.

Right. Have you been able to turn off the water supply?

I turned off the little valve under the sink, and that's slowed it down a lot.

Good thinking. That'll stop it getting worse. When would suit you for a visit?

As soon as possible, really. Is there any chance of today?

I could pop round this afternoon, say between two and four.
 That would be perfect. Roughly how much do you think it'll cost?
 Hard to say until I see it, but a leaking pipe is usually a quick, cheap fix.
 That's a relief. Do you charge a call-out fee?
 Just a small one, and it comes off the final bill if you go ahead.
 That sounds fair. Let me give you the address.
 Go ahead, I'm ready.
 It's 14 Mapleton Road, the blue door on the left.
 Got it. I'll see you this afternoon, then. Try to keep that cupboard empty.
 Will do. Thanks so much for fitting me in!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
leak	water escaping where it shouldn't
drip	water falling slowly, one drop at a time
soaked	completely wet
water supply	the main flow of water into a home
valve	a part that turns water flow on or off
pop round	to visit briefly (informal)
call-out fee	a charge for a worker coming to your home
quick fix	a fast, easy repair
fit (someone) in	to make time in a busy schedule

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I've got a leak under my kitchen sink." — describing the problem
- "Is there any chance of today?" — asking for an urgent appointment
- "When would suit you for a visit?" — arranging a time
- "Roughly how much do you think it'll cost?" — asking for an estimate
- "Do you charge a call-out fee?" — asking about costs
- "Thanks for fitting me in." — thanking someone for making time

LANGUAGE TIP

When reporting a problem, start with the issue, then give details: *I've got a leak... it's a steady drip... the cupboard's getting soaked.* Soften price questions with *roughly* or *about* (*Roughly how much will it cost?*) to sound polite rather than pushy.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One of you is a customer with a household problem (a leak, a broken heater, a blocked drain); the other is the repair person. Describe the issue, arrange a time, and ask about the cost.

1. How would you describe a leak or breakdown over the phone?
2. What questions would you ask before booking a repair?
3. How do you ask politely about the price?
4. What household problem have you had to deal with recently?

At Work

Interviews, meetings, feedback, and confident professional communication.

25

A Job Interview

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Priya has applied for a marketing coordinator position. She arrives for an in-person interview with Mr. Daniels, the hiring manager, who asks about her experience, strengths, and reasons for applying.

Hi Priya, thanks for coming in. Did you have any trouble finding us?

Not at all, thank you. Your directions were really clear.

Great. So, to start, could you tell me a little about yourself?

Of course. I've been working in digital marketing for about three years, mostly managing social media campaigns for small businesses.

That sounds relevant. What made you apply for this particular role?

Honestly, I admire your brand, and I'm looking for a position where I can take on more responsibility and grow.

What would you say is your greatest strength?

I'd say I'm very organized. I'm good at juggling several projects at once without dropping the ball.

And what about a weakness?

I used to take on too much myself, but I've learned to delegate and ask for help when I need it.

Good answer. Can you give me an example of a challenge you handled well?

Sure. Last year a campaign was falling behind, so I reorganized the timeline and we still launched on schedule.

Impressive. Do you have any questions for me?

Yes, what does a typical day look like for someone in this role?

It varies, but you'd be collaborating closely with the design team. We'll be in touch by the end of the week.

Thank you so much for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE

MEANING

relevant	connected to or useful for the topic
take on responsibility	accept more duties or a bigger role
juggle several projects	manage many tasks at the same time
drop the ball	make a mistake or forget something important
delegate	give tasks to other people to do
fall behind	be later than planned with work
collaborate	work together with others
we'll be in touch	we will contact you later
a typical day	what usually happens on a normal workday

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Could you tell me a little about yourself?" — a common opening interview question.
- "What made you apply for this role?" — asking about motivation.
- "I'd say my greatest strength is..." — introducing a positive quality.
- "Can you give me an example of...?" — asking for a real situation.
- "Do you have any questions for me?" — inviting the candidate to ask.
- "I look forward to hearing from you." — a polite, professional closing.

LANGUAGE TIP

When describing a weakness, always show how you're improving it. Saying "I used to... but I've learned to..." turns a negative into evidence of growth.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is the interviewer, the other is the candidate for a job you really want. Use the questions from the dialogue.

1. How would you answer "Tell me a little about yourself"?
2. What is one strength you could describe with an example?
3. What is a weakness you are working on improving?
4. What is one good question you could ask the interviewer?

Scenario: It's Marcus's first day at a software company. His manager, Elena, welcomes him, shows him around, and helps him get settled in before introducing him to the team.

Good morning, Marcus! Welcome aboard. How are you feeling?

Good morning! A little nervous, honestly, but excited to get started.

That's completely normal. Everyone feels that way on day one. Let me show you to your desk.
 Thanks. Is this where I'll be sitting?
 Yes, right here next to the window. Your laptop and login details are already set up.
 Perfect. Who should I talk to if I have IT problems?
 Just message the help desk on the chat app. They usually reply within minutes.
 Got it. And where's the kitchen or break room?
 Down the hall on the left. Feel free to help yourself to coffee anytime.
 That's good to know. What should I focus on today?
 Mostly settling in. Read through the onboarding documents, and don't worry about being productive yet.
 Sounds good. Will I be meeting the rest of the team?
 Absolutely. We have a quick team lunch at noon so everyone can say hello.
 That's a really nice way to start. Thank you for making me feel welcome.
 Of course! Don't hesitate to ask if anything's unclear. There's no such thing as a silly question.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
welcome aboard	a friendly way to greet a new team member
day one	the very first day of something
login details	the username and password to access systems
help desk	the team that solves technical problems
help yourself	take something freely without asking
settle in	get comfortable in a new place or role
onboarding	the process of introducing a new employee
don't hesitate to ask	please feel free to ask questions
a silly question	a question that seems too simple or obvious

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "A little nervous, but excited to get started." — describing first-day feelings.
- "Who should I talk to if I have a problem?" — finding the right person for help.
- "Where's the kitchen / break room?" — asking about the workplace layout.
- "What should I focus on today?" — asking for direction.
- "Thank you for making me feel welcome." — showing appreciation.
- "Don't hesitate to ask if anything's unclear." — offering support to someone.

LANGUAGE TIP

On your first day, asking questions shows interest, not weakness. Use "Where's...?", "Who should I...?", and "What should I...?" to learn quickly and make a good impression.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is a manager welcoming a new employee; the other is the new employee asking questions about the workplace.

1. What three questions would you ask on your first day?
2. How would you describe how you feel about starting a new job?
3. What would you say to thank someone for welcoming you?
4. How could you offer help to a new colleague in the future?

27 In a Team Meeting

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: A small team meets to discuss the progress of a project. The team lead, Sofia, runs the meeting while Tom and Aisha give updates and share ideas.

Okay everyone, let's get started. Thanks for joining. Tom, can you give us an update on the website?

Sure. We're on track. The homepage is finished, and we're testing it now.

Great progress. Any blockers we should know about?

Just one. We're still waiting on the final images from the design team.

Understood. I'll follow up with them after the meeting. Aisha, how about the content?

The first three pages are done. I should have the rest ready by Friday.

Perfect. Does anyone have suggestions on the launch date?

Can I jump in? I think we should add a few extra days for testing, just to be safe.

That's a fair point. Tom, what do you think?

I agree. I'd rather launch a bit later than launch with bugs.

Let's push the date to the following Monday, then. Everyone okay with that?

Works for me.

Same here.

Great. So, to sum up: Tom chases the images, Aisha finishes the content by Friday, and we launch next Monday. Anything else?

Nothing from me.

Then let's wrap up. Thanks, everyone. Good work.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
give an update	report on the current progress of something
on track	progressing as planned
blocker	a problem that stops work from continuing
follow up	check on something or take further action

jump in	politely interrupt to add a comment
a fair point	a reasonable and valid argument
to sum up	to give a short summary of the main points
wrap up	finish or end a meeting
works for me	that is fine with me; I agree

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Can you give us an update on...?" — asking for a progress report.
- "Any blockers we should know about?" — checking for problems.
- "Can I jump in?" — politely joining the conversation.
- "That's a fair point." — acknowledging someone's good idea.
- "Everyone okay with that?" — checking for agreement.
- "So, to sum up..." — summarizing decisions at the end.

LANGUAGE TIP

To interrupt politely in a meeting, use a short opener like "Can I jump in?" or "Sorry, may I add something?" before you speak. It signals respect and keeps the discussion smooth.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Hold a short team meeting with two or three people. One leads, the others give updates on a project of your choice.

1. How would you give a progress update on a current task?
2. What phrase would you use to politely interrupt?
3. How would you express agreement with a teammate's idea?
4. How would you summarize the decisions at the end of a meeting?

Scenario: Manager Daniel meets with his team member Lena for a one-on-one. He gives her feedback on a recent presentation, and she responds professionally.

Thanks for sitting down with me, Lena. I wanted to share some feedback on yesterday's presentation.

Of course, I'd appreciate that. How do you think it went?

Overall, really well. Your slides were clear, and the client seemed impressed.

That's great to hear. Was there anything I could improve?

One small thing. You spoke quite fast at the start, so a few points were hard to follow.

That's fair. I do tend to rush when I'm nervous.

It's totally understandable. Just try to slow down and pause between sections.

Thanks, that's really helpful. I'll work on my pacing next time.

I appreciate how openly you take feedback. It makes a big difference.

I'd actually like some feedback for you too, if that's okay.

Please, go ahead. I'm always happy to hear it.

It would help me if I got the agenda a bit earlier before client meetings.

That's a great point. I'll make sure to send it the day before from now on.

Thank you. I really value these conversations.

So do I. Let's keep them going.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
feedback	helpful comments about someone's work
one-on-one	a private meeting between two people
that's fair	I accept that; it's a reasonable comment
tend to	usually do something out of habit
pacing	the speed at which you speak or work
take feedback openly	accept comments without getting defensive
go ahead	please continue; permission to speak
make a difference	have a positive effect
value	think something is important and useful

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I wanted to share some feedback on..." — gently introducing feedback.
- "Was there anything I could improve?" — inviting honest comments.
- "That's fair." — accepting criticism gracefully.
- "I'll work on that next time." — showing willingness to improve.
- "It would help me if..." — giving feedback in a soft, constructive way.
- "I really value these conversations." — appreciating open communication.

LANGUAGE TIP

When giving feedback, start with something positive before mentioning what to improve, and keep it specific. Saying "It would help me if..." sounds far kinder than "You never..."

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One person gives feedback on the other's recent work (a presentation, report, or task). Then switch roles.

1. How would you start giving someone positive feedback?
2. How would you suggest an improvement politely?
3. What would you say to accept criticism without getting defensive?
4. How would you ask your manager for something that would help you?

29

Disagreeing Politely with a Colleague

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Two colleagues, Raj and Hannah, are planning a product launch. Raj wants to launch quickly, but Hannah thinks they need more time. They disagree respectfully and find a compromise.

I think we should launch the product next week while there's still buzz about it.

I see what you mean, but I'm not sure we're quite ready.

Why's that? Most of the work is done.

True, but we haven't finished testing. If something breaks, it could hurt the brand.

That's a good point, but waiting too long might mean we lose momentum.

I understand the concern. I just think a rushed launch is riskier than a slightly later one.

Fair enough. So what would you suggest?

How about we delay by just one week and use that time to test properly?

Hmm. Could we at least start promoting it now, even if the launch is a week later?

Yes, absolutely. I'm completely fine with building hype in advance.

Okay, that actually sounds like a good compromise.

Great. So we promote now, test thoroughly, and launch a week from Monday.

Works for me. Thanks for talking it through instead of just overruling me.

Of course. We both want the same thing in the end.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
buzz	excitement and attention about something
I see what you mean	I understand your point of view
lose momentum	lose energy or progress over time
that's a good point	acknowledging the other person is right
fair enough	okay, I accept your reasoning
compromise	a solution where both sides give a little

build hype	create excitement before something happens
talk it through	discuss something carefully to reach agreement
overrule	reject someone's decision using more authority

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I see what you mean, but..." — disagreeing while showing respect.
- "That's a good point, but..." — accepting part of an idea before objecting.
- "I'm not sure I agree." — disagreeing softly.
- "What would you suggest?" — inviting an alternative.
- "How about we...?" — proposing a compromise.
- "That sounds like a good compromise." — accepting a middle solution.

LANGUAGE TIP

Disagree with the idea, not the person. Begin with agreement ("I see what you mean...") before adding "but...". This softens your point and keeps the conversation friendly.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You and a colleague disagree about a plan (a deadline, a budget, or a design). Disagree politely and try to reach a compromise.

1. How would you disagree without sounding rude?
2. What phrase could you use to acknowledge the other person's point first?
3. How would you suggest a compromise?
4. How would you accept a solution you both agree on?

30

Asking Your Boss for Time Off

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Carlos wants to take a few days off for a family event. He speaks with his manager, Ms. Reed, to request the time and make sure his work is covered.

Ms. Reed, do you have a moment? I'd like to talk about taking some time off.

Sure, Carlos, come in. What did you have in mind?

I'd like to request three days off next month for a family wedding.

Okay. Which dates exactly?

From the 14th to the 16th, if that works for the team.

Let me check the calendar... That should be fine. It's a fairly quiet week.

Great. I've already thought about how to cover my tasks while I'm away.

Good thinking. What's your plan?

I'll finish the report before I leave, and Dana has agreed to handle any urgent emails.

That sounds well organized. Will you be reachable if something comes up?

I'd prefer to be fully offline, but I can check messages once a day if it's urgent.

No, enjoy your time off properly. We'll manage. Just send me a quick handover note before you go.

Of course. Should I also submit the request in the leave system?

Yes, please log it there so HR has a record.

Will do. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

No problem at all. Enjoy the wedding!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
time off	days when you are not working
request	formally ask for something
cover my tasks	have someone do your work while you're away
reachable	able to be contacted
come up	happen unexpectedly
offline	not connected or not checking work
handover note	a summary of your work for someone covering you
log it / submit a request	record something officially in a system
HR	Human Resources, the people-management department

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Do you have a moment?" — politely asking for someone's time.
- "I'd like to request a few days off." — making a clear request.
- "If that works for the team." — showing you've considered others.
- "I've already thought about how to cover my tasks." — being responsible.
- "Will you be reachable if something comes up?" — a manager checking availability.
- "I really appreciate it." — thanking your boss sincerely.

LANGUAGE TIP

When asking for time off, show you've planned for your absence. Mentioning who will "cover your tasks" makes a yes far more likely than simply asking for the days.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One person is an employee requesting time off; the other is the manager. Discuss the dates and how the work will be covered.

1. How would you politely ask your boss for time off?
2. How would you explain your plan for covering your work?
3. How would you respond if your boss asked you to be reachable?
4. How would you thank your manager for approving the request?

Connected

Phone calls, customer service, tech support, texting, and video calls.

31

Making a Phone Call and Leaving a Message

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Daniel calls a colleague, Ms. Reyes, but she's not at her desk. Her assistant answers, and Daniel decides to leave a voicemail message instead.

Good morning, Greenline Marketing, this is Tom speaking.

Hi Tom, this is Daniel Okafor from Brightway Design. Could I speak to Ms. Reyes, please?

Let me check if she's available. May I ask what it's about?

Sure, it's about the proposal she sent over yesterday.

One moment, please. ... I'm sorry, Daniel, she's in a meeting right now.

No problem. Could I leave a message for her?

Of course. Go ahead.

Could you let her know I've reviewed the proposal and I have a few small changes?

Got it. Anything else?

Yes, could you ask her to call me back when she's free?

Sure. Does she have your number?

She should, but let me give it to you just in case. It's 0-7-7-0-0, 1-2-3-4-5-6.

Let me read that back: 0-7-7-0-0, 1-2-3-4-5-6. Is that right?

That's correct, thanks.

I'll pass the message along as soon as she's out.

Thanks so much, Tom. Have a good day.

You too. Bye now.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
this is ... speaking	a polite way to say your name on the phone
to be available	to be free to talk or help
leave a message	to give information for someone to receive later

call (someone) back	to return a phone call
one moment, please	a polite request to wait a short time
read (something) back	to repeat information to check it is correct
pass the message along	to deliver a message to the right person
just in case	to be safe; in case it is needed

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Could I speak to ..., please?" — to ask for a specific person
- "Could I leave a message?" — when the person isn't available
- "Could you let her know that ...?" — to give the content of your message
- "Could you ask him to call me back?" — to request a return call
- "Let me give you my number just in case." — to share your contact details
- "I'll pass the message along." — to reassure the caller it will be delivered

LANGUAGE TIP

When you leave a message, always state your name and reason clearly at the start, then end with what you want to happen next ("please call me back"). Saying numbers in small groups, with a short pause, makes them much easier to write down.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One of you is the caller trying to reach a busy person; the other answers and takes a message. Then swap roles.

1. How do you politely ask to speak to someone on the phone?
2. What information should you always include when leaving a message?
3. Why is it useful to read a phone number back to the caller?
4. How would you ask someone to return your call later?

32

Booking an Appointment by Phone

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Priya phones a dental clinic to book a check-up. She works during the day, so she needs to find a time that fits her schedule.

Good afternoon, Maple Dental Clinic. How can I help you?

Hi, I'd like to book an appointment for a check-up, please.

Of course. Are you an existing patient with us?

Yes, my name's Priya Sharma.

Thank you. Let me pull up your details. When would suit you best?

Ideally something after 5 p.m., since I work until then.

Let me see ... We have a slot next Tuesday at 5:30, or Thursday at 6.

Thursday at 6 would be perfect.

Great. That's with Dr. Lewis. Shall I book you in?

Yes, please. How long will the appointment take?

About thirty minutes. Please arrive ten minutes early to fill in a form.

No problem. Will I get a reminder?

Yes, we'll send you a text the day before. Is your mobile number still the same?

It is, thanks. And what if I need to reschedule?

Just give us at least 24 hours' notice and we'll move it for you.

Perfect. So that's Thursday at 6 with Dr. Lewis.

That's right. See you then, Priya.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
book an appointment	to arrange a fixed time to meet or be seen
existing patient	someone who has visited the clinic before
pull up (someone's) details	to find information on a computer
slot	an available time for an appointment
book (someone) in	to officially record an appointment
reminder	a message that helps you remember
reschedule	to change to a different time
give notice	to tell someone in advance

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'd like to book an appointment, please." — to start the request
- "When would suit you best?" — to ask about preferred times
- "Do you have anything after 5 p.m.?" — to ask for a specific time
- "Shall I book you in?" — to confirm the booking
- "What if I need to reschedule?" — to ask about changing the time
- "So that's Thursday at 6 with Dr. Lewis." — to confirm the details at the end

LANGUAGE TIP

Always repeat the key details — the day, time, and person — at the end of the call to confirm you both understood the same thing. Asking about reminders and cancellation rules up front saves stress later.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One of you calls to book an appointment (doctor, hairdresser, mechanic); the other offers times and confirms the details. Then swap.

1. How would you ask for an appointment outside of working hours?
2. What questions help you avoid problems later (reminders, cancelling)?
3. Why is it a good idea to repeat the details at the end?
4. How would you politely ask to change an appointment you already booked?

33

Dealing with Customer Service

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Marco ordered a coffee machine online, but it arrived damaged. He calls the company's customer service line to sort it out.

Thanks for calling HomeGoods support, this is Sarah. How can I help?

Hi Sarah. I received my order today, but the coffee machine is damaged.

Oh, I'm really sorry to hear that. Let's get it sorted. Do you have your order number?

Yes, it's H-as-in-hotel, 4-9-2-0-1.

Thank you. I can see the order here. Could you describe the damage for me?

The side is cracked, and it looks like it was dropped in transit.

Understood. Would you prefer a replacement or a full refund?

I'd rather have a replacement, if that's possible.

Absolutely. I can ship a new one out today at no extra cost.

Great. And what should I do with the damaged one?

We'll email you a free return label. Just drop it at any post office.

That's easy enough. When will the new one arrive?

Within three working days. I'll send you a tracking link by email.

Perfect. Could I get a reference number for this call?

Of course. It's CS-7-7-3-1. Is there anything else I can help with?

No, that's everything. Thanks for being so helpful, Sarah.

You're very welcome. Sorry again for the trouble. Take care!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
get it sorted	to solve or fix a problem (informal)
order number	the code that identifies your purchase
in transit	while being delivered or transported
replacement	a new item to replace a faulty one

full refund	getting all your money back
return label	a printed address for sending something back
tracking link	a web link that shows where your package is
reference number	a code that records your contact for later

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I received my order, but ..." — to explain what went wrong
- "I'd rather have a replacement." — to state your preferred solution
- "What should I do with the damaged one?" — to ask about next steps
- "When will the new one arrive?" — to ask about timing
- "Could I get a reference number for this call?" — to keep a record
- "Thanks for being so helpful." — to end on a polite note

LANGUAGE TIP

Stay calm and polite even when you're frustrated — agents help cooperative callers faster. When spelling tricky letters or codes, use words like "H as in hotel" to avoid confusion. Always ask for a reference number so you can follow up.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: One of you is a customer with a faulty product; the other is the agent offering a refund or replacement. Then swap roles.

1. How can you explain a problem clearly and calmly?
2. What's the difference between asking for a refund and a replacement?
3. Why is it useful to get a reference number for your call?
4. How would you spell a difficult code out loud over the phone?

34

Solving a Tech Problem with Support

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Lena's home internet keeps dropping out. She contacts her provider's technical support, and the agent, Raj, walks her through some steps.

Hello, technical support, my name's Raj. What seems to be the problem?

Hi Raj. My internet keeps dropping out every few minutes. It's really frustrating.

I understand. Let's figure this out together. Is it on Wi-Fi or a wired connection?

Wi-Fi. My laptop and phone both keep losing the signal.

Okay. Have you tried restarting the router?

Not yet. How do I do that?

Unplug it, wait about thirty seconds, then plug it back in.

Alright, give me a second ... Okay, the lights are flashing now.

Perfect. Wait until they turn solid green. That means it's back online.
 They're green now. Let me check ... Oh, it seems more stable already.
 Great. There may also be too many devices on one channel. I can update your settings remotely.
 Yes, please do. I'm not very technical, to be honest.
 No worries at all. I've switched you to a less crowded channel. Try streaming a video.
 It's playing smoothly, no buffering. That's a relief!
 Excellent. If it drops again, give us a call and ask for case number TS-2-0-8-8.
 Got it, TS-2-0-8-8. Thanks so much for your patience, Raj.
 My pleasure. Have a great day, Lena.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
drop out	to stop working or disconnect suddenly
router	the device that sends Wi-Fi around your home
restart / reboot	to turn a device off and on again
back online	connected to the internet again
remotely	done from another location, not in person
buffering	when a video pauses to load
case number	a code that identifies your support request
walk (someone) through	to explain steps one by one

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "My internet keeps dropping out." — to describe the problem
- "How do I do that?" — to ask for instructions
- "Give me a second." — to ask the agent to wait
- "I'm not very technical, to be honest." — to ask for simpler help
- "It seems more stable already." — to report an improvement
- "Thanks so much for your patience." — to thank a helpful agent

LANGUAGE TIP

It's fine to admit "I'm not very technical" — support agents will then explain things more simply. Describe symptoms with concrete words ("it drops out every few minutes", "the light is flashing red") so the agent can pinpoint the cause faster.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: One of you has a device that won't work; the other is support, walking you through troubleshooting steps. Then swap roles.

1. How would you describe a tech problem clearly to support?
2. What phrases help you ask for step-by-step instructions?
3. How can you tell support you don't understand technical words?
4. What would you say to report that the fix is working?

35

Making Plans Over Text and Messaging

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Two friends, Jess and Omar, text each other to arrange a get-together over the weekend. The conversation uses a casual, modern texting style.

Hey! Are you free this weekend?

Hey! Saturday's pretty open. What's up?

Thinking of grabbing brunch and maybe catching a film after. You in?

Sounds great, I'm in! What time were you thinking?

Maybe 11ish? There's that new café on King Street.

Perfect. I've been meaning to try that place.

Same! Should we book a table or just turn up?

Let's book, it gets packed on weekends.

Good call. I'll sort it out and send you the details.

Cool. Which film, btw?

Not sure yet – I'll send you a couple of options later.

Sounds good. Shall I drive? I can pick you up.

That'd be amazing, thanks! Around 10:30?

10:30 it is.

Can't wait! See you Sat.

See you then!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
are you free?	do you have time / are you available?
you in?	casual way to ask "do you want to join?"
11ish	around 11 o'clock (approximately)
turn up	to arrive somewhere (without booking)
it gets packed	it becomes very crowded

good call	a good decision or suggestion
sort it out	to arrange or handle something
btw	"by the way" (text abbreviation)

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Are you free this weekend?" — to start making plans
- "You in?" — a casual way to invite someone
- "What time were you thinking?" — to agree on a time
- "Should we book or just turn up?" — to plan the details
- "I'll sort it out and send you the details." — to take charge of arranging
- "Can't wait! See you then." — a friendly way to finish

LANGUAGE TIP

Texting English is shorter and more relaxed than speech: drop the subject ("Sounds great" instead of "It sounds great"), add "-ish" for approximate times, and use abbreviations like "btw" or "tbh" with friends. Save this casual style for informal chats, not formal messages.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Text a partner to plan a day out. Decide on the activity, time, and who arranges what — using casual texting style. Then swap who suggests the plan.

1. How do you casually invite a friend to do something?
2. What does adding "-ish" to a time mean?
3. Which text abbreviations do you know, and what do they mean?
4. How would you offer to arrange or organise part of the plan?

36

A Video Call with Friends or Family

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Ana has a video call with her brother Carlos, who lives abroad. They catch up, but the call starts with some common connection trouble.

Hey Carlos! Can you see me okay?

Hi! I can see you, but you're a bit frozen. Hang on.

Is it better now? I think my connection's a little slow.

Yeah, that's much better. You're coming through clearly now.

Great! It's so good to see your face. How are things over there?

Really good, thanks. Busy with work, but I can't complain. How about you?

Pretty good! Wait — you're cutting out a bit. Could you say that again?

Sure. I said work's been busy. Can you hear me now?

Yes, loud and clear. So, how's the new apartment?

I love it! Hold on, let me show you around — I'll flip the camera.
Oh wow, it's lovely! The view is amazing.
Right? Oh, hang on, Mum's trying to join the call.
Let her in! It'll be nice to have all of us together.
Done. Mum, can you hear us? You're on mute!
Ha, classic. Tap the microphone icon, Mum.
There we go. Okay, now we can all catch up properly.
I've missed this. Let's not leave it so long next time!

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
frozen	when the video image stops moving
hang on / hold on	wait a moment
coming through clearly	the sound or picture is good
cut out	to lose sound or picture briefly
loud and clear	heard perfectly
flip the camera	to switch to the other camera view
on mute	with the microphone turned off
catch up	to share recent news with someone

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Can you see me okay?" — to check the video at the start
- "You're a bit frozen." — to report a video problem
- "You're cutting out. Could you say that again?" — to ask for a repeat
- "Can you hear me now?" — to check the sound
- "Let me show you around." — to share your surroundings
- "You're on mute!" — to tell someone their mic is off

LANGUAGE TIP

Video calls have their own phrases for tech hiccups: "you're frozen", "you're cutting out", "you're on mute". Knowing them helps you fix problems quickly without breaking the flow. Start with a quick "Can you see and hear me?" to check everything works.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Have a pretend video call with a partner. Begin by checking the connection, then catch up on news. Act out one "tech problem" and solve it together.

1. What do you say to check the other person can see and hear you?
2. How do you politely ask someone to repeat themselves on a call?
3. What would you say if someone's microphone is off?
4. How would you suggest having video calls more often?

When Things Go Wrong

Health, emergencies, complaints, and handling problems calmly and clearly.

37

At the Doctor's Office

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Daniel has been feeling unwell for a few days and visits his local clinic. He describes his symptoms to Dr. Reyes, who examines him and explains what to do next.

Good morning, Daniel. Come on in and have a seat. So, what brings you in today?

Hi, Doctor. I haven't been feeling great for the last few days. I've got a really bad sore throat and a headache that won't go away.

I'm sorry to hear that. Have you had a fever at all?

Yeah, I checked last night and it was just over 38 degrees. I've also been feeling really tired and a bit dizzy.

Okay. And how long exactly have you had these symptoms?

They started about four days ago, but they've definitely got worse since then.

Right. Any cough, or trouble breathing?

A little bit of a dry cough, but my breathing's fine.

Let me take a quick look at your throat. Open wide for me, please. Hmm, it's quite red and swollen. I'd like to check your temperature and listen to your chest as well.

Of course. Is it anything serious?

Nothing to worry about. It looks like a throat infection. I'm going to prescribe you a course of antibiotics. Take them twice a day, and make sure you finish the whole course, even if you start feeling better.

Got it. Should I be doing anything else?

Plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids, and take paracetamol for the fever if you need it. If you're not improving in a week, come back and see me.

Thank you so much, Doctor. That's a relief.

You're welcome. Take care of yourself, and get well soon.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
What brings you in today?	A polite way a doctor asks why you are visiting.

symptom	A sign that you are ill, such as pain or a fever.
sore throat	Pain or discomfort in your throat.
to have a fever	To have a body temperature higher than normal.
to prescribe	To officially tell a patient to take a certain medicine.
a course of antibiotics	A complete set of medicine taken over several days to fight infection.
to feel dizzy	To feel unsteady, as if you might fall.
fluids	Liquids you drink, like water or juice.
get well soon	A friendly wish for someone to recover quickly.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I haven't been feeling great for the last few days." — To explain that you have been unwell recently.
- "I've got a really bad headache that won't go away." — To describe a persistent symptom.
- "They've definitely got worse since then." — To say a problem is getting more serious.
- "Is it anything serious?" — To ask the doctor how worried you should be.
- "Should I be doing anything else?" — To ask for further advice on treatment.
- "That's a relief." — To express that you feel less worried now.

LANGUAGE TIP

When describing how long you've felt ill, use the present perfect with "for" and "since": "I've had a cough *for* three days" (a length of time) or "I've felt sick *since* Monday" (a starting point). This tells the doctor the symptom started in the past and is still happening now.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You are visiting a doctor because you've had stomach pain for two days. A partner plays the doctor and asks about your symptoms. Describe the pain, how long you've had it, and ask whether it's serious.

1. How would you tell a doctor that your symptoms have got worse over time?
2. What questions might a doctor ask you to understand your illness?
3. Why is it important to finish a whole course of antibiotics?
4. What polite phrases could you use to thank a doctor and end the appointment?

Scenario: Priya goes to the pharmacy to pick up her prescription and also wants something for a cold. She asks the pharmacist, Tom, for advice on what to take.

Hi there, how can I help you today?

Hi. I've got a prescription to pick up, and I also wanted to ask about something for a cold.

Sure. Let's sort out the prescription first. Could I have your name and date of birth, please?

It's Priya Sharma, and my date of birth is the 12th of March, 1994.

Thank you. Here we are. This is your antibiotic — take one tablet twice a day with food. Have you taken this before?

No, it's my first time. Are there any side effects I should know about?

It might upset your stomach slightly, which is why it's best to take it with a meal. If you get a rash or any swelling, stop taking it and see your doctor right away.

Okay, good to know. And for my cold — I've got a blocked nose and a sore throat. Is there anything you'd recommend?

For that, I'd suggest this decongestant for your nose and some throat lozenges. They're both available over the counter.

Can I take those alongside the antibiotic? I don't want anything to clash.

That's a sensible question. Yes, these are perfectly safe to take together. Just don't exceed the recommended dose on the packet.

Great. I'll take both, then. How much do I owe you?

The prescription is nine pounds, and the cold remedies come to about seven. So sixteen pounds altogether.

Perfect. Here you go. Thanks so much for your help.

No problem at all. Feel better soon, and remember to finish the full course of antibiotics.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
prescription	A written order from a doctor for a specific medicine.
to pick up (a prescription)	To collect medicine that has been prepared for you.
side effect	An unwanted effect a medicine can have on your body.
over the counter	Medicine you can buy without a prescription.
decongestant	A medicine that helps clear a blocked nose.
lozenge	A small tablet you suck to soothe a sore throat.
to clash	(Of medicines) to react badly when taken together.
recommended dose	The correct amount of medicine you should take.
cold remedy	A medicine or treatment that relieves cold symptoms.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I've got a prescription to pick up." — To say you've come to collect your medicine.
- "Are there any side effects I should know about?" — To ask about possible reactions to a medicine.
- "Is there anything you'd recommend?" — To ask the pharmacist for advice.
- "Can I take those alongside the antibiotic?" — To check whether medicines are safe together.
- "Don't exceed the recommended dose." — To remind someone not to take too much.
- "How much do I owe you?" — To ask the total price you need to pay.

LANGUAGE TIP

To ask politely for advice, use "Is there anything you'd recommend?" or "What would you suggest?" The contraction "you'd" (you would) makes the question sound softer and more natural than a direct "What do I take?" Pharmacists hear these phrases every day.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: You go to a pharmacy with a headache and a slight cough. A partner plays the pharmacist. Ask for a recommendation, check for side effects, and confirm the price before you pay.

1. How would you ask a pharmacist whether two medicines are safe to take together?
2. What is the difference between a prescription medicine and one bought over the counter?
3. Why is it useful to ask about side effects before taking a new medicine?
4. What polite phrase can you use to ask how much something costs?

39

Reporting a Lost or Stolen Item

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Marco realises his wallet is missing after a day out in the city. He goes to the police station to report it, and Officer Bennett takes down the details.

- tt:** Good afternoon. How can I help you?
- Hi. I'd like to report a lost wallet. Actually, I think it might have been stolen.
- tt:** I'm sorry to hear that. Let's get the details down. When did you last have it?
- I'm pretty sure I had it on the bus this morning, around nine o'clock. When I went to pay for lunch, it was gone.
- tt:** And where were you when you noticed it was missing?
- At a café on King Street. I retraced my steps but couldn't find it anywhere.
- tt:** Can you describe the wallet for me?
- It's a brown leather wallet, quite worn. It had my ID card, two bank cards, and about forty pounds in cash.
- tt:** Have you cancelled your bank cards yet?
- Not yet. I came straight here. I wasn't sure what to do first.
- tt:** I'd strongly advise calling your bank as soon as possible to block the cards. In the meantime, I'll file a report and give you a reference number.
- Thank you. Will I need that number for my insurance?
- tt:** Yes, exactly. Your insurance company will ask for it when you make a claim. Keep it somewhere safe.
- I will. Is there any chance it'll turn up?
- tt:** Sometimes wallets are handed in, so there's a chance. If anyone brings it to us, we'll contact you on the number you've given.
- That's reassuring. Thanks for your help, Officer.

tt: You're welcome. Don't forget to ring your bank straight away.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
to report (something)	To officially tell the authorities about a problem.
to retrace your steps	To go back the same way to look for something lost.
to cancel a card	To stop a bank card from being used.
to block (a card)	To prevent a card from working temporarily.
to file a report	To create an official written record of an incident.
reference number	A unique number used to track a report or case.
to make a claim	To formally ask an insurance company for money.
to turn up	To be found or to appear, often unexpectedly.
to hand (something) in	To give a found item to someone in authority.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'd like to report a lost wallet." — To begin reporting something missing.
- "When did you last have it?" — To ask when an item was last seen.
- "I retraced my steps but couldn't find it." — To say you looked back where you'd been.
- "I came straight here." — To say you went somewhere without delay.
- "Is there any chance it'll turn up?" — To ask if a lost item might be found.
- "That's reassuring." — To say something makes you feel calmer.

LANGUAGE TIP

Notice the difference between "lost" and "stolen." You *lose* something by accident ("I lost my wallet"), but something is *stolen* when a person takes it deliberately ("My wallet was stolen"). If you're unsure, you can say "It's missing — I think it might have been stolen," just as Marco does.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You've lost your phone while travelling. A partner plays a police officer or staff member at a lost-property office. Describe the phone, say where and when you last had it, and ask what you should do next.

1. How would you describe a lost item so someone could identify it?
2. What should you do first if your bank cards go missing, and why?
3. Why is a reference number important when you report something lost or stolen?
4. What is the difference between something being "lost" and being "stolen"?

Scenario: Hannah bought a coffee machine online, but it stopped working after a week. She calls the shop's customer service line and speaks to an agent, Kevin, to ask for a refund.

Thanks for calling Brightway Electronics. My name's Kevin. How can I help?

Hi, Kevin. I'm calling because I'm not happy with a product I bought from you. It's a coffee machine, and it's already stopped working.

I'm really sorry to hear that. Can you tell me a bit more about what's gone wrong?

Of course. I only bought it a week ago, and now it won't switch on at all. I've tried a different socket, but nothing happens.

That definitely shouldn't happen with a new machine. Do you have your order number to hand?

Yes, it's BW-48217.

Thank you. I can see your order here. As it's faulty and within the warranty, you're entitled to a replacement or a full refund.

Honestly, I'd prefer a refund. I've lost a bit of confidence in the product.

That's completely understandable. I can arrange that for you. We'll send a courier to collect the faulty machine free of charge.

That's good to hear. How long will the refund take?

Once we receive the machine, the money will be back in your account within five working days.

Okay, that sounds fair. Will I get something in writing to confirm all this?

Absolutely. I'll email you a confirmation with the collection date and the refund details right away.

Brilliant. Thank you for sorting this out so quickly.

You're very welcome, and I'm sorry again for the inconvenience. Is there anything else I can help with?

No, that's everything. Thanks, Kevin.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
to make a complaint	To formally say you are unhappy about something.
faulty	Not working correctly; broken.
warranty	A promise to repair or replace a product within a set time.
to be entitled to	To have the right to receive something.
refund	Money given back to you for a returned product.
replacement	A new item given in place of a faulty one.
courier	A person or company that collects and delivers items.

inconvenience Trouble or difficulty caused to someone.

to sort (something) out To deal with and solve a problem.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'm calling because I'm not happy with a product I bought." — To politely begin a complaint.
- "Can you tell me a bit more about what's gone wrong?" — To ask for details about a problem.
- "I'd prefer a refund." — To state which solution you want.
- "How long will the refund take?" — To ask about timing.
- "Will I get something in writing to confirm all this?" — To ask for written proof.
- "Thank you for sorting this out so quickly." — To thank someone for solving your problem.

LANGUAGE TIP

You can complain firmly while staying polite. Instead of "Your machine is terrible," say "I'm not happy with the product" or "This definitely shouldn't happen." A calm, factual tone makes staff far more willing to help, and clearly stating "I'd prefer a refund" tells them exactly what outcome you want.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You ordered a jacket online, but it arrived with a broken zip. A partner plays the customer service agent. Explain the problem calmly, say whether you want a refund or a replacement, and ask for written confirmation.

1. How can you make a complaint firmly but still sound polite?
2. What is the difference between a refund and a replacement?
3. Why might you ask to get a resolution "in writing"?
4. What details might a company need before they can help you?

41 Asking for Help in an Emergency

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Sofia is in a park when an elderly man suddenly collapses. She calls the emergency services and speaks to a dispatcher, Ray, who guides her through what to do.

Emergency services, which service do you need — ambulance, fire, or police?

Ambulance, please. It's an emergency. A man has just collapsed in the park.

Okay, stay calm, I'm here to help. Can you tell me exactly where you are?

We're in Riverside Park, near the main entrance by the fountain.

Got it. Is the man conscious? Can you hear him breathing?

He's not responding when I talk to him, but I think he's still breathing. It's hard to tell.

All right. I'm sending an ambulance now. I need you to do exactly as I say. Is he lying on his back?

Yes, he is.

Good. Gently tilt his head back to open his airway, and watch his chest to see if it's rising. Can you do that for me?

Okay, I've done that. Yes, his chest is moving. He's definitely breathing.

That's great news. The ambulance is on its way and should be there in about five minutes. Stay with him and keep talking to me.

Should I move him or give him anything?

No, don't move him and don't give him any food or water. Just keep him warm and let me know if anything changes.

Understood. Wait — I can hear the siren now.

Perfect. Wave the paramedics over so they can find you quickly. You've done really well, Sofia.

Thank you so much. They're here now.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
emergency services	The ambulance, fire, and police services you call in a crisis.
to collapse	To fall down suddenly, often because of illness.
dispatcher	The person who answers an emergency call and sends help.
conscious	Awake and aware of what is happening.
to respond	To react or answer when spoken to.
airway	The passage through which you breathe.
paramedic	A trained medical worker who comes in an ambulance.
on its way	Coming; travelling towards you now.
to stay calm	To remain relaxed and in control during stress.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "It's an emergency." — To make clear the situation is urgent.
- "Can you tell me exactly where you are?" — To ask for a precise location.
- "He's not responding when I talk to him." — To report that someone is unresponsive.
- "The ambulance is on its way." — To say help is coming.
- "Should I move him or give him anything?" — To ask what action to take.
- "Let me know if anything changes." — To ask to be updated about a situation.

LANGUAGE TIP

In an emergency, speak slowly and give the most important information first: the service you need, your location, and what's happening. Short, clear sentences like "A man has collapsed in the park" are far more useful than long explanations. Stay on the line until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: You witness a car accident and call the emergency services. A partner plays the dispatcher and asks for details. State which service you need, describe the location clearly, and explain what has happened.

1. What three pieces of information should you give first in an emergency call?
2. Why is it important to stay calm and stay on the line?
3. How would you describe your exact location to a dispatcher?
4. What kinds of questions might a dispatcher ask you about an injured person?

42

Apologizing and Sorting Out a Misunderstanding

INTERMEDIATE

Scenario: Leo missed an important team meeting because he thought it was scheduled for the following day. He talks to his colleague Aisha to apologize and clear up the confusion.

Aisha, have you got a minute? I owe you an apology.

Oh? What's up?

I'm really sorry I missed the meeting this morning. I genuinely thought it was tomorrow.

Ah, I did wonder where you'd got to. We were waiting for you for a while.

I feel terrible about it. I must have misread the calendar invitation. There's no excuse, really.

These things happen. To be fair, the invite did get changed at the last minute, so it's an easy mistake to make.

Oh, did it? That would explain the mix-up. I had Thursday in my head the whole time.

Yeah, the time got moved forward a day. Maybe the update didn't sync properly on your side.

That makes sense. Still, I should have double-checked. Is there anything I missed that I need to catch up on?

Nothing major. We agreed on the new deadlines and split up the tasks. I can send you a quick summary.

That would be a huge help, thank you. And please pass on my apologies to the rest of the team.

Will do, but honestly, don't worry about it. Everyone understood.

Thanks for being so understanding. I'll make sure my calendar's properly synced from now on.

No harm done. Let's just get you up to speed and move on.

Sounds good. I really appreciate it.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
to owe someone an apology	To need to say sorry to someone.
misunderstanding	A failure to understand something correctly.

mix-up	A confusion or mistake, often about details.
to misread	To read or interpret something incorrectly.
There's no excuse.	A way of taking full responsibility for a mistake.
to catch up on	To learn what you missed.
to get someone up to speed	To give someone the information they missed.
No harm done.	A phrase meaning no real damage was caused.
to pass on (apologies)	To give a message to someone else.

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I owe you an apology." — A sincere way to begin saying sorry.
- "I genuinely thought it was tomorrow." — To explain an honest mistake.
- "That would explain the mix-up." — To realise what caused the confusion.
- "I should have double-checked." — To take responsibility for not being careful.
- "Please pass on my apologies to the team." — To apologize to others through someone.
- "Thanks for being so understanding." — To thank someone for not being upset.

LANGUAGE TIP

A good apology often has three parts: say sorry, take responsibility, and offer to fix things. Notice how Leo says "I'm really sorry," then "I should have double-checked," and finally "I'll make sure my calendar's synced from now on." Using "should have + past participle" is a natural way to admit what you ought to have done differently.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You forgot to reply to an important email from a colleague, which caused a delay. A partner plays the colleague. Apologize sincerely, explain what happened, take responsibility, and offer to put things right.

1. What are the three parts of a good apology?
2. How can you take responsibility for a mistake without making excuses?
3. What phrases can you use to find out what you missed?
4. How might you reassure someone who is apologizing to you?

Going Deeper

Opinions, storytelling, negotiation, and the real conversations that matter most.

43

Sharing Your Opinion in a Discussion

ADVANCED

Scenario: Maya and Daniel are in a book club meeting, debating whether a novel they read was overrated.

So, what did everyone make of the ending? Personally, I found it a bit of a letdown.

Really? See, that's interesting, because for me the ending was the strongest part.

Fair enough. I mean, I get why people love it, but to be honest, it felt a little too neat for me.

Too neat? How do you mean?

Well, everything got wrapped up so conveniently. The way I see it, real life is messier than that.

That's a valid point, actually. But couldn't you argue the author did that on purpose, as a kind of comfort?

Hmm, I hadn't thought of it that way. You might be onto something there.

The thing is, I tend to judge a book by how it makes me feel, not how realistic it is.

That's a fair distinction. I suppose I'm coming at it from a different angle.

Exactly. And there's no right answer, is there? That's what I love about these discussions.

Couldn't agree more. If you don't mind me asking, what was your favourite line in the whole thing?

Oh, easily the one about memory being a kind of fiction. It stuck with me for days.

See, now that I'll give you. That line was genuinely brilliant.

So maybe we're not so far apart after all.

Maybe not. Shall we open it up to the rest of the group?

Let's do it. I'm curious whether anyone agrees with you.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
to make of (something)	to think or understand about something
a letdown	something disappointing

too neat	too tidy or convenient to feel realistic
the way I see it	in my opinion (a confident way to state a view)
a valid point	a reasonable, well-founded argument
to be onto something	to be close to a good or correct idea
coming at it from a different angle	approaching a topic from a different perspective
I'll give you (that)	I admit you are right about that point
to open it up	to invite others to join the discussion
not so far apart	having views that are closer than they seemed

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Personally, I found it a bit of a letdown." — softening a critical opinion with "personally."
- "The way I see it..." — introducing your viewpoint with quiet confidence.
- "That's a valid point, actually." — acknowledging an opponent before responding.
- "I hadn't thought of it that way." — admitting a new perspective gracefully.
- "I suppose I'm coming at it from a different angle." — explaining disagreement without conflict.
- "Now that I'll give you." — conceding one specific point.
- "Shall we open it up to the rest of the group?" — broadening the discussion.

LANGUAGE TIP

In a respectful discussion, acknowledge before you challenge. Phrases like "That's a valid point, but..." show you're listening, which makes people far more open to your actual opinion. Leading with "You're wrong" shuts the conversation down.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You and a friend just watched a film. You loved it; they thought it was overrated. Share your opinion, listen to theirs, and find one thing you agree on.

1. What is a film or book you have a strong opinion about, and why?
2. How do you politely tell someone you disagree with them?
3. What phrase can you use to admit someone has changed your mind?
4. Why is it useful to acknowledge a point before disagreeing with it?

Scenario: Priya and Tom are having coffee and discussing a news story about remote work becoming permanent at many companies.

Did you see that article about firms making remote work permanent? I'm all for it, honestly. I had a feeling you'd say that. I'm a bit more on the fence, to be honest.

Really? What's holding you back?

Well, I worry we lose something when we're never in the same room. The spontaneous conversations, you know?

That's a fair concern, I'll admit. But surely the flexibility outweighs that?

For some people, absolutely. I just don't think it's one-size-fits-all.

No, you've got a point there. It depends hugely on the person and the job.

Exactly. Where I do agree with you is on the commuting. Two hours a day is madness.

Right? That's time you never get back. So we're not entirely at odds, then.

Not at all. I'd say it's more about finding the right balance than going all in either way.

Couldn't have put it better myself. Maybe the future is hybrid, then.

That's where I'd land, yeah. Best of both worlds, in theory.

In theory. Companies have a habit of getting these things wrong.

Now that, I won't argue with.

Anyway, we should get going before this turns into a full debate.

Too late for that, I think. But fair enough.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
I'm all for it	I strongly support it
on the fence	undecided about something
what's holding you back?	what makes you hesitant?
to outweigh	to be more important than something else
one-size-fits-all	a single solution meant to suit everyone
at odds	in disagreement or conflict
to go all in	to commit fully to one option
where I'd land	the conclusion I'd reach
best of both worlds	the advantages of two different options at once
I won't argue with that	I completely agree

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'm a bit more on the fence, to be honest." — signalling you're undecided.
- "That's a fair concern, I'll admit." — conceding before pushing back.
- "You've got a point there." — acknowledging a good argument.
- "Where I do agree with you is..." — isolating common ground.
- "So we're not entirely at odds, then." — noting reduced disagreement.
- "Now that, I won't argue with." — strong, casual agreement.
- "Couldn't have put it better myself." — enthusiastic agreement with someone's wording.

LANGUAGE TIP

When discussing the news, avoid absolute statements like "That's completely wrong." Native speakers soften disagreement with hedges: "I'm not so sure," "I take your point, but," or "I'd push back on that a little." This keeps the conversation friendly even when opinions clash.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: Discuss a recent news story with a partner. One of you agrees with it, the other is on the fence. Find at least one point of common ground.

1. What current topic do you have strong feelings about?
2. What phrase do you use when you partly agree and partly disagree?
3. How can you disagree without sounding rude or aggressive?
4. Why might "hybrid" or "balanced" answers be more realistic than extremes?

45

Telling a Story About Something That Happened

ADVANCED

Scenario: Carlos tells his friend Nina about a chaotic experience he had at the airport last week.

You look exhausted. How was the trip?

Oh, where do I even begin? The flight back was an absolute disaster.

Uh-oh. What happened?

So, picture this: I get to the airport with loads of time, feeling smug, right?

Famous last words.

Exactly. Long story short, the check-in system had crashed. The queue was out the door.

Oh no. So what did you do?

Well, here's the thing – by the time I got to the front, they'd closed the gate.

You're kidding. They just closed it?

Right in front of me. And get this – the next flight wasn't until the following morning.

No way. Please tell me they put you up in a hotel.

That's the best part. They handed me a voucher for a place that turned out to be fully booked.

Oh, you're joking. That's a nightmare.

Honestly, at that point I just had to laugh. Otherwise I'd have cried.

So how on earth did it end?

A kind stranger overheard me and offered her spare room. Total lifesaver.

That's incredible. What a story. You couldn't make it up.

Tell me about it. I'm never flying with that airline again.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE

MEANING

where do I even begin?	a dramatic opening for a big story
picture this	imagine this scene (sets up a story)
feeling smug	feeling pleased with yourself, often too soon
famous last words	a comment likely to be proven wrong
long story short	to summarise quickly
here's the thing	introduces an important or surprising detail
get this	listen to this surprising part
a lifesaver	someone or something that helps in a crisis
you couldn't make it up	it's so unbelievable it must be true
tell me about it	I completely agree / I know exactly how you feel

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Where do I even begin?" — a hook to open a dramatic story.
- "So, picture this..." — pulling the listener into the scene.
- "Long story short..." — skipping ahead to the key part.
- "And get this —" — building suspense before a twist.
- "Here's the thing..." — flagging the crucial detail.
- "You couldn't make it up." — emphasising how unbelievable it was.
- "At that point I just had to laugh." — describing your emotional reaction.

LANGUAGE TIP

Good storytellers use the "historic present" — telling a past story in the present tense ("So I get to the airport...") to make it feel vivid and immediate. Mix in suspense markers like "get this" and "here's the thing" to keep your listener hooked.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: Tell a partner about a time something went wrong while travelling or running errands. Use at least three storytelling phrases and one twist ("get this...").

1. What is the most chaotic travel experience you have had?
2. Which phrase would you use to build suspense in a story?
3. How can switching to the present tense make a story more exciting?
4. What is a good way to react when someone tells you a dramatic story?

Scenario: Coworkers Lena and Sam are planning a team-building day and tossing around ideas.

Right, we need ideas for the team day. Throw something at me.

How about an escape room? Everyone seems to love those.

Ooh, that could work. Although, some of the team aren't massively into puzzles.

Fair point. What if we did something more relaxed, like a cooking class?

Now you're talking. That way no one's competing, and we all eat at the end.

Exactly. Win-win. Have you thought about the budget, though?

Good shout. It might be a stretch for the whole team. Could we scale it down?

We could. Or, here's a thought — we do it at someone's place to save on venue costs.

I'm not sure that's quite the vibe, to be honest. People like getting out of the usual setting.

That's true. Okay, why don't we get a couple of quotes first and then decide?

Sounds like a plan. I'll look into cooking classes; you check the escape rooms as a backup.

Deal. Shall we run it by the team before we commit to anything?

Definitely. Last thing we want is to plan it and have no one show up.

Been there. Let's send out a quick poll this afternoon.

Perfect. I knew you'd come through with the ideas.

That's what I'm here for.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
throw something at me	give me your ideas
now you're talking	now you've said something I really like
win-win	a situation good for everyone
good shout	good idea / good point (informal)
a stretch	difficult to afford or achieve
here's a thought	introduces a new suggestion
not quite the vibe	not the right feeling or atmosphere
run it by (someone)	get someone's opinion before deciding
sounds like a plan	I agree, let's do that
come through	to deliver what was needed

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "How about...?" / "What if we...?" — common ways to make a suggestion.
- "Now you're talking." — showing enthusiasm for an idea.
- "Here's a thought —" — gently introducing an alternative.
- "I'm not sure that's quite the vibe." — softly rejecting an idea.
- "Why don't we... and then decide?" — proposing a next step.
- "Sounds like a plan." — agreeing to a proposal.
- "Shall we run it by the team?" — suggesting you check with others.

LANGUAGE TIP

When you reject a suggestion, soften it before offering an alternative: "That could work, although..." or "Fair point, but what if...?" Pairing a small concession with your own idea keeps brainstorming collaborative rather than combative.

YOUR TURN — PRACTICE

Role-play: You and a partner are planning a weekend trip. Take turns suggesting ideas, gently rejecting some, and agreeing on a final plan.

1. What are three different ways to make a suggestion in English?
2. How can you turn down an idea without sounding negative?
3. What phrase shows you really like someone's suggestion?
4. Why is it useful to suggest a next step instead of deciding immediately?

47

Talking About Your Future Plans and Dreams

ADVANCED

Scenario: Old friends Aisha and Marco catch up over dinner and talk about where they see their lives heading.

So, be honest — where do you see yourself in five years?

Big question. Ideally? Running my own little design studio. That's the dream, anyway.

I can absolutely see that. Are you actually working towards it, or is it more of a "one day" thing?

A bit of both, honestly. I've started taking on freelance clients on the side to test the waters.

That's a smart way to ease into it. Less risky than quitting overnight.

Exactly. I'd rather build it up gradually than burn out. What about you? Any big plans brewing?

Well, this stays between us, but I'm seriously thinking about moving abroad.

No way! Whereabouts?

Probably Lisbon. I've always wanted to live by the sea, and now feels like the right moment.

Good for you. Life's too short to keep putting these things off, right?

That's exactly how I feel. If not now, when?

Couldn't agree more. So what's the first step?

Sorting out the visa, mainly. Fingers crossed it all falls into place.

It will. You've always landed on your feet.

Here's hoping. We should make a pact to check in this time next year.

Deal. I want to hear all about that sea view.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
where do you see yourself...?	a question about future goals
that's the dream	that's my ideal goal
a "one day" thing	a vague hope without a real plan
test the waters	to try something cautiously before committing
ease into it	to start something gradually
brewing	(of plans) developing in the background
this stays between us	please keep this confidential
if not now, when?	an argument for acting without delay
fall into place	(of plans) to work out successfully
land on your feet	to end up in a good situation after difficulty

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Where do you see yourself in five years?" — asking about long-term goals.
- "That's the dream, anyway." — describing an aspiration realistically.
- "I've started... to test the waters." — describing a cautious first step.
- "This stays between us, but..." — sharing something in confidence.
- "If not now, when?" — motivating yourself or others to act.
- "Fingers crossed it all falls into place." — hoping plans work out.
- "We should make a pact to check in." — agreeing to follow up later.

LANGUAGE TIP

When talking about uncertain plans, English speakers hedge with "ideally," "probably," "hopefully," and "I'm thinking about." Saving definite phrases like "I will" for things you're sure of makes you sound more natural and avoids over-promising.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: Tell a partner about a big dream and one realistic first step you could take towards it. Then ask about their plans and react encouragingly.

1. Where do you see yourself in five years?
2. What is one small step you could take to "test the waters" on a goal?
3. How do you respond encouragingly when a friend shares a dream?
4. Why might hedging words like "ideally" sound more natural than "I will"?

48

Negotiating and Reaching a Compromise

ADVANCED

Scenario: Flatmates Ben and Sophie disagree over how to split chores and shared costs, and try to work it out fairly.

Can we talk about the flat stuff? I feel like the chores have got a bit lopsided lately.

Yeah, let's sort it out. I'll be honest, I didn't realise it was bothering you.

It's not a huge deal, but I've been doing most of the kitchen, and it adds up.

That's fair. How about I take over the kitchen entirely and you handle the bathroom?

Hmm, the bathroom's quicker, though. Doesn't quite feel even.

Good point. What if I do kitchen and bins, and you do bathroom and hoovering?

Now we're getting somewhere. I could live with that.

Great. And on the bills — I know I use more electricity with the gaming setup.

I appreciate you saying that. I wasn't going to bring it up, but it had crossed my mind.

Let's meet in the middle. I'll cover sixty percent of the electric, you do the same on water since you take longer showers.

Ha, guilty. Honestly, that seems more than reasonable.

Perfect. Shall we write it down so there's no confusion later?

Good idea. Nothing worse than arguing over who agreed to what.

Agreed. See, that was painless. I was bracing myself for a row.

Me too, actually. We should do these check-ins more often.

Deal. Clears the air before things build up.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
lopsided	unbalanced or unfair
it adds up	small things accumulate into something significant
doesn't feel even	doesn't seem fairly balanced
now we're getting somewhere	we're making real progress

I could live with that	that's acceptable to me
meet in the middle	to compromise so both sides give a little
it had crossed my mind	I had thought about it too
more than reasonable	very fair, even generous
brace yourself for	to prepare for something difficult
clear the air	to resolve tension by talking openly

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "Can we talk about...? I feel like..." — opening a difficult conversation calmly.
- "That's fair, but it doesn't quite feel even." — pushing back politely.
- "What if I do... and you do...?" — proposing a specific trade.
- "Now we're getting somewhere." — recognising progress.
- "Let's meet in the middle." — proposing a compromise.
- "That seems more than reasonable." — accepting a fair offer.
- "Shall we write it down so there's no confusion?" — confirming the agreement.

LANGUAGE TIP

In a negotiation, use "I feel" and "I" statements instead of "you always" accusations. "I've been doing most of the kitchen" is far easier to respond to than "You never clean." Focusing on the situation, not the person, keeps things from turning into an argument.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: You and a partner share something (a flat, a project, a car). One feels the split is unfair. Negotiate calmly until you both reach a compromise you can live with.

1. What is a fair way to start a conversation about an imbalance?
2. Which phrase would you use to propose meeting in the middle?
3. How do "I" statements help keep a negotiation friendly?
4. Why is it useful to write down what you both agreed?

49

Comforting a Friend Who Is Upset

ADVANCED

Scenario: Grace notices her friend Olu is down after losing out on a job he really wanted, and tries to support him.

Hey, you've been quiet all evening. Is everything okay?
 Not really, to be honest. I found out I didn't get the job today.
 Oh, Olu. I'm so sorry. I know how much that meant to you.
 Yeah. I really thought I had it this time, you know?

Of course you did — and honestly, you had every reason to. Do you want to talk about it, or would you rather take your mind off it?

Talking helps, I think. It just stings, after all that prep.

It makes complete sense that you're gutted. Anyone would be. Don't be hard on yourself.

I keep wondering what I did wrong.

Hey, that's not necessarily on you. Sometimes it just comes down to fit, and that's out of your hands.

I suppose. It's hard not to take it personally, though.

Totally understandable. For what it's worth, the way you handle this says a lot about you.

Thanks. That actually means a lot.

I mean it. And I'm here, whatever you need — even if that's just sitting in silence eating crisps.

Ha. You know, that doesn't sound bad at all.

Then that's the plan. Take all the time you need. The right thing will come along.

I hope so. Thanks for noticing. Really.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
take your mind off it	to distract yourself from something upsetting
it stings	it hurts emotionally
gutted	deeply disappointed (informal, British)
be hard on yourself	to criticise or blame yourself too much
that's not on you	it isn't your fault
out of your hands	beyond your control
take it personally	to feel hurt as if it were about you specifically
for what it's worth	a humble way to offer an opinion or comfort
that means a lot	I really appreciate that
come along	to appear or happen, often unexpectedly

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "I'm so sorry. I know how much that meant to you." — validating their feelings.
- "Do you want to talk about it, or take your mind off it?" — offering choice, not pressure.
- "It makes complete sense that you're upset." — normalising their reaction.
- "Don't be too hard on yourself." — easing self-blame.
- "That's out of your hands." — reframing what they can't control.
- "For what it's worth..." — gently offering comfort or perspective.
- "I'm here, whatever you need." — reassuring them of your support.

LANGUAGE TIP

When comforting someone, resist the urge to immediately "fix" the problem or say "at least...". First, validate the feeling: "That makes sense," "Anyone would feel that way." People usually want to feel heard before they want advice. Ask "Do you want to vent or do you want suggestions?"

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: A partner shares bad news (a setback at work or school). Comfort them – validate first, offer support, and avoid jumping straight to advice.

1. What is a good first thing to say when a friend is upset?
2. Why is it better to validate feelings before giving advice?
3. What phrase can you use to offer support without pressure?
4. How would you gently remind someone that something wasn't their fault?

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Saying Goodbye Before Moving Away

ADVANCED

Scenario: At a small farewell gathering, Hana says goodbye to her close friend Liam before she moves to another country.

So this is really it, huh? I can't believe you're actually leaving tomorrow.

I know. It still hasn't quite sunk in, to be honest.

It's going to be so strange not having you around the corner.

Tell me about it. You've been there through everything. I don't know how to thank you.

You don't have to. Just promise me you won't be a stranger.

Never. We'll video-call all the time, I mean it. Distance is just a number these days.

It had better be. And the second you're settled, I'm booking a flight out to visit.

You'd better. I'm holding you to that.

Honestly, I'm so happy for you, even if I'm a bit of a mess about it.

Don't start, or you'll set me off. I'm trying to keep it together here.

Sorry, sorry. Let's not make this a sad thing. This is a new chapter for you.

Exactly. And it's not goodbye, really. It's more of a "see you soon."

See you soon. I like that a lot better.

Come here. Group hug before I lose it completely.

Take care of yourself out there, okay? Go and smash it.

I will. Look after yourself too. I'll message the moment I land.

KEY VOCABULARY & EXPRESSIONS

WORD / PHRASE	MEANING
this is really it	this is the final moment

sink in	to be fully understood or realised emotionally
around the corner	very nearby
don't be a stranger	stay in touch / keep contacting me
I'm holding you to that	I expect you to keep that promise
a bit of a mess	emotionally overwhelmed
set someone off	to make someone start crying or reacting
keep it together	to stay calm and not break down
a new chapter	a fresh, important stage of life
go and smash it	go and succeed (encouraging, informal)

USEFUL PHRASES YOU CAN REUSE

- "It still hasn't quite sunk in." – describing that a big change feels unreal.
- "Promise me you won't be a stranger." – asking someone to keep in touch.
- "I'm holding you to that." – playfully insisting on a promise.
- "Let's not make this a sad thing." – keeping a farewell upbeat.
- "It's not goodbye, it's see you soon." – softening a difficult parting.
- "Take care of yourself out there." – a warm closing wish.
- "Go and smash it." – encouraging someone heading into something new.

LANGUAGE TIP

English speakers often soften emotional goodbyes with humour and understatement to avoid getting overwhelmed ("Don't start, or you'll set me off"). Reframing "goodbye" as "see you soon" or "this is a new chapter" makes the moment feel hopeful rather than final.

YOUR TURN – PRACTICE

Role-play: Say goodbye to a partner who is moving away. Express what they mean to you, make a plan to stay in touch, and end on a hopeful note.

1. What would you say to someone close to you who is moving away?
2. How can you ask someone to stay in touch in a warm, natural way?
3. Why do people use humour during emotional goodbyes?
4. How would you reframe "goodbye" to make a parting feel more hopeful?

REFERENCE

Appendices

Phrase banks, phrasal verbs, idioms, and model answers to keep returning to.

Appendix A — 100 Everyday Phrases to Memorize

These are the phrases that native speakers reach for again and again. Learn them by heart, say them out loud, and they will come to you automatically the moment you need them.

Greetings & Goodbyes

- Hi, how's it going?
- How have you been?
- Good to see you again.
- What's new with you?
- Long time no see!
- Nice to meet you.
- How's your day going?
- Take care!
- See you around.
- Have a good one.
- Catch you later.
- Talk to you soon.
- Say hi to everyone for me.
- It was great seeing you.

Starting a Conversation

- Can I ask you something?
- Do you have a minute?
- I've been meaning to ask you...
- By the way...
- Speaking of that...
- Guess what?
- You'll never believe what happened.
- Mind if I join you?
- Is this seat taken?
- So, what do you do?
- How do you two know each other?
- I couldn't help overhearing...

Agreeing & Disagreeing

- I couldn't agree more.
- That's exactly what I think.
- You've got a point there.
- Fair enough.
- That makes sense.
- Absolutely.
- I see what you mean, but...
- I'm not so sure about that.
- I beg to differ.
- I'm afraid I disagree.
- That's not quite how I see it.
- To be honest, I think otherwise.

Asking for Help

- Could you give me a hand?
- Would you mind helping me out?
- Can you do me a favor?
- I'm a bit stuck—any ideas?
- How does this work?
- Could you show me how?
- Sorry, could you repeat that?
- What does that mean?
- Can you speak a little slower, please?
- I'm not sure I follow.
- Where can I find...?
- Could you point me in the right direction?

Being Polite

- Thanks so much, I really appreciate it.
- That's very kind of you.
- No worries at all.
- Don't mention it.
- After you.
- Excuse me, sorry to bother you.
- I'm so sorry, that was my fault.
- No problem whatsoever.
- It's my pleasure.
- Thank you for your patience.

- Sorry to keep you waiting.
- Please, go ahead.

Shopping & Money

- How much is this?
- Do you have this in another size?
- I'm just looking, thanks.
- Can I try this on?
- Is this on sale?
- Do you take card?
- Can I pay in cash?

Reacting to News

- No way!
- You're kidding!
- That's amazing!
- I'm so happy for you.
- Congratulations!
- That's such great news.
- Oh no, I'm so sorry to hear that.

Ending a Conversation

- Anyway, I should get going.
- It was lovely chatting with you.
- Let's catch up soon.
- I'd better let you go.
- We'll have to do this again.
- I won't keep you any longer.

- I owe you one.

- Could I get a receipt, please?
- Is there a discount?
- I'd like to return this.
- Keep the change.
- That's a bit out of my budget.
- Where are the fitting rooms?

- That's a shame.
- Are you serious?
- Wow, I had no idea.
- How exciting!
- That must have been tough.
- Good for you!

- Give me a call sometime.
- Keep in touch.
- Send me a message later.
- Thanks for stopping by.
- Right, I'll let you get back to it.
- Great talking to you!

Appendix B — Essential Phrasal Verbs for Conversation

Phrasal verbs are the heartbeat of natural English. Below are forty of the most common ones you'll hear in everyday conversation, each with a plain meaning and an example you can copy straight into your own speech.

PHRASAL VERB	MEANING	EXAMPLE
pick up	to collect someone or something	I'll pick you up at eight.
get along (with)	to have a good relationship	I really get along with my new neighbors.
run into	to meet by chance	I ran into an old friend at the station.
look forward to	to feel excited about something coming	I'm looking forward to the weekend.
figure out	to understand or solve	I can't figure out how this app works.
find out	to learn or discover	I just found out she's moving abroad.
give up	to stop trying	Don't give up—you're almost there.
turn up	to arrive or appear	He turned up an hour late.
show up	to arrive, especially unexpectedly	Hardly anyone showed up to the meeting.
come up with	to think of an idea	She came up with a brilliant plan.
put off	to postpone	Let's put off the trip until next month.
call off	to cancel	They called off the game because of rain.
look after	to take care of	Can you look after my dog this weekend?
look into	to investigate	I'll look into the problem tomorrow.
bring up	to mention a topic	Don't bring up politics at dinner.
get over	to recover from	It took me weeks to get over the flu.
hang out	to spend time relaxing	We hung out at the park all afternoon.
hang on	to wait	Hang on, I'll be right back.
check out	to look at or examine	You should check out that new café.
work out	to exercise; to be resolved	I work out three times a week.
turn down	to refuse; to lower	She turned down the job offer.
turn on / off	to start or stop a device	Could you turn off the lights?
set up	to arrange or prepare	I'll set up a meeting for Friday.
break down	to stop working	My car broke down on the highway.
break up	to end a relationship	They broke up after five years.
catch up	to share recent news	Let's grab coffee and catch up.

end up	to finally be or do something	We ended up staying home all day.
go on	to continue; to happen	What's going on over there?
get up	to leave your bed	I get up at six every morning.
wake up	to stop sleeping	I woke up before my alarm today.
grow up	to become an adult	I grew up in a small town.
take off	to leave; (of a plane) to depart	I'd better take off before traffic.
put up with	to tolerate	I can't put up with the noise anymore.
count on	to rely on	You can count on me.
drop by	to visit briefly	Feel free to drop by anytime.
fill in (for)	to substitute for someone	Can you fill in for me on Monday?
get back to	to reply later	I'll get back to you by email.
look up	to search for information	Let me look up the address.
sort out	to organize or fix	We need to sort out the schedule.
cheer up	to become happier	Cheer up—things will get better.
calm down	to become less upset	Take a breath and calm down.

Appendix C – Common Idioms in Everyday Speech

Idioms add color and personality to your English. You don't need to use them constantly, but recognizing them—and dropping one in at the right moment—makes you sound truly fluent. Here are thirty you'll hear all the time.

IDIOM	MEANING	EXAMPLE
a piece of cake	very easy	The test was a piece of cake.
break the ice	to ease initial tension	He told a joke to break the ice.
under the weather	feeling slightly ill	I'm a bit under the weather today.
hit the road	to leave or set off	It's getting late—let's hit the road.
once in a blue moon	very rarely	We eat out once in a blue moon.
on the same page	in agreement	Let's make sure we're on the same page.
cost an arm and a leg	to be very expensive	That jacket cost an arm and a leg.
call it a day	to stop working for now	I'm tired—let's call it a day.
get the hang of it	to learn how to do something	Don't worry, you'll get the hang of it.
hit the nail on the head	to be exactly right	You hit the nail on the head.
a blessing in disguise	a hidden benefit	Losing that job was a blessing in disguise.
the last straw	the final problem one can take	That was the last straw for me.
cut to the chase	to get to the point	Let me cut to the chase.
spill the beans	to reveal a secret	Come on, spill the beans!
in the same boat	in the same difficult situation	We're all in the same boat here.
keep an eye on	to watch carefully	Can you keep an eye on my bag?
no big deal	not important	It's no big deal, honestly.
on second thought	after reconsidering	On second thought, let's stay in.
make up your mind	to decide	Hurry up and make up your mind.
around the corner	very near (in time or place)	The holidays are just around the corner.
sleep on it	to take time before deciding	I'll sleep on it and tell you tomorrow.
ring a bell	to sound familiar	That name rings a bell.
out of the blue	unexpectedly	She called me out of the blue.
a long shot	unlikely to succeed	It's a long shot, but worth a try.
cross that bridge when we come to it	to deal with a problem later	We'll cross that bridge when we come to it.
take it easy	to relax	Take it easy this weekend.
my treat	I'll pay	Lunch is my treat today.

touch base

to make brief contact

Let's touch base next week.

the bottom line

the most important point

The bottom line is, we need more time.

pull someone's leg

to joke with someone

Relax, I'm just pulling your leg.

Appendix D — Sample Answers & Discussion Notes

Conversation practice rarely has a single “right” answer. The goal is not to produce a perfect sentence but to respond naturally, keep the exchange going, and sound like yourself. The model responses below show one good way to handle common question types—notice how each one stays simple, adds a small detail, and often invites the other person to reply. Treat them as patterns to adapt, not scripts to memorize.

How to Give an Opinion

Start with a clear opinion phrase, give one reason, then soften or open it up. *Question: “What do you think about working from home?”* — “Personally, I think it’s great because I save so much time on commuting. That said, I do miss seeing my coworkers. What about you?”

How to Tell a Short Story

Set the scene, say what happened, then end with how you felt. *Question: “Has anything funny happened to you lately?”* — “Actually, yes! The other day I got on the wrong bus and ended up on the other side of town. I had no idea until the driver said it was the last stop. I couldn’t stop laughing.”

How to Politely Disagree

Acknowledge the other view first, then offer yours gently. *Question: “Don’t you think social media is mostly harmful?”* — “I see where you’re coming from, and it definitely has downsides. But I’d say it depends how you use it—for me it’s a great way to stay in touch with family abroad.”

How to Make a Suggestion

Offer the idea lightly so the other person can say no comfortably. *Question: “I’m so bored this weekend.”* — “Why don’t we check out that new exhibition downtown? Or if you’d rather relax, we could just grab a coffee and catch up.”

How to Answer “Tell Me About Yourself”

Keep it short: present, a little background, then a personal touch. *Question: “So, tell me a bit about yourself.”* — “Sure! I work in marketing, and I’ve been in this city for about three years now. In my free time I’m really into hiking and trying new restaurants. How about you?”

How to Handle a Question You Didn’t Catch

Don’t freeze—ask naturally and the conversation keeps flowing. *Question: (something you missed)* — “Sorry, I didn’t quite catch that—could you say it again?” or “Do you mean... ?” Repeating part of what you understood shows you’re listening.

How to Express You’re Not Sure

It’s perfectly fine not to have an answer ready. *Question: “Where do you see yourself in five years?”* — “Honestly, I’m not entirely sure yet. I’d love to grow in my current field, but I’m also open to wherever life takes me. I try not to plan too far ahead.”

How to Keep a Conversation Going

Answer, then bounce a related question back. *Question: “Did you have a good weekend?”* — “I did, thanks! I finally finished a book I’d been reading for ages. Did you get up to anything fun?” A follow-up question is the easiest way to avoid awkward silences.

A Final Word — Keep Going

If you've made it this far, you already have everything you need to speak English with confidence. Fluency was never about being perfect—it's about being willing to open your mouth, make a few mistakes, and keep talking anyway. Every native speaker you admire once stumbled over words too. The difference is simply that they kept going.

So make English a small part of every single day. Say one of these phrases out loud while you make your coffee. Have a tiny conversation with yourself in the mirror. Order in English, think in English, dream in English. Five honest minutes a day will take you further than five hours once a month. Confidence is not something you wait to feel—it's something you build, one real conversation at a time.

You've done the hard part by starting. Now go out into the world and use these words. Speak up, smile, and trust yourself. We're cheering you on—you've got this.