

ESL III (Access) - VPAU502:

Engage in casual conversation and straightforward spoken transactions.

## Element 2: PARTICIPATE IN CASUAL CONVERSATION

Performance Criteria: 2.1 / 2.2 / 2.3 / 2.4 / 2.5 / 2.6

STUDENT NAME:

DATE:

### 2-1 INITIATE conversations using appropriate expressions and conventions

To “initiate” means to start. How can you start casual communication with others?

#### TIPS for application

Be willing to greet and start talking to others. Think about expressions like:

- ☞ *Hi Julie, how've you been?* ☞ *Hey! What've you been up to?* ☞ *How's it going?*
- ☞ *Guess what?* ☞ *(Have you) heard about...?* ☞ *(Do you) remember...?*

### 2-2 CONTRIBUTE comments, opinions or information on a range of topics

“Contribute” means to add to or include yourself in something. When people are talking about different kinds of things, how can you contribute something to the conversation?

#### TIPS for application

Think about and be ready to add your comments and opinions on a variety of topics:

- Personal or family news, health, future plans; Comparison of cultural expectations and practices
- Social issues of general / current interest; Study issues, Vocational and work related matters
- Current news or events, public and community issues, e.g. the environment, housing, welfare

### 2-3 Give DETAILED responses

Short simple answers with no detail can you make you look uninterested or even rude. Good conversation involves some interesting details from the people talking.

#### TIPS for application

Avoid short answers to questions. Think about ways to add to what you or others say:

- ☞ *(That's) because...* ☞ *and, well...* ☞ *So, I suppose...* ☞ *Not only that, but...*

### 2-4 Use a range of conversational STRATEGIES

Conversation isn't just a collection of words and phrases. It's **how, when** and **why** you use those words and phrases. To converse well, you need to apply different strategies to make the communication happen.

#### TIPS for application

Try using some of the following strategies in your conversations:

- Repeating key words and phrases to show interest: ☞ *You bought a car??*
- Responding appropriately: ☞ *Really? Oh, that's terrible...*
- Interrupting appropriately: ☞ *But the thing is...* ☞ *If you ask me...* ☞ *I don't agree, really...*
- Asking questions /asking for clarification where necessary: ☞ *Do you mean...?* ☞ *So, you're saying...*
- Changing or re-directing the topic: ☞ *Anyway, as I was saying...* ☞ *By the way...*
- Inviting others to participate: ☞ *So, what do you think?* ☞ *What do you reckon?* ☞ *And you?*
- Non-verbal behaviour (body language like tilting your head) or eye contact to show interest

### 2-5 CLARIFY misunderstandings and ambiguous points where necessary

Everybody (even native speakers) runs into problems with understanding during conversations. It's important to clarify things if they don't seem to be clear.

#### TIPS for application

Consider a range of ways to explain or clarify what you mean:

- ☞ *Sorry, that's not what I meant...* ☞ *That didn't come out so well.* ☞ *Sort of, but...*
- ☞ *Actually,...* ☞ *Well, what I mean (by that) is...* ☞ *What I meant to say was that...*

### 2-6 CLOSE conversations using customary steps

How you finish up a conversation matters! How can you “wind things up”?

#### TIPS for application

Work on your ability to work with these stages:

- Pre-closing: ☞ *Anyway, I should go...* ☞ *Is that the time?* ☞ *Have to (pick up the kids/go shopping)*
- Closing and leave-taking: ☞ *Lovely to see you...* ☞ *Gotta dash...* ☞ *Bye!* ☞ *See you later.*



# ESL III: PARTICIPATION IN CASUAL CONVERSATION – GUIDELINES & TIPS

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REVIEW OF SELF/CLASS PERFORMANCE

2-1 INITIATE conversations using appropriate expressions and conventions

2-2 CONTRIBUTE comments, opinions or information on a range of topics

2-3 Give DETAILED responses

2-4 Use a range of conversational STRATEGIES

2-5 CLARIFY misunderstandings and ambiguous points where necessary

2-6 CLOSE conversations using customary steps

