

# How to Keep a Conversation Going

*When you run out of things to say*

## WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

- Not a list of phrases to memorise.
- Not theory.
- Just 3 patterns you can use in a real conversation today.

## THE REAL PROBLEM

Here is what usually happens. You answer a question, the other person nods, and now it is your turn again. Your mind goes blank. You say 'yes' or 'okay' and the conversation dies.

The real issue is not vocabulary. It is that you do not have a system for keeping the conversation alive. Native speakers have a small set of moves they use automatically. **You can learn the same moves.**

## KEY IDEA

**There are three tools that keep almost every conversation going: the follow-up question, the echo, and the topic bridge.**

## SEE IT IN ACTION

### PATTERN 1 — THE FOLLOW-UP QUESTION

After someone answers, ask one more question about what they just said. Do not change the subject yet.

If they say 'I went to Bali last month' — do not just say 'nice.' Ask: 'How long were you there?' or 'Was it your first time?' One follow-up question shows you are listening and buys you more time.

The easiest follow-up words: **how, what, who, when, was it, did you.**

### PATTERN 2 — THE ECHO

Repeat the most interesting word from what they said, with a rising tone. That is it.

They say 'I just got a promotion.' You say 'A promotion?' They will explain. You do not need a question. You just need to reflect one word back.

This works because people love to talk about themselves. You give them the signal to continue — and you get time to think.

### PATTERN 3 — THE TOPIC BRIDGE

When the current topic is finished, use a bridge phrase to move to a new one.

Useful bridges: 'That reminds me...' / 'Speaking of which...' / 'On a completely different note...' / 'Actually, I wanted to ask you...'

You do not need to wait for permission to change the subject. These phrases give you natural entry points.

## PRACTICE

Five situations. What do you say to keep the conversation going? Pause and try before reading the suggested response.

**1. They say: 'I work in finance.'**

*Follow-up: 'What kind of finance?' or 'How long have you been doing that?'*

**2. They say: 'I moved here two years ago.'**

*Echo: 'Two years ago?' — they will explain why.*

**3. Silence after talking about the weather.**

*Bridge: 'On a different note — have you been here long?'*

**4. They say: 'I just started learning guitar.'**

*Follow-up: 'What made you want to start?' or 'What kind of music?'*

**5. You answered their question and now it is quiet.**

*Turn it back: 'What about you — do you have the same experience?'*

---

## TODAY'S SMALL ACTION

**Today, use one follow-up question in any conversation — in English or in your own language. Notice how the other person responds. That is the habit.**

*Want more practice? The members edition has extra exercises, a self-check quiz, and a full phrase bank.*