

Don't Fear the Approach!

How do you feel before starting a conversation with someone new? Have you ever felt nervous? Did your palms sweat? Did your heart rate go up? These first few moments, known as the approach, can sometimes be very awkward and stressful. I know, I've been there. There have been so many times where I have hesitated to say "hello." There have been so many times where I just backed down and just walked away. And I never felt great about it when I did it. Approach anxiety is real and the only way to fight this fear is to just push through the fear. It's really that simple.

"To fight fear, act. To increase fear, wait."

-Anonymous

Who knows? That one person you say "hello" to might become your best friend, your partner, or that missing link in your life. It only takes one person to completely change your life so do you think taking that chance to say "hello," can be a worthwhile risk?

YES!

There are so many wonderful benefits about meeting new people. In my experience, it sharpens your communication skills and increases your self-confidence. Best of all, new people in your life can provide information about amazing opportunities and ideas you may have never heard about. Just by being able to share your personal life experiences with someone opens you up, making you more aware of the world and how you can move forward.

So, are you ready? Let's take a look at how you can start conversations with people easily using English. Enjoy yourself and have fun. Let's do this!

Start a Conversation with a Potential Friend

If you "connect" with someone you meet, go ahead and show an interest in that person! How do you do this? Here are some tips below.

- ❖ **Keep it positive.** Smile and open with a positive comment. For example, you can talk about how much you love the restaurant you are in or how great your local sports team is doing.
- ❖ **Talk about your neighborhood.** Generally, people take pride in where they live and they usually enjoy doing things in that area. If you live in the same area, you can connect over how great it is and talk about places where you spend time.
- ❖ **Ask what they like to do for fun.** If you discover that you have some of the same interests, it's a great chance to continue the conversation!
- ❖ **Relax, don't talk so much about yourself.** Take the time to listen to the other person. Enjoy getting to know more about them by listening and reacting to what they say.
- ❖ **Talk about a mutual friend.** This is an easy way to make common ground with the person. You can talk about some fun and interesting stories about the person you both know.

Start a Conversation with Someone You Like

If you know that you like a person and want to start a good conversation, the way you talk and your body language becomes more important than what you talk about. Slow down your speech, make eye contact and keep your face and body towards that person. If they do the same, then it's a sign that they are attracted to you too! Here are some more tips below.

- ❖ **Don't talk about your school or job.** These topics are boring and not a turn-on. You can save it for later.
- ❖ **Keep an interesting photo of you to show.** This will give you a chance to tell a unique story you've had and get to know the other person.
- ❖ **Be playful and tease the person.** For example, if it's hot outside and they're wearing a long sleeve shirt, you can gently tease them about their fashion choice. There are so many different angles where you can tease a person. Just be very observant and when you tease, be nice and playful. Be careful because if you tease too much, the person can become turned off.
- ❖ **Never tell the person everything about yourself.** It's okay to tell the person some basic information about yourself, but keeping certain details from them will make you more "mysterious" and intriguing. They will remember you. For example, if they ask you what you do for work, try responding with, "Oh, I'm a repair man for cigarette lighters," or "I'm an elephant nail clipper." They will most likely laugh and become more interested in you because of your playfulness.
- ❖ **Talk about the person's leisure activities.** Without being too pushy, ask what they like to do for fun on the weekends. When you feel that things are comfortable enough, ask the person to do an activity together.
- ❖ Remember to keep your conversations fun, original, witty and engaging. Good luck!

Start a Conversation with a Group of People

Talking to an entire group of people can be a little more tricky. The safest way you can start a conversation is to find common ground with the group. It can be hard to make everyone feel relaxed. Try your best to include as many people in the conversation.

- ❖ **Talk to the group instead of just one or two people.** This is important because if you talk to just one person in the group, everyone else will feel left out.
- ❖ **Keep your topics light and broad.** Think of topics that the people in the group may have in common. For example, you can say, "Hey, you guys look like you love the L.A. Dodgers - did you see that crazy game last night?"
- ❖ **Make fun at yourself.** If you are starting a conversation with people who know you, but don't know each other, this is a great strategy. Let people laugh at you and tease you - they will quickly relax and feel more comfortable around you. Again, this is where you are building that common bond.
- ❖ **Talk about pet peeves.** Pet peeves are things that some people find super annoying. Pet peeves are great conversation starters because everyone has them. You can start by telling a story about one of your pet peeves and others are sure to join in on your conversation. Have fun!

127 Phrases for Conversation: Part 1

How to "break the ice"

"Break the ice" means to do or say something to relieve tension and to get a conversation going in a situation when you meet someone new.

Comment on the Location or Occasion. Look around you and see if there is anything worth commenting on:

1. "I love this view!"
2. "This is a gorgeous beach!"
3. "Great dog, what's his name?"
4. "Such incredible food here!"

Introducing Yourself and Others

5. Hi, I just wanted to introduce myself. I'm ____ (your name)
6. I don't think we've met before. My name is ____ (your name)
7. So nice to meet you.
8. It's a pleasure to meet you.
9. Likewise.
10. This is ____.
11. I'd like you to meet ____.
12. Have you met ____?
13. I wanted to introduce you to ____.

Interrupting Someone Who is Busy

14. Sorry to interrupt, but ____.
15. Sorry to bother you, ____.
16. Sorry, I just want to say that ____.
17. May I please have a word with you? **formal*
18. Excuse me, can I talk to you for a minute? **use to interrupt a conversation between two people so you can talk to one of them*
19. Can I jump in here? **use to interrupt a group discussion*

Asking for Information

20. Excuse me, I was wondering ____.
21. Sorry to bother you. Could you tell me ____?
22. Hi there, I'd like to know ____.
23. Do you have any idea ____?
24. Would you happen to know ____?
25. I don't suppose you would know ____?
26. Do you know ____?
27. I'm calling to find out _____. **use when talking on the telephone*
28. Can anyone tell me ____? **use when asking a group of people*