

EASY TOPICS FOR ESL BEGINNERS

At Spoken English Practice, we encourage even students with beginner level English skills to start speaking as early as possible. **If you don't speak, you will never improve speaking.** It is better to start practicing speaking than to wait till you get perfect grammar and a big vocabulary. Your grammar and vocabulary will improve naturally, when you start speaking.

So what Conversation topics do we use with beginner level English students?

For someone who is just starting to learn English, conversation topics should be simple and offer lots of chances to learn and use basic vocabulary words. Think of these conversations as building blocks: pieces of the language that you can use later on when having a longer or more complex conversation with someone you have just met.

Here are ten topics that beginner level English students should be comfortable speaking about:

School or work

Most people learning English will either be attending school at some level or working at a job. You can discuss the location of your school or workplace (downtown? In the country?), how you arrive there (by car, by bus, on foot, etc.), what you do when you get there (read, have meetings, eat lunch) and who you see while there (teachers, bosses, colleagues, or classmates).

Grocery shopping

Everyone has to eat, and learning how to purchase food in English is very important. Discussing the grocery store involves learning the names of foods such as fruits and vegetables, meats, and cheese, as well as discussing money and prices, nutrition and health. This can help students learn how to inquire about the price of things and how to conduct a simple financial transaction.

Cooking

Cooking is closely related to shopping, and opens up another area of vocabulary. Once you have the food from the store, how will you cook it? Do you enjoy cooking? Who does the cooking in your family? What are your favourite foods? What are some traditional dishes from your country of origin? Do you eat different foods on holidays and special occasions? Discussing cooking is also good for learning words about preference (like, dislike, enjoy, avoid, etc.).

Home

Talking about where you live leads to a lot of helpful vocabulary practice as well. Do you live in a house, an apartment, on a farm? Who lives there with you? What furniture do you have? What colours are the rooms painted? You can also talk about what you like to do when you're at home – read, watch TV, play games, sleep, etc. This will be helpful in learning the words for rooms in the home and for pieces of furniture.

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Family

A logical extension of the above is discussing your family. How many people are in your family? Mother, father, grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins? If anyone is divorced or remarried, do you have step-parents or siblings? Who is the oldest sibling, and the youngest? This is great for learning the words for various relatives and for explaining the family relationship words like son, daughter, nephew, cousin, etc.

Pets

Pets are another simple and fun topic of conversation for beginner level English speakers. Do you have any pets? If so, what kind of animal are they? What are your pets' names? How old are they? You can talk about how you take care of them, like taking the dog for a walk or feeding the fish. If you don't have pets, would you like to have one? Do you have allergies that prevent it? This topic is great for learning the names of common domestic animals as well as using simple verbs in short sentences.

Weather

The weather is probably the most clichéd conversation topic ever, but that's for a reason: the weather affects everyone, no matter where you live, and it's important to know how to discuss it. Is it sunny outside, or raining? Snowing? Does it get very hot or cold where you live, and do you have seasons, or is it about the same all year round? Do you need to wear a coat today, or pack an umbrella? This is also helpful in learning to use the future tense – what does the weather forecast say?

Clothing

Clothing is something every beginner level English learner should know how to discuss. You can talk about what items of clothing you are wearing, what colour they are, what other clothes you have, what you need to wear to school, work, or other places, and so forth.

Friends

You can talk about your friends: who are they, and how/where did you meet? How long have you known one another? What are some things you like to do together? Do you have any friends who live far away? This is a good opportunity to discuss emotions – how do friends make us feel?

Travel

Travel is something many beginner level English speakers will encounter, and it's important to know the words for various modes of travel, like cars, trains, airplanes, busses, bicycles, and so on. It's also helpful in learning how to ask for directions to a place or navigating an airport or bus journey.