LET'S TALK!

24 Illustrated ESL Conversation Cards | Teacher's Guide

A2–B1 • Teenagers and adults • Speaking, listening and interaction

Make conversation easy to start

Use these 24 illustrated cards to help learners talk about familiar experiences, interests and real-life issues. Each card pairs a main question with a follow-up, so students can move beyond short answers and keep a conversation going. Use a few cards for a warm-up or build them into a full speaking lesson; preparation is minimal.

Four ways to use the cards

1 Pair and share

Regular speaking practice · 4–6 minutes per card

1. Put learners in pairs and give each pair a card.

2. Student A reads the main question; Student B answers with a reason or example.

3. Student A asks the follow-up. Then switch roles or choose another card.

Invite students to ask their own follow-up questions, too.

2 Pick a card

Warm-up or spontaneous speaking · 2–3 minutes per student

1. Place cards face down or in a box. A student chooses one and takes 30 seconds to think.

2. The student speaks for about one minute; classmates ask one or two follow-up questions.

3 Small-group conversation

Listening and interaction · 10–15 minutes

1. Make groups of four or five and give each group a small selection of cards.

2. One learner reads a question. Everyone takes a turn, then reacts, agrees, disagrees politely or asks a follow-up.

Remind learners to respond to one another, not just deliver separate answers.

4 Speaking stations

Large classes and active participation · 5–7 minutes per station

1. Set up stations with different cards and divide the class into small groups.

2. Groups discuss the questions at their station, then rotate when time is up.

Help learners say a little more

When answers stop after one sentence, offer a simple structure:

ANSWER → REASON → EXAMPLE

For “What do you do in your free time?” a learner might say: “I listen to music. It helps me relax. I often listen after school.” Model one example, then leave the structure visible while pairs talk.

Useful language

Give an opinion	I think… / In my opinion…
Give a reason or example	Because… / For example…
Agree or add an idea	I agree. / Also…
Disagree politely	I see your point, but…
Compare	I prefer… / Compared with…

Adjust the support

For learners who need more help: allow a short planning pause, review topic vocabulary, offer sentence starters and pair them with a supportive partner. Begin with the main question; add the follow-up when they are ready.

For learners ready for more: ask them to justify opinions, compare experiences, challenge an idea politely or write their own follow-up questions. Selected cards can lead into a short debate.

Listen, then give focused feedback

Avoid interrupting every mistake. While students talk, note a few examples of effective language and recurring errors. Afterwards, recognise what worked and choose one or two points to practise. You can listen for fluency, useful vocabulary, clear sentences, understandable pronunciation and turn-taking.

A ready-to-use 15-minute routine

Stage	What to do	Time
Lead-in	Introduce a topic; review key words.	3 min
Pair talk	Discuss a main question and follow-up.	8 min
Share and respond	Share an idea; give brief language feedback.	4 min

Prepare and print

Print on A4 landscape paper, with four cards per page for a paper-saving set. Cut along the borders; thicker paper or lamination helps if you will reuse the cards. Organise them by topic for quick access. You do not need all 24 in one lesson: choose a few that suit the class and leave room for conversation to develop.

Food & Lifestyle

What's your favourite food? Why do you like it?



Follow-up: Is there a dish you'd like to try from another culture?

Travel & Places

What's a place you'd like to visit one day? Why?



Follow-up: Have you ever travelled to another country? Where and how was it?

Hobbies & Entertainment

What do you like doing in your free time?



Follow-up: Is there a hobby you'd like to try in the future? Why?

Technology & Learning

How does technology help you in your studies?



Follow-up: What are the advantages and disadvantages of using technology?

Dreams & Future Plans

What are your dreams for the future?



Follow-up: What do you think you need to do to achieve your dreams?

Everyday Life

How do you relax after a busy day?



Follow-up: What do you do to manage stress (e.g., study, exercise, read)?

Health & Well-being

What do you do to stay healthy and fit?



Follow-up: Do you think young people today live a healthy lifestyle? Why?

Family & Relationships

How would you describe your family?



Follow-up: What do you usually do together as a family?

Education & School

What do you like most about school?



Follow-up: What changes would you like to see at your school?

Culture & Identity

What are you proud of about your country or culture?



Follow-up: Is there a tradition or celebration you particularly like? Why?

Work & Career

What kind of job would you like to have in the future?



Follow-up: What skills or qualifications do you think you need for that job?

Global Issues

What is a big problem in today's world that worries you?



Follow-up: What can young people like you do to help solve it?

Travel & Tourism

What is your favourite place to visit? Why?



Follow-up: Where would you like to travel in the future?

Media & Entertainment

What type of movies, music or TV shows do you enjoy? Why?



Follow-up: Can you recommend something interesting to watch or listen to?

Friends & Social Life

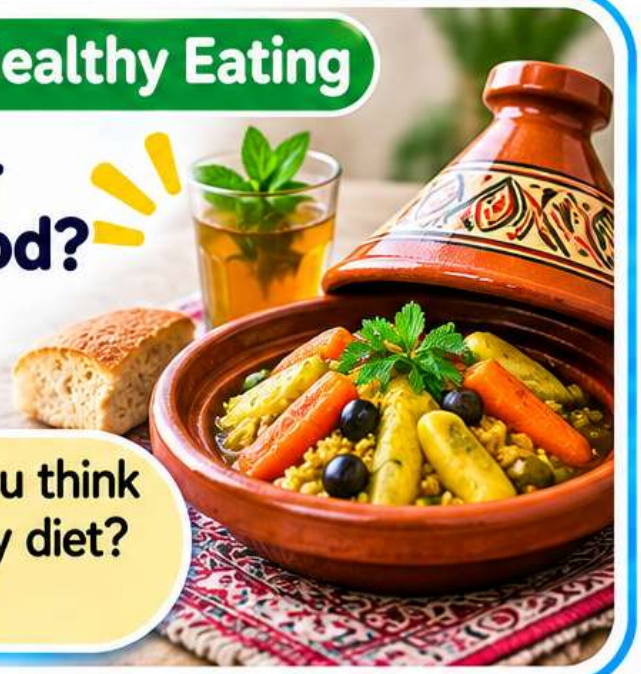
How do you usually spend your free time with your friends?



Follow-up: Do you prefer spending time with friends or family? Why?

Food & Healthy Eating

What is your favourite food? Why do you like it?



Follow-up: Do you think you have a healthy diet? Why or why not?

Technology & Daily Life

How does technology affect your daily life?



Follow-up: What are the advantages and disadvantages of technology?

Sports & Hobbies

What is your favourite sport or hobby? Why do you enjoy it?



Follow-up: What other sport or hobby would you like to try in the future?

Sustainable Living

What can we do at school or at home to live more sustainably?



Follow-up: Which eco-friendly habits do you already follow?

Life Skills & Independence

What life skills do you think are important for a young person?



Follow-up: Which life skill do you want to improve? Why?

Money & Spending

How do you usually manage your money (e.g. pocket money or part-time work)?



Follow-up: Do you think it is important to save money? Why?

Languages & Communication

Why is it important to learn foreign languages?



Follow-up: Which other language would you like to learn? Why?

Values & Life Choices

What do you think is more important for a happy life: success, money, or good relationships?



Follow-up: Can people be happy without having a lot of money? Why?

Volunteering & Community

Have you ever volunteered or helped in your community?



Follow-up: What are the benefits of volunteering for young people?