


WORKBOOK

How to Start a Conversation in English *and Keep It Going*




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• ADVANCE LANGUAGE SKILLS
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Breaking the Ice





Icebreaker topics:

1. **Ask an Opinion** - We all want to feel like our opinions matter, so showing that you care about someone else's opinion by asking for their thoughts about something shows that you are interested in what they have to say.

For example,

- **Formal Example:** "What are your thoughts on the company's recent **acquisition**?"

The act of one company purchasing another company

- **Informal Example:** "What do you think about Taylor Swift's new song? I can't stop listening to it!"





Icebreaker topics:

2. **Ask for Help** - Asking for help can make a person feel valued and useful, so this is a nice way to show that you respect their abilities. Just make sure that whatever the task is, it is convenient and not a burden. You might ask them to show you where you can find some office supplies, but not to give you a 45-minute ride home. See the difference?

For example,

- **Formal Example:** "Could you point me in the direction of the IT department, please?"
- **Informal Example:** "Excuse me, do you know what time the next bus runs?"





Icebreaker topics:

3. Offering Help - When you offer to help someone, it shows that you are approachable, thoughtful, and willing to make their day a little easier. This can naturally make you seem easy to talk to and lead to a conversation.

For example,

- **Formal Example:** "I noticed you're reviewing the quarterly report. Would you like me to double-check any sections for you?"
- **Informal Example:** "Looks like you've got your hands full with those boxes—need a hand?"





Icebreaker topics:

4. **Ask Questions** - People like talking about themselves, so give them the chance to. Asking questions shows genuine curiosity and interest in the other person. Open-ended questions can lead to longer conversations.

For example,

- **Formal Example:** "What's your role here at the company?"
- **Informal Example:** "So, what do you usually do for fun around here?"



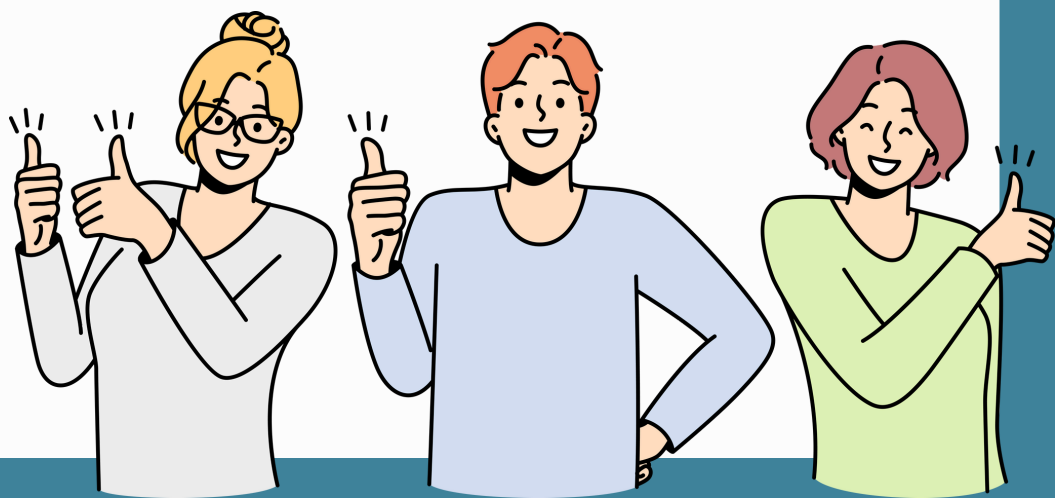


Icebreaker topics:

5. **Give a Compliment** - What better way to get someone to talk to you than to make them feel good by telling them something you like about them?

For example,

- **Formal Example:** "You made some excellent points in the meeting earlier. I'd love to hear more of your perspective on the topic."
- **Informal Example:** "I really love your Beatles shirt! They're one of my favorite bands."





Icebreaker topics:

6. Comment on Something in your Environment
- Pointing out something interesting or shared in the environment can be a natural way to start a conversation. It creates an instant connection by focusing on something you both can relate to or observe.

For example,

- **Formal Example:** “That painting in the lobby caught my eye—it’s gorgeous. Do you know who the artist is?”
- **Informal Example:** “This coffee shop always smells amazing, doesn’t it?”





Icebreaker topics:

7. **Tell a Joke** - This is a fun, lighthearted way to connect with someone else. Just make sure your joke is appropriate for the situation you are in.

For example,

- **Formal/Informal Example:** "You know what can really ruin a Friday? "

"Finding out it's only Thursday!"



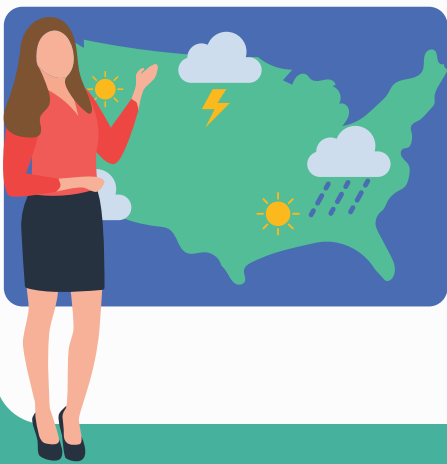


Icebreaker topics:

8. **Talk about the Weather** - Even though this is a simple, basic icebreaker, it works because it's universally relatable and doesn't require much effort. It's a neutral and easy topic to start with, especially when there's not much else to go on.

For example,

- **Formal Example:** "It's such a beautiful day outside today! I hope the weather holds up and we can enjoy it this weekend. Do you have any plans?"
- **Informal Example:** "Wow, it's freezing out there! I think I need to start carrying around a blanket!"





Icebreaker topics:

9. Talk about Current Events or Media - Talking about current events or trending topics can be a fun way to get people talking as most people have opinions on these types of trends.

Note: Be aware of your audience and avoid politics, as this can be a touchy subject for people.

For example,

- **Formal Example:** “Did you happen to read the latest article on global markets in The Wall Street Journal? The insights on emerging trends were fascinating.”
- **Informal Example:** “Did you catch the last season of Squid games? It was wild!”





**PRACTICE:
STARTING
CONVERSATIONS**



Challenge

For each scenario, imagine you're interacting with different people:

- A new coworker
- A friend you haven't seen in a while
- A neighbor you rarely speak to

Write one sentence for each type of person and compare how your tone and language change based on the relationship.





Kayla Patino

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