



Speaking activity

Keeping the conversation going

Ask students to focus on developing conversations so that they develop relationships between the speakers, and maximise the chances for each speaker to contribute in full. Point out that the conversation is between two friends, so it needs to be informal.

This worksheet will help you with:

- ▶ conversation in all situations
- ▶ GESE Grade 7 (SELT B2) – Interactive and Conversation phases

Activity 1

Naomi is asking Jack about the summer job he has just started. For each gap choose the phrase that fits best (A–C), and put a line through the two that are either wrong or don't fit well.

Naomi: Hi, Jack. How are you doing?

Jack: I started my new summer job yesterday.

Naomi: (1) C...

Jack: Well, I'm helping out in a builder's merchants.

Naomi: (2) B...

Jack: It's a firm that supplies stuff like bricks, cement and wood. Most of their customers are construction companies, so they might come in and buy supplies when they're building a house or a garage, for instance. The general public also go in and buy materials. (3) A...

Naomi: Sure. So what are you doing?

Jack: So far I've been in the office, getting to know the systems for taking orders, selling over the counter, ordering new supplies, and so on.

Naomi: (4) B...

Jack: Next week they're going to put me in the yard, and I'll have to move stuff around – not the heavy materials, luckily, as they're transported by – (5) B... – fork-lift trucks, and I haven't been trained to operate those.

Naomi: And are you enjoying it?

Jack: Oh, at the moment there's so much to learn, my head's spinning. I'm sure I'll enjoy it when I get more familiar with the place. (6) C... What are you doing for the summer?

1.
 - A ~~I hope you don't mind me asking, but what is it?~~
 - B ~~Do you happen to know what it is?~~
 - C Tell me about it.
2.
 - A ~~What?~~
 - B What's that, exactly?
 - C ~~I'm starting work in a bakery next week.~~
3.
 - A Do you get the idea?
 - B ~~Do you understand?~~
 - C ~~Am I making myself clear?~~
4.
 - A ~~Well.~~
 - B Uhuh.
 - C ~~Really.~~
5.
 - A ~~[thinks in silence]~~
 - B oh, what're they called? Fork something – oh yes
 - C ~~do you know what I mean?~~
6.
 - A ~~That's all I can say.~~
 - B ~~Well, I'll have to be going.~~
 - C But enough of me.

Activity 2

Read this conversation. It contains a number of phrases and sentences which are unsuitable. In pairs, write an improved version of the conversation.

Olivia: Oh look, Jason! There's an eagle.

Jason: Don't be ridiculous. It's much too small. Oh, it's started to rain. By the way, I'm getting wet. Pass me my waterproof from the backpack.

Olivia: Here you are.

Jason: OK.

Olivia: Is that a new waterproof?

Jason: Of course. Incidentally, it's my sister's wedding at the end of next month. Do you want to come to the reception with me?

Olivia: Why not?

Comments and possible improvements:

‘Don’t be ridiculous.’ Impolite. Possible improvement: ‘I don’t think it can be.’

‘It’s much too small.’ This would be more polite if it were less definite, eg ‘Eagles are generally much larger, I think.’

‘By the way’. Wrong meaning – ‘By the way’ introduces a new topic, or a new aspect of the topic. Best omitted.

‘Pass me my waterproof from the backpack.’ Impolite. It’s an order, and in most social situations should be phrased as a request, eg ‘Would you mind passing me my waterproof from the backpack, please?’ Note, though, that an order can imply closeness, particularly if it’s followed by a tag question, eg ‘Pass me my waterproof from the backpack, will you?’

‘OK.’ Wrong meaning – ‘OK’ isn’t normally used to express thanks. ‘Thank you’ or ‘Thanks’ would be better.

‘Of course’. Inappropriate. ‘Of course’ (meaning ‘yes’) normally implies that the answer is obvious, as in ‘Could you give me a hand, please?’ ‘Of course.’

It’s polite, but in the conversation about the waterproof it implies that Olivia ought to know it’s new, so she’s asked a stupid question.

‘Incidentally’. This is used correctly here, as it introduces a new topic.

‘Do you want to come’: a rather unenthusiastic invitation, that’s likely to make Olivia feel Jason doesn’t really want her to go. ‘Would you like to come’ would be better.

‘Why not?’ to mean ‘Yes’: in English, although not in all languages, ‘Why not?’ usually suggests lack of enthusiasm. Better: ‘Thanks very much, I’d love to’ or ‘That’s very kind of you, but I don’t think I’ll be able to.’

Top-tip activity

Complete each space with one word to show what a strong candidate would do.

- ▶ takes an **active** part in conversation
- ▶ makes sure they fully **understand** what they are required to do
- ▶ asks for further **information** before making suggestions
- ▶ considers how the other person **feels**
- ▶ shows they are **interested** in what the other person is saying
- ▶ says if they are trying to think of a particular **word**