

COMMUNICATION

Keeping the conversation going

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER

EN_B1_3053X

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

- I can identify a range of strategies used in conversation and give examples of each.
- I can use these strategies in a conversation on an everyday topic.



Warm-up

In your country, what do you **do...**

**...when you
greet a friend?**



**...when you
greet a stranger?**



Reading

On his way to work, **Greg** meets **Maria**. She is a friend of his and his wife, **Vanessa**.

Greg: Maria! Fancy running into you! How are you?

Maria: I'm fine, thanks! How are you and Vanessa? Are you guys still thinking of ending things?

Greg: Ending things? What exactly do you mean by that, if I may ask?

Maria: Oh, it's just she mentioned to me the other week you've been arguing quite a lot lately.



1. What does Maria want to know?
2. How does Greg respond to her question?



Reading

On his way to work, **Greg** meets **Maria**. She is a friend of his and his wife, **Vanessa**.

Greg: We're much better now, actually. Anyway, how are things with you and your new boyfriend?

Maria: Oh, with Lee? Same old, same old really.

Greg: I'm glad to hear that. Sorry, Maria I've got to head off. I have a meeting at 9 at the office.

Maria: Alright. Well, it was nice running into you, Greg! And give my regards to Vanessa!



3. How does Greg change the topic of the conversation?
4. How does Greg manage to end the conversation?



Match with a synonym

Match the phrases from the text (1-5) with a synonym (a-e).

1 *Fancy **running into** you!*

a recently

2 *Are you thinking of **ending things**?*

b splitting up, ending the relationship

3 *She told me **the other week**...*

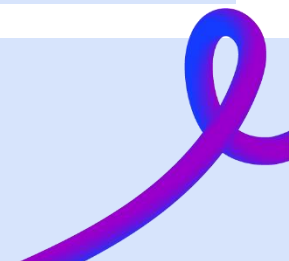
c meeting, seeing

4 *Anyway, I've got to **head off***

d my best

5 *Give **my regards** to Vanessa!*

e leave now



Asking for clarification

Read the explanation and **review** the examples from the text.



Ending things? What exactly do you mean by that, if I may ask?



Oh, it's just she mentioned to me the other week you've been arguing quite a lot lately.

- Greg repeats what Maria said as a question, so with rising intonation.
- He does this to show he hasn't understood what she means.
- Then, he asks her to clarify her words. He adds *if I may ask* to be even more polite.
- Another clarifying phrase: *What exactly are you referring to (by that)?*

Changing the topic

Read the explanation and **review** the examples from the text.



We're much better now. **Anyway**, how are things with you and your new boyfriend?



Oh, **with Lee**? Same old, same old really.

- Greg uses **anyway** to change the topic of the conversation.
- **Other phrases:** *that reminds me...;*
in any case...;
speaking of which...
- Notice Maria also **uses a question** to clarify.





Complete the sentences

1. **Fill in** the gaps to form a complete sentence.
2. **Compare** your answers in breakout rooms or together as a class.
3. **Identify** two questions for clarifying and three questions to change the topic.

1 Sorry, what _____ do you _____ by that?

2 When you say the other month, when are you _____ to?

3 _____ of which, how are things going at work?

4 In any _____, what's new with you?

5 Oh, that _____ me, have you heard the news about Sophie?

exactly
speaking
case
referring
reminds
mean



Take a photo of the activity **before** going into the breakout room!



Reading

Greg arrives at the office. He has a meeting with **Jo**, from the Marketing department.

Greg: Let's hear your idea for the shoot, Jo!

Jo: Well, the idea is to photograph the new swimwear in a desert just outside of Mumbai.

Greg: There are deserts close to Mumbai?

Jo: For sure. I mean, Dubai is surrounded by them!



1. What project are Greg and Jo planning?
2. Which two locations for it does Jo mention?



Reading

Greg arrives at the office. He has a meeting with **Jo**, from the Marketing department.

Greg: Could I stop you for one second, Jo? I'm not sure if I'm following you here or not. Just to clarify, will the shoot be in Mumbai or in Dubai? You've said both places just now.

Jo: My apologies, I meant in *Dubai*, not Mumbai. I must have been thinking about last year's campaign in India.



3. What does Greg have difficulty understanding?
4. What does Jo give as the correct information?

Asking for clarification at work

Read the three steps in the box and **review** the examples.

Could I stop you for one second, Jo?
I'm not sure if I'm following you here or not.

Just to clarify, will the shoot be in
Mumbai or in Dubai?

- These are the **three P-E-A** steps:
- 1. Politely **ask to pause** the conversation.
- 2. Explain you **don't understand** someone or something.
- 3. Ask for **clearer, more specific information**.





Form two more phrases

One phrase to **pause a conversation** and another phrase to explain you **don't understand**.

Could I

jump in

Jo?

just

very quickly,

here



sure if

I've understood

correctly

you

I'm not

entirely



Just to **double-check**:
will the shoot be in
Mumbai or Dubai?

Native-speakers often use this phrase to quickly **confirm** or **clarify** information they already know.

It means the same as
to **check again** > **double-check!**

Match the two parts of the sentence

1. **Match** the beginning of the sentence with the correct end.
2. **Use** three complete sentences and **form** an example like the one on slide 12.
3. **Follow the P-E-A steps:** 1) Politely pause 2) Explain misunderstanding 3) Ask for clarity

1 Could I just...

a ...the task needs to be done by end of day tomorrow or the day after?

2 I'm sorry, but I'm not quite...

b following you.

3 Could I ask you to please...

c understood you.

4 Just to clarify:...

d ...stop you for a second there?

5 I don't think I've completely...

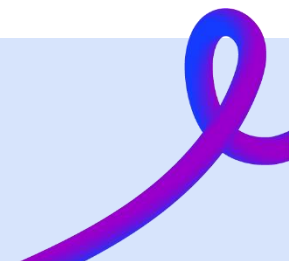
e ...pause for one second?



Form a sentence

1. **Imagine** you are talking to a colleague at work.
2. **Ask them** to clarify the information in each situation.
3. **Follow the P-E-A steps:** 1) Politely pause 2) Explain misunderstanding 3) Ask for clarity

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|-------------|
| 1 | You're not sure if a colleague wants you to send an email or call the client. | > | <hr/> <hr/> |
| 2 | You're discussing lunch, and your colleague says he's vegan and has some food allergies. | > | <hr/> <hr/> |
| 3 | You can't understand if their sales presentation is starting or ending at 10 a.m.. | > | <hr/> <hr/> |
| 4 | They speak French, Spanish and German, but you can't tell which they speak fluently. | > | <hr/> <hr/> |
| 5 | You've heard another teammate is on holiday next week or the week after that. | > | <hr/> <hr/> |





Role-play

1. **Choose** a situation from the last slide (or invent your own).
2. **Role-play** it with a partner.

Student A

Greet other person

Ask for clarification politely.

Change the topic of the conversation.

Student B

Respond and explain situation. Go into detail.

Clarify situation.

Respond and end conversation.



End of the lesson

Idiom

as clear as day

Meaning: very easy to understand.

Example: Your instructions were as clear as day. They were so easy to follow!



Additional practice



Fill in the gaps

Choose from the correct word to complete the sentences.

- 1 Fancy _____ into you here! I haven't seen you in years!
- 2 I have to _____ off now, but give my _____ to Helen.
- 3 My boss told me the _____ week that I might get a promotion.
- 4 How is that guy you've been seeing? You told me you were thinking of _____ things?
- 5 How is work, if I _____ ask?

ending
head
other
may
running
regards



Free practice

Choose one of the topics below and **take turns** speaking about it.



While **listening** to your classmate, try to **ask them for clarification**.

Use as many different **phrases** from the lesson as you can!

1



Your job

2



Your hometown

3



Your current living situation

4



Your family

5



Your hobbies



Preparing for a meeting

1. **Imagine** you have an **important meeting** at work tomorrow.
2. The list below shows some information you **know** and some information you **don't know**.
3. **Discuss**: what questions would you ask **to clarify** this information?

- 1 The meeting will happen at some time between 9am – 4pm
- 2 The meeting will be in either conference room 1 or conference room 2
- 3 You don't know if members of your team need to come
- 4 You don't know if the agenda will be sent out before the meeting





Now you're in the meeting

1. **Read** the boxes below: they contain information that you need to clarify.
2. **Practise** politely asking someone **to pause the conversation** and **clarify some information**.



Your boss tells you that John will contact an important client. There are two Johns in your team.

You are not sure if the next meeting will be in one week or two weeks

You discuss a lot of deadlines in the meeting. You are unsure if these times are European Central Time or Greenwich Mean Time.

You will be out of the office for the next meeting and you want to know if you can join by video call.



Answer key

P. 6: 1c, 2b, 3a, 4e, 5d

P. 9: 1. exactly, mean, 2. referring, 3. speaking, 4 case, 5. reminds

P. 15: 1d, 2b, 3e, 4a, 5c

P. 21: 1. running, 2. head, regards, 3. other, 4. ending, 5. may



Summary

Greetings and ending conversations

- *Fancy running into you!*
- *Anyway, I've got to head off*
- *Give my regards to Vanessa!*

Asking for clarification

- You can repeat what someone has said with rising intonation
- Then ask to clarify, adding *if I may ask* to be polite
- You can also ask *what exactly are you referring to?*

Changing the topic

- Using *anyway* at the start of a sentence is a good way to change the topic
- *That reminds me* and *in any case* are two other useful phrases
- *Speaking of which* is another good way to change the topic of a conversation

Asking for clarification at work

- | | |
|---|--|
| ● <i>Could I stop you for one second, please?</i> | <i>Can I just jump in very quickly here?</i> |
| ● <i>I'm not sure if I'm following you here</i> | <i>I'm not sure if I've understood you correctly</i> |
| ● <i>Just to clarify...</i> | <i>Just to double-check,...</i> |



Vocabulary

to run into someone

to end things with someone

the other week

to head off

regards

What exactly do you mean by that?

May I ask?

What exactly are you referring to by that?

Anyway

That reminds me

In any case

Speaking of which

Could I stop you for one second?

Could I just jump in very quickly here?

Could I ask you to pause for one second?

I'm not entirely sure if I'm following you here

I'm not sure if I've understood you correctly

I don't think I've completely understood you

Just to clarify,...

to double-check



Notes

