

Comprehensive ESL
**ENGLISH
CONVERSATION
TOOLKIT**

Let's
Speak!

Fun
English!

NIGEL OPENSHAW

Comprehensive ESL

ENGLISH CONVERSATION TOOLKIT

*Master the Skills for Confident and
Engaging Conversations*

Nigel Openshaw

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Dedication

To the incredible and inspiring students I had in South Korea—your dedication, hard work, and support helped shape me into the teacher I am today.

You became more than just students; you felt like family, and words alone cannot capture my gratitude.

I am deeply thankful for the unforgettable memories and lessons Korea gave me, and I will always carry them with me.

Introduction

Engaging discussion activities designed to build confidence, fluency, and natural conversation skills for intermediate to advanced ESL learners!

Great discussions happen when language feels natural—like a conversation between friends rather than a classroom exercise. This book is designed to help students build confidence in expressing their thoughts, developing opinions, and engaging in meaningful discussions on real-world topics.

These lessons adapt to different class structures and timing needs with flexible, reusable activities. Whether you're working with teens or adults, the goal remains the same: to create a space where students can explore ideas, challenge perspectives, and speak with ease.

This isn't about memorizing perfect sentences—it's about using English effortlessly, authentically, and engagingly.

Let's start the conversation.

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If you have found this resource helpful, consider getting the paperback version on Amazon. With the physical copy, you can enjoy a more tangible learning experience and refer to the lessons whenever you need.

I have created these materials with your needs in mind—they are low-prep, practical, and easy to implement. The paperback provides a convenient way to have the book at your fingertips, whether teaching in the classroom or looking for fresh ideas to enhance your learning.

I believe in creating value without pressure, so if the paperback feels like the right fit for you.

It is just another option to support your teaching journey.

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Lesson 1.

Expanding Speaking Vocabulary

This lesson improves speaking skills by using targeted keywords and teaching students to use adjectives to describe a topic.

OBJECTIVES:

Increase vocabulary and learn more about a topic.

Discuss further and elaborate on new subjects.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a subject from the Resources section.

On an A4 sheet or whiteboard, draw six oval shapes horizontally and fill in one word in each oval.

If needed, create an activity where students practice using adjectives to describe the topic.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce the primary theme of the lesson selected in the To Do section.

Explain any adjective activities that may be relevant.

Encourage students to explain the subject using unfamiliar words.

2. LEARN:

Ask students to explain the topic.

Sketch a copy of the template on the board to show the six keywords.

Review each word with students to assess comprehension.

For lesson expansion, write functional terms or comments on the board's far right side.

Introduce any relevant terms previously provided by students.

3. INSTRUCT:

Divide the class into pairs or teams based on the number of students for discussions.

Distribute the paper created in the To Do section.

Students compile a list of words that they believe are connected to each of the six items.

Ask questions about the words for clarity and encourage the use of adjectives in their responses.

Demonstrate their comprehension by asking them to use the words in spoken sentences.

4. EXERCISE:

Continue discussing but with less teacher focus.

Continue evaluating their word comprehension and encouraging the use of adjectives in their responses.

Expand the subject into new topics if they support conversations.

Supply guidance when needed.

5. ASSESS:

List topics discussed in each group on the board for a class-wide discussion and comparison.

Use hostile questioning for error checking and proofreading.

BONUS - WORD LEAGUE CHALLENGE:

Set up a word league with other classes.

Introduce a brand-new topic for the competition.

Notify each team that the words they have collected will earn them points.

Keep track of how many words each team or class creates and supply awards to those who produce the most.

Proofread for errors as they affect the results.

RESOURCES

ANIMALS - BIRDS:

Partridge, Crow, Chick, Duck, Duckling, Seagull
Sparrow, Swallow, Gosling, Quail, Puffin, Albatross
Hawk, Heron, Goose, Pelican, Pheasant, Eagle
Peacock, Ostrich, Swan, Turkey, Vulture, Magpie

ANIMALS - FARM LIFE:

Calf, Chicken, Cow, Duck, Goat, Mouse
Hen, Horse, Lamb, Pig, Rooster, Sheep
Ant, Beetle, Butterfly, Cockroach, Bee, Cricket
Dragonfly, Bug, Moth, Ladybug, Mosquito, Spider

ANIMALS - PETS AND SEA CREATURES:

Bird, Cat, Chicken, Dog, Goldfish, Hamster
Horse, Gerbil, Pigeon, Rabbit, Snake, Turtle
Cod, Crab, Octopus, Lobster, Oyster, Salmon
Sardine, Shark, Shrimp, Trout, Tuna, Squid

ANIMALS - WILDLIFE:

Badger, Beaver, Anteater, Hyena, Lion, Monkey
Ostrich, Jaguar, Leopard, Snake, Tiger, Wolf
Alligator, Zebra, Bear, Kangaroo, Camel, Cheetah
Crocodile, Elephant, Giraffe, Gorilla, Panda, Rhinoceros

BODY - FACE AND UPPER:

Tongue, Tooth, Nose, Eye, Face, Lip

Mouth, Brain, Cheek, Chin, Ear, Hair

Throat, Neck, Head, Heart, Shoulder, Lungs

Wrist, Finger, Hand, Arm, Nail, Elbow

BODY - LOWER AND INJURIES:

Chest, Toe, Feet, Ankle, Foot, Hip

Knee, Leg, Muscle, Skin, Stomach, Back

Black Eye, Blister, Broken Bones, Bruise, Burn, Cut

Fracture, Sprain, Scratch, Lump, Burn, Swelling

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Lesson 2.

Conversation Starter Strategies

This lesson will teach us strategies for starting and keeping conversations prepared.

OBJECTIVES:

Initiate a conversation using open-ended questions.

Formulate sentences using simple words and primary question forms (5W+H).

THINGS TO DO:

Pick a subject from the Resources section.

Create a worksheet if students need further understanding of 5W+H.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce conversation starters to the students.

Introduce the selected lesson topic.

If necessary, introduce the 5W+H question exercise.

The lesson aims to foster conversation and connect questions with 5W+H question forms.

2. LEARN:

Write the topic on the board and set aside resource questions. Brainstorm ideas related to the topic.

Draw an oval shape on paper and write words inside.

Brainstorm and ask questions about the topic and discuss why students select certain words. Then, preliminary questions will be introduced to expand the case.

Write four linking words on the left side of the board and create two diagonal lines from each word.

Propose two related words for each diagonal line, resulting in eight words in the second column.

Divide the second column into two more diagonal lines to add two related words to each, resulting in sixteen words in the third column.

3. INSTRUCT:

Students construct eight phrases using three words from the board, one from each level.

Students use vocabulary they know to form proper sentences. Then, they proof and compare their sentences with a partner.

4. EXERCISE:

Each student reads aloud one sentence and adds it to the board. Ask about the sentences presented.

5. ASSESS:

Ask students to explain their word choices for a few phrases on the board.

Use conventional question structures to ask questions about a sentence.

The goal is to form a query from an answer.

BONUS - WORD BRAINSTORM LEAGUE:

Students list as many words as possible under a given heading, such as "fruit," in five to ten minutes.

Students read aloud their words while standing, and other students check off any identical words on their lists. The unchecked words are tallied to decide the winner.

RESOURCES

ANIMALS QUESTIONS:

What is your favourite/favorite animal? Do you prefer dogs or cats? Have you ever seen an animal in the wild? What is the most dangerous animal in your country?

Follow-up question: How do humans affect the lives of animals?

COLOURS/COLORS QUESTIONS:

What is your favourite/favorite colour/color? Do you think colours/colors can influence our emotions? What colour/color do you associate with happiness? What colour/color would you like to paint your room?

Follow-up question: How do diverse cultures interpret colours/colors differently?

COUNTRIES QUESTIONS:

What is your favourite/favorite country? Have you ever visited a foreign country? What do you know about the culture of another country? What is your favourite/favorite food from another country?

Follow-up question: How can we learn about diverse cultures and traditions from other countries?

DAILY ROUTINES QUESTIONS:

What time do you wake up in the morning? What is the first thing you do every day? What is your favourite/favorite part of your daily routine? What is the least favourite/favorite part of your daily routine?

Follow-up question: How can we make our daily routines more productive and enjoyable?

EDUCATION QUESTIONS:

What is your favourite/favorite subject in school? What is the most important thing you have learned in school? Do you like studying? Why or why not? What do you want to be when you grow up?

Follow-up question: How can we make education more engaging and relevant to students?

ENVIRONMENT QUESTIONS:

What is one thing you can do to help the environment? Do you prefer city or countryside living? What is the most beautiful place you have seen in nature? Have you ever seen an animal in the wild?

Follow-up question: How can we balance the needs of humans with the needs of the environment?

FAMILY QUESTIONS:

Do you have siblings, and how many? What is your favourite/favorite family tradition? Who is the most crucial person in your family? What do you like to do with your family?

Follow-up question: How does family shape our identity and sense of belonging?

FOODS QUESTIONS:

What is your favourite/favorite food? Have you ever tried food from a different culture? Do you like spicy food? Why or why not? What is the most unusual food you have tried?

Follow-up question: How does food connect people and cultures?

HISTORY QUESTIONS:

What is your favourite/favorite period in history? What is something interesting you have learned about history? Do you think we can learn from the mistakes of the past? What is your favourite/favorite historical figure?

Follow-up question: How can studying history help us understand the present and shape the future?

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Lesson 3.

Communication With Synonyms

This lesson will encourage open communication while expanding vocabulary using synonyms and antonyms.

Start with simple questioning.

OBJECTIVES:

Enhance the use of common sentences with questioning.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a verb from the Resources section.

Search for images relevant to the topic that can enhance presentations or printouts.

Provide students with mini-whiteboards and markers for lesson activities.

Make twelve small cards with 8 "F" for false and 4 "T" for true for the bonus activity.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce the primary lesson topic chosen in the To Do section.

Explain the concepts of synonyms and antonyms and ensure that the students understand the meaning of each term.

Use questioning to discuss the lesson's primary aim while expanding the use of common verbs.

2. LEARN:

Write the verb on the board and ask students to supply example sentences.

Refer to the sample question and statement from the selected verb if needed.

Encourage students to describe any relevant scenarios in greater detail.

As a group, discuss the topic and expand on the suggestions made by the students.

After introducing the images from the To Do section, create a two-column table on the board, one for "Synonyms" and one for "Antonyms."

Begin by asking for synonyms and antonyms for the chosen primary verb, then list them in the proper column.

Review the new verbs and ask for examples.

3. INSTRUCT:

Based on the chosen verb, divide students into teams or pairs (depending on the class size).

Incorporating synonyms and antonyms, the teams will develop statements and questions.

The number of statements depends on the number of teams and the time allowed.

4. EXERCISE:

The groups will gather for a quiz based on the content they developed.

Hand out whiteboard and markers.

Quiz the class on the new synonyms or antonyms created by each group.

The selected group will read one statement aloud, leaving a blank space for the new verb.

Other students will write their guesses for the word on their mini-whiteboards.

Assign one point for each correct response and tally the points to keep the score.

Clear the boards and start the next word.

5. ASSESS:

Continue the game as other students take part. Then, if time allows, move on to the activity.

BONUS - GUESS WHO IS LYING:

Through this game, students will learn that everyone is not truthful. Three team members will tell the truth, while one will secretly lie.

To begin the game, two teams of four students will each have a card with the letters "T," "T," "T," and "F."

The group will have two minutes to create sentences like "I speak three languages."

When finished, the teams will share their sentences with the opposing team.

The guessing team asks up to five questions to determine the truth. The students will win if they discover the lie.

RESOURCES

ACTION VERBS:

Walk to school every day. "What are some other ways to get to school?"

Play soccer with friends. "Why is teamwork important in sports?"

Write a story for English class. "What makes a good story?"

Dance at the school dance. "What are some different types of dance?"

Sing in the school choir. "What is your favourite/favorite type of music?"

Run a race at the track. "How do you prepare for a race?"

Jump over the hurdle. "What are some other track and field events?"

Swim in the school pool. "Why is it important to know how to swim?"

CHANGE OF STATE VERBS:

Melt an ice cube. "What are some changes of state for water?"

Freeze a glass of water. "What are some changes of state for water?"

Boil a pot of water. "What are some changes of state for water?"

Ripen a banana. "What are some changes of state for fruit?"

Burn a piece of paper. "What are some changes of state for solids?"

Evaporate a puddle of water. "What are some changes of state for water?"

Inflate a balloon. "What are some changes of state for air?"

Rust a piece of metal. "What are some changes of state for metals?"

COMMUNICATION VERBS:

Talk to a friend about a movie. "What is your favourite/favorite movie?"

Listen to the teacher in class. "How can you be a good listener?"

Write a letter to your pen pal. "What are some common phrases used in letter writing?"

Read a book from the library. "What are some benefits of reading?"

Watch a video on YouTube. "How can you tell if a video is dependable?"

Use sign language to communicate. "What are some basic signs in sign language?"

Speak a foreign language. "What are the benefits of learning a foreign language?"

Text a friend to make plans. "What are some etiquette rules for texting?"

CONSUMPTION VERBS:

Eat a healthy breakfast. "What are some benefits of eating a healthy breakfast?"

Drink water throughout the day. "Why is it important to stay hydrated?"

Read a newspaper in the morning. "How can you stay informed about current events?"

Watch a movie on Netflix. "What are some benefits of watching movies?"

Play video games with friends. "What are some benefits of playing video games?"

Listen to music on headphones. "What are some benefits of listening to music?"

Enjoy a picnic in the park. "What are some benefits of spending time in nature?"

Take a bath before bed. "What are some benefits of taking a bath?"

EMOTION VERBS:

Love your family and friends. "What are some ways to show love and affection?"

Hate when you lose a game. "How can you manage disappointment and failure?"

Fear spiders and insects. "What are some common fears?"

Enjoy listening to music. "What are some benefits of listening to music?"

Feel sad when a pet dies. "How can you cope with losing a pet or loved one?"

Feel happy when you achieve a goal. "What are some ways to set and achieve goals?"

Get angry when someone is rude. "How can you manage your emotions in a conflict situation?"

Feel excited about a new adventure. "What are some new experiences you would like to try?"

EXISTENCE VERBS:

Be happy with who you are. "What are some ways to build self-esteem?"

Live in a big city. "What are some differences between city and rural life?"

Exist in the present moment. "What are some mindfulness exercises?"

occurs during a specific time. "What are some important historical events?"

Happen unexpectedly. "What are some examples of unpredictable events?"

Survive in extreme conditions. "What are some skills needed for survival?"

Coexist with other species. "What are some ways to protect the environment?"

Belonging to a group. "What are some benefits of belonging to a community?"

MANIPULATION VERBS:

Cook a meal for your family. "What are some ingredients in your favourite/favorite meal?"

Draw a picture of your pet. "How can art express emotions and ideas?"

Build a model airplane. "What are some benefits of building models?"

Fix a broken toy. "How can you use problem-solving skills to fix something?"

Plant a garden in the backyard. "What are some benefits of gardening?"

Cut paper to make a collage. For example, "What are different types of art?"

Sew a button on a shirt. "What are some basic sewing skills?"

Create a sculpture out of clay. "What are different types of sculpture?"

MENTAL STATE VERBS:

Remember your friend's birthday. "How can you improve your memory?"

Understand a problematic concept. "What are some strategies for understanding difficult concepts?"

Know the answer to a question. "How can you expand your knowledge?"

Believe in yourself. "Why is it important to have self-confidence?"

Doubt the truth of a statement. "How can you verify the truth of a statement?"

Imagine a different world. "What are some elements of a good story?"

Think about the mysteries of the universe. "What are some unanswered questions about the universe?"

Learn a new skill. "What are some benefits of learning new skills?"

PERCEPTION VERBS:

See a rainbow after the rain. "How is a rainbow formed?"

Hear the deep sound of a bell. "What are some other sounds you hear in your environment?"

Smell freshly baked cookies. "What are some other pleasant smells?"

Taste a spicy dish. "What other flavours/flavors can you taste in food?"

Feel the warmth of the sun. "What are some other things you can feel on your skin?"

Sense danger in a situation. "How can you stay safe in a dangerous situation?"

Notice the changes in the seasons. "What are some differences between the four seasons?"

Observe the behaviour/behavior of animals. "What can you learn by observing animals?"

POSSESSION VERBS:

Have a new toy. "What are some benefits of playing with toys?"

Own a pet. "What are some of the responsibilities of owning a pet?"

Possess a valuable item. "What are some ways to protect valuable items?"

Hold a baby in your arms. "What are some benefits of holding a baby?"

Keep a journal of your thoughts. "What are some benefits of journaling?"

Control your emotions. "What are some strategies for emotional regulation?"

Use a tool for a project. "What are some basic tools used in projects?"

Wear a hat in the summer. "What are some benefits of wearing hats?"

Lesson 4.

Follow-Up Conversation Skills

In this lesson, students will learn how to prompt more questioning. The topics are straightforward to increase familiarity and confidence, but keeping the conversation flowing is challenging.

OBJECTIVES:

Understand and use correct question structures.

Know when and how to ask follow-up questions.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a topic from the Resources section.

Write six related keywords to use for comprehension.

Obtain blank dice to write 5W and H (who, what, where, why, when, and how). Alternatively, have packs of six small cards for each group.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Explain to students about follow-up questions and how to use them.

Introduce the primary lesson theme from the To Do section.

Review the 5W and H list (who, what, where, why, when, and how).

Mention the lesson's end aim: for students to expand their vocabulary and apply the correct question structures.

2. LEARN:

Evaluate students' understanding of the six words by asking for examples, such as "Who are you? What did you eat for breakfast today?"

Pose an expanding query on a well-known subject, such as students' daily schedules.

Expand on any responses.

Also, refer to the answer as a question to other students to keep the conversation flowing.

3. INSTRUCT:

With help from the students' first replies, create more questions, such as "What was the most recent movie/film you watched?"

Ask students about the movie/film and which performance they appreciated the most.

Encourage students to speak freely, but keep the text from becoming too random.

4. EXERCISE:

Write the keywords on the board and correct mistakes as students speak.

Have the students be expressive and think out of the box.

Evaluate students' comprehension levels before conducting the activity.

5. ASSESS:

Be prepared to get the conversation back on track if it deviates too far from the first subject.

Ask students again after the warm-up discussion to elicit more responses.

Please create a new list of words on the board to help students expand their vocabulary.

Have students create sentences using the terms to change the pace of the lesson toward the conclusion.

BONUS - ASKING QUESTIONS CHALLENGE:

Roll the dice or shuffle the cards between students and have them create questions based on the word.

Each student finishes their question and hands the dice to someone else, who rolls it for their turn.

Continue passing the dice/cards until all students have had a chance to try or the questions have proven they understand.

RESOURCES

CAUSE AND EFFECT QUESTIONS:

- Why did the car crash into the tree?
- What caused the plant to die?
- Why did the boy get a bad grade?
- Why did the team lose the game?
- What effect did the rain have on the picnic?
- What impact did the fire have on the forest?
- Why did the boy's dog run away?
- What effect did the earthquake have on the city?

CLASSIFICATION QUESTIONS:

- What are the types of animals in the zoo?
- What are the four seasons of the year?
- What are the different kinds of food groups?
- What are the different types of vehicles?
- What are the different types of musical instruments?
- What are the different kinds of sports?
- What are the different types of clothing?
- What are the different kinds of weather conditions?

COMPARISON QUESTIONS:

- How is a cat different from a dog?
- Who is better at playing soccer, boys or girls?
- When is summer different from winter?
- What is the difference between city and rural life?

What is the difference between a bicycle and a car?

How is a movie different from a book?

Why is swimming different from running?

What is the difference between a cake and a pie?

DESCRIPTION QUESTIONS:

What colour/color is the sky?

How does a butterfly move?

Who is your favourite/favorite character?

Where is the nearest store?

When is sunset?

Why is the sea blue?

How tall is a giraffe?

What sound does a dog make?

EXPLANATION QUESTIONS:

Why does the sun rise in the morning?

How does a computer work?

What happens to food in your body?

Who discovered electricity?

Where do clouds come from?

When do leaves fall from the trees?

What causes the seasons to change?

How does a plant grow?

HYPOTHETICAL QUESTIONS:

What would happen if we had no electricity?

Which character from a book would you like to be?

Where would you like to travel in the world?

Where would you live if you could choose?

Why would you want to be a superhero?

When would you like to travel in time?

What would happen if it rained every day?

Who would you invite to a dinner party?

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Lesson 5.

Everyday Casual Conversations

The emphasis of this lesson is to focus on brief, casual statements. Therefore, slang, colloquialisms, and euphemisms are informal words used in this lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

Master the use of casual language in everyday conversations.

Construct simple conversations using informal English.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a colloquialism from the Resources section.

Select six contextual words for comprehension.

Create two or three discussion bonus questions.

Create a deck of cards with 12-24 topics for the bonus activity.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce everyday language and the primary topic chosen in the To Do section.

Ask students to explain the meaning of these words to ensure understanding.

Discuss the lesson's main aim, which is to build discussions using casual language.

2. LEARN:

Ask students for similar terms.

Offer synonyms and antonyms to cut ambiguity.

Have students use the words on the board and dissect the meaning of each for comprehension.

Expand on each term after introducing its primary definition.

3. INSTRUCT:

Pair up students and have each pair add four related words to the topic.

For each word, have the couple create two phrases for brainstorming and select one statement for each term.

Have students write a plausible paragraph and prepare their phrases to flow naturally. Then, arrange the terms logically or merge them into a coherent section.

Have students create questions with specific sentences and combine queries and responses.

Proofread all work for correct grammar and syntax.

4. EXERCISE:

Have student pairs role-play their text for the entire class.

Give a point to the students who recall the text without consulting their notes. Keep a score of points.

5. ASSESS:

Use questions to discuss the presented text with the class to support engagement.

BONUS - CASUAL CARD CONVERSATIONS:

Use the deck of cards to select a topic for discussion in everyday informal language randomly.

Divide the class into teams for added intensity.

RESOURCES

ADVENTURE-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Life is a journey, not a destination." Enjoy the process, not only the result.

"Carpe diem." Seize the day and be in the moment.

"Off the beaten path." Somewhere less well-known.

"The thrill of the chase." Pursue a challenge.

ANIMAL-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Do not count your chickens before they hatch." Please do not plan on something until it is sure to happen.

"Let sleeping dogs lie." Be careful, as something may become worse.

"A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." It is better to have something specific than something uncertain.

"Curiosity killed the cat." Being too curious leads to trouble.

FOOD AND DRINK-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Easy as pie." Something is straightforward to do.

"Cool as a cucumber." To be calm under pressure.

"A piece of cake." Something is straightforward to do.

"A bun in the oven." Someone is pregnant.

FRIENDSHIP-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Birds of a feather flock together." People with similar interests tend to stick together.

"BFF (Best Friends Forever)." They are close and influential friends.

"To have someone's back." Support someone well.

"Frenemies." People who pretend to be friends but dislike each other.

PLAY-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." We should have some fun and be interesting.

"Child's play." Something is straightforward to do.

"Playing hooky." Skip responsibilities.

"Play by ear." We decide based on the situation.

SCHOOL-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Put your thinking cap on." Think hard for ideas.

"A teacher's pet." A student who is friendly with the teacher.

"Cutting class." Skipping school without permission.

"Acing a test." Getting a perfect score on an exam.

SPORTS-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Keep your eye on the ball." Stay focused on the task at hand.

"Play ball!" Start the game or activity.

"Hail Mary pass." A desperate attempt to win or succeed.

"The ball is in your court." Then, it is your turn to act or decide.

TECHNOLOGY-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Plug and play." Easy to install and use.

"Hit the delete button." To remove something.

"Get your ducks in a row." To be well-prepared.

"Back to the drawing board." Start again because the earlier attempt failed.

TIME-RELATED COLLOQUIALISMS:

"Time flies when you are having fun." Enjoyable activities make time seem to pass quickly.

"Better late than never." It is better to do something late than not to do anything at all.

"Time heals all wounds." The passing of time helps to lessen the pain of a situation.

"In the nick of time." To do before time runs out.

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Lesson 6.

Using Adjectives Effectively

This lesson promotes using adjectives correctly while describing a well-known subject.

OBJECTIVES:

Use multiple adjectives while describing something to supply a better explanation.

Describe a subject in relevant situations.

THINGS TO DO:

Choose a topic from the Resources section.

Create a practice worksheet or a short task if students are unfamiliar with adjective order.

A simple adjective order is available in the Resources section. However, specific ordering may vary.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce the primary lesson theme selected in the To Do section.

Explain the correct placement of adjectives before a noun.

Mention the end aim to use adjectives to describe an object further.

2. LEARN:

Write the six definitions from the Resources on the board and discuss them.

Make sure that students understand the meaning of each word.

Ask the students to supply adjectives for each term and place them in quotation marks.

Introduce the adjectives from the To Do section if students have not already done so.

Ask students to create categories, such as size, and brainstorm more terms to fit each type.

Create a table using the provided categories and display three examples on the board.

Discuss the order of adjectives when they come before a noun.

Ask students to construct a phrase with a noun and three adjectives.

Pick an object from the classroom, like a clock.

Describe it using a variety of adjectives while keeping its name a secret.

Challenge the students to identify the object being described by scanning the room.

Ask other students for additional adjectives to keep the activity going.

3. INSTRUCT:

Ask students to follow the example provided and write descriptions for selected items.

Pair or group students and ask them to find an item and provide three adjectives to describe it.

Repeat the process until everyone understands the procedure.

4. EXERCISE:

Encourage students to be creative and describe anything they see, even out the windows, and if it is visible to everyone.

The students will be limited to five guesses; if the class cannot guess the answer, the student will win.

Continue playing until everyone has had a turn or there are no more items.

5. ASSESS:

Ask follow-up questions after repeated sentences to assess student understanding.

Describe the primary topic and categories addressed.

If there is time, explain a few other uncommon objects, such as a door hinge.

BONUS - CLASSROOM WORD KNOCKOUT:

Write a noun on the board and randomly select two or three students.

Give them 20 seconds to construct a sentence quietly while standing before the class.

After a minute, ask the students for their sentences; the first grammatically correct sentence is the winner.

Repeat the process with new students until everyone has had a turn, then play champion of champions with only the winners.

RESOURCES

ADJECTIVES ORDER:

Quantity: To discuss amounts and numbers, explore terms such as "two," "many," and "several."

Opinion: Use descriptive words like "lovely," "amazing," and "delicious" to express your opinion about a topic.

Size: Enhance vocabulary with adjectives such as "tall," "big," and "short" to describe the size of an object or person.

Physical quality: Develop descriptive language by using words like "thin," "fat," and "slim" to talk about physical appearance.

Shape: Describe the form of an object with words like "square," "round," and "triangular."

Age: Use adjectives like "young," "old," and "15-year-old" to discuss a person or object's age.

Colour/Color: Add colour/color to language by using descriptive terms such as "pink," "purple," and "flame red."

Material: Use words like "wooden," "metal," and "plastic" to describe the fabric of an object.

Origin: Learn to discuss the source of something using adjectives like "Japanese," "Swedish," and "American."

Purpose: Discuss the function or intent of an object using words like "cooking," "sewing," and "cleaning."

BANKING - FINANCE TERMS:

Withdraw, Account, Statement, Bankrupt, Borrow, Exchange

Cash, Credit Card, Currency, Debt, Deposit, Rate

Loan, Mortgage, Invest, Pay, Save, Savings

Investment, Cashier, Check, Shares, Customer, Budget

CITY - URBAN SHOPPING:

Street, Avenue, Square, Building, Street Light, Pavement/Sidewalk
Road, Fountain, Park, Bus Stop, Crossing, Bridge
Bargain, Cheap, Cost, Expensive, Instalments/Installments, Price
Purchase, Receipt, Wallet, Discount, Refund, Spend

EVENTS - SPECIAL OCCASIONS:

Fancy Dress, Christening, Family Gathering, Wedding, Get Together, Anniversary
Birthday, Fireworks, Barbecue, Social, Funeral, Dinner
Bonfire, Holiday, Religion, Memorial, Display, Festival
Halloween, New Year, Procession, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Graduation

ENVIRONMENT: NATURE AND ISSUES

Nuclear Energy, Solar Energy, Conservation, Nuclear Waste, Forest Fires, Global Warming
Greenhouse Effect, Nuclear Power, Ozone Layer, Pesticide, Pollution, Waste
Wildlife, Oil Slicks, Exhaust Fumes, Aerosol, Acid Rain, Unleaded Petrol
Rain Forest, Protected Animal, Climate, Animal Welfare, Protesters, Endangered

FOOD-CONTAINER TYPES:

Bottle, Can, Carton, Bag, Bowl, Cone
Dish, Envelope, Folder, Tube, Jar, Jug
Case, Crate, Drawer, Hamper, Tub, Bucket
Basin, Basket, Bin, Box, Cabinet, Backpack

FOOD - COOKING AND EQUIPMENT:

Bake, Boil, Broil, Fry, Grill, Poach

Roast, Scramble, Simmer, Steam, Braise, Stew

Can Opener, Fork, Strainer, Spoon, Spatula, Knife

Rolling Pin, Ladle, Microwave, Mixing Bowl, Paper Towels, Timer

EXPLORE MORE ESL RESOURCES:

The free PDF has only the first few resources. More is available in the main books below:

- [ESL Advanced Discussions](#)
- [ESL Intermediate Discussions](#)

Lesson 7.

Fact vs. Opinion Debating

This lesson introduces debating. Students will discuss a claim and examine solid reasons for and against it.

OBJECTIVES:

Understand the meaning of a statement and find arguments.

Express one's viewpoint and prepare an effective response to a claim.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a topic from the resources provided.

Prepare three arguments for and against the chosen claim for further comprehension.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

First, explain to the students how to construct arguments and present their viewpoints during a debate.

Introduce the selected topic from the To Do section.

Discuss the primary lesson goal for students to evaluate arguments for and against a specific issue.

2. LEARN:

Write the topic on the board and discuss it with the class.

Ensure that all students understand words related to the topic.

Clarify with facts and opinions. Try with examples.

Create a table on the board with columns for "Fact" and "Opinion."

Reminding them what the difference is between them might help.

After gathering comments from the students, discuss each one.

Ask the students to justify their responses to differentiate their opinions from the facts.

3. INSTRUCT:

Divide the class into groups of three to four and create a for and against section.

Write the claim and a table with headings for "Pros" and "Cons" on the board.

Distribute the A4 paper and ask the students to split it into "Pros" and "Cons" columns.

Instead of the original topic, students will write their arguments and counterarguments about the statement on the board.

After some time, they should discuss good responses and drop bad ones.

Monitor the students' progress and offer suggestions when necessary.

4. EXERCISE:

Each group will present their significant points to the class.

Note their arguments on the board.

Once each group has finished, have the class review and debate each argument.

Encourage students to weigh the merits of the facts, opinions, and pros and cons.

Allow both sides to discuss and refute each other's ideas.

The conclusion of the discussion will determine whether the argument stays, moves to the other column, or gets removed.

5. ASSESS:

Ask the students if the arguments are in the correct column.

Request that students make changes and point out inaccuracies to evaluate their comprehension.

Discuss the terms for review.

BONUS - ENGLISH COURT DEBATE:

Students are encouraged to voice their perspectives.

Place various topic cards in a box, such as "Should mobile phones be prohibited in classrooms?"

Select three students to oversee and be the judges.

Divide the remaining students into two teams: advocate for the topic and argue against it.

Select a team spokesperson to lead the discussion.

Have one team make a statement and write it on the board.

The opposing team will respond to the statement, and both sides will continue to supply fresh reasons.

After some time, the judges will decide which team presented the most compelling case.

Remember: suggest that students use respectful language, focus on the arguments rather than the people making them, and listen carefully to each other's points.

RESOURCES

ART AND CULTURE:

- Art is a form of expression.
- Diverse cultures have different art forms.
- People use art to spread important messages.
- Art and culture bring people together.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING:

- Education is essential for personal and societal growth.
- Different people have different learning styles.
- Learning happens outside of traditional classroom settings.
- Education helps us better understand the world.

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA:

- Entertainment and media influence our opinions and beliefs.
- Different people enjoy diverse types of entertainment.
- People use the media to spread positive messages.
- We should be critical of the media we consume.

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS:

- Family is an important support system.
- Respectful communication is vital in all relationships.
- Families come in all shapes and sizes.
- Each family has its unique dynamic.

FOOD AND COOKING:

- Cooking from scratch is healthier than processed food.

Diverse cultures have unique cuisines.

Carefully reading recipes leads to better results.

Sharing meals with others brings people together.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS:

Mental health is as important as physical health.

Eating a balanced diet is vital for good health.

Sleep is essential for both physical and psychological health.

Hygiene practices prevent the spread of illness.

HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS:

Diverse cultures celebrate different holidays.

Holidays bring people together.

Festivals highlight various art forms and cultures.

We must respect and honour/honor other traditions.

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Eye contact is essential when greeting someone.

Diverse cultures have diverse ways of greeting.

Body language communicates a greeting or disrespect.

Be polite and make an excellent first impression.

NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

The environment needs to be protected.

Climate change is a global issue.

Different human actions have different environmental impacts.

We need to work together to protect the environment.

POLITICS AND CURRENT EVENTS:

We must stay informed about current events.

Different people have different political views.

Politics affects people's daily lives.

It is crucial to engage in civil and respectful political discourse.

EXPLORE MORE ESL RESOURCES:

The free PDF has only the first few resources. More is available in the main books below:

- [ESL Advanced Discussions](#)
- [ESL Intermediate Discussions](#)

Lesson 8.

Using Informal Phrases

*This lesson tests students' creative language use.
Students look for the literal meaning, but this does not
result in comprehension.*

OBJECTIVES:

Understand the meaning of proverbs and clichés.

Use proverbs and clichés in context to demonstrate understanding.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a subject from the Resources section.

Next, add six words related to assessing understanding.

Students will need internet connectivity to complete the task.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce students to proverbs and clichés using everyday language to describe a situation.

Discuss the primary lesson theme and aim: to create text using proverbs and clichés.

2. LEARN:

Provide students with the first half of a proverb and check whether they know the complete statement. For example, "A penny saved...".

Explain to students that they should express themselves even if they make mistakes.

Pose questions to gauge comprehension and invite suggestions for the next step.

Go through each word to ensure that students understand the meaning of the informal term before explaining the entire saying.

Verify that each student understands the term's meaning and clarify it for those who may be unclear.

Ask students to express their proverb interpretation in two to three phrases.

Review and edit their work to correct any mistakes.

3. INSTRUCT:

Ask the class to respond and post their responses on the board for everyone to see.

Find any students who may want to revise their definitions and then write the proper interpretation on the board.

Have students compare their definitions to the accurate description and provide examples of when to use the term.

Ask students to work in pairs or groups to produce three uses for the proverb and present their findings to the class.

4. EXERCISE:

Check on their activities to ensure they are all engaged.

5. ASSESS:

Ask each group about their prepared responses and write them on the board to prove whether students know the expression's context-specific use.

Finish the task by going through the examples provided by the students.

BONUS - EXPLORING THE ORIGINS:

As an added exercise, students research an expression's history to better understand its literal and metaphorical interpretations.

Their efforts may only be simple, but it is an excellent way to get students to collaborate freely. They will need to conduct their research on the Internet.

RESOURCES

ANIMAL-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"Do not count your chickens before they hatch"; we should avoid assuming success before it happens.

"The elephant in the room" is an obvious problem no one wants to discuss.

"A fish out of water" means someone in an unfamiliar or uncomfortable situation.

"A wolf in sheep's clothing" means someone who pretends to be harmless but is dangerous.

BUSINESS-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"Thinking outside the box" means creatively approaching a problem.

"Cutting corners" means taking shortcuts or compromising quality to save time or money.

"Moving the goalposts" means changing the rules or expectations in the middle of something.

"Putting all your eggs in one basket" means risking everything on one plan or idea.

FOOD-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"A piece of cake" means something easy to do.

"Bite off more than you can chew" means to take on more than you can manage.

"The icing on the cake" means a bonus or something that makes a good situation even better.

"Too many cooks spoil the broth" means that when too many people try to do the same thing, they may mess it up.

GENERAL LIFE-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade" means to turn a tricky situation into something positive.

"All that glitters is not gold" means that what looks good on the outside may not be as good as it seems.

"You cannot judge a book by its cover" means that you cannot decide the value of something based on appearance alone.

"The grass is greener on the other side" means that people think others' situations are practical elsewhere.

HEALTH-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"An apple a day keeps the doctor away" means eating healthy helps prevent illness.

"Laughter is the best medicine" means that laughter helps improve your mood and physical health.

"You are what you eat" means that your health and well-being depend on the food you consume.

"Prevention is better than cure" means that it is better to avoid a problem than to fix it later.

RELATIONSHIP-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"Love is blind" means that people in love overlook flaws or problems in their partner.

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder" means that being apart increases feelings of love and longing.

"Behind every great man is a great woman" means that a man's success is often due to the support of a woman.

"Breaking up is hard to do" means that ending a relationship is difficult and painful.

SPORTS-RELATED CLICHÉS:

"Practice makes perfect" means that by repeatedly doing something, you will get better at it.

"It is not whether you win or lose, it is how you play the game" means that how you conduct yourself is more important than winning.

"Hitting it out of the park" means doing something exceptionally well.

"Playing hardball" means being tough or challenging in negotiations.

EXPLORE MORE ESL RESOURCES:

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- [ESL Intermediate Discussions](#)

Lesson 9.

Moral Dilemma Challenge

Students should think about various scenarios and evaluate their own moral decisions. In each case, what would they do?

OBJECTIVES:

Encourage students to discuss morality and ethics.

Students evaluate moral dilemmas using critical thinking skills.

THINGS TO DO:

Select a problem from the Resources section.

Find two relevant tales online and create a simple reading exercise for practice.

Select six words from the moral statement and expand on each one.

LESSON PLAN

1. WARM-UP:

Introduce values and ethics and explain the lesson's aim to examine moral and ethical options in certain circumstances.

Introduce the primary lesson theme from the To Do section.

2. LEARN:

Discuss the To Do section words and ask for student opinions.

Introduce the dilemma to be explored.

3. INSTRUCT:

Provide students with a story related to the topic and ask them to consider the situation and debate whether it is good.

Compile a list of opinions from the students.

4. EXERCISE:

Discuss the situation with the class and ask for their opinions on the best action.

Encourage students to consider the perspective of the individuals in the story and reflect on whether they would make the same decision again.

It is not a decision of each other but rather an assessment of different perspectives.

5. ASSESS:

Compare the students' original ideas with the discussion at the end of the lesson.

Assess both sides of the debate and appreciate how students respond to different points of view.

Remember to make the activity enjoyable and not push any uncomfortable students.

BONUS - TWENTY QUESTIONS CHALLENGE:

Select a single student from the group.

Randomly select a word and give it to the student to keep a secret.

Other students can only ask "yes" or "no" questions and have twenty guesses to get the word right.

Once they guessed correctly, a new round with a different student would start.

RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL:

How important is it to protect the environment?

Should everyone preserve the environment?

What can you do to reduce your carbon footprint?

Is using products that harm the environment OK if they are cheap?

How do you manage a situation where someone is damaging the environment?

Should companies be held responsible for their impact on the environment?

How do you make sure you are recycling correctly?

Is it right to cut down trees for development purposes?

GENERAL DILEMMAS:

What are the pros and cons of waking up early?

Is it better to do homework first or play video games?

How do you balance chores and free time?

Should you tell the truth or lie to avoid trouble?

Is it OK to cheat in a competition to win?

How do you manage a friend who mistreats you?

What actions should you take if you witness bullying?

How do you deal with peer pressure?

HUMAN RIGHTS:

How important are human rights?

Should everyone have the right to free speech?

What should you do if someone violates someone else's rights?

Is it ever OK to discriminate against someone?

What can you do to address mistreatment?

Does everyone have the right to practice their religion?

Is it right to punish someone without a fair trial?

What can you do if you see discrimination?

JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS:

Is it fair for some people to have more than others?

How can we treat all races equally?

How do you ensure that we include diversity?

What is the best way to resolve a conflict?

Should everyone have the same rights?

How do you react to unfair treatment?

Is it right to punish every criminal?

What can you do if someone mistreats another person?

LOYALTY AND BETRAYAL:

Is it ever OK to break a promise?

How do you deal with a friend who has betrayed you?

How important is loyalty in a friendship?

Is it OK to keep a secret from a friend to protect them?

How do you forgive someone who has betrayed you?

What do you do when your friends are unfriendly?

Is it wrong to gossip about your friends?

What do you do if your friend does something wrong?

EXPLORE MORE ESL RESOURCES:

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- [ESL Intermediate Discussions](#)

Lesson Extra

Conversation Starters

*The following list includes over 250 discussion starters
for various subjects.*

ART:

Calligraphy, Drawing, Graphic Design, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture, Street Art

BUSINESS:

E-commerce, Entrepreneurship, Finance, Human Resources, Innovation, Leadership, Marketing, Supply Chain Management

CULTURE:

Customs, Dance, Fashion, Festivals, Food, Heritage, Music, Traditions

DEPRESSION:

Anxiety, Chronic, Coping Strategies, Medication, Mental Health, Mindfulness, Psychology, Self-Help, Therapy

ENVIRONMENT:

Climate Change, Environmental Activism, Environmental, Policy, Green Living, Pollution, Renewable Energy, Sustainability, Wildlife Conservation

FITNESS:

Cardiovascular Training, Exercise, Meditation, Nutrition, Sports, Strength Training, Wellness, Yoga

GENDER ROLES:

Feminism, Gender Equality, Gender Stereotypes, LGBTQ+, Masculinity, Sexuality, Transgender Rights, Women's Health

HISTORY:

American History, Ancient History, Archaeology, Genealogy, Historical Figures, Historiography, Modern History, World History

INNOVATION:

AI, Bioengineering, Futurism, Inventions, Nanotechnology, Robotics, Science, Technology

JUSTICE:

Activism, Advocacy, Criminal Justice Reform, Equality, Human Rights, Judicial System, Restorative Justice, Social Justice

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Positive Classroom Environment

While student grades and pass rates are essential to a teacher, success should also be measured by the relationships you build and the positive environment you create in the classroom. Academic achievement is vital, but the foundation for it is a space where students feel seen, heard, and valued.

Prioritize Flexibility and Adaptability

Meeting your students' diverse needs and interests requires a flexible approach. Stay adaptable in how you deliver lessons, as this responsiveness allows you to foster deeper engagement and personal growth among your students.

Stay Confident and in Control

Students respond positively to a confident and competent teacher. Establish yourself as the class leader, and do not hesitate to take a moment to regroup if you are feeling overwhelmed. Adjust your approach when necessary; making changes as you go is okay.

Remembering your students' names and being mindful of what they say is an excellent way to build rapport. Showing genuine interest in their contributions goes a long way toward creating a supportive and engaging environment.

Preparation is Key

Take a few moments after each lesson to jot down notes on what went well and what could be improved. Review these notes before your next class to stay prepared and ensure you meet your students' needs.

For students who may have missed a lesson or are struggling, offer additional resources or set up a meeting after class. You demonstrate care

and commitment to their success by proactively responding to their needs.

Gratitude and Reflection

I am deeply grateful to the inspiring and motivated students I taught in South Korea. They shaped my journey as a teacher by pushing me to understand their needs better and adapt my methods. Their eagerness to learn and passion for education made me strive to be a better educator.

I hope you, too, find joy in your students' growth and success. Best wishes as you continue your teaching journey. Remember, it is the connections you build that genuinely make a difference.

Growth Beyond the Classroom

Improvement does not end when the lesson is over—it continues as we step outside the classroom.

Adjusting to a new culture and language can be challenging for foreign English teachers, but it is also a rich opportunity for growth.

Respect and Collaborate

Building respect and trust with local teachers and students is essential. Embrace the different learning needs, abilities, and cultural expectations that shape the classroom experience. Understand that your perception of what it means to be a teacher might differ from local teachers' expectations of you and may be shaped by their model of what a "foreigner" should be. While your perspective is valuable, remember you are a guest in their country. Embrace this role with humility and openness, and collaborate with those around you to create a harmonious learning environment.

Improve Personal Performance

Progress is made when we identify and address the barriers to growth, even in tasks not part of the routine. Seeking input from others, considering alternative approaches, and staying open to innovative ideas can all help improve your confidence and performance. It is important to anticipate challenges and reduce uncertainty by being proactive about potential obstacles. Change is hard, but it is also necessary for progress. Reflect on your experiences and use them as a foundation for improvement. Remember, seeking help is a strength and a sign that you are committed to growing, not a weakness.

Communicate with Empathy

To build trust and foster positive relationships, take time to care for others and show genuine interest in their lives. Effective communication goes beyond speaking—it is about understanding and appreciating the perspectives of others. Doing so creates a deeper connection and opens doors for collaboration and growth.

Experience Joy and Positivity

Teaching is most impactful when it is enjoyable and fulfilling. If it begins to feel like a chore, find places of gratitude within the work and look for ways to push beyond the minimum. Stay positive, even under challenging circumstances, and be mindful of your emotions. Reflection is key to personal and professional growth—take time to evaluate your past experiences to learn and improve.

Enjoying the journey toward your goals helps reduce stress and create positive memories. Finding joy in what we do benefits our well-being and enriches the lives of those we teach.

Good luck on your journey. Hard work, reflection, and a positive attitude always lead to progress.

About the Author

*I create from experience, from what I've lived, learned,
and felt. This isn't just a book; it's a piece of my
journey, shared with you.*

I'm Nigel—a lifelong learner, creator, and explorer of ideas. My journey has taken me from teaching ESL in South Korea to backpacking across Australia and New Zealand and now to a quieter, more creative life. I believe in the power of curiosity, small intentional actions, and creating work that sparks inspiration and growth.

My books reflect the things I care about most:

* Writing and storytelling—I create resources that inspire, engage, and help others learn, from travel memoirs to ESL activity books.

* Mental Health & Well-being—I draw from personal experience and research to explore mindfulness, burnout, and self-discovery in my writing.

* Gardening & Sustainable Living – With over 30 years of growing wisdom, I share insights on kitchen gardening, inspired by my grandfather's love for the earth.

* Art & Creative Expression—I create every book cover and illustration. I believe visuals should feel as connected to the story as the words.

Beyond books, I'm always experimenting—whether exploring numerology, diving into gaming, or capturing the beauty of nature through photography. Everything I create is about connection, growth, and seeing the world differently.

— Just a lonely layabout, left to my own devices—that's me. I strongly believe in lifelong learning for personal growth. Therefore, I am always

eager to discover new interests and expand my horizons. I bring this passion to my writing.

I have even created a free app called Numerology Colors that offers insights into one's numbers based on their name and date of birth. It is an entertaining and informative way to explore numerology and better understand oneself.

If you want to learn more about my projects, please visit my website at www.nigelmopenshaw.com

www.nigelmopenshaw.com

- [ESL Advanced Discussions](#)
- [ESL Intermediate Discussions](#)