**Lesson 1: Meeting People**

Welcome to Lesson 1 of the Speak Fluently course!

Many students are afraid of making a mistake or “saying the wrong thing” when talking with a native English speaker. These social English lessons will teach you phrases you can use with confidence in various social situations. Let’s start with some basic expressions.

# Situation #1 – Saying hello and goodbye

There are many different ways to say “hello” in English, and some of them require a different answer.

If the other person says…

## “Hello”

* **“Hi”**
* **“Hi there”**
* **“Hey”**
* **“Hiya”**
* **“Howdy”**

You can say…

## “Hi”

* **“Hey”**

In these phrases, “hello” is the most formal, and “hey,” “hiya,” and “howdy” are the

least formal.

Instead of “hello,” the other person might also say…

## “How ya doin’?”

* **“How are ya?”**
* **“How’s it goin’?”**
* **“How are things?”**
* **“How’s life?”**

If everything is **good,** you can say…

## “Great! Thanks for asking.”

* **“Good – how about you?”**
* **“All right.”**

If everything is **not good,** you can say…

## “Not so good.”

* **“Could be better.”**

If you give one of the “not good” responses, be prepared to say **why** you are feeling bad, because the other person will probably say something like this:

## “Oh, what’s wrong?”

* **“Oh, what’s the matter?”**

Now let’s learn the greetings beginning with “what…” If the other person says…

## “What’s up?”

* **“What’s new?”**
* **“What’s happenin’?”**
* **“What’s goin’ on?”**

You can respond…

## “Not much.”

* **“Not much. How about you?”**
* **“Not much.”** [then add a sentence about something you are doing, something you did recently, or something you're planning to do.]

## “Not much. I just got back from a business trip.”

* + **“Not much. I’ve been studying a lot lately.”**
  + **“Not much. I’m looking forward to the dance festival this**

**weekend.**

There are also a number of ways to say **goodbye** in English:

## Formal or informal:

* “Bye / Bye-bye”
* “See you soon / later!”

*(only say this if you will definitely see the other person later)*

* “Take care”
* “Have a good one!”
* “So long”

## Informal only:

* “Take it easy.”
* “Catch ya later.”
* “Later!”
* “I’m off / I’m out.”
* “Peace / Peace out.”

# Situation #2 – Talking about your country and job

It’s common for people you meet to ask about your country and job. If someone asks, “Where are you from?” you can respond:

## “I’m from Russia.”

* **“I’m originally from Russia, but now I live in Italy.”**
* **“I was born in Russia, but I grew up in France.”**

To ask about your profession, native English speakers don’t usually ask “What is your job?” Instead, we say:

## “What do you do?”

* **“What do you do for a living?**

The correct way to answer this question is to say **“I’m…”** and then your profession, for example:

* I’m an engineer.
* I’m a nurse.
* I’m a student.
* I’m a teacher.
* I’m a freelance writer.
* I’m between jobs at the moment. *(this means “I’m unemployed.”)*

# Situation #3 – Not Understanding

There will probably be a few moments in your English conversations when you

don’t understand what the other person said. Don’t worry – it’s OK! If you didn’t hear what the other person said, you can say…

## “Pardon?”

* **“Sorry?”**
* **“Could you repeat that?”**
* **“Sorry – I didn’t hear what you said.”**
* **“Could you speak a little slower, please?”**

If you understood the basics, but you want to get more information or details, you

can say…

* **“What do you mean?”** *(this asks the other person to re-state their idea in different words, or in more detail)*

If you want to check if the other person understood YOU, then you can say…

## “Do you know what I mean?”

* **“Does that make sense?”**

**Situation #4 – Showing Interest in the Conversation**

When the other person is talking for a long time or telling a story, it’s good to show

that you are interested in what they are saying. You can say…

## “Really?”

* **“That’s interesting.”**
* **“Uh-huh.”**
* **“Right.”**
* **“Gotcha.”**
* **“Sure.”**

We’ll learn more of these small responses to conversations in a later lesson.

Finally, here are two tips to keep a conversation going:

1. Try to ask questions that start with **Who, What, When, Where, Why,** and **How.** Try to avoid yes/no questions.
2. In each of your answers, **give one or two details** that will help continue the

conversation. You don’t need to talk for a long time.

For example, if someone asks you,

* “What did you think of the New York City bus tour? Did you like it?”

…don’t just say “Yes.”

Instead, you can say,

* “Yes – my favorite part was visiting the Empire State Building.”

That encourages the other person to make a comment about the tour, or ask you another question – and the conversation continues.

# Situation #5 – Ending a Conversation

It’s a good idea to say **“Anyway, it was nice talking to you…”** or **“Anyway, it was nice chatting with you…”** This signals to the other person that you want to bring the conversation to a close. Then, complete the sentence with one of these options:

* Anyway, it was nice talking to you, **but I should get going.**
* Anyway, it was nice chatting with you, **but I’ve gotta head out.**
* Anyway, it was nice talking to you, **but I’ve gotta run.**

All of these options mean that **you need to leave.**

**Practice: Time for you to speak**

1. **When you meet someone, what would you say?**
2. **If someone asks: “Where are you from?”, how would you respond?**
3. **If someone asks you:** “**What did you think of London? Did you like it?”, how would you respond?**
4. **Complete the following conversation:**

**A: Hello**

**B:**

* **A: “How’s it goin’?”**

**B:**

**A: Not so good**

**B:**

**A: I just got back from my trip and found lots of things that need to be done.**

**B: oh! I understand what you mean.**

**A: Anyway, it was nice chatting with you after that long time, but I’ve gotta head out.**

**B: Catch ya later**

**A: see ya.. bye bye**

You’ve finished Lesson 1! Now you know typical expressions for handling social conversations in English. There’s no homework for today, you just need to study what you've just learned .