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Classic Watson Assistant

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Important: This documentation is for the **classic Watson Assistant** experience. To see the documentation for the new Watson Assistant, please go here .

Getting started with a dialog skill

Last updated 2022-12-14

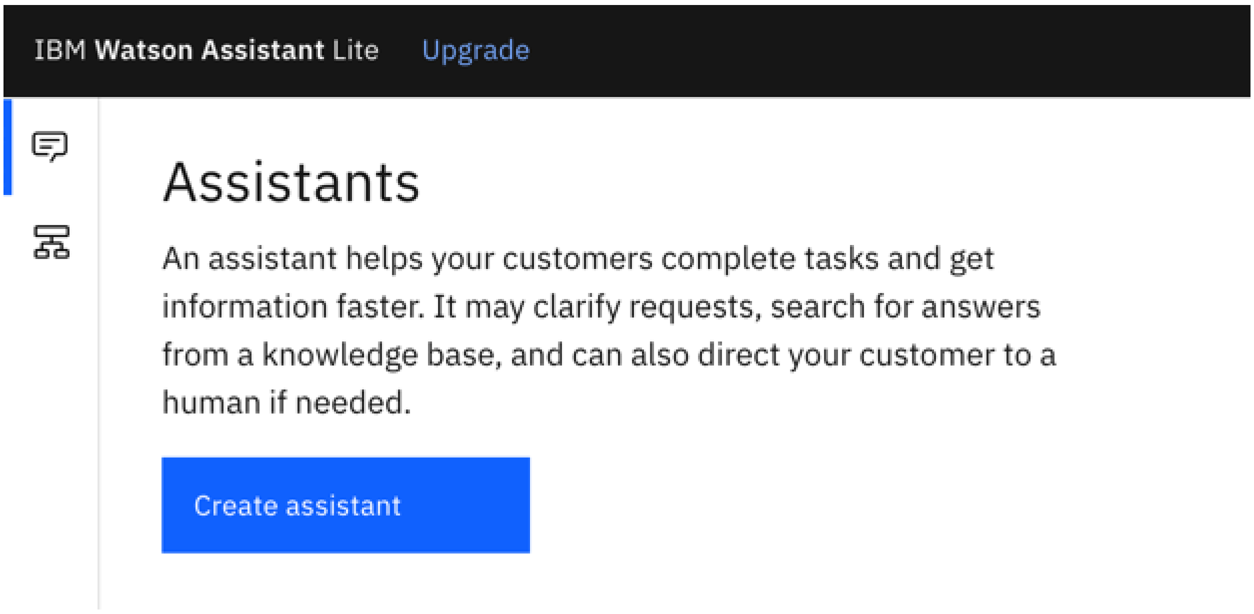
In this short tutorial, we help you use a dialog skill to build your first conversation.

A *dialog skill* uses Watson natural language processing and machine learning technologies to understand user questions and requests, and respond to them with answers that are authored by you.

Step 1: Create an assistant

An *assistant* is a cognitive bot to which you add skills that enable it to interact with your customers in useful ways.

① Click the **Assistants** icon, and then click **Create assistant**.

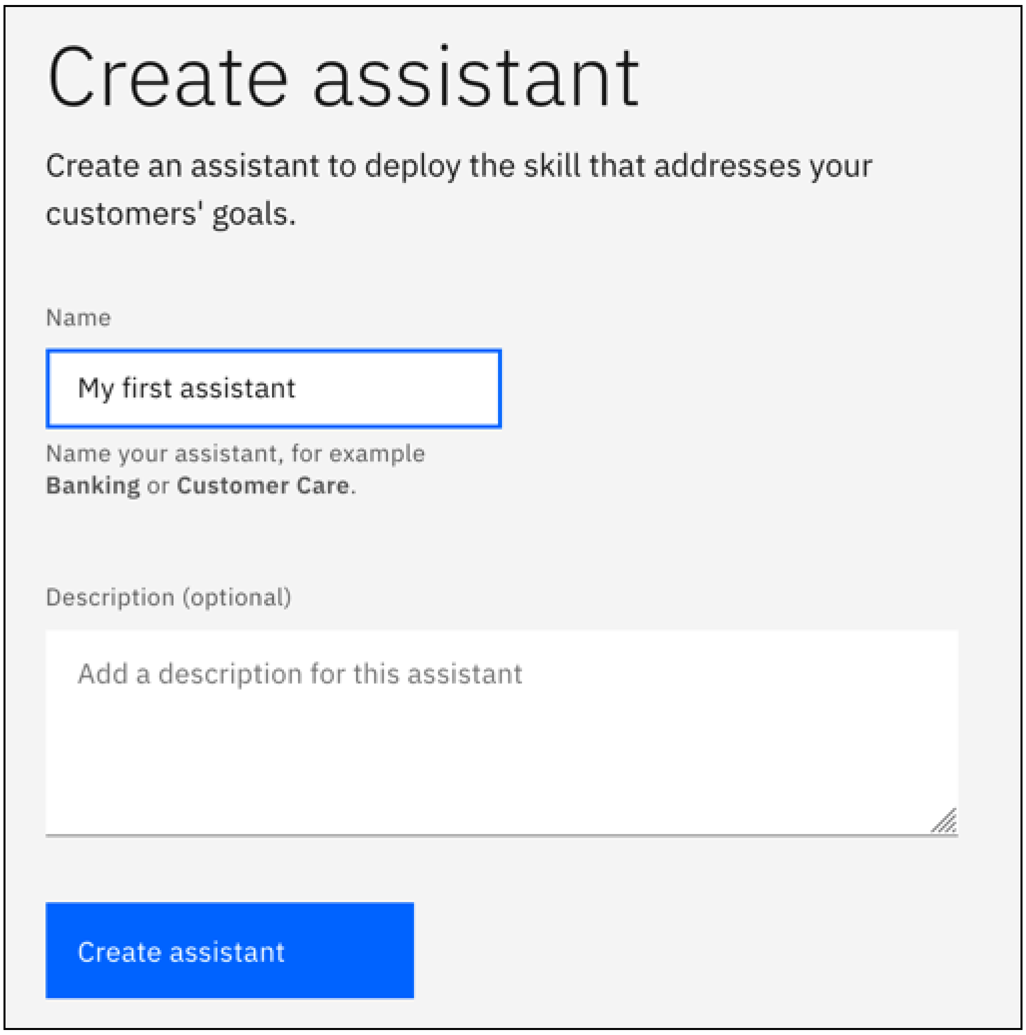


IBM **Watson Assistant** Lite Upgrade

Assistants

An assistant helps your customers complete tasks and get information faster. It may clarify requests, search for answers from a knowledge base, and can also direct your customer to a human if needed.

② Name the assistant `My first assistant`.



Create assistant

Create an assistant to deploy the skill that addresses your customers' goals.

Name

My first assistant

Name your assistant, for example **Banking** or **Customer Care**.

Description (optional)

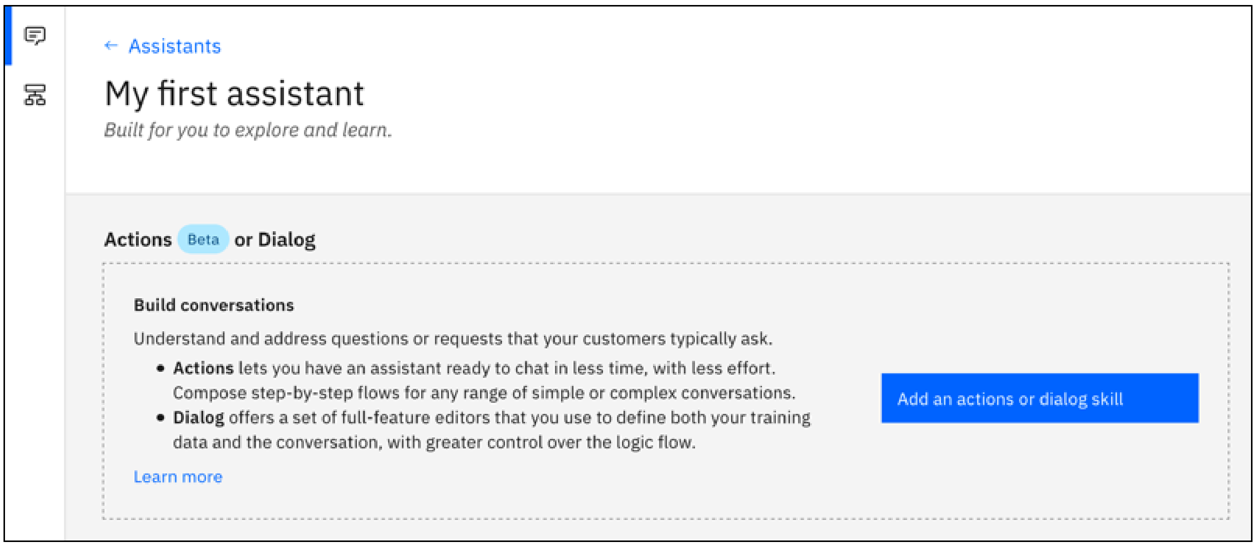
Add a description for this assistant

3. Click **Create assistant**.

Step 2: Create a dialog skill

A *dialog skill* is a container for the artifacts that define the flow of a conversation that your assistant can have with your customers.

1. Click **Add an actions or dialog skill**.



← Assistants

My first assistant

Built for you to explore and learn.

Actions Beta **or Dialog**

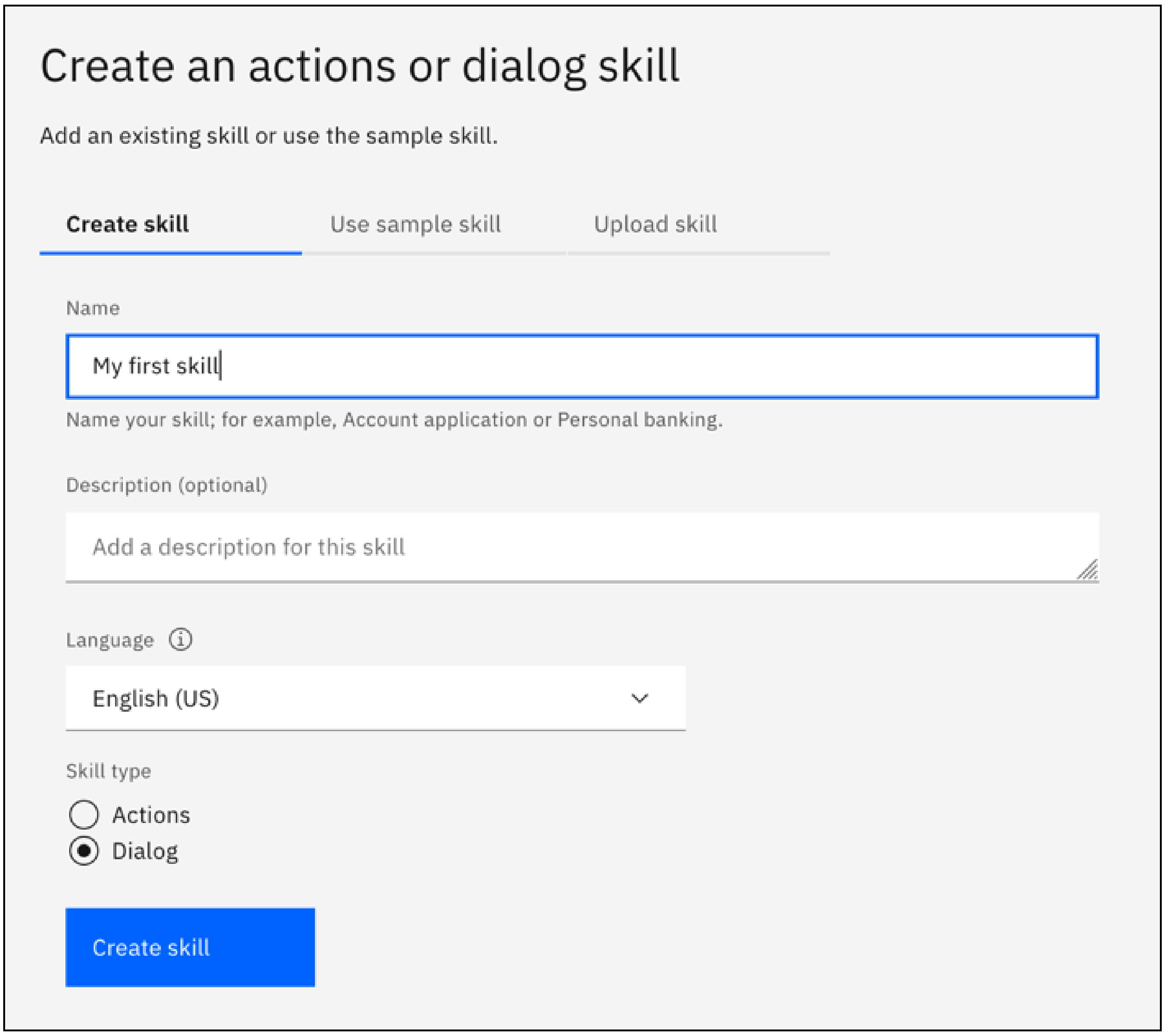
Build conversations

Understand and address questions or requests that your customers typically ask.

- **Actions** lets you have an assistant ready to chat in less time, with less effort. Compose step-by-step flows for any range of simple or complex conversations.
- **Dialog** offers a set of full-feature editors that you use to define both your training data and the conversation, with greater control over the logic flow.

Learn more

2. Give your skill the name `My first skill`.
3. **Optional**. If the dialog you plan to build will use a language other than English, then choose the appropriate language from the list.
4. For skill type, choose Dialog.


Create an actions or dialog skill

Add an existing skill or use the sample skill.

Name

My first skill

Name your skill; for example, Account application or Personal banking.

Description (optional)

Add a description for this skill

Language

English (US)

Skill type

( ) Actions
[✓ Dialog]

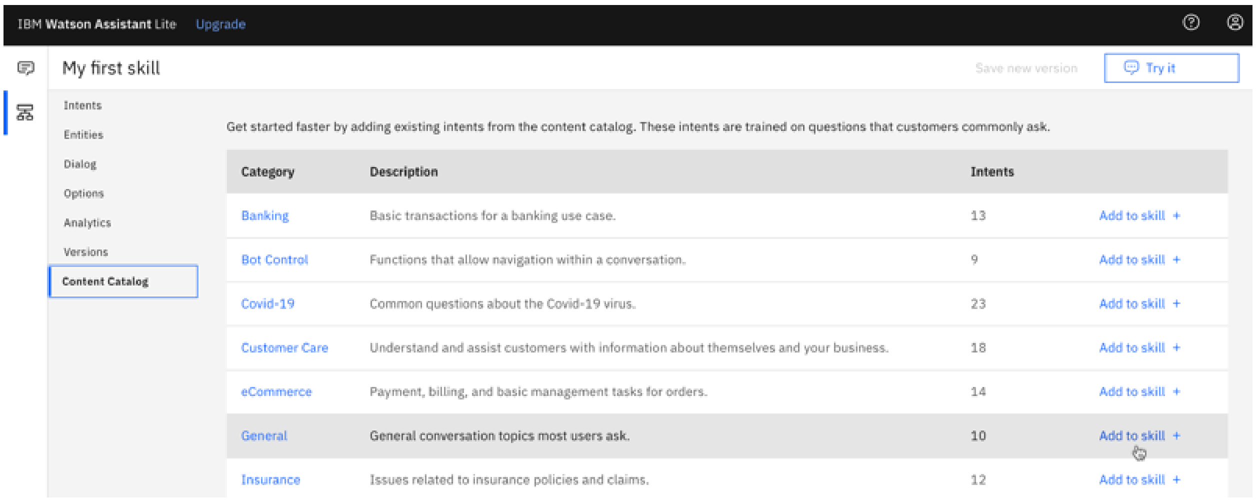
5. Click **Create skill**.

   The skill is created and appears in your assistant.

Step 3: Add intents from a content catalog

The Intents page is where you start to train your assistant. In this tutorial, you will add training data that was built by IBM to your skill. Prebuilt intents are available from the content catalog. You will give your assistant access to the **General** content catalog so your dialog can greet users, and end conversations with them.

1. Make sure your **My first skill** is open.
2. Click **Content Catalog** from the Skills menu.
3. Find **General** in the list, and then click **Add to skill**.


IBM **Watson Assistant** Lite Upgrade

My first skill

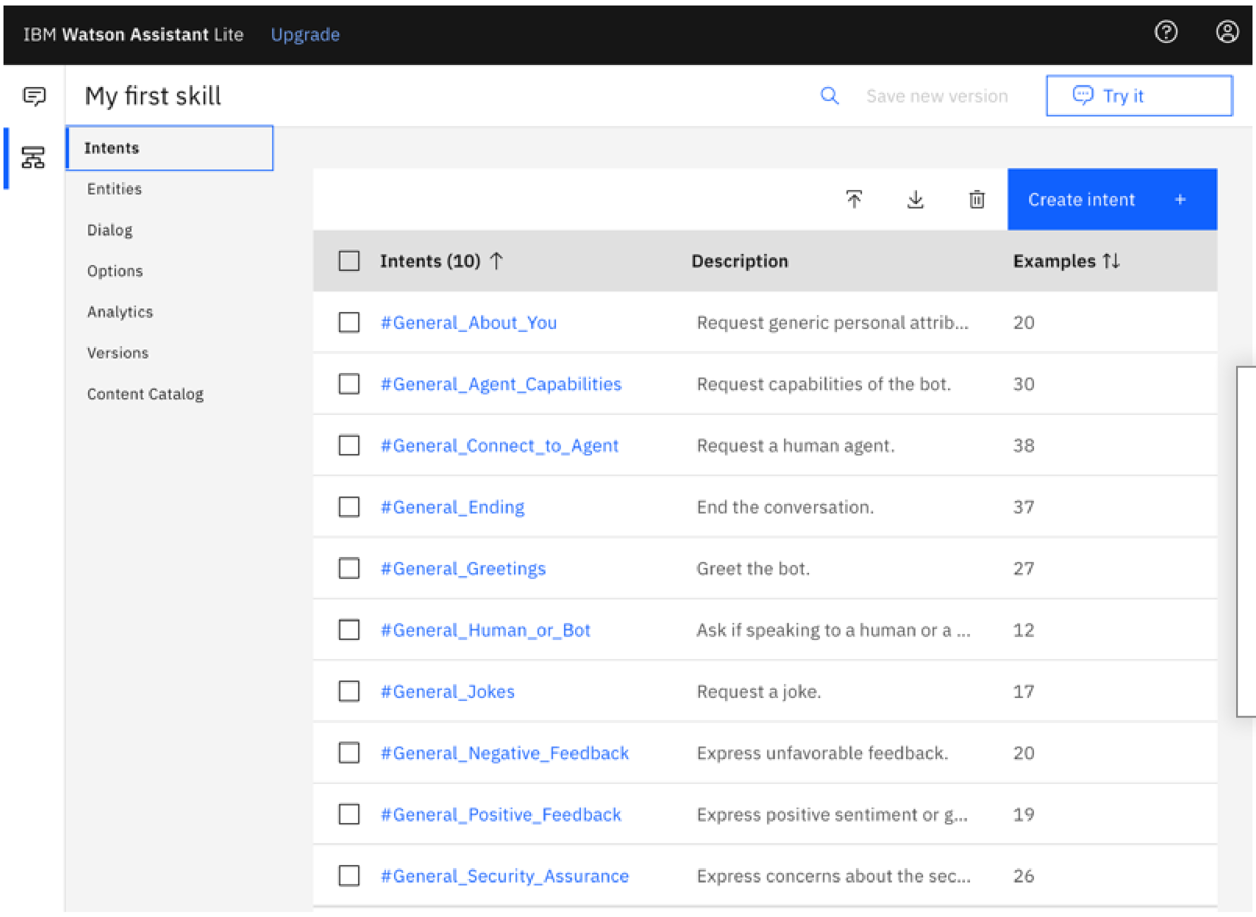
Save new version Try it

Intents
Entities
Dialog
Options
Analytics
Versions
Content Catalog

Get started faster by adding existing intents from the content catalog. These intents are trained on questions that customers commonly ask.

Category	Description	Intents	
Banking	Basic transactions for a banking use case.	13	Add to skill +
Bot Control	Functions that allow navigation within a conversation.	9	Add to skill +
Covid-19	Common questions about the Covid-19 virus.	23	Add to skill +
Customer Care	Understand and assist customers with information about themselves and your business.	18	Add to skill +
eCommerce	Payment, billing, and basic management tasks for orders.	14	Add to skill +
General	General conversation topics most users ask.	10	Add to skill +
Insurance	Issues related to insurance policies and claims.	12	Add to skill +

④ Open the **Intents** tab to review the intents and associated example utterances that were added to your training data. You can recognize them because each intent name begins with the prefix `#General_`. You will add the `#General_Greetings` and `#General_Ending` intents to your dialog in the next step.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My first skill

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Intents
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Create intent +

Intents (10) ↑	Description	Examples ⇅
#General_About_You	Request generic personal attrib...	20
#General_Agent_Capabilities	Request capabilities of the bot.	30
#General_Connect_to_Agent	Request a human agent.	38
#General_Ending	End the conversation.	37
#General_Greetings	Greet the bot.	27
#General_Human_or_Bot	Ask if speaking to a human or a ...	12
#General_Jokes	Request a joke.	17
#General_Negative_Feedback	Express unfavorable feedback.	20
#General_Positive_Feedback	Express positive sentiment or g...	19
#General_Security_Assurance	Express concerns about the sec...	26

You successfully started to build your training data by adding prebuilt content from IBM.

Step 4: Build a dialog

A dialog defines the flow of your conversation in the form of a logic tree. It matches intents (what users say) to responses (what your virtual assistant says back). Each node of the tree has a condition that triggers it, based on user input.

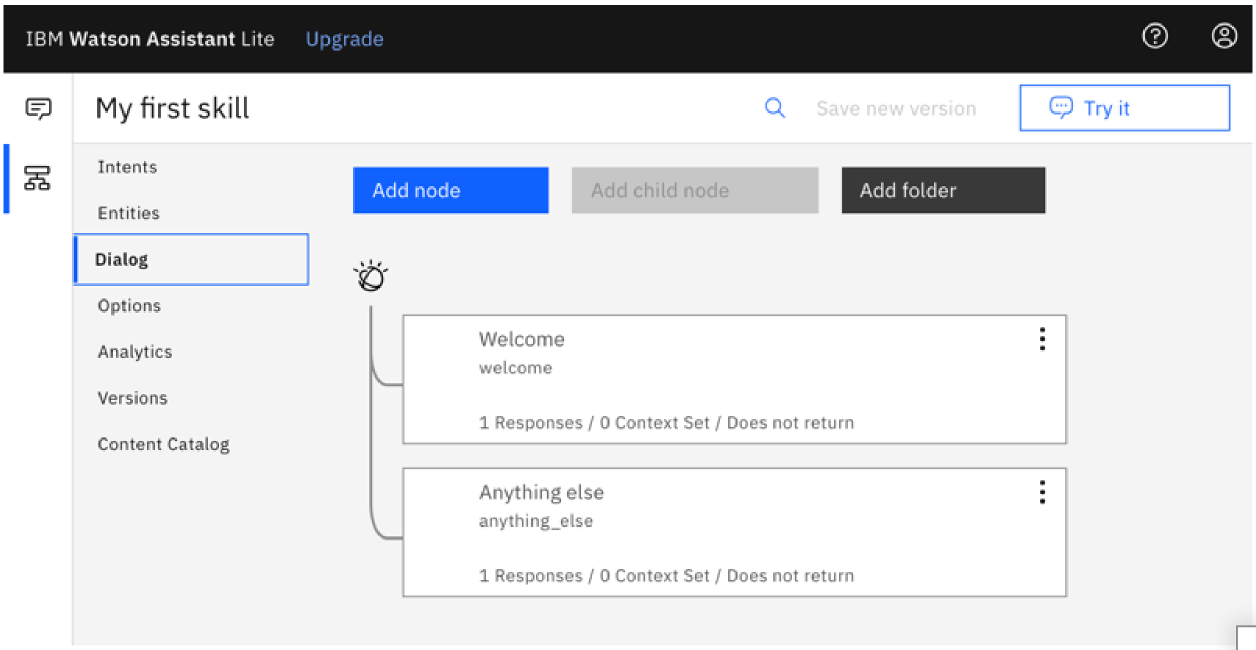
We'll create a simple dialog that handles greeting and ending intents, each with a single node.

Adding a start node

1. From the Skills menu, click **Dialog**.

   The following two dialog nodes are created for you automatically:

   - **Welcome**: Contains a greeting that is displayed to your users when they first engage with the assistant.
   - **Anything else**: Contains phrases that are used to reply to users when their input is not recognized.

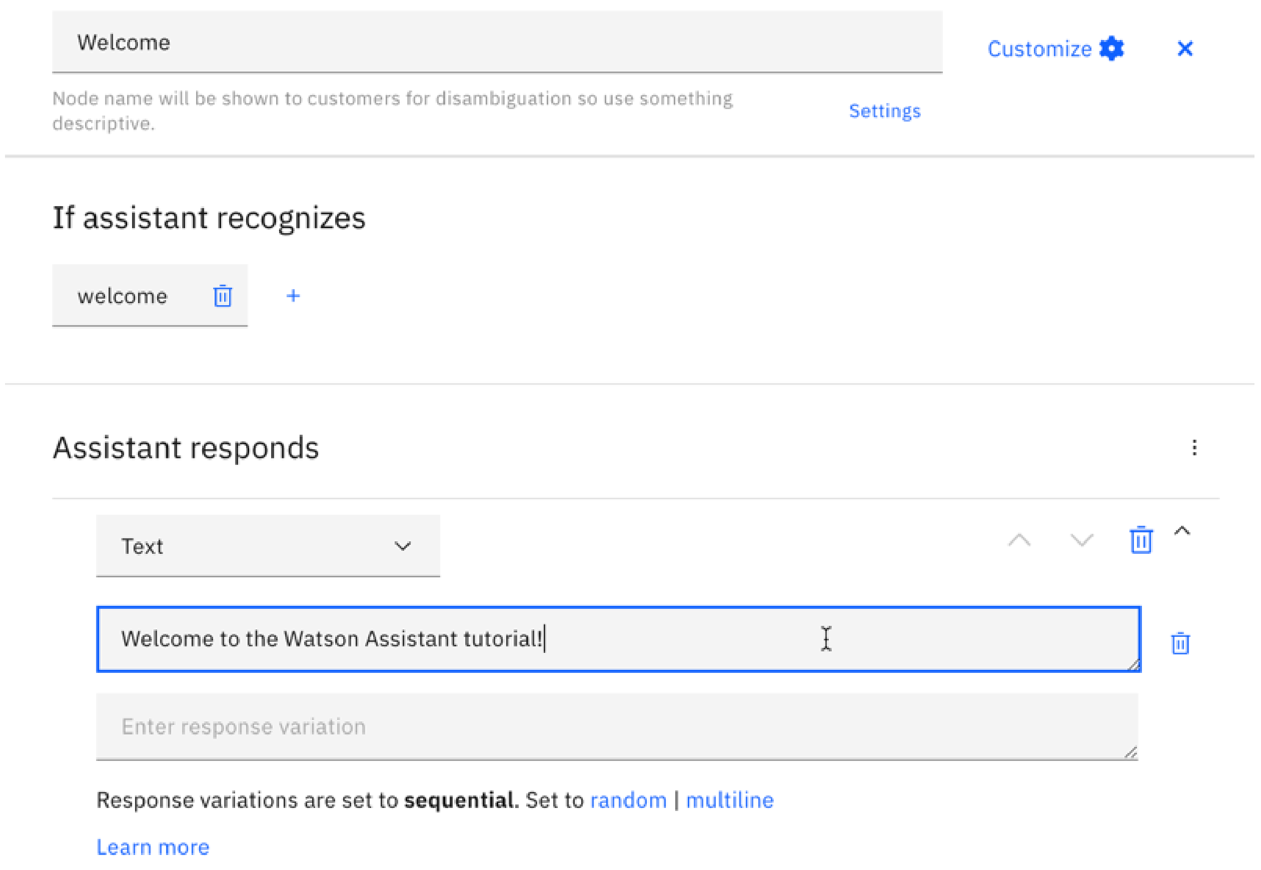


Welcome
welcome
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return

Anything else
anything_else
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return

2. Click the **Welcome** node to open it in the edit view.
3. Replace the default response with the text, `Welcome to the Watson Assistant tutorial!`.

Cookie Preferences


Welcome

Node name will be shown to customers for disambiguation so use something descriptive.

If assistant recognizes

welcome

Assistant responds

Welcome to the Watson Assistant tutorial!

Response variations are set to **sequential**. Set to random | multiline

4. Click ✕ to close the edit view.

You created a dialog node that is triggered by the `welcome` condition. (`welcome` is a special condition that functions like an intent, but does not begin with a `#`.) It is triggered when a new conversation starts. Your node specifies that when a new conversation starts, the system should respond with the welcome message that you add to the response section of this first node.

Testing the start node

You can test your dialog at any time to verify the dialog. Let's test it now.

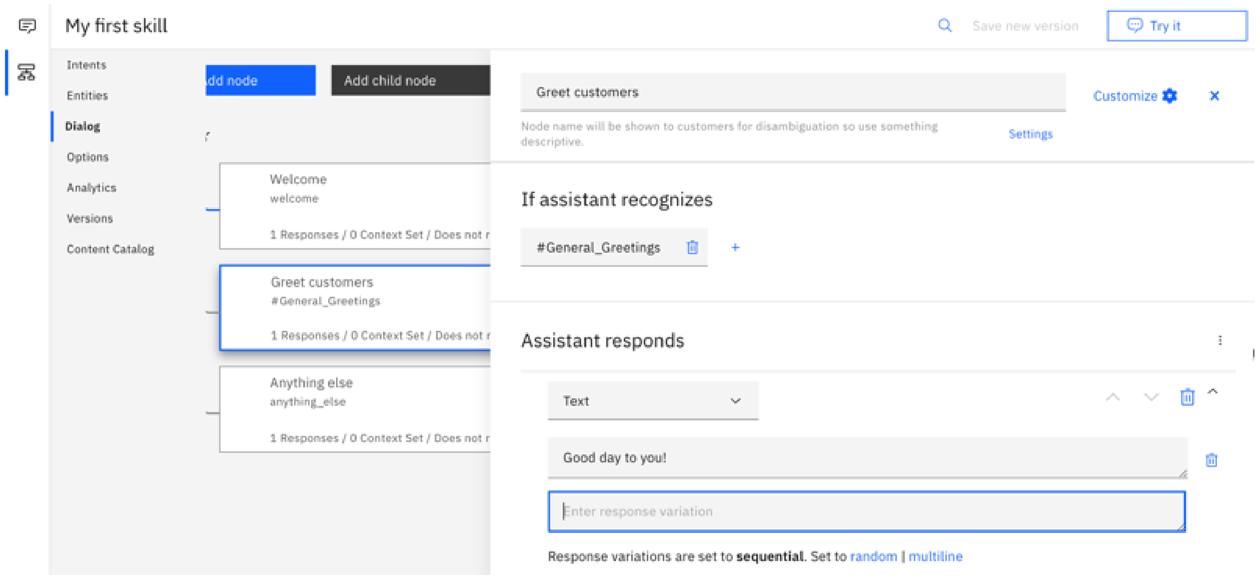
- Click the Try it icon to open the "Try it out" pane. You should see your welcome message.

Adding nodes to handle intents

Now let's add nodes between the `Welcome` node and the `Anything else` node that handle our intents.

1. Click **Add node**.
2. In the node name field, type `Greet customers`.
3. In the **If assistant recognizes** field of this node, start to type `#General_Greetings`. Then, select the **`#General_Greetings`** option.

4. Add the response text, `Good day to you!`


My first skill

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Greet customers

Node name will be shown to customers for disambiguation so use something descriptive.

If assistant recognizes

#General_Greetings

Assistant responds

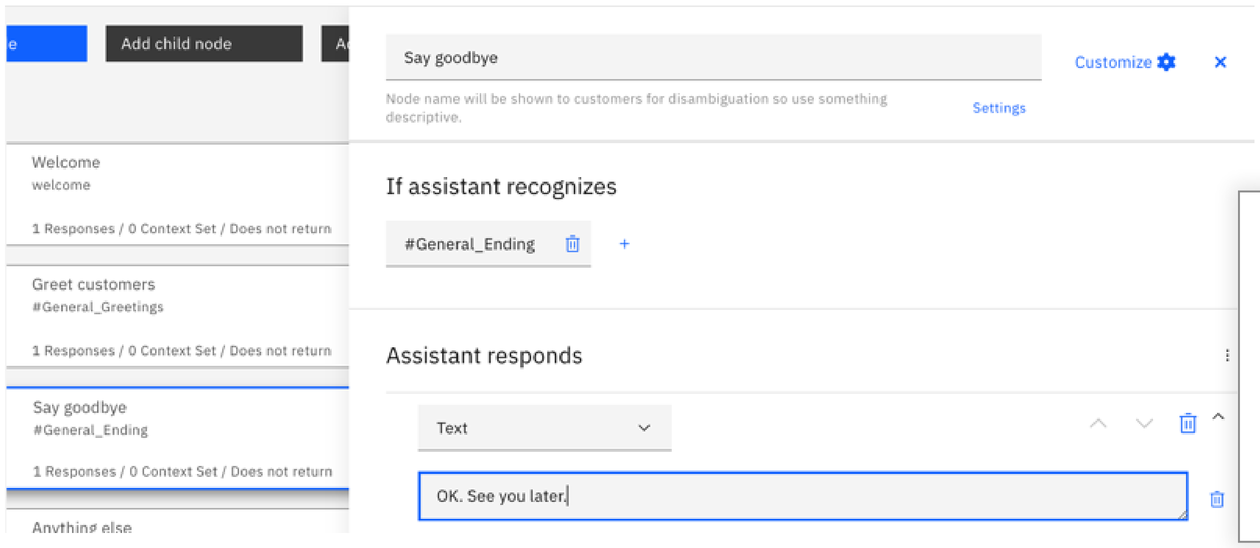
Text

Good day to you!

Enter response variation

Response variations are set to **sequential**. Set to random | multiline

5. Click ✕ to close the edit view.
6. Click **Add node** to create a peer node.
7. Name the peer node `Say goodbye` and specify `#General_Ending` in the **If assistant recognizes** field.
8. Add `OK. See you later.` as the response text.


Say goodbye

Node name will be shown to customers for disambiguation so use something descriptive.

If assistant recognizes

#General_Ending

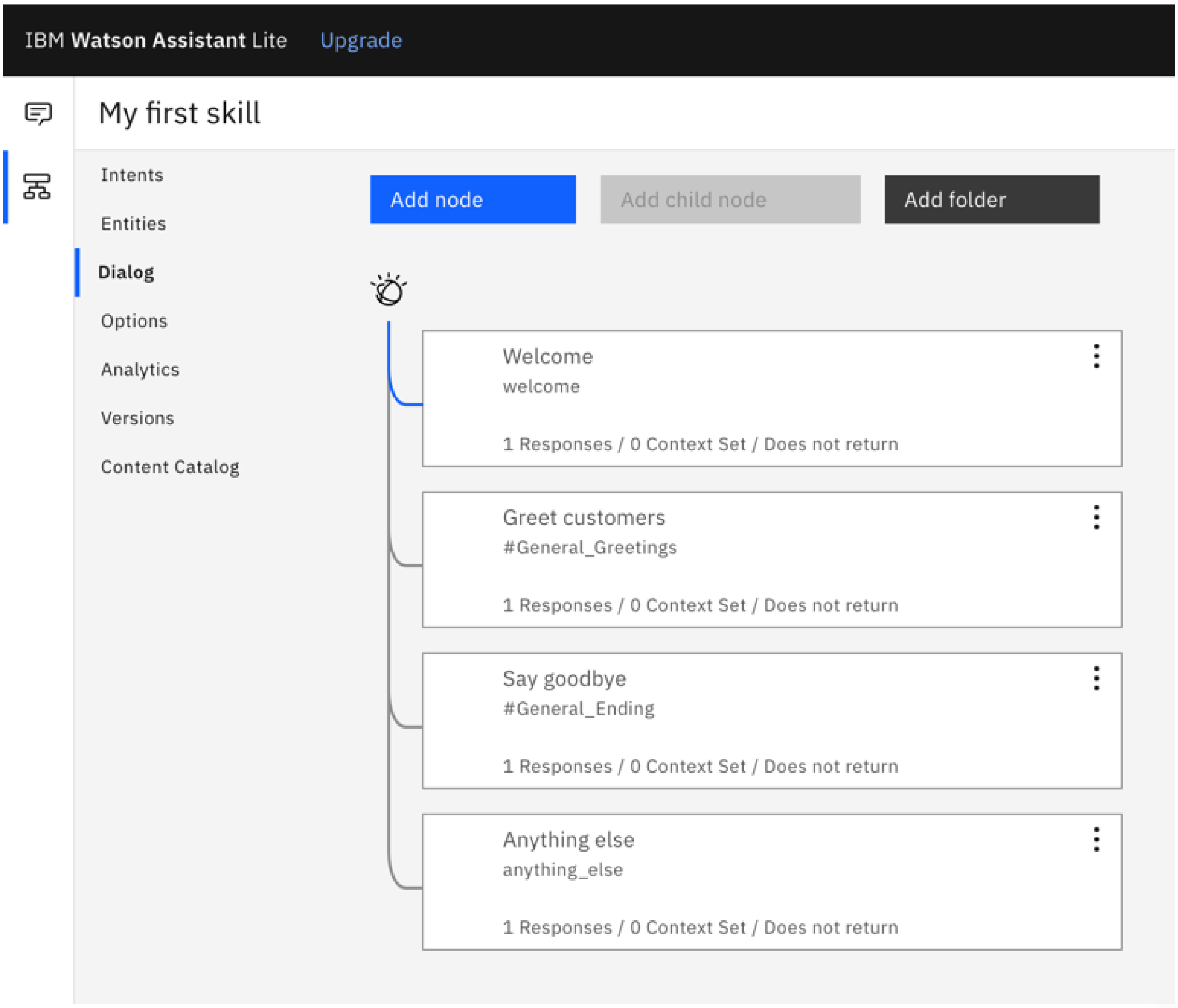
Assistant responds

Text

OK. See you later.

Add child node
Welcome
welcome
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return
Greet customers
#General_Greetings
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return
Say goodbye
#General_Ending
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return
Anything else
Customize
Settings

9. Click ✕ to close the edit view.



Welcome
welcome
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return

Greet customers
#General_Greetings
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return

Say goodbye
#General_Ending
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return

Anything else
anything_else
1 Responses / 0 Context Set / Does not return

Testing intent recognition

You built a simple dialog to recognize and respond to both greeting and ending inputs. Let's see how wel
it works.

1. Click the `Try it` icon to open the "Try it out" pane. There's that reassuring welcome message.
2. In the text field, type `Hello` and then press Enter. The output indicates that the `#General_Greetings` intent was recognized, and the appropriate response (`Good day to you.`) is displayed.
3. Try the following input:
   - `bye`
   - `howdy`
   - `see ya`
   - `good morning`

Cookie Preferences

- `sayonara`

0:00 / 0:20

Watson can recognize your intents even when your input doesn't exactly match the examples that you included. The dialog uses intents to identify the purpose of the user's input regardless of the precise wording used, and then responds in the way you specify.

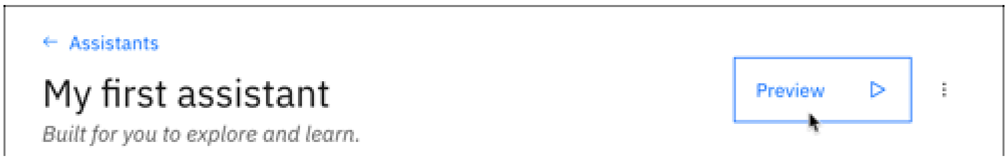
Result of building a dialog

That's it. You created a simple conversation with two intents and a dialog to recognize them.

Step 5: Integrate the assistant

Now that you have an assistant that can participate in a simple conversational exchange, test it.

1. Click the **Assistants** icon to open a list of your assistants.
2. Find the *My first assistant* assistant, and open it.
3. Test your assistant with *Preview*.


← Assistants

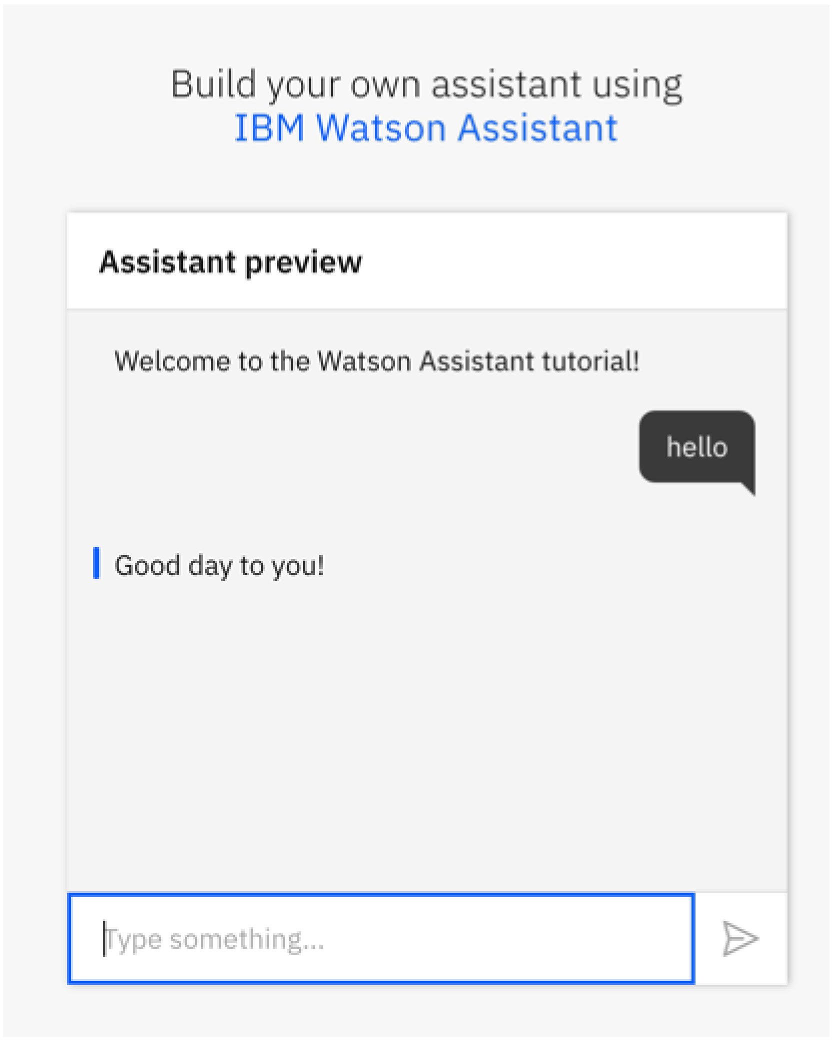
My first assistant

Built for you to explore and learn.

4. Copy the URL from *Share this link* and use it in a new tab. You can start submitting message to see how your assistant responds.

   Note: With a Lite plan, you can use the service for free. With other plans, you are charged for messages that you submit from the preview link. You can review metrics about the test user conversations from the Analytics page. You are not charged for messages that you submit from the "Try it out" pane, and the exchanges you have there are not logged.

5. Type `hello` into the text field, and watch your assistant respond.



Welcome to the Watson Assistant tutorial!

hello

Good day to you!

You can share the URL with others who might want to try out your assistant.

6. After testing, close the web page. Click the **X** to close the preview link integration page.

Next steps

This tutorial is built around a simple example. For a real application, you need to define some more interesting intents, some entities, and a more complex dialog that uses them both. When you have a polished version of the assistant, you can integrate it with web sites or channels, such as Slack, that your

customers already use. As traffic increases between the assistant and your customers, you can use the tools that are provided in the **Analytics** page to analyze real conversations, and identify areas for improvement.

- Complete follow-on tutorials that build more advanced dialogs:
  - Add more dialog nodes to design complex conversational exchanges. See Building a complex dialog.
  - Learn techniques for getting customers to share information that the assistant needs before it can provide a useful response. See Adding a node with slots.