

49 English Conversation Topics

Lessons with Discussion Questions,
Writing Prompts, Idioms & Vocabulary



Jackie Bolen

49 English Conversation Topics (for Intermediate-Advanced ESL/EFL):

**Lessons with Discussion Questions,
Writing Prompts, Idioms & Vocabulary**

Jackie Bolen

www.eslspeaking.org

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About the Author: Jackie Bolen

I taught English in South Korea for a decade to every level and type of student and I've taught every age from kindergarten kids to adults. Most of my time centered around teaching at two universities: five years at a science and engineering school out in the rice paddies of Chungcheongnam-Do, and four years at a major university in Busan where I taught high-level classes for students majoring in English. These days, I live in Vancouver, Canada where I teach privately as well as in English language academies. In my spare time, you can usually find me outside surfing, biking, hiking, or on the hunt for the most delicious kimchi I can find.

In case you were wondering what my academic qualifications are, I hold a Master of Arts in Psychology. During my time in Korea, I've successfully completed both the Cambridge CELTA and DELTA certification programs. With the combination of almost 15 years teaching ESL/EFL learners of all ages and levels, and the more formal teaching qualifications I've obtained, I have a solid foundation on which to offer teaching advice. I truly hope that you find this book useful and would love it if you sent me an email with any questions or feedback that you might have—I'll always take the time to personally respond.

Jackie Bolen around the Internet

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This book contains all new topics and questions! There are even more complete English conversation lesson plans in these other books of mine.

67 ESL Conversation Topics (Intermediate-Advanced)

47 ESL Conversation Topics (Beginner-Intermediate)

If you can't get enough ESL conversation questions in this book, you can get even more goodness delivered straight to your inbox every week. I promise to respect your privacy—your name and email address will never be shared with anyone for any reason. [Sign-up here.](#)

How to Use this Book

These conversation lessons are designed for teenagers, university students, or adults. They do assume a basic knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary so are best suited for intermediate or advanced students.

The main purpose of these lessons is to get students talking about a certain topic and can be used for classes of 30 minutes to two hours. There are 49 different topics in total and each lesson includes the following:

- warm-up question
- vocabulary challenge (5 scrambled words from the conversation questions)
- idioms and phrases related to the topic (5)
- 15 conversation questions
- 3 writing prompts suitable for class time or homework

For smaller classes of less than three students, it's possible to work through each lesson together as a class. It's also possible to use these conversation lessons for 1-1 or private tutoring. However, for larger classes of four or more, I recommend putting students into pairs and letting them work through the lesson together to make classes more student-centered.

Advertising

Warm-Up

Do you think that you're influenced by advertising? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Challenge

n b a r d = A type of product from a certain company with a certain name.

e i c o m m l r a = What you see on TV during breaks.

c i u n e f e l n r = Someone with a lot of social media followers.

c m u e s t r o = Someone who buys something or uses a service.

t g a t r e = To go after, or aim for something.

Idioms and Phrases

go viral, across the board, sold on (something), deliver the goods, price yourself out of the market

If you don't _____, you'll be out of a job.

Have you seen the latest video. It will _____ I think.

I'm not _____ this colour. What do you think?

Be careful. You might _____ if you go too high.

It's rare that we agree on a decision _____ at our company.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: brand, commercial, influencer, customer, target

Idioms and phrases: deliver the goods, go viral, sold on, price yourself out of the market, across the board

Let's Talk

1. Name as many different advertising methods as you can (at least 5).
2. What are some of your favourite brands?
3. If you need a new pair of shoes, what influences your decision to buy one pair over another one?
4. Have you seen any shocking or memorable commercials or advertisements?
5. What makes an ad memorable and another one not?
6. Do celebrity or influencer advertisements make you want to buy the product?
7. Are you easily influenced by advertising?
8. What do you think about companies (fast food restaurants, for example) that target children in their advertising?
9. What influences you to buy one product, or another?
10. Do you consider customer reviews before buying something?
11. Should political parties be allowed to advertise before an election?
12. Should pharmaceutical companies be allowed to advertise their drugs?
13. Would you rather pay for a TV/movie subscription (Netflix, for example) than see ads like on cable TV?
14. What are some of the negative effects of advertising?
15. When you go to the grocery store, do you ever buy “store brand” items?

Writing Prompts

1. Is there enough protection against false advertising in your country?
2. Which products depend the most on advertising? Which products have a strong brand loyalty?
3. Do you think advertising is a form of art?

Advice

Warm-Up

Do you like to give advice to people? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Challenge

u n s o l e i d c = Something that isn't asked for.

i h a t b = Something you do many times.

e e x p t = Someone who knows a lot about a certain thing.

f a i c n i a l n = Related to money.

p s a n r t e = The people who raise a child.

Idioms and Phrases

the pot calling the kettle black, actions speak louder than words, unsolicited advice, Rome wasn't built in a day, don't count your chickens before they hatch

I know you didn't ask, but I have some _____ for you about this decision.

Didn't you get arrested for drunk driving too? Aren't you just _____?

Don't give up. _____.

Do it, instead of saying it. _____.

You're not officially accepted. _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: unsolicited, habit, expert, financial, parents

Idioms and phrases: unsolicited advice, the pot calling the kettle black, Rome wasn't built in a day, actions speak louder than words, don't count your chickens before they hatch

Let's Talk

1. Have you ever gotten some good advice? What was it?
2. Have you ever gotten some bad advice? What was it?
3. Do you think that you're good at giving advice?
4. Have you ever given somebody bad advice?
5. Did your parents give you lots of advice when you were growing up?
6. What do you think about unsolicited advice?
7. What is some advice you'd give to kids growing up today?
8. Would you pay an expert to get financial or legal advice about something if you needed it?
9. Is the Internet a good source of advice?
10. Do you ever read advice columns in newspapers or online?
11. In your friend group, who do people usually ask for advice?
12. I want to quit smoking. Please give me some advice!
13. I just won a million dollars. Please give me some advice about what to do with it!
14. I'm depressed and just sit on the couch watching TV all day. What should I do?
15. I hate my job but can't afford to quit. Please give me some advice.

Writing Prompts

1. What advice would you give someone who wanted to get rich quickly?
2. What advice would you give someone who wanted to drop out of high school and start his or her own company?
3. What advice would you give someone who found a wallet with \$1000 in it?

Annoying Things

Warm-Up

What are 2-3 things that annoy you?

Vocabulary Challenge

c r o k w e o r = A person that you work with.

e p t / p v e e e = A certain thing that always annoys you (two words).

p l a r a l t i y c r u = Especially.

i s m n o g k = Using cigarettes.

o a n y n = To bug or get on someone's nerves.

Idioms and Phrases

get your knickers in a knot/twist, flew off the handle, gets my goat, got on my nerves, the gloves are off

My dad _____ when he found out that I crashed the car.

You know what _____? The way that Tanja laughs when she tells us to stay late at work.

My kids _____ towards the end of the summer. I'm happy they're back at school.

Well, _____. No more Mr. Nice Guy!

You don't need to _____. I'm going to clean up the kitchen after I'm done eating.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: coworker, pet peeve, particularly, smoking, annoy

Idioms and phrases: flew off the handle, gets my goat, got on my nerves, the gloves are off, get your knickers in a knot

Let's Talk

1. What annoys you about where you currently live?
2. How do you get to school or work? Do you find this annoying?
3. Have you ever had an annoying coworker or classmate? What did they do?
4. Do you have a family member that you find annoying? What do they do?
5. Does PDA (public displays of affection) annoy you?
6. Does it annoy you when people talk during TV shows or movies?
7. Does smoking bother you?
8. Do you have any habits that annoy other people?
9. If something is annoying to you, what do you usually do?
10. What does "pet peeve" mean? Do you have any?
11. Is it possible to change an annoying habit?
12. Why do some people find children to be annoying?
13. Do you find any celebrities annoying?
14. Do you get annoyed at people with bad grammar or spelling?
15. Is there a saying or phrase that is particularly annoying to you?

Writing Prompts

1. What would you do if you had a very annoying coworker or classmate that you had to work closely with?
2. What are some things that annoy people about using public transportation?
3. If you find lots of people or things annoying, are you actually the problem?

Around the Neighborhood

Warm-Up

How would you describe your neighborhood?

Vocabulary Challenge

b n e o i s g r h = People that live near you.

u c o t m e m = To get to work by car, bike, walking, or public transportation.

n a i s t s o c i o a = Organized group.

r c h e i l n d = Kids.

i o u p n p t o r y t = Circumstances that make it possible to do something.

Idioms and Phrases

he's (she's) been around the block, girl next door, love your neighbor as yourself, this neck of the woods, neighbors from hell

Remember that _____ from when you were growing up? Where is she now?

Wow! _____. Isn't that his 5th hockey team in 6 years?

Well, in _____ we don't park on the street. Everyone uses their driveway.

Why do you expect your brother to be kind to you when you're mean to him? _____.

Remember those _____ from a few years ago? They're back. Across the street from me.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: neighbors, commute, association, children, opportunity

Idioms and phrases: girl next door, he's been around the block, this neck of the woods, love your neighbor as yourself, neighbors from hell

Let's Talk

1. What are some good things about your neighborhood?
2. What are some things that you don't like about it?
3. Do you know your neighbors well?
4. Where are some places in your neighborhood that people like to hang out?
5. What kinds of recreational opportunities are there?
6. What kinds of people live in your neighborhood?
7. Do most people commute to work?
8. Do you have a neighborhood association of some kind?
9. Are there good schools in your neighborhood?
10. Is your neighborhood a good place to raise children?
11. Would you move if you had the opportunity?
12. Do your parents still live in the neighborhood where you grew up?
13. Do most people rent or own their houses?
14. What would make your neighborhood better?
15. Does your community have special events?

Writing Prompts

1. Think about a neighborhood in your city where many people want to live. What is so good about it?
2. Think about a neighborhood in your city where people don't want to live. Why don't they want to live there?
3. If you could, what changes would you make to your neighborhood?

Bad Behaviour

Warm-Up

Did you ever get in trouble for anything when you were a kid from your parents or teachers?

Vocabulary Challenge

l p c u i b = Not in private.

I r e o l i n g = A system of faith.

e c u u l r t = A way of life shared by a group of people.

n c l r i a m i = A person who commits a crime.

e c I n n e f l u = To have an impact on the behaviour of another person.

Idioms and Phrases

know-it-all, busybody, cheapskate, couch potato, behind the times

My mom is so _____. She still uses a flip phone and thinks gay marriage should be illegal.

One of my cousins is a serious _____. He always tries to get out of paying his fair share at dinners.

I used to be a _____, but I started running a few years ago and got hooked.

My aunt Karen is such a _____. She's always calling me to "chat," but she just wants the latest gossip.

My boss is a real _____. He doesn't listen to any opinion but his own.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: public, religion, culture, criminal, influence

Idioms and phrases: behind the times, cheapskate, couch potato, busybody, know-it-all

Let's Talk

1. What are some examples of good behaviour in children?
2. What are some examples of bad behaviour in children?
3. Do you have any bad habits? What are they?
4. Did you do anything really bad when you were young?
5. Have you ever felt embarrassed by a friend or family member acting badly in public?
6. Do you think friends can influence teenagers in a positive or negative way?
7. Think about a bully at school. Would you teach your child to fight back against him or her?
8. Do you think video games can result in murders or other violent crimes?
9. Does music influence people in a bad way?
10. How does religion impact behaviour?
11. In what situations are you on your "best behaviour?"
12. What should the punishment be for murder?
13. Should criminals get out of jail early for good behaviour?
14. Are there things in some cultures which are considered rude but not in others?
15. Do you think corporal (hitting) punishment is okay for teachers to use?

Writing Prompts

1. What should be done about repeat offenders (people that commit more than 1 crime)?
2. Do teachers or parents have a bigger role in teaching children about how to be good citizens?
3. What would you do if you saw one person in a couple hitting the other one?

Birthdays

Warm-Up

Describe a memorable birthday that you've had. Or, a birthday party that you've been to.

Vocabulary Challenge

a m e b m o l r e = Something easily remembered.

t n t r a i d o i = A custom or belief or action passed down from generation to generation.

s a c p l e i = Not common or usual.

p t a y r = How people often celebrate a birthday.

s e i u r r s p = Not expected.

Idioms and Phrases

birthday bash, let your hair down, blow out the candles, good things come in small packages, birthday suit

Oh, _____! You're only 40 once!

Oh no! Ted is in his _____ again. Where are his mom and dad at?

Ready to _____? 3-2-1 . . .

I got Teresa an engagement ring for her birthday. _____, right?

When's your big _____? Saturday, right?

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: memorable, tradition, special, party, surprise

Idioms and phrases: let your hair down, birthday suit, blow out the candles, good things come in small packages, birthday bash

Let's Talk

1. When is your birthday? Do you like having it then?
2. How do you usually celebrate your birthday?
3. What's a memorable birthday gift that you've received?
4. What's a memorable birthday gift that you've given?
5. What kind of meal do you like to have on your birthday?
6. Are birthdays important to you? Why or why not?
7. Do you enjoy attending birthday parties?
8. What are some common birthday traditions in your country?
9. Are there some special birthdays in your country? For example, 40 or 65?
10. Have you ever attended a surprise birthday party?
11. Have you ever forgotten an important birthday?
12. Would you rather receive a thing or an experience as a birthday gift?
13. What do you think about birthday cards? Nice, or a waste of money?
14. Do you worry about getting older?
15. How did your school celebrate birthdays when you were younger?

Writing Prompts

1. Describe your ideal birthday party.
2. Did you have a birthday that was particularly difficult? Talk about why it was.
3. What's the ideal amount of money to spend on a birthday gift? Why?

Beauty and Physical Attractiveness

Warm-Up

Do you care about fashion trends? How would you describe your style?

Vocabulary Challenge

c a n p e e a r a = The way that someone looks.

e a i t t r v a c = Beautiful/handsome.

n p i e i r g c = Putting a hole in the skin to wear a piece of jewellery.

o t a t o t = A permanent drawing on the skin.

i p l c a s t e s r u r r g = Permanently changing your appearance through a medical procedure (two words).

Idioms and Phrases

I need to get my beauty sleep, beauty is more than skin deep, dressed to kill, five o'clock shadow, vertically challenged

Don't be so shallow. _____.

I think guys look quite handsome with a _____.

My date went well. He's nice but he's _____ and is way shorter than me.

Come for dinner _____. We'll go out dancing afterwards.

Time for me to call it a night! _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: appearance, attractive, piercing, tattoo, plastic surgery

Idioms and phrases: beauty is more than skin deep, five o'clock shadow, vertically challenged, dressed to kill, I need to get my beauty sleep

Let's Talk

1. Do you know some examples of different beauty standards between cultures?
2. Is there someone in your country who almost everyone agrees is very beautiful?
3. How much time do you spend getting ready for work or school in the morning?
4. Do you think people spend too much money on their appearance?
5. Do you take steps (wear a hat or sunscreen) to protect your skin from the sun?
6. Do you think that how attractive you are can impact job success?
7. Why do you think people have plastic surgery?
8. What do you think, "Beauty is skin deep" means?
9. Do you like tattoos? Do you have one?
10. What are your thoughts about piercings? Do you have any?
11. Are beauty pageants terrible? Or, not so bad?
12. Do you think one gender worries more about appearance than the other?
13. Are there some "rules" for women when it comes to appearance that men don't have?
14. Name 10 adjectives to describe a women's appearance.
15. Name 10 adjectives to describe a man's appearance.

Writing Prompts

1. Have you ever felt worried about your appearance? What was the situation?
2. If you have a partner, describe their appearance.
3. Do you think that there is too much pressure on women for them to be thin?

Children

Warm-Up

What are some of the positives and negatives of having children?

Vocabulary Challenge

i s i b n l = A brother or sister.

s c o i u n = Your aunt or uncle's child.

k s e p d a n = Being hit on the bum.

u m a k p e = What people use to alter the appearance of their face. It can be washed off.

p s n m h a r o e t = The electronic device that people always have with them!

Idioms and Phrases

when pigs fly, boys will be boys, born on the wrong side of the tracks, it takes a village to raise a child, sleeps like a baby

I hate the _____ thing. That's not a real excuse for bad behaviour.

Why don't you let me take him for the weekend and you can get a break? _____, right?

Those kids were _____. It's no wonder they are such terrible students.

Another kid? _____! I'm already exhausted.

My husband _____ on planes. He's so lucky!

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: sibling, cousin, spanked, makeup, smartphone

Idioms and phrases: boys will be boys, it takes a village to raise a child, born on the wrong side of the tracks, when pigs fly, sleeps like a baby

Let's Talk

1. How many siblings did you have? Was that a good number?
2. Do you have a funny memory of one of your brothers or sisters?
3. Did you have a lot of cousins around when you were growing up?
4. What did your family like to do together when you were a child?
5. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of being an old child?
6. Do you have children? How old are they?
7. What are some things you like about having children? What are some things that you don't like?
8. How is life different for children in the past than today?
9. Do children today have a lot of pressure?
10. Who is most responsible for teaching children—parents or teachers?
11. Should children be spanked by teachers or parents for bad behaviour?
12. At what age should children get a smartphone?
13. Do you think that any amount of electronic use for young children is bad?
14. What can children learn through play?
15. At what age should people be allowed to wear makeup?

Writing Prompts

1. What is the best age to have children? Why do you think that?
2. Can video games or TV and movies have a negative influence on children?
3. How can children learn morals and values?

Classrooms and Learning

Warm-Up

Do you remember any of the classrooms from when you were a kid? How were they organized?

Vocabulary Challenge

h t r c e e a = A person who teaches you something.

e p o s n r s o i f = A paid job, usually involving training or education.

m c r l a o s o s = A space where you go to take a class.

l n o i e n = Using the Internet.

c s e t u b j = Examples are English, Math, and Geography.

Idioms and Phrases

teach her a lesson, school of hard knocks, honour roll, eager beaver, “A” for effort, show of hands

_____. Who's coming to the lunch next week?

I made the _____ during all four years of high school.

Wow! Carol is such an _____. Does she ever not know the answer to a question?

The results aren't great but _____ I guess. It'll have to do.

Tony struggled early in his life, but he has a good job now. He learned from the _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: teacher, profession, classroom, online, subject

Idioms and phrases: show of hands, honour roll, eager beaver, “A” for effort, school of hard knocks

Let's Talk

1. Describe a particularly good teacher that you had.
2. Describe a particularly bad teacher that you had.
3. What qualities make a good teacher?
4. What qualities make a bad teacher?
5. Is teaching a well-paid profession in your country?
6. Would you ever consider teaching for a job?
7. Are you currently taking any classes? What are you learning?
8. Think about a classroom. What makes that space nice and comfortable?
9. Should teachers assign seats? What situations might it be helpful?
10. When you went to high school, did you stay in one classroom or change classrooms?
11. At what age did you start to have different teachers for different subjects?
12. Do you think that online learning is just as good as in-person?
13. Did you have to learn something online during Covid (or have business meetings?) What was that experience like?
14. Do you plan to learn something new in the future? What is it?
15. How difficult did you find it to learn English?

Writing Prompts

1. What could be done to improve the education system in your country?
2. Should university or college be free for all students?
3. Did you have a teacher that you didn't get along with? Why didn't you?

Computers

Warm-Up

Are you “good with computers?” If yes, how did you learn? If no, who helps you with them?

Vocabulary Challenge

n i n t t e e r = A global computer network.

t d e o s k p = A kind of computer that stays in one place.

e b y a t r t = How mobile electronic devices are powered.

e p r o w = Electricity.

o s r e s n i = Older people.

Idioms and Phrases

the dark web, got our wires crossed, leading edge technology, nuts and bolts, hacker

I think we _____ here. Why don't we have lunch tomorrow and we can chat about it?

Doesn't Terry know the _____ of this system? Maybe she can take a look at this issue.

I've heard that you can find anything on _____.

My son is a skilled _____. He can even break into bank websites. He never does anything bad with his skills though.

If we don't invest in _____, we'll fall behind our competitors.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: Internet, desktop, battery, power, seniors

Idioms and phrases: got our wires crossed, nuts and bolts, the dark web, hacker, leading edge technology

Let's Talk

1. Name 10 things that people use the Internet for.
2. How do you access the Internet?
3. Can your mother or father use the Internet well?
4. Which websites do you check regularly?
5. Do you have a laptop or desktop computer? Or, do you just use a phone or tablet?
6. Has the power gone out where you live? How did you feel without being able to access the Internet?
7. Do you feel nervous if your phone battery is getting low?
8. Do you think we're too dependent on computers and technology?
9. What can be done about seniors who don't know how to use computers?
10. Is computer programming considered to be a good career in your country?
11. How often are you on social media? What do you use it for?
12. Do you remember when you got your first computer? What was that like compared to now?
13. What's the future of computing, in your opinion?
14. Do you think our lives have improved because of computers?
15. At what age should children start using computers?

Writing Prompts

1. Life is better because of computers. Do you agree or disagree?
2. We are too dependent on computers. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Describe the things that you use a computer for in your life.

Corruption

Warm-Up

What kinds of people are often corrupt? Why might this be the case?

Vocabulary Challenge

b b e r i = Money given in exchange for a favour.

y c t o r u n = Canada, Thailand, and Bolivia are examples.

p a c o i l n i t i = A person who is elected to work in government.

p i e o c l o e f c f r i = A person who arrests criminals and enforces laws (2 words).

e g o n v e r t n m = The ruling system of a country or state.

Idioms and Phrases

foul play, behind closed doors, ballot rigging, cooking the books, under the table

Who really knows what happens _____ at those meetings.

The police suspect _____ in the disappearance of Mary Smith.

His accountant is known to be skilled at _____.

Do you want to pay me _____? I won't charge you tax if you do.

_____ is almost impossible to do in a modern democracy.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: bribe, country, politician, police officer, government

Idioms and phrases: behind closed doors, foul play, cooking the books, under the table, ballot rigging

Let's Talk

1. Name a few different kinds of corruption.
2. Has corruption affected your life?
3. In your job, are there opportunities for people to bribe you?
4. Do you think things can happen more quickly in your country if you pay a little bit extra?
5. Is corruption ever a good thing?
6. Are all politicians dishonest?
7. Are police officers generally dishonest?
8. How do police officers get disciplined for bad behavior?
9. Do you know some countries that are especially corrupt?
10. Have you ever given someone a bribe?
11. Is giving gifts to teachers considered bribery?
12. What are some ways that the government can prevent corruption?
13. How can companies prevent corruption?
14. Does corruption happen because the government doesn't pay its workers enough money?
15. If you received some expensive concert tickets from a client, would you look more favourably upon them?

Writing Prompts

1. Corruption isn't always bad. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Give 3-4 examples of corruption or bribery in real life.
3. Do the police in your country treat people fairly? Why or why not?

College/University

Warm-Up

Did you go to college? Why or why not? Or, are you thinking about it for your future?

Vocabulary Challenge

s p r o f r e s = A person who teaches at a university.

m o a r j = Some examples are history, engineering or law.

l s p i u h b = To prepare a piece of writing for sale or public distribution.

t i u o i n t = Money you pay in order to attend university.

i o n p o t = A choice.

Idioms and Phrases

put our thinking caps on, pass with flying colours, pull an all-nighter, cram, drop out

I'm so proud of Jenny! She's studied so hard and will _____ I think.

If you _____ for an exam, you won't remember that much beyond a day or two!

I might have to _____ to get this history paper done.

Let's _____. There has to be an easy solution to this.

I know you want to _____, but it'll be a huge mistake. You won't get a good job.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: professor, major, publish, tuition, option

Idioms and phrases: pass with flying colours, cram, pull an all-nighter, put our thinking caps on, drop out

Let's Talk

1. What are some famous universities in your country?
2. What are some of the most popular majors?
3. How many students go to university in your country?
4. Do you think that students spend too much time having fun and not enough time studying?
5. Are community college programs a popular option?
6. What kinds of jobs can people who don't go to university get in your country?
7. If you had children, would you encourage them to go to university? Why or why not?
8. Which major would you encourage them to choose?
9. Do you think that university prepares students for the “real world?”
10. Do you think that tuition is too expensive?
11. Should tuition be covered by the government? For how long?
12. What do you think about students rating their professors?
13. Have you heard of the saying, “publish or perish”? What does it mean?
14. If you went to university, was it a good experience?
15. Did you join any clubs while you were there?

Writing Prompts

1. Universities should do more to prepare students for jobs after they graduate. Do you agree or disagree?
2. All majors have equal value and should receive government funding. Do you agree or disagree?
3. What are some of the positives and some of the negatives about attending university instead of getting a job?

Cities

Warm-Up

How would you describe the city that you live in?

Vocabulary Challenge

l s l m a w t n o = Smaller than a city but bigger than a village (2 words).

t i o s u t r = Someone who visits a place just for fun.

r d t o o c = A person who helps you with medical issues.

i s n m o g k = Using cigarettes.

o m r a y = The top government official in a city.

Idioms and Phrases

the big apple, the windy city, the city of lights, city slicker, concrete jungle

Chicago is known as _____.

Paris is known as _____.

New York is known as _____.

I'll always be a _____. I love it here.

Tokyo is a huge _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: small town, tourist, doctor, smoking, mayor

Idioms and phrases: the windy city, the city of lights, the big apple, city slicker, concrete jungle

Let's Talk

1. Name 10 adjectives that can be used to describe a city (or 20!)?
2. What do you like about living in your city?
3. What do you not like?
4. Why do you live where you live?
5. Where do young people hang out in your city?
6. Is there a city that you'd prefer to live in?
7. Is there a city in your country that tourists really like?
8. Is there a city that's the center of the financial world in your country?
9. Which cities have a reputation for being very expensive?
10. Would you ever live in a small town or city with less than 10,000 people?
11. Is it difficult to find a doctor or access medical services in your country?
12. What are some of the advantages of living in a big city?
13. What are some of the disadvantages?
14. Is smoking allowed in most places in your city?
15. What do you think about the mayor of your city?

Writing Prompts

1. If you could change three things about your city, what would you change?
2. Do you think your city is generally safe? Why or why not?
3. What are some of the issues facing your city in the next 10 years?

Crime

Warm-Up

Do you think that crime is a big problem in your city? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Challenge

a l e l g i l = Not legal. For example, stealing or drinking and driving.

i t l e e n n = Punishment that's easy or tolerant.

m a e l n t t h e h a l = A person's emotional well-being (2 words).

d r m e u r = To kill someone.

e p u n n i t s h m = A penalty for doing something wrong.

Idioms and Phrases

doing time, behind bars, pull a fast one, armed robbery, gone straight

Keith? He's _____ at TCC. 30 years I think. He murdered someone.

You can't _____ on me! I know that you didn't do your homework.

I've _____. I stopped drinking, and I also stopped selling drugs.

I can visit Ted in prison, but I really hate seeing him _____.

Did you hear about the _____ that happened at the convenience store down the street?

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: illegal, lenient, mental health, murder, punishment

Idioms and phrases: doing time, pull a fast one, gone straight, behind bars, armed robbery

Let's Talk

1. What are some “white-collar” crimes?
2. What are some “blue-collar” crimes?
3. Do you always lock your car and home?
4. Are there some areas in your city where you don't like to go because of crime?
5. Is drug use a problem in your city?
6. Should some drugs like marijuana not be illegal?
7. Do you think that punishment is too lenient, too harsh, or just about right for criminals in your country?
8. Should the punishment for murder be death? Why or why not?
9. Do people take drunk driving seriously enough in your country?
10. Is it easy to get a gun in your country? Should it be easier or more difficult?
11. Does prison help criminals or make them worse?
12. Have you ever stolen anything? Even something small like pens or paper from work?
13. Are there any gangs in your city?
14. What do you think causes people to become criminals?
15. Is there enough help for people with mental health problems in your country?

Writing Prompts

1. Are there any situations in which it's okay to break the law?
2. There are many cyber crimes that we don't even know about. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Is the answer to crime more police officers? Or are there other solutions?

Disasters

Warm-Up

Name as many kinds of natural disasters as you can.

Vocabulary Challenge

f t r e l q u e n = Often.

a e a r k t e h q u = A violent shaking of the Earth.

o t o y n p h = A kind of tropical storm.

m d m a a e n = Caused by humans.

y c i h t a r = An organization that helps people.

Idioms and Phrases

a storm is brewing, weather the storm, pitch in, bracing for the worst, the eye of the storm

Tampa Bay is _____. The hurricane is predicted to hit tomorrow morning.

Have you heard that it's actually quite calm in _____?

Oh you'll _____ just fine. You're far away enough from the coast.

Let's all _____. We'll get this cleaned up in no time at all.

Does it look like _____? Those clouds are so dark, and it's getting very windy.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: frequently, earthquake, typhoon, manmade, charity

Idioms and phrases: bracing for the worst, the eye of the storm, weather the storm, pitch in, a storm is brewing

Let's Talk

1. What kinds of natural disasters happen most frequently where you live?
2. Which ones cause the most damage?
3. Do you have any personal experience of a bad disaster that happened?
4. Do you think your city is well-prepared for a disaster?
5. Are you personally prepared for something like an earthquake or tornado to happen?
6. Have you seen any memorable movies about a natural disaster?
7. What's the difference between a hurricane, cyclone, and typhoon? Look it up if you don't know!
8. What are some countries that are known for having a lot of natural disasters?
9. Some people “chase” tornadoes. Crazy, fun, interesting?!
10. Do you know what PTSD is? If not, look it up. Would it be possible for that to happen after a big disaster?
11. If the power went out where you lived for a week, would it be terrible? Or, not so bad.
12. What's the difference between a natural disaster and a manmade disaster?
13. Was there a way that we could have been better prepared for Covid-19?
14. Do you think we learned any lessons as a society from Covid-19?
15. Have you ever given money to a charity that helps people affected by a disaster?

Writing Prompts

1. How can technology lessen the impact of natural disasters?
2. Is it up to people or the government to prepare for natural disasters?
3. Could we have prevented Covid-19?

Dogs and Cats

Warm-Up

Have you ever had a dog or cat as a pet?

Vocabulary Challenge

a i n s n u c r e = A way to protect yourself financially from a bad thing happening.

g a l l e r y = Describes someone with an allergy.

t b e i = To bring the teeth together.

a n i m a l s = Snake, horse, elephant are examples of.

a t t a c h e d = Lots of affection or fondness towards something.

Idioms and Phrases

it's raining cats and dogs, look what the cat dragged in, the cat's meow, let sleeping dogs lie, dog tired

Well, _____. I haven't seen you in years!

Have you tried that new vegan ice cream at Scoops? It's _____.

Tony, when are you going to learn to _____? You shouldn't stir the pot all the time.

I'm _____ from that hike. I just want to lay on my couch.

Let's cancel soccer for tonight. _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: insurance, allergic, bite, animals, attached

Idioms and phrases: look what the cat dragged in, the cat's meow, let sleeping dogs lie, dog tired, it's raining cats and dogs.

Let's Talk

1. What are some good qualities of cats?
2. What are some good qualities of dogs?
3. Cats or dogs—which is the better pet?
4. Is there another animal that's even a better pet than a cat or dog?
5. What are some of the positive things about having a pet?
6. What are some of the negative things?
7. At what age can children help look after a pet?
8. Have you heard of “pet insurance?”
9. Why do we not eat cats or dogs, but we eat cows and pigs?
10. Are there any well-known animal rights groups where you live?
11. What should happen to a dog that bites someone?
12. Why do some people not like pets?
13. Should we try to save a pet from a fire?
14. Are some people too attached to their pets?
15. Are you allergic to any animals? Do you know anyone who is?

Writing Prompts

1. Animals are always a terrible gift. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Cats are the ultimate pet. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Some people consider their pet to be a part of their family. What do you think about that?

Death and Dying

Warm-Up

Is death something that should be welcomed or feared?

Vocabulary Challenge

l e i f y e c x n p e c t a = The average length of time a group of people lives (2 words).

p s i o s s o e s n s = Things that you own.

g n i u n r s o m h e = A place where seniors live (2 words).

a c t r e m e = To burn a body after death.

r f a u n l e = A ceremony that people have to remember a person who has died.

Idioms and Phrases

at death's door, as dead as a doorknob, six feet under, dropped dead, a brush with death

My grandmother is _____. She is on a ventilator in the hospital.

When I'm _____, I hope that my family visits my grave.

My coworker just _____ at work last week. He had a massive heart attack.

I had _____ last year. I got Covid-19 and ended up in the hospital.

No! Don't touch it. That bird is _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: life expectancy, possessions, nursing home, cremate, funeral

Idioms and phrases: at death's door, six feet under, dropped dead, a brush with death, as dead as a doorknob

Let's Talk

1. What is the average life expectancy for men in your country? What about women?
2. Why do you think that women live longer in general?
3. Should people give away their possessions and money while they're still alive, instead of after they die?
4. Should children look after parents in their homes? Or, is a nursing home a good option?
5. Should the government do more to look after seniors?
6. What do you think about assisted suicide?
7. Would you ever consider assisted suicide? In what situations?
8. What kinds of rituals or ceremonies are common at funerals in your country?
9. Do you believe in life after death?
10. Why do you think people are often afraid of dying?
11. How can you help someone who lost a family member or close friend?
12. Is there a suicide hotline or other mental health supports like that in your country?
13. Should people be cremated or buried?
14. What would you do if you found out you only had one more year to live?
15. Is it equally bad to lose a pet than a family member?

Writing Prompts

1. Describe what you'd do if you only had a month to live.
2. What kind of funeral would you like?
3. Families should have to look after sick and dying family members. Do you agree or disagree?

Education

Warm-Up

What's a favourite memory that you have from your school days?

Vocabulary Challenge

a m e b m l o r e = Easily remembered.

a d o b a r = Another country.

p n r o a c r t a s e t i = To wait until the very last minute to do things like study.

o h o m r e k w = School things done outside regular school hours.

g d r e a = A, B+, C-, D, F are examples of

Idioms and Phrases

drawing a blank, bookworm, class clown, bomb it, too cool for school

I was a real _____ when I was a kid.

What's his name again? I'm _____.

Oh, you're such a _____. Do you ever stop joking around?

I know that you're _____ but please give your dear old mother a hug.

The math test? I might _____. I barely understood anything we learned in this unit.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: memorable, abroad, procrastinate, homework, grade

Idioms and phrases: bookworm, drawing a blank, class clown, too cool for school, bomb it

Let's Talk

1. At what age did you start school?
2. Do most people in your country go to university or college?
3. Did you take any memorable field trips in school?
4. In your country, what grades are elementary school, middle school, and high school?
5. Do you have a favourite teacher? Why did you like him or her so much?
6. How big was your high school? Did you like that?
7. What was your favourite subject in school? What about your least favourite?
8. Are private schools a popular option in your country?
9. Do many people go abroad to study from your country?
10. What are some qualities of good students?
11. Do you still keep in touch with anyone from your school days?
12. What's your study style? Do you get things done early, or do you procrastinate?
13. Were grades important to you in school?
14. Do you prefer to study alone or with other students?
15. What do you think about homework? Is it mostly a waste of time?

Writing Prompts

1. If you could make three changes to the education system in your country, what would they be?
2. Home-schooling is a bad option for most students. Do you agree or disagree?
3. The government should pay teachers more. Do you agree or disagree?

First Dates

Warm-Up

What are some “red flags” on a first date?

Vocabulary Challenge

n o n e l i d i a g n t = Meeting a romantic partner using the Internet (2 words).

t f s i r i m i p r o e s n s = The initial consideration of judgement of someone or something (2 words).

d b n l i d t a e = Meeting someone you don't know on a date organized by a third person (2 words).

f s e l r o w = Roses and tulips are examples.

l i o c o a n t = Place.

Idioms and Phrases

have a crush on _____, head over heels in love, go out with, got dumped, ask her/him out

If you like Keith, why don't you _____? There's no rule that you have to wait for the guy to ask.

I was _____ with my wife after our first date.

Tony asked you out?!? Are you going to _____him?

My weekend was terrible. I _____.

I _____ Tammy but I'm way too shy to ask her out.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: online dating, first impression, blind date, flowers, location

Idioms and phrases: ask him out, head over heels in love, go out with, got dumped, have a crush on

Let's Talk

1. Have you been on a very good first date?
2. How about a very bad first date?
3. Who should pay for the first date?
4. Do you think it's unfair that men are expected to pay for dates?
5. Have you ever tried online dating? Is it a good way to meet people?
6. Think back to your first dates. What feelings did you have before going on the dates?
7. Have you ever been very excited about a first date, but it went badly?
8. Have you ever gone on a blind date?
9. How can you make a good first impression on a first date? How about a bad impression?
10. Should you bring a small present like flowers on a first date?
11. What are some good locations for a first date?
12. What would you normally wear on a first date?
13. What should you do after the date if you liked the person?
14. What should you do after the date if you didn't like them?
15. Is there a rule for how long to wait after the first date to text the person?

Writing Prompts

1. How are first dates and later dates different from each other?
2. The person who asked the other person out on a date should pay for it. Do you agree or disagree?
3. People should stay safe on a first date by meeting in a public place. Should people follow this rule?

Gender

Warm-Up

Does one gender have certain advantages over the one in your country?

Vocabulary Challenge

c t y a p l i = Usual.

a t t h e l e = A person who plays sports.

a m i r l y i t = Army, navy, etc.

e g e n r d = Male, female, trans, etc.

r c e h s o = Jobs that need to be done around the house.

Idioms and Phrases

a woman's work is never done, man up, like father like son, gender wage gap, the best man for the job

I can't believe we still have a _____ in 2022.

Uggghhh . . . _____. I have to go home and cook dinner now.

_____ and get it done.

Who is _____? Ted? Wait. Mary would be great too.

You know how it is. _____. Ted learned everything he knows from his dad.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: typical, athlete, military, gender, chores

Idioms and phrases: gender wage gap, a woman's work is never done, man up, the best man for the job, like father like son

Let's Talk

1. What are some adjectives that are used to describe men?
2. What are some adjectives that are used to describe women?
3. What are some typical jobs for males and females in your country?
4. Have you heard of the “glass ceiling?” Do you think it's a real thing?
5. Are there some jobs women are better at and vice-versa?
6. What do you think about “stay-at-home” dads?
7. What are some behaviours that boys and men can do but girls can't?
8. Is it okay for boys and men to cry in your country?
9. Should men and women share equally in chores at home?
10. What about in raising children?
11. Can women join the military in your country?
12. Who makes a better manager or politician—men or women?
13. Is it okay for both genders to show their anger?
14. What do you think about women athletes having to wear bikinis, for example (beach volleyball)?
15. Should we raise young children without a gender until they are older?

Writing Prompts

1. Gender stereotypes are harmful. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Have you heard of the “third shift?” Describe what it is.
3. It's uncommon to see single fathers, while it's common to see single mothers. Why do you think this is?

Generation Gap

Warm-Up

What is a generation gap?

Vocabulary Challenge

b y a b e b o r o m s = People born right after WWII (2 words).

n s g l a = Very informal language.

m o c v e e o r = Find success in dealing with a problem.

o i n p o i n = A view or judgement, not necessarily based on fact.

y t o e c h n o l = Equipment and machines developed from scientific knowledge.

Idioms and Phrases

Millennials, sandwich generation, the Baby Boomers, act your age, no spring chicken

Well, to be honest, I'm _____. I'm not sure I can hike for 25 km.

Kevin! _____! Sit up straight and eat your dinner.

Women of the _____ find it particularly difficult, more so than men.

There are lots of jobs in Canada and the USA, now that _____ are finally retiring.

_____ are just starting to reach management positions in big companies these days.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: Baby Boomers, slang, overcome, opinion, technology

Idioms and phrases: no spring chicken, act your age, sandwich generation, the Baby Boomers, Millennials

Let's Talk

1. Have you ever felt a generation gap with any of your family members or coworkers?
2. How can you overcome a generation gap with someone?
3. Was life easier for your parents than for you?
4. What are the biggest challenges facing your generation?
5. What challenges do kids face growing up today?
6. Did you find it easy to talk to your parents about anything when you were growing up?
7. Did you sometimes feel misunderstood by your parents?
8. Is it okay to date or marry someone from a different generation?
9. Should you automatically offer respect to people older than you? Why or why not?
10. Do you think labels like Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials are helpful?
11. Does technology create a generation gap?
12. What do you think about older people trying to use slang words?
13. Does music play a role in generation gaps?
14. At what age did you feel like you were really an “adult?”
15. In your opinion, how many years of difference makes a generation gap?

Writing Prompts

1. Do you think that older people have a lot of wisdom to share with younger people?
2. What are the main causes of conflict between generations?
3. What label does your generation have? Read some characteristics of that. Do you “fit?”

Government and Politics

Warm-Up

Do you generally follow what's happening in politics?

Vocabulary Challenge

u c p o r t r = Taking money or favours in a dishonest way for personal way.

r f e a d l e = Another word for national.

c i a m g a n p = Organized action to achieve a goal.

n a l c l i e a = A union formed for mutual benefit.

f n t u i n o c = An activity or purpose.

Idioms and Phrases

lame duck, politically correct (PC), big government, toe the party line, get off your soapbox

Canadians are known for being _____. And polite as well.

I couldn't vote how I actually wanted. Sorry. I had to _____.

Tony! _____. We're all tired of hearing about how Covid-19 isn't a real thing.

If you don't like _____, don't move to Europe!

She can't do much about it when she's a _____ president.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: corrupt, federal, campaign, alliance, function

Idioms and phrases: politically correct, toe the party line, get off your soapbox, big government, lame duck

Let's Talk

1. What do you think of when you hear the word “government?”
2. What is the function of the government?
3. Are you generally happy with how the government functions in your country?
4. Would you like to work for the government? Why or why not?
5. Are most people who work in the government corrupt?
6. Should government leaders be paid more, similar to CEOs?
7. Does your country have a “big government” or “small government” system?
8. Did you vote in the last national/federal election?
9. How do you decide who to vote for?
10. Have your political views changed over time?
11. What are the major political parties in your country?
12. How many levels of government do you have in your country?
13. Do you think that too much money is spent on political campaigns?
14. What are some of the positives and some of the negatives of being in the EU?
15. Do you think Canada and the USA would ever form a similar alliance?

Writing Prompts

1. What are some ways in which government services could be improved in your country?
2. What changes would you make if you were the president or prime minister of your country?
3. Would you ever consider running for government office? Why or why not?

Global Warming

Warm-Up

Do you know what global warming is?

Vocabulary Challenge

o c o n t r i b u t = A person or thing that partially causes something to happen.

r r e e s v e = Turn around; go backward.

c b a n o r t f b p o r o i t = The amount of carbon used by a person or organization (2 words).

E t a h r = The planet that we live on.

n e s c c i e = The study of the physical and natural world.

Idioms and Phrases

climate change, the ozone layer, a voice in the wilderness, can't see the forest for the trees, the tip of the iceberg

Holes in _____ are a huge issue for our Earth.

David Suzuki is _____. I wish the government leaders would take him seriously.

Focusing on recycling is only one small thing. It's like they _____.

_____ is the biggest crisis facing our generation.

All the hurricanes this year is only _____. Way worse things are coming.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: contributor, reverse, carbon footprint, Earth, science

Idioms and phrases: the ozone layer, a voice in the wilderness, can't see the forest for the trees, climate change, the tip of the iceberg

Let's Talk

1. What images come to mind when you think about global warming?
2. Name 10 things that people can do to prevent global warming.
3. Name some things that big businesses can do.
4. What are the biggest contributors to global warming?
5. Do you think we'll be able to reverse global warming?
6. Do you think your country takes climate change seriously?
7. Should we have done something about this decades ago?
8. Which countries are the worst polluters?
9. How large is your "carbon footprint?"
10. Do you think there are already too many people on this Earth?
11. Do you think that Covid-19 is partially a result of climate change? Will we see more things like this in the future?
12. Will science be able to solve this problem?
13. Are houses in your country generally environmentally friendly?
14. How much longer until people aren't able to live on the Earth?
15. Do you think we'll ever live in space or on other planets?

Writing Prompts

1. Eating less meat has the potential to reverse climate change. Do you agree or disagree?
2. What can the average person do to halt climate change?
3. Recycling isn't enough. We need to reduce how much we buy. Do you agree or disagree?

Health

Warm-Up

Are you a generally healthy or unhealthy person? Give some examples.

Vocabulary Challenge

habit = Something that you do regularly.

dentist = A person that checks your teeth.

smoker = A person that uses cigarettes.

funded = Provided with money.

access = Obtain.

Idioms and Phrases

as fit as a fiddle, alive and kicking, a picture of health, out of shape, in good shape

I may be old but at least I'm _____.

Ted's check-up went well. The doctor said that he's _____.

I'm so _____ these days. I stopped exercising for weeks because I had Covid.

I'm _____ now. I've been hitting the gym pretty regularly.

Wow! I can't believe he's almost 90. He's _____ and can play tennis better than me!

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: habit, dentist, smoker, funded, access

Idioms and phrases: alive and kicking, a picture of health, out of shape, in good shape, as fit as a fiddle

Let's Talk

1. Name 10 healthy habits.
2. Name 10 unhealthy habits.
3. Name a few “lifestyle diseases.”
4. What's your best health habit? What's your worst one?
5. Do you exercise regularly?
6. What kinds of foods do you eat?
7. How often do you get a cold or flu?
8. How often do you go to the dentist?
9. Is preventative care important in your country?
10. Is it easy or difficult for smokers where you live?
11. Are pets good for health?
12. Is it easy to access medical services where you live?
13. Do doctors and nurses get paid well in your country?
14. Did you get Covid-19? Did you get quite sick?
15. Do you think that the health care system should be publicly funded?

Writing Prompts

1. How can parents encourage their children to be healthy?
2. Smoking should be illegal. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Will science allow the average person to live to more than 100?

Languages

Warm-Up

How long have you been studying English?

Vocabulary Challenge

o m t o i t i v n a = Reason for doing something.

y a i b t i l = The skill to do something.

v i o m e p r = Get better at something.

i s p o r u e v = Prior.

M n r a n i d a = A language that is spoken in China.

Idioms and Phrases

a piece of cake, can't make heads or tails of it, it's all Greek to me, figure it out, hit the books

I need to _____. My IELTS exam is next week.

Ahhhh! _____. Why can't I figure this out?

What is this grammar worksheet all about? I _____.

Japanese is _____ compared to English for Korean speakers.

Don't give up! You'll _____ and why don't you ask your teacher for help?

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: motivation, ability, improve, previous, Mandarin

Idioms and phrases: hit the books, it's all Greek to me, can't make heads or tails of it, a piece of cake, figure it out

Let's Talk

1. How many languages can you speak? How well do you know each one?
2. Do you have plans to study English or another language more in the future?
3. What's your motivation for studying English?
4. Do you find speaking or writing more difficult?
5. What works best for you—studying English in a class, with a partner, or alone?
6. Name some ways that you can practice speaking English.
7. What are some ways to improve your listening ability?
8. Which area of English are you best at? For example, grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, or speaking.
9. Should everyone in your country be required to study English?
10. At what age do most people start learning English in your country?
11. Can someone become a native English speaker if they start learning as an adult?
12. Is it easy to find an English class to join?
13. Will another language like Spanish or Mandarin eventually become more popular than English?
14. Does knowing English help advance your career?
15. Think about your previous English teachers. Which ones were the best? Why?

Writing Prompts

1. Think about someone you know who speaks English really well but isn't a native speaker. What is their secret?
2. What's your motivation for studying English?
3. What are some ways that you could improve your English ability?

Leadership

Warm-Up

Who is one leader that you look up to?

Vocabulary Challenge

i q s u e a l i t = Traits or characteristics.

w f e o s l r l o = People who follow.

d P e r n e t s i = Joe Biden's title.

c a i a p n t = The leader of a sports team.

i n i t e n r e g s t = Not boring.

Idioms and Phrases

the head honcho, calls the shots, holds the purse strings, mover and shaker, raked him over the coals

Talk to Emily if you want to get a raise. She's the one who _____.

My wife is a real _____ at her company. She just got another promotion.

Remember that guy Ted I was telling you about? The one who always shows up an hour late for work? I just had a meeting with him and _____.

Who's _____ these days? Sandra is the CEO, right?

I don't _____. You'll have to talk to Ken about that.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: qualities, followers, President, captain, interesting

Idioms and phrases: holds the purse strings, mover and shaker, raked him over the coals, the head honcho, call the shots

Let's Talk

1. Name 10 situations in which you might find a leader.
2. What are some qualities of a good leader?
3. What are some qualities of a bad leader?
4. What are some kinds of different leadership styles?
5. Have you ever had a really good or really bad boss?
6. Can anyone be a leader? Or, are some people natural followers?
7. Is it possible to learn how to be a good leader?
8. Would you like to be a politician?
9. If you were president or prime minister of your country, what changes would you make?
10. Would you like to be the CEO of a big company?
11. Why do companies and countries need good leadership?
12. Do you like to be a leader? In what situations?
13. Would you find a course or class about leadership interesting?
14. Romantic relationships—is there usually a leader? Or, is it a partnership?
15. For sports teams, should the best leader automatically be the captain of the team?

Writing Prompts

1. People that are physically attractive have an advantage in leading people. Do you agree or disagree?
2. In general, women make better leaders than men. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Think about a great leader. What makes them so good?

Living Arrangements

Warm-Up

Who do you live with? Do you like it that way?

Vocabulary Challenge

h c d h i o l o d = The period of time when someone is a child.

t y d o r o m r i = Housing on a college or university campus.

r a o t o m e m = Someone that you live with who isn't a family member.

a f a e f o b r l d = Reasonably priced.

c s p a u m = The physical location of a college or university.

Idioms and Phrases

security deposit, shared laundry, affordable housing, own my own home, the suburbs

I hate having _____. Whenever I want to use it, someone else already is.

You'll have to pay the first month's rent as well as the _____ on the day you move in.

The lack of _____ is a huge problem in Vancouver and Toronto.

I've worked so hard for the past 10 years so I could _____.

I moved to _____ recently. It's not so bad, except for the long commute to work.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: childhood, dormitory, roommate, affordable, campus

Idioms and phrases: shared laundry, security deposit, affordable housing, own my own home, the suburbs

Let's Talk

1. What kind of home do you live in?
2. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of that place?
3. How's your current place different from your childhood home?
4. Have you ever had roommates? How was that experience?
5. Describe the ideal roommate.
6. Have you ever lived in a campus dormitory? How was that?
7. What are some advantages and disadvantages of renting a place?
8. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of owning a home?
9. Is it very difficult for people to buy their own homes in your city?
10. Should the government do more to provide affordable housing for people?
11. Is your home clean and tidy? Or, a bit messy?
12. What chores do you not mind? Which ones do you hate?
13. Do you like having people over to your house?
14. What makes a place very cozy and comfortable?
15. Would you ever want to live with your parents or grandparents?

Writing Prompts

1. Home is where the heart is. Do you agree with this common idiom?
2. Describe your dream home.
3. Can the average person in your country buy their own home? Why or why not?

Marriage

Warm-Up

Describe the last wedding that you went to.

Vocabulary Challenge

y g a a m a e r g r i = 2 men or 2 women getting married (2 words).

m l u p l t e i = More than one.

d e i c v d o r = No longer married.

a n e c r e s y s = Needed or required.

c l o e u p = 2.

Idioms and Phrases

tie the knot, love at first sight, match made in heaven, settle down, get cold feet

Toni and Sandy are a _____. Don't you think?

I never believed in _____ until I met Tammy.

I think it's time for Tom to _____ and find a good woman.

I'm worried that I might _____ on my wedding day.

When are you going to _____?

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: gay marriage, multiple, divorced, necessary, couple

Idioms and phrases: match made in heaven, love at first sight, settle down, get cold feet, tie the knot

Let's Talk

1. What's the average amount that people spend on weddings in your country (look it up online). Is that too much?
2. What's the average age that people get married?
3. Is marriage better for men or women?
4. Is gay marriage legal in your country?
5. Why do people sometimes not get along with their in-laws?
6. Is it better to be single or married?
7. What do you think about people getting married but not living together?
8. Is it okay for couples to live together before getting married?
9. How long should you date someone before getting married?
10. What do you think about people having multiple husbands or wives?
11. Is love necessary for a good marriage?
12. What usually causes people to get divorced?
13. What advice would you give to someone who is about to get married?
14. Have you ever been a best man or bridesmaid What was that experience like?
15. Why do you think there are more single mothers than single fathers?

Writing Prompts

1. What's your ideal wedding?
2. Arranged marriages can work well. Do you agree or disagree?
3. People spend too much time, effort, and money on weddings. Do you agree or disagree?

Medicine

Warm-Up

Do you go to the doctor when you need to, or avoid it for a while?

Vocabulary Challenge

p i r e s c r i p t = Something that a doctor tells you to take.

e i x e r c i s e = Running, tennis, and yoga are examples of.

i v a c c i n e = Something that protects against disease or illness.

a d e c a d e = A period of 10 years.

I m m u n e s y s t e m = The system in the body that fights disease and infection (2 words).

Idioms and Phrases

an apple a day keeps the doctor away, a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, a taste of her own medicine, laughter is the best medicine, under the weather

Drink some juice with your pills. _____.

Eat your salad! You know what they say, _____.

Hang out with your friends! It'll make you feel better. After all, _____.

I like to catch up on Netflix when I'm feeling _____.

She got fired? I'm happy that she got _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: prescription, exercise, vaccine, decade, immune system

Idioms and phrases: a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, an apple a day keeps the doctor away, laughter is the best medicine, under the weather, a taste of her own medicine

Let's Talk

1. Is it easy to access medical services in your country?
2. What kind of health care system does your country have?
3. How much do you have to pay to visit the doctor?
4. How do you pay for prescription medication?
5. Do you have a family doctor?
6. What do you think about Chinese medicine?
7. Do you ever go to a chiropractor, physiotherapist, or massage therapist?
8. Do you hate visiting the doctor?
9. Have you ever had an annual check-up?
10. How often do you go to the dentist? Is this important to you?
11. Can a lot of diseases be cured by exercise and healthy eating?
12. What can weaken and what can strengthen your immune system?
13. Did you get the Covid-19 vaccine? Why or why not?
14. Will the average person live to be more than 100 in a decade or two?
15. Have you ever been really sick?

Writing Prompts

1. Animal testing should be banned. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Foods like garlic, mushrooms, kale, etc. have a lot of positive health benefits. Do you agree or disagree?
3. People living longer and longer is difficult on our societies. Do you agree or disagree?

Money and Spending

Warm-Up

Are you a “spender” or a “saver?”

Vocabulary Challenge

i n i f l i o a n t = A general increase in prices.

t g u y i l r p l r e a e s = Something frivolous or wasteful that you spend money on (2 words).

c s t k o e m a r t k = A place where buyers and sellers of company shares meet (2 words).

G b r e a g = Someone who asks for money on the street.

r l e a t e s t e a = Property (land or buildings) (2 words).

Idioms and Phrases

break the bank, brings home the bacon, money doesn't grow on trees, pick up the tab, flat broke

I'll have to ask Tammy about that. She _____ in our family.

No, we can't go to Disneyland. _____.

Let me _____. You paid last time.

I'm _____. I don't even know what I'm going to eat tomorrow.

We can get a new car as long as it doesn't _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: inflation, guilty pleasure, stock market, beggar, real estate

Idioms and phrases: brings home the bacon, Money doesn't grow on trees, pick up the tab, flat broke, break the bank

Let's Talk

1. Do you know what inflation is? Is it a big problem in your country?
2. How does the currency system work where you live (dollars/bills, etc.)?
3. How often do you eat at home vs. eating out?
4. Do you have any “guilty pleasures?”
5. Do you enjoy shopping? What for?
6. What are some ways in which people can save money?
7. What do you think about a “universal basic income?”
8. Is tipping common where you live?
9. How much do you spend on presents for people?
10. Do you invest money in real estate or the stock market?
11. Is there a sales tax in your country? On what kinds of things?
12. Do you ever give money to beggars on the street?
13. Does the government do enough to help poor people in your country?
14. Is owning a home not affordable for the average person in your country?
15. What are the pros and cons of high levels of taxation?

Writing Prompts

1. Can poor people be just as happy as rich people? Explain your answer.
2. Credit cards are a good thing. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Kids should have to do chores in order to receive an allowance. Do you agree or disagree?

Nursing Homes

Warm-Up

Have you ever visited a nursing home?

Vocabulary Challenge

a r e n l u t c t = Not wanting to do something.

i e x v p e n e s = Not cheap.

e t p a n r = Mother or father.

y w e h a l t = Describes someone who has a lot of money.

h e o m e c r a = Support that allows someone to live in their home (2 words).

Idioms and Phrases

old geezer, a senior moment, one foot in the grave, a ripe old age, getting on in years

That guy Ted! What an _____. He's always so grumpy.

I hope that I live to _____. At least 90.

I had _____ yesterday. I thought I lost my glasses, but they were on my head.

Tony has _____, but he still drinks and smokes all the time.

My parents are _____, and I'm thinking about moving to be closer to them.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: reluctant, expensive, parent, wealthy, home care

Idioms and phrases: old geezer, a ripe old age, a senior moment, one foot in the grave, getting on in years

Let's Talk

1. Where do older people generally live in your country?
2. Why do people live in nursing homes?
3. What are the pros of a nursing home?
4. What are the cons?
5. Why are some people reluctant to move into a nursing home?
6. How expensive are nursing homes?
7. Who should pay for nursing homes for older people who aren't wealthy?
8. Do nursing homes generally do a good job of caring for people?
9. Would you ever let your older parents or grandparents live with you?
10. If you have children, do you expect them to let you live with them when you're older?
11. Who should care for older people? Families or the government?
12. What do you think about home care for older people?
13. Do you worry about what will happen to you when you get older?
14. What do you expect to change when you get older?
15. What scares you about getting older?

Writing Prompts

1. Family members should always look after older people. Do you agree or disagree?
2. People should stay in their own homes as long as possible. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Have you known someone who has lived in a nursing home? What was their experience like?

Olympics

Warm-Up

Do you watch the Olympics? What are your favourite events?

Vocabulary Challenge

o g l u a m s o r = Flashy or exciting.

a p a r t i e c d i p = Joined in.

u d g r n t i e s g t = Checking to see if people are using illegal substances (2 words).

o f u a s m = Well known.

O i l y a m n p = Person who participates in the Olympics.

Idioms and Phrases

front runner, jump the gun, skating on thin ice, throw a curveball, neck and neck

Don't _____ on this. We haven't heard back from that other company yet.

Timmy. You're _____ with your dad. You'd better clean your room right now.

Sorry to _____ into our plans, but I have to work until 1:00 on Saturday.

Did you see that finish? They were _____.

Who's the _____ for getting that contract? What are they doing?

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: glamorous, participated, drug testing, famous, Olympian

Idioms and phrases: jump the gun, skating on thin ice, throw a curveball, neck and neck, front runner

Let's Talk

1. Would you ever plan a trip to see the Olympics? What about if they were in your country in another city?
2. What are some of the more glamorous Olympic sports?
3. What are some of the less glamorous ones?
4. Which sports would you like to see added to the Olympics?
5. Do you prefer watching the summer or winter Olympics?
6. Do you know anyone who has participated in the Olympics?
7. Would you want the Olympics to come to your city?
8. Do the Olympics do more harm than good to the host countries?
9. How can countries make money from hosting the Olympics?
10. Do you find the opening and closing ceremonies boring or interesting?
11. What impact did Covid-19 have on the Olympics?
12. If you could be good at any Olympic sport, what would it be? Why?
13. Does your country have any famous Olympians?
14. What do you think about drug testing in the Olympics?
15. Would you ever encourage your child to become an Olympian?

Writing Prompts

1. Overall, hosting the Olympics isn't good for a country. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Would you encourage a young child to try to get into the Olympics later in life? Why or why not?
3. Athletes should be able to take whatever performance-enhancing drugs they want. Do you agree or disagree?

Phones

Warm-Up

Are you addicted to your smartphone?

Vocabulary Challenge

m l o e b i n p h e o = An old-fashioned name for cellphone (2 words).

e t i c t k = What you need to get into an event or on a plane.

e a v i e s d n r o p g p = Listening in on another conversation that doesn't involve you.

t e t i e q t u e = Rules for good manners.

g h n a n g i t o u = Spending time with someone (2 words).

Idioms and Phrases

blowing up, burner phone, hold the phone, hang up, cut off

Why is call display blocked? Is he calling us from a _____?

Why is your phone _____? Who keeps calling you?

We got _____. I didn't hear the last thing you said.

I'm going to _____ now. Please don't call me back.

_____. Ted and Amy broke up?!

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: mobile phone, ticket, eavesdropping, etiquette, hanging out

Idioms and phrases: burner phone, blowing up, cut off, hang up, hold the phone

Let's Talk

1. When did you get your first cellphone? Was it a smartphone?
2. What do you mostly use your phone for?
3. Do you ever call people? Or, do you prefer texting?
4. Do you ever buy tickets or plan vacations using your phone?
5. Does the average person need a desktop or laptop computer these days?
6. Do you ever have “phone breaks?”
7. How nervous do you feel if your phone starts to run out of battery?
8. Are you happy with your current phone or are you considering getting a new one?
9. What's the best brand of mobile phone in your opinion?
10. Are mobile phones dangerous? In what ways?
11. At what age should kids get their first phone?
12. What are some etiquette rules for using cell phones?
13. Do you like eavesdropping on conversations when out in public?
14. Have you ever been on a date or hanging out with a friend who used their phone too much?
15. Should schools ban phones?

Writing Prompts

1. Children shouldn't use cell phones. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Teenagers should have to pay their own phone bills. Do you agree or disagree?
3. People use their phones way too much! Do you agree or disagree?

Parties

Warm-Up

What was the last party that you went to?

Vocabulary Challenge

d a g t i t n e n = Going.

w i e n d g d = Marriage ceremony and party.

a e l e r m e y n t o s c o h l = Where children study from ages 5-12 (approx.) (2 words).

e u x e s c = A reason given to not do something.

t c r e l a e b e = To enjoy a happy day or occasion.

Idioms and Phrases

the life of the party, a whale of a time, let's get the party started, party pooper, crash the party

Ready? _____! I'm tired of sitting around waiting.

Why is Keith always such a _____? I've never been around someone so negative as him.

It doesn't matter that we weren't invited. Let's just _____.

Just come with me. We'll have _____.

Wow! Beth really is _____. It was so boring until she got here.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: attending, wedding, elementary school, excuses, celebrate

Idioms and phrases: Let's get the party started, party pooper, crash the party, a whale of a time, the life of the party

Let's Talk

1. Do you enjoy going to parties? Why or why not?
2. Do you enjoy hosting parties? Why or why not?
3. Do you bring something to eat or drink to a party?
4. Do you bring a small gift to the host?
5. What are some occasions that people have parties for?
6. What are some etiquette rules when you're at a party?
7. Do you always RSVP?
8. What do you think of people that click “attending” on a Facebook event but then don't show up?
9. Do you like house parties or out somewhere?
10. What kinds of games or activities do you like to do at parties?
11. Have you ever been to a theme or dress up party?
12. What are some polite excuses for not going to a party?
13. Are there any special and important birthdays in your culture?
14. Do people celebrate certain wedding anniversaries?
15. What do you think about parties for children graduating from elementary school or middle school?

Writing Prompts

1. What's your ideal birthday party?
2. Would you like someone to throw a surprise party for you? Why or why not?
3. A house party is the best kind of party. Do you agree or disagree?

Police

Warm-Up

What is your view of the police in your country?

Vocabulary Challenge

h l a s e s = To bug or annoy.

p o c i o r t r n u = Dishonest actions.

a m l e n t t h e a h l = Psychological and emotional state of being (2 words).

r c e o p s p = A slang word in English for police officers.

n d r k u i d n r i g v = Operating a car after having some alcohol.

Idioms and Phrases

get away with murder, held hostage, a new sheriff in town, on the run, take no prisoners

Tom! Are you okay? I just heard that you were _____ when you were travelling.

Get ready. There's _____. I have a feeling it's going to get a lot more serious around here.

The shooter is still _____. Lock your doors and don't go outside. Stay away from the windows too.

Let's beat them to get into the finals. We'll _____!

Jenny. You let the kids _____. I hate always being the bad guy.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: hassle, corruption, mental health, coppers, drunk driving

Idioms and phrases: held hostage, a new sheriff in town, on the run, take no prisoners, get away with murder

Let's Talk

1. Have you had any interactions with the police (positive or negative)?
2. What images come to mind when you hear the word “police?”
3. Do you have any friends or family members who work for the police?
4. Why do you think the police have such a bad reputation in many countries?
5. Is corruption a big problem among police officers?
6. Should police officers get paid more to prevent corruption?
7. Would you ever become a police officer? Or encourage your children to do that?
8. Would you call the police if you need help?
9. What do you think about “defunding” the police?
10. Should the government hire more mental health workers instead of police officers to deal with crime?
11. Do the police often hassle homeless people in your country?
12. What are some slang words for the police in your country? In English, you might hear cops, coppers, pigs, po-po, etc.
13. Is being a police officer more dangerous for women than men?
14. Is drunk driving a serious offense where you live?
15. What do you think of “NACAB?” (not all cops are bad)

Writing Prompts

1. The police force should be much smaller than it currently is. Do you agree or disagree?
2. There isn't enough accountability for bad police officers. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Are most police officers bad?

Poverty

Warm-Up

What are some reasons that people are poor?

Vocabulary Challenge

e i m e s a g = Pictures.

i w o n r g k o p o r = People with jobs who don't have much money (2 words).

a e w r e l f t s t e a = A country that provides a lot of assistance to people who need it (2 words).

m e c r i = For example, murder, theft, etc.

m P e r i s M t i r e n i = The head of the government in Canada.

Idioms and Phrases

strapped for cash, on the dole, in the red, pinching pennies, down on my luck

You could go _____? I think you'll get about \$2000 a month.

My company was _____ last quarter.

We're going to have to start _____ if we want to send Jimmy to college.

I was _____ during my 20s. I lost my job and my house as well.

Why don't we watch a movie at my house instead of going out? I'm _____ these days.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: images, working poor, welfare state, crime, Prime Minister

Idioms and phrases: on the dole, in the red, pinching pennies, down on my luck/strapped for cash (either one works for the last two)

Let's Talk

1. What are some words or images that come to mind when you think about poverty and poor people?
2. Are there lots of poor people in your country?
3. Do you know what “working poor” means?
4. How much assistance does the government give poor people in your country?
5. Should the government do more to help poor people?
6. Do you live in a “welfare state?”
7. What do you think about a “universal basic income?”
8. What are some of the reasons why people are poor?
9. Are people who live on the street just lazy?
10. Where can you find homeless people in your city? Why do you think they stay there?
11. Does poverty cause crime?
12. Have you ever donated to a food bank or given some money to a poor person on the street?
13. Do schools in your country provide breakfast and lunch for children? If yes, is it free? Do you think that they should?
14. Why do you think that poverty still exists in rich countries?
15. If you were the president or prime minister, what would you do to address poverty in your country?

Writing Prompts

1. Poverty is one of the biggest issues in my country. Do you agree or disagree?
2. The government should do more to eliminate poverty. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Do some research and find out the main causes of homelessness.

Privacy

Warm-Up

Is privacy important to you? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Challenge

a s o l c i i m a e d = Examples are Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter (2 words).

f s r i n i g e n r t p = The unique patterns on fingers.

h i a n c g k = Gaining unauthorized access to a computer or network.

t r m o n o i = Track.

f m d r e o e = The power to say or do what you'd like.

Idioms and Phrases

my lips are sealed, let the cat out of the bag, whistle blower, spill the beans, keep it under wraps

Toni kind of _____. We were going to tell everyone next week.

Don't worry. You know that I'll never tell. _____.

Please _____. I'm not 100% sure that I'm quitting yet.

Did you hear about that trial for the _____? He got 10 years of jail time.

_____. I know that something is bothering you.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: social media, fingerprints, hacking, monitor, freedom

Idioms and phrases: let the cat out of the bag, my lips are sealed, keep it under wraps, whistle blower, spill the beans

Let's Talk

1. How do you maintain privacy when using the Internet?
2. How about at home or school?
3. What about when using social media? Do you share lots of personal things, or not?
4. How strict are your privacy settings on something like Facebook?
5. Do you think famous people have a right to privacy?
6. Do companies have the right to monitor you online when you're at work?
7. Should the government monitor online action? Why or why not?
8. Should social media companies always keep your information private?
9. What do you think about getting your fingerprints taken when you travel to another country?
10. Have you heard of "freedom of the press?" Describe what it is.
11. During Covid-19, some governments used credit card usage and cell phones for contact tracing. Do you agree or disagree with this?
12. Do you think that security cameras keep us safe or invade our privacy?
13. Are you nervous about a company like Google having so much of your information?
14. Do you think banks do a good job at preventing hacking?
15. Have you ever been "hacked?" What happened?

Writing Prompts

1. Privacy vs. public safety. There's always a balance for things like security cameras. What do you think about this?
2. Companies like Facebook and Google have too much information about me. Do you worry about this?
3. What are some things the average person can do to keep themselves safe while online?

Procrastination

Warm-Up

What is procrastination? Look it up if you don't know.

Vocabulary Challenge

o b e u h a r v i = A course of action.

a d y e l = Wait.

l p t e y n a = A punishment.

a e i d c v = Guidance or recommendation.

p e n a c t i e = The ability to tolerate or delay something.

Idioms and Phrases

better late than never, the early bird gets the worm, lost track of time, dragging your feet, take my time

I don't procrastinate, I just like to _____.

Oh sorry, I must have _____. I need another 15 minutes to get ready to go.

Toni is always late! She just laughs and says, "_____." It drives me crazy.

I'm going to apply for colleges well before the deadline. _____, right?

Quit _____ on cleaning your room. You have to get it done before you go out.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: behaviour, delay, penalty, advice, patience

Idioms and phrases: take my time, lost track of time, better late than never, the early bird gets the worm, dragging your feet

Let's Talk

1. What are some reasons that people procrastinate?
2. Are you a procrastinator?
3. If yes, about what kinds of things?
4. Do you know anyone who has a difficult time getting things done?
5. Do you think it's possible for someone who procrastinates to change their behaviour?
6. Is it sometimes good to delay an action or a decision?
7. What is the difference between patience and procrastination?
8. Have you ever had to pay a late penalty because you didn't pay a bill on time?
9. Have you ever been late for an important event? What happened?
10. Do you know anyone who is always late to things? What goes wrong for them?
11. When you come to class, are you usually early, on time, or late?
12. Some people think that if you're not 5 minutes early, you're actually late. Do you agree with that?
13. Do you get angry at people who are always late?
14. Some cultures prefer to wait and do things at the last minute. Others prepare ahead of time for things. What are people in your country like?
15. If you have a friend who procrastinates that wants to change, what advice would you give them?

Writing Prompts

1. What are some of the positives and some of the negatives of doing things at the last minute?
2. How can someone who procrastinates change their behaviour? Name a few ideas.
3. If you had a husband or wife who was supposed to pay the bills each month and they kept forgetting about them, what would you do?

Religion

Warm-Up

What are the names of some of the biggest religions in the world?

Vocabulary Challenge

s i p i t r i t u y a l = Concerned with the human spirit.

t a g i n o c s = Someone who believes that it's impossible to know anything with certainty.

h B u a d d = An enlightened one.

l e a u q = Being the same.

e m o y n = Currency.

Idioms and Phrases

a cold day in hell, an act of god, fall from grace, speak of the devil, scared the hell out of me

Honestly, it will be _____ before he ever pays you back.

Hey! _____. We were just talking about you!

Oh wow. You _____. I didn't even know you were home.

My boss had a big _____ when the news broke.

The only explanation is that it was _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: spirituality, agnostic, Buddha, equal, money

Idioms and phrases: a cold day in hell, speak of the devil, scared the hell out of me, fall from grace, an act of god.

Let's Talk

1. What are some of the major religions in your country?
2. Do most people follow a religion in your country?
3. What are some countries or areas of the world where many people are religious?
4. Is religion important to you?
5. Is there a difference between religion and spirituality?
6. What are some of the benefits of religion?
7. What are some of the negatives?
8. Do you know what “agnostic” means? If no, look it up!
9. Most religions are about love and peace. Why do they sometimes cause wars?
10. What do you think about religions that teach that men and women are not equal?
11. Should religion be taught in schools? Why or why not?
12. What would the world be like without religion?
13. Religion gives hope to a lot of people. Why do you think this is?
14. What would Jesus, Buddha, or Mohammed think of our world today?
15. Money is the new religion. What do you think about this?

Writing Prompts

1. Do you think religion is mostly harmful or helpful? Explain your answer.
2. There are many religions in the world. How do we know which one(s) are true?
3. Do you enjoy talking about religion? Why or why not?

Restaurants

Warm-Up

How often do you eat out?

Vocabulary Challenge

e i x p v e n e s = Not cheap.

t b e l r e r i = Very bad.

e b u f t f = A type of restaurant where you can eat at much as you want.

t f s a f o d o = Examples are McDonalds and Burger King (2 words).

u s t h d w n o = Closed (2 words).

Idioms and Phrases

dine and dash, grab a bite to eat, it's my treat, go Dutch, get the bill

We need to go. Can we please _____?

Did those people just do a _____? I didn't see them pay, and they left so quickly.

Why don't we _____? You always buy!

Let's go out for dinner on your birthday. _____.

I'm so tired. Let's _____ on the way home from work.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: expensive, terrible, buffet, fast food, shut down

Idioms and phrases: get the bill, dine and dash, go Dutch, It's my treat, grab a bite to eat

Let's Talk

1. What's your favourite restaurant? Describe it!
2. Where do you like to go for a quick, cheap lunch?
3. What's your favourite kind of food to eat when you go out (Chinese or Italian, for example)?
4. Is eating out expensive where you live?
5. Are you expected to tip when you eat out?
6. Who usually pays when you go out to eat? Are there any rules about this?
7. When you go out to eat, do you ever order alcohol, appetizers, or dessert?
8. Do you ever eat at fast food restaurants?
9. What do you think about fast food restaurants offering toys to children?
10. Have you ever worked in a restaurant (or known someone who has)? What was that experience like?
11. What would you do if you ordered something but didn't like it?
12. Have you ever received terrible service at a restaurant? What happened?
13. Do you enjoy eating at buffets? Are they popular in your country?
14. Do you generally prefer to eat in, or do you get take out?
15. The Canadian government supported restaurants during Covid-19 when they were shut down. What do you think about this?

Writing Prompts

1. What would you do if you ordered something, but there was a hair in it?
2. Do you think kids and seniors should get special menus and discounts at restaurants?
3. What are some things, besides the food, that make a restaurant either good or bad?

Safety

Warm-Up

What comes to mind when you hear the word “safety?”

Vocabulary Challenge

u c a u s t i o = Describes someone who is careful.

c c o n o s c u i = Aware of surroundings.

d n a c e c t i = Unfortunate incident that results in something bad happening.

i a i n r e l = Examples are Air Canada and United.

e c r n o n c = Worry.

Idioms and Phrases

better safe than sorry, safety first, plays it safe, watch your step, throw caution to the wind

I think I'm going to _____ and ask Mary out on a date.

Hey, _____, right? Just go to the doctor and make sure it's nothing serious.

Please _____ when you're getting off the bus.

Oh you know Tom. He always _____ and never does anything but stay in his house!

Let's measure twice before we cut the wood. _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: cautious, conscious, accident, airline, concern

Idioms and phrases: throw caution to the wind, safety first, watch your step, plays it safe, better safe than sorry

Let's Talk

1. Are you a generally cautious person?
2. Do you know any very safety-conscious people?
3. Have you ever been in an accident of some kind?
4. What are some jobs where you might find a “safety officer?”
5. Do you always lock your doors?
6. Are there any places where you go that you feel nervous?
7. Are you scared about being alone outside when it's dark?
8. Is crime a big concern in your city?
9. Would you fly with a cheap airline that didn't have a good safety record?
10. Do you have any safety-related travel tips?
11. Are you concerned with food safety? What kinds of things do you do?
12. Is it dangerous to drive in your country?
13. What are some safety features that you can find in cars?
14. Do you worry about identity theft?
15. How can children and teens keep themselves safe online?

Writing Prompts

1. What are some ways in which you ensure the safety of your home or possessions?
2. Are you safe when you do things online? Why or why not?
3. What are some tips for staying safe when driving?

Science and Technology

Warm-Up

Is there a difference between science and technology? Look it up if you're not sure.

Vocabulary Challenge

t g a g d e = A small mechanical or electrical device or tool.

n i n i v e o n t = A new process or device that someone has come up with.

i c n l g o n = Making an exact copy of something.

i o r c g a n = Made without the use of pesticides.

g a e v a e r = Regular, normal.

Idioms and Phrases

it's not rocket science, on the same wavelength, reinvent the wheel, pull the plug, cutting edge

You don't have to convince me. We're _____.

We have to _____ on that project. We're bleeding money.

I don't think we need to _____. I'm sure someone has done something very similar already.

The new model will have _____ safety features.

You're nervous about your driving test? Well, _____. Almost everybody passes.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: gadget, invention, cloning, organic, average

Idioms and phrases: on the same wavelength, pull the plug, reinvent the wheel, cutting edge, it's not rocket science

Let's Talk

1. What kinds of things do you use the internet for?
2. What's your favourite “gadget?”
3. What are some inventions that changed our world?
4. Is technology always good? Why or why not?
5. Will cloning people be common in the future?
6. Will science and technology allow us to live easily beyond 100 years?
7. Does technology keep people alive for too long?
8. What do you think about GMOs (genetically modified food)?
9. Are you willing to pay more for food that is organic?
10. Will robots take over the world one day?
11. Do you think computers and robots do too many jobs that people should be doing?
12. Were you alive when the internet became readily available? How did life change?
13. Will technology be able to reverse global warming one day?
14. Does modern technology reduce or increase stress?
15. Does it matter that the average person has no idea how their car works?

Writing Prompts

1. In your opinion, which invention had the biggest impact on our world?
2. What do you think would happen if the power went out for a month in your city?
3. Technology does more harm than good. Do you agree or disagree?

Service Industry

Warm-Up

What does “service industry” mean? Look it up if you don't know.

Vocabulary Challenge

i n d u s t r y = Field or area.

e x c e l l e n t = Really good.

r e v i e w = As assessment of something.

m o n o p o l y = When only 1 company offers a specific product or service.

h i r e = Paying someone to do something for you.

Idioms and Phrases

the bottom line, touch base, go the extra mile, raise the bar, word of mouth

Let's _____ again. I'd love to hear how this product is working for you.

At ABC computers, the most important thing is to _____ for the customer.

_____ is the best form of advertising because it's free.

_____ is that we have to do better for our customers. Whatever it takes to prevent them from switching providers.

I want to _____ for what's expected of our employees. Most people seem to be doing just the bare minimum.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: industry, excellent, review, monopoly, hiring

Idioms and phrases: touch base, go the extra mile, word of mouth, the bottom line, raise the bar

Let's Talk

1. What are some examples of service industry jobs?
2. Have you ever gotten really good customer service?
3. What about really bad?
4. What makes for a good customer service experience?
5. Are there any companies that you know that are known for excellent customer service?
6. Have you ever complained or left a review online about bad service?
7. Are there any companies known for terrible customer service?
8. How important is good customer service to the success of a business?
9. Would you go back to a restaurant with amazing food but terrible service? Why or why not?
10. Have you ever paid someone to clean your house?
11. What do you think about hiring someone to plan a wedding? Or, is it better to do it yourself?
12. If money didn't matter, what are three services you'd pay for every month?
13. Are there any "monopolies" in your country? Why might their customer service not be that good?
14. Does tipping have a big impact on the quality of service you get?
15. How does customer service in your country compare to any other countries that you've been to?

Writing Prompts

1. Tipping should be banned in restaurants. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Have you ever had a service industry job? What was that experience like?
3. The "customer is always right." Do you agree or disagree with this?

Single Life

Warm-Up

Do you enjoy being single? Why or why not?

Vocabulary Challenge

g s m t a i = Disgrace associated with a person or situation.

b i e n t e f = An advantage.

r c h e i l n d = Kids.

f s c p i e c i = Certain thing, person or situation.

m d i a r e r = Has a spouse.

Idioms and Phrases

joint custody, joined at the hip, single and ready to mingle, blinded by love, single parent

We do have _____ but the kids are with me 80% of the time.

My friend set me up on a _____, but it was terrible! He was a smoker, which my friend knows I hate.

I know you're _____ right now, but is she really a great catch? Didn't she just leave her husband a couple of months ago?

I became a _____ after my husband died in a car accident.

Do you know anyone? I'm _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: stigma, benefit, children, specific, married

Idioms and phrases: joint custody, blind date, blinded by love, single parent, single and ready to mingle

Let's Talk

1. Why do you think some people remain single?
2. What are the pros of being single?
3. What are the cons?
4. Is there a stigma attached to older, single people?
5. Do you think that single or married people are happier?
6. Why do some people stay in unhappy marriages?
7. Is marriage better for men or women, in general?
8. Is there one specific person right for you? Or, could many people be good for you?
9. Is it fair that married people often get tax benefits?
10. How is life different if you have kids than if you don't?
11. Do you know any single people who've had children? What do you think about this?
12. Are there more single people in the city or in the countryside?
13. Are most of your friends married or single?
14. Have you ever been set up on a date?
15. Do you ever try to set up your single friends?

Writing Prompts

1. How do habits change when someone is single vs. when they're in a relationship?
2. Single people have a lot of disadvantages. What are some of them?
3. What was the best time in your life? Were you single or married?

Social Media

Warm-Up

What are your favourite social media networks?

Vocabulary Challenge

k f e a s n w e = False or misleading information (2 words).

n s t e e = A short form of the word “teenagers.”

u f a s m o = Describes a person or thing that everyone knows.

d r a o n u g e s = Not safe.

k c e o r w o r = Someone that you work with.

l y d a i = Something done most days.

Idioms and Phrases

went viral, basic, YOLO, #winning, selfie

They made so many sales because their ad campaign _____.

Let me take a picture for you! It'll be better for your profile picture than a _____.

I just fixed my dishwasher! _____.

That guy is _____. Don't waste your time with him.

Go on the trip. _____.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: fake news, teens, famous, dangerous, daily

Idioms and phrases: went viral, selfie, #winning, basic, YOLO

Let's Talk

1. How much time do you spend on social media? Is it too much?
2. What kinds of things do you do on social media?
3. Have you ever met someone from online in real life?
4. Do you follow any famous people on social media?
5. What do you think about “influencers?”
6. Do you care how many followers you have or likes you get?
7. Is it possible to survive these days without any social media accounts?
8. Why do you think people care so much about social media?
9. What are some positive things about social media?
10. What are some negative things?
11. Can social media sites be dangerous? In what way?
12. At what age should kids or teens be allowed to have social media accounts?
13. Should people be allowed to use social media while they're working?
14. Have you ever looked up an old classmate, coworker, or friend on social media?
15. Has social media changed our daily behaviour?

Writing Prompts

1. Overall, social media is bad for people. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Social media companies should protect people against “fake news.” Do you agree or disagree?
3. How do you use social media in your life?

Teachers

Warm-Up

Describe one of your favourite teachers.

Vocabulary Challenge

r e t r i = Finish working when you're older.

r e t x e p = A person with a lot of knowledge or skill in a particular area.

o r t o s b = Machines that can replicate human movement.

e h i r n d = Create difficulty.

i p r o e d n i c s t = Guesses about the future.

Idioms and Phrases

teacher's pet, skip class, pull an all-nighter, you can't teach an old dog new tricks, didn't make the grade

I'm so tired. I had to _____ to study for the exam today.

Why do you even try with Keith? _____.

Who do you think is the _____? Cam maybe?

I applied to a few law schools, but I _____. They all rejected me.

If you _____ one more time, you'll fail the course.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: retire, expert, robots, hinder, predictions

Idioms and phrases: pull an all-nighter, you can't teach an old dog new tricks, teacher's pet, didn't make the grade, skip class

Let's Talk

1. What are some qualities of a good teacher?
2. What are some qualities of a bad one?
3. Would you ever consider being a teacher? Why or why not?
4. If you had to choose an age to teach, who would that be? Why?
5. Do you think teachers get paid enough money in your country?
6. What are the advantages of being a teacher?
7. What are the disadvantages?
8. Have you ever taught someone how to do something? How did it go?
9. Would you rather have a first-year teacher or someone just about to retire?
10. Who has the biggest influence over young kids—parents or teachers?
11. Do teachers have to be experts in the subject that they teach?
12. Does technology help or hinder teachers?
13. Can robots ever replace teachers?
14. Do you think that online learning is equally effective as in-person?
15. Do you have any predictions for how teaching will change in the future?

Writing Prompts

1. Overall, the public education system in my country is good. Do you agree or disagree?
2. Do you think teaching is a difficult job? Why or why not?
3. Teachers should teach morals and values, not just things like English or math. Do you agree with this?

Transportation

Warm-Up

How do you get to school or work? How long does it take?

Vocabulary Challenge

c p i u b l o t r a n s i p o n r t a = A shared way to get from place to place (2 words).

s i p g e n e d e t i c t k = A fine for driving too quickly (2 words).

r c a n a d c e t c i = Hitting another vehicle, accidentally (2 words).

l d e s r i s v e r = Describes something that doesn't require a person to drive it.

r y f e r = A method of transportation on the water.

Idioms and Phrases

I lost my train of thought, that ship has sailed, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it, traffic jam, bumper to bumper

Don't worry about that now. _____.

Honestly, _____. You should have talked to me about that months ago if you wanted it to get done.

I'm going to be late. Traffic is _____ on the highway.

I'm stuck in a _____. I'll be there around 7:30 I think.

Sorry, _____. What was I talking about?

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: public transportation, speeding ticket, car accident, driverless, ferry

Idioms and phrases: We'll cross that bridge when we come to it, that ship has sailed, bumper to bumper, traffic jam, I lost my train of thought.

Let's Talk

1. How do you get where you need to go?
2. At what age can you get a driver's license in your country? Is that too young, too old, or just right?
3. How do you feel about taking public transportation?
4. Do you have a bicycle? How often do you use it?
5. Are there bike lanes in your city?
6. Have you ever been in a car accident?
7. Have you ever gotten a parking or speeding ticket?
8. Do you think that driverless cars will be common in your lifetime?
9. When was the last time you flew on a plane?
10. How early do you arrive at the airport for your flight?
11. Do you ever feel nervous when flying?
12. Is traffic a big problem in your country?
13. Have you ever taken a ferry? What was that experience like?
14. What are some of the safest methods of transportation?
15. What are some of the more dangerous ones?

Writing Prompts

1. What are some of your predictions for the future of transportation?
2. There should be more regulations for airlines. Do you agree or disagree?
3. Cars are helpful, but they're also destroying our planet. Do you agree or disagree?

Unexplained Mysteries

Warm-Up

What is a “conspiracy theory?” If you don't know, look it up.

Vocabulary Challenge

i s u s o p u i s c = Describes someone who is skeptical or doesn't easily believe things.

n f o e r t u r t e l e l = A person who claims to predict the future (2 words).

J u e s s h s C r t i = The central person in Christianity (2 words).

t p n l e a = Earth, Venus, and Jupiter are examples of.

t h e a d u n = Describes a place with ghosts or other supernatural beings.

Idioms and Phrases

one of life's great mysteries, God works in mysterious ways, mystery meat, shrouded in mystery, the Bermuda Triangle

What can I say? _____. I have no idea how she recovered from that.

Don't eat that _____! It's too scary.

I'm feeling nervous about my flight through _____.

_____ is how my kids can make such a big mess in such a short amount of time.

How you can get into that club is _____. You can apply but then who knows what happens after that.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: suspicious, fortune teller, Jesus Christ, planet, haunted

Idioms and phrases: God works in mysterious ways, mystery meat, the Bermuda Triangle, One of life's great mysteries, shrouded in mystery

Let's Talk

1. Are you a generally suspicious person?
2. Are there things in our world that can't be explained?
3. Have you ever been to a psychic or fortune teller?
4. Do you believe that some people can predict the future?
5. Do you think that there's life on other planets?
6. Have aliens visited our planet?
7. Can dreams help us figure out things in our lives?
8. Do you think that Jesus Christ was a real person? Did he actually rise from the dead?
9. What do you think happens to people after they die?
10. What is the Bermuda Triangle? What do you think about it?
11. Do you believe in spirits, demons, or ghosts? Are some places haunted?
12. Do you know of anyone who was miraculously healed from a serious illness?
13. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?
14. Why can some people walk on coals or hold their breath underwater for a very long time?
15. Do twins have a special connection?

Writing Prompts

1. Is religion dying in your country? What might be causing this?
2. What is the purpose of life?
3. There must be intelligent life on other planets. Do you agree or disagree with this?

Weather

Warm-Up

What kind of weather do you like best? Why?

Vocabulary Challenge

m s e u r m = The season where you might go to the beach.

t w r i n e = The season where you might go skiing.

e a v a e g r = Central or typical value in a set of numbers.

r t e t m p u e e r a = Celcius and Fanrenheit are units of this.

b a l i r z d z = A very bad snowstorm.

Idioms and Phrases

extreme weather, got wind of it, on cloud nine, saving for a rainy day, soak up some sun

Global warming is a likely reason that we're getting more _____ lately.

I tried to plan a surprise party for my wife, but she _____.

My grandparents are always _____.

I want to _____ on my vacation. That's about it!

I was _____ after seeing my test score.

Answers

Vocabulary challenge: summer, winter, average, temperature, blizzard

Idioms and phrases: extreme weather, got wind of it, saving for a rainy day, soak up some sun, on cloud nine

Let's Talk!

1. What's the weather like in summer in your country?
2. What's the weather like in fall?
3. What's the weather like in winter?
4. What's the weather like in spring?
5. What are some activities that people do in each season?
6. What's your favorite season? Why?
7. What's your least favorite season? Why?
8. Which season is the most beautiful?
9. What kind of weather do you hate?
10. Would you rather live in a place that's always hot or always cold?
11. Do you think we're getting more extreme weather lately because of global warming?
12. Has extreme weather like a tornado, blizzard, or earthquake ever impacted your life?
13. What are some very bad storms or natural disasters that you can remember?
14. What kind of weather do you prefer when choosing a vacation?
15. What are some countries or places with very good weather?

Writing Prompts

1. Describe your ideal day in terms of weather.
2. Global warming is changing weather patterns in my country. Do you agree?
3. Describe your favourite season and what kinds of things you like to do then.

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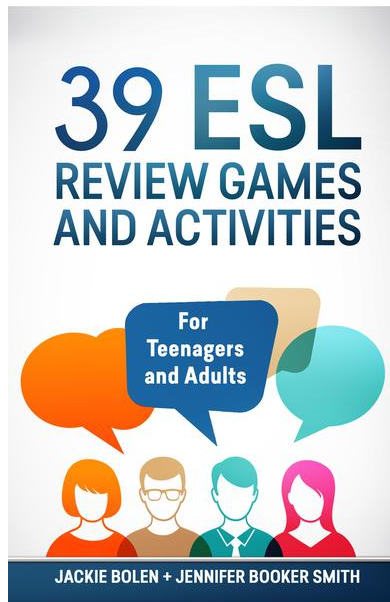
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