

Worksheets - Socialising (2): Keeping conversations going
Conversation skills quotes (1)

Read these quotes carefully to make sure you understand all the words. Ask your teacher about any words you don't understand. Can you guess the missing word in each quote?

1. "Many a man would rather you heard his _____ than granted his request."
(Phillip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield)
2. "The most basic of all human needs is the need to _____ and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them."
(Ralph Nichols)
3. "Bore, n.: A person who _____ when you wish him to listen."
(Ambrose Bierce)
4. "There is no such thing as a worthless conversation, provided you know what to listen for. And _____ are the breath of life for a conversation."
(James Nathan Miller)
5. "You cannot truly _____ to anyone and do anything else at the same time."
(M. Scott Peck)
6. "There's a big difference between showing _____ and really taking interest."
(Michael P. Nichols, The Lost Art of Listening)
7. "The greatest compliment that was ever paid me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my _____."
(Henry David Thoreau)
8. "There are people who, instead of listening to what is being said to them, are already listening to what they are going to _____ themselves."
(Albert Guinon)

Source of most quotes: <http://www.leadershipnow.com/listeningquotes.html>

Now read the quotes aloud to your partner, who has a list of the eight missing words. Your partner will suggest which word goes with which quote. Discuss the task together until you have completed all sixteen quotes.

Here are the missing words from your partner's quotes:

communication	emotions	I	listen	reply	themselves	understand	why?
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Conversation skills quotes (2)

Read these quotes carefully to make sure you understand all the words. Ask your teacher about any words you don't understand. Can you guess the missing word in each quote?

9. "When people talk, listen completely. Most people never _____."
(Ernest Hemingway)
10. "To listen closely and _____ well is the highest perfection we are able to attain in the art of conversation."
(Francois de La Rochefoucauld)
11. "I only wish I could find an institute that teaches people how to listen. Business people need to listen at least as much as they need to talk. Too many people fail to realise that real _____ goes in both directions."
(Lee Iacocca, Former CEO Chrysler Corporation)
12. "Seek first to _____, then to be understood."
(Stephen R. Covey, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People)
13. "I would say that listening to the other person's _____ may be the most important thing I've learned in twenty years of business."
(Heath Herber, Herber Company)
14. "When I left the dining room after sitting next to Mr. Gladstone, I thought he was the cleverest man in England. But after sitting next to Mr. Disraeli, I thought _____ was the cleverest woman in England."
(A woman when asked her impression of the two English statesmen Benjamin Disraeli and William Gladstone after dining with them.)
15. "How can you have charisma? Be more concerned about making others feel good about _____ than you are making them feel good about you."
(Dan Reiland)
16. "_____ " On my television show, I probably use this word more than any other. It's the greatest question ever asked and it always will be. And it is certainly the surest way of keeping a conversation lively and interesting.
(Larry King, How to Talk to Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere)

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Answer	interest	listen	questions	say	story	talks	understand
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Types of questions

Open questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why didn't you come to this conference last year? • Where did you go on holiday this year? 	<p>In theory, these are good for 'opening a conversation up', because there are many possible answers. In practice, questions with why or how are often better at opening up a conversation than questions with where or when, which can often be answered with a single word or phrase.</p>
Closed questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you had a holiday this year? • Do you do any sports? 	<p>In theory, these 'close down the conversation', by allowing a one-word answer: yes or no. In practice, only a very rude person would answer with a single word, so they can actually be very effective for keeping conversations going.</p>
Negative questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hasn't the weather been awful this summer? • Shouldn't you wait for a better offer before you sell your house? • Didn't you use to work in China? 	<p>These questions are useful when you want to express your opinion in a way that shows that you want to involve the other person. As these examples show, they can be used to turn an obvious statement into a discussion, to make an opinion seem less direct and to check a fact that you're not sure of.</p>
Hypothetical questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an ideal world, what would your dream job be? • So what if money were no object? 	<p>These questions typically include the word 'would', or sometimes might or could. It's also possible to start this type of question with 'what if + past tense'. Questions like this aren't great for starting a natural-sounding conversation, but they're very useful for keeping a conversation going when you have run out of other ideas.</p>
Question tags	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your wife's a doctor, isn't she? • It's been a great party, hasn't it. 	<p>These work in the same way as negative questions, by turning a statement into a question. These are often used to check something we are not sure of, as in the first example, which has rising (questioning) intonation, or simply to invite the other person to respond to your opinion, in which case there is falling intonation, as in a sentence.</p>
Statements with questioning intonation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And there's nothing you can do about it? • You work in pharmaceuticals? • Really? 	<p>These are the easiest questions to make, but they can be a very effective way of checking information and encouraging the other person to expand something he/she said earlier. You can change the focus of the question simply by stressing different words.</p>

Making questions

- 1. Add question tags to these statements.**
 - a. You work in marketing.
 - b. The music's a bit too loud.
 - c. The opening speech was very inspiring.
 - d. The journey wasn't too bad.
 - e. There's going to be a prize-giving ceremony at the end.
 - f. You should tell the organisers that you want to go to the meal.
 - g. You haven't been to one of these events before.

- 2. Turn the statements from (1) into negative questions. What changes do you need to make? Which statement doesn't work as a negative question? Why?**

- 3. Which statements from (1) could you say simply with questioning intonation? Which words would you stress?**

- 4. Respond to these statements with a hypothetical question to keep the conversation going.**
 - a. No, we're never going to relocate – at least, not while our children are young.
 - b. I don't really have time for sports these days.
 - c. I've thought about starting my own business, but I don't like the idea of the financial risks involved.
 - d. My hobbies? Er ... work, cooking, cleaning and sleeping.

- 5. Imagine you are talking to a stranger at a conference. Think of three questions you could ask about each the following topics.**
 - a. Work
 -
 -
 -
 - b. Holidays
 -
 -
 -
 - c. Hobbies
 -
 -
 -
 - d. Family
 -
 -
 -
 - e. Home
 -
 -
 -

Conversation patterns

1. **Look at the following conversations. They both follow the same pattern. What is the speaker doing in each sentence 1–7?**

A: So, do you have a family? Children?	1	A: Do you have time for sports?
B: Well, I'm married, but we don't have children – yet.	2	B: No, not really.
It's actually quite nice not to have children: it means we can see a bit of the world before we settle down.	3	I used to like running, back when I was a student, but it's very time- consuming.
What about you?	4	And you? Are you a sportswoman?
A: Yes, we've got two sons.	5	A: Well, I'm not sure if I'm a sportswoman, but I try to keep fit.
They're wonderful, but I know what you mean about seeing the world: it's very difficult with children.	6	I go to the gym a couple of times a week, and I also play tennis when I can.
So – which countries have you visited?	7	But tell me about your days as a runner. Were you good?

2. **Now match these descriptions to the sentences 1–7. You will need to use two descriptions twice.**

- The speaker bounces the question back to the other person.
- The speaker answers the question.
- The speaker picks up on something the other person said, and asks about that.
- Opening question.
- The speaker expands on the answer – one or two sentences.

3. **Now continue one of the conversations, following the same pattern.**

B: ➤

➤

➤

A: ➤

➤

➤

Game: Keeping conversations going

Use the questions you wrote earlier (Making questions, tasks 4 and 5) to have a conversation with a partner. Use the conversation patterns above to help you. Try to keep each conversation going for at least two minutes before you ask the next opening question.

