

CONVERSATION

3-2-1 Icebreaking

Thi Ngoc Yen Dang

Levels	<i>All</i>
Aims	<i>Develop fluency</i> <i>Help students get to know each other at the beginning of a course</i>
Class Time	<i>30–60 minutes</i>
Preparation Time	<i>10 minutes (first time only)</i>
Resources	<i>Timer</i> <i>1 card per student (see Appendix)</i>



This activity is based on the 4/3/2 technique (Arevart & Nation, 1991; Nation & Newton, 2009), which helps to foster speaking fluency. In a 4/3/2 activity, a student talks about a familiar topic with three different students, giving the same speech within a gradually reduced time. The speaker talks with the first student for 4 minutes, with the second student for 3 minutes, and with the third student for 2 minutes. Delivering the speech with the same content in reduced amounts of time enables students to improve their speaking fluency.

Icebreaking is a useful activity at the beginning of a course. It helps students get to know each other so that a friendly and cooperative environment can be created. This activity focuses on students introducing themselves to their peers. Note that the time for this activity has been adapted to 3/2/1 because a 4-minute talk about oneself may be too long.

PROCEDURE

1. Prepare the cards (Appendix).
2. Explain the purpose of the activity to the students.
3. Give students 1 minute to plan a speech about themselves, with the option of writing it down. Suggest some information that can be included, such as nationality, hobbies, and reasons to study English.
4. Give each student one card. Tell them to find one partner holding the card with the same color as theirs. In pairs, one student talks about him- or herself for 3 minutes while the other listens and tries to remember that information. The speaker can look at their notes but should not read the notes aloud. The listener may take notes when listening.
5. When 3 minutes have passed, ask the students to change roles.

6. When another 3 minutes have passed, ask the students to change partners by finding a student holding a card with the same shape as theirs. In this round, each student talks for 2 minutes.
7. When both 2-minute rounds have passed, ask the students to change partners again by finding a student holding the card with the same letter. In this round, each student talks for 1 minute.
8. Ask the students to return to their desks for a class discussion. Each student speaks to the whole class and introduces one student they met. Other students who also talked to the same person can add any information that is missing.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Some students may cut down the information in their speech to deal with the time reduction. Teachers should remind students to avoid this so that they can develop their speaking fluency. They should repeat the same ideas within a shorter period of time.
2. This activity can be used with other topics.
3. Depending on the levels of the students and the topics, the allotted time for each turn can be longer or shorter.
4. Shrinking-time condition (4/3/2 or 3/2/1) focuses solely on pushing fluency. To develop students' complexity and accuracy rather than fluency, a constant-time condition (3/3/3 or 2/2/2) may be more suitable (Thai & Boers, 2016).

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

- Arevert, S., & Nation, P. (1991). Fluency improvement in a second language. *RELC Journal*, 22, 84–94.
- Nation, I. S. P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Thai, C., & Boers, F. (2016). Repeating a monologue under increasing time pressure: Effects on fluency, complexity, and accuracy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 50, 369–393.

CONVERSATION

At the End of the Rainbow

Leticia Araceli Salas Serrano

Levels	<i>All</i>
Aims	<i>Develop fluency</i> <i>Enhance interaction among students</i>
Class Time	<i>30 minutes</i>
Preparation Time	<i>None</i>
Resources	<i>A picture of a rainbow or markers in the seven colors of the rainbow</i>

An old Irish tale tells that a pot of gold can be found at the end of a rainbow. However, there are also other stories and symbols connected to rainbows. For example, some people say that rainbows represent the future. What would you like to find at the end of that rainbow? This activity guides students in discussion about some personal goals. Students interact with their peers and share their plans or projects for the future. This is a great activity to wrap up a unit or a course.

PROCEDURE

1. Ask the class, “What are the seven colors of the rainbow?” and write them on the board as the students say them: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Then show a picture of a rainbow or draw one using colorful markers.
2. Ask the class, “Do you know what object is at the end of the rainbow?” Tell the Irish legend about the pot of gold found at the end of the rainbow.
3. Explain that a rainbow can also represent the future and then encourage the class to think about their hopes and dreams for the future. Write on the board, “What goals would you like to reach? What would you like to find at the end of the rainbow?” Give an example, such as learning English or receiving an award. Seeing it at the rainbow’s end means the goal was achieved.
4. Students copy the questions written on the board. For a few minutes, students discuss in pairs what their goals are and what they would like to find at the end of the rainbow.
5. Lead a class discussion in which students share their goals.
6. After the discussion, young learners draw what they would like to find at the end of the rainbow. Adults can listen to the song “At the End of the Rainbow” and sing along.

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Because the activity might be very personal or emotional, some students might prefer not to share their real plans or projects. In that case, tell them to make up a goal. Another option is to tell them to choose a popular character from a book or movie and make up a goal for that character. If they do that, they should tell their partner the name of the character.
2. To extend the activity, students could discuss how they're going to reach their goals, or they can create a plan of action.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

To read more about Irish myths: www.celtic-weddingrings.com/celtic-mythology/myth-of-the-leprechaun.aspx

For young learners, watch this video, "The Ancient Rock at the End of the Rainbow!": www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKUnq-KaLeE

For adults, watch this video with the lyrics to "At the End of the Rainbow," and sing along with Earl Grant: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdkfjbSidzs

CONVERSATION

Conversation Champions

Eleanora S. Bell (Nonie) and Amanda Strickland

Levels	<i>High beginner to advanced</i>
Aims	<i>Use multimodal integrative language skills in practice of targeted vocabulary and language functions</i> <i>Increase fluency in creative oral production</i>
Class Time	<i>90 minutes</i>
Preparation Time	<i>15–30 minutes (plus 10 minutes first time only)</i>
Resources	<i>Handouts (Appendixes A–F)</i>



Conversation Champions is a scaffolded task-based extension activity for instruction of targeted vocabulary and language structures. It begins with recognition of these vocabulary and language structures in a listening activity, continues with dialogue creation, and concludes with dialogue presentations that showcase the forms in authentic, original conversations. As a culminating activity, such as at the conclusion of a unit, Conversation Champions works well for either practice, reinforcement, assessment, or all three.

PROCEDURE

1. If desired, prepare an audio recording of the sample conversation (Appendix A). Once the recording is made, preparation time in the future is dedicated to assembling handouts.

Phase One: Listening Activities (25 minutes)

2. Divide students into two groups. Distribute the Info Gap Questions handout (Appendix B). Students receive only the part/column designated for their group.
3. Prepare students to listen and fill in the Info Gap Questions handout. Direct them to take notes on the paper while listening, paying special attention to the vocabulary words used and their context.
4. Present a brief sample conversation including target vocabulary. Either play the audio recording or read the text. If the text is read, ask for student volunteers to read the two parts of bank teller and customer aloud to the class. Remind each group to listen for different vocabulary items.
5. Repeat the listening to allow students to check their handout.
6. Distribute the Cloze of Sample Conversation handout (Appendix C). Pair students from Group 1 with Group 2. Tell them to review their notes and complete

the handout based on the combination of the content from their respective Info Gap Questions sheets.

7. Lead the class in a review of the answers, highlighting use of target structures.

Phase Two: Dialogue Creation Activity (45 minutes)

8. The same student pairs choose from preselected topics to create a meaningful, real-life dialogue including a required number of target vocabulary words and grammar structures. Distribute the handout Student Instructions (Appendix D) and review the directions and requirements with the class.
9. Move around the room, clarifying or offering assistance as needed. While students are working, prepare rubrics with student names.

Phase Three: Dialogue Presentation Activity (20 minutes)

10. Student pairs present their dialogues before an audience of peers. The audience members use student rubrics (Appendix E) to note the number of vocabulary words and structures used by each pair. Simultaneously, the instructor evaluates the dialogue presented by each pair using the teacher rubric (Appendix F).
11. The audience then votes on the pair that best demonstrates targeted forms.
12. The selected student pair is recognized as “Conversation Champions.”

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Instructors should introduce, review, and quiz students on a limited list of target vocabulary and grammar structures at least one week in advance of this culminating activity.
2. Pair students sensitively across language capability levels and culture groups.
3. While student pairs are collaborating on dialogues to present, they’re naturally using the targeted forms repeatedly in authentic, original conversations that could be graded separately from the final product.
4. Students can provide a recording and text of their performed dialogue via a class website. It can be used as an assessment or sample conversation for future use.
5. This activity can be based on a range of topics at any level, such as household chores, directions, housing issues, a job search, or academic research.