

How to start a conversation with a stranger

1. Look at the photos and discuss the questions.



- Do the people know each other or have they just met? How do you know?
- Imagine the people have just met. Who started the conversation? How did they start it? What are they talking about now?
- Do you think it's awkward to start a conversation with someone you don't know? Why/Why not?
- How would you start a conversation with a stranger?

2. Complete the gaps in the conversation starters with one word each.

- I don't think we've I'm Mon.
- is it going?
- Hi, you from around here?
- Is it if I sit here?
- So, do you know Mia?
- Sorry to bother you, but would you helping me?
- Hi, where are you from? No, wait, don't tell me. Let me! You're Portuguese.

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3. Match the conversation starters to the reactions.

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| a) I don't think we've met. I'm Mon. | 1) No problem! Grab a seat. |
| b) How is it going? | 2) No we're not. We are just here on holiday. |
| c) Hi, are you from around here? | 3) Hi! Sorry, but I have to go now. It was nice to meet you, though. |
| d) Is it OK/cool if I sit here? | 4) We used to work together. |
| e) So, how do you know Mia? | 5) Sure! What do you need? |
| f) Sorry to bother you, but would you mind helping me? | 6) Actually, I'm Spanish. |
| g) Hi, where are you from? No, wait, don't tell me. Let me guess! You're Portuguese. | 7) Not too bad. |

4. Look at some other ways you can start a conversation with a stranger.

Decide where the conversations might be taking place.

- a) Is it your first time here?
- b) You should try this pie. It's delicious!
- c) Your dog is really cute.
- d) I can't believe it's raining again!
- e) Wow! Look at this crowd!
- f) I love your jacket! Where did you get it?
- g) Are you having a good time?

5. In pairs, decide how you would answer the conversation starters in ex. 4.

Try to show that you are open to a longer conversation!

6. Discuss the questions.

- When was the last time you talked to a stranger? What did you talk about?
- You are going to watch a video about a man who decided to talk to a hundred strangers. Would you like to do an experiment like this? Why/Why not?



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7. Watch the first part of the [video](https://youtu.be/pXT OyBINUW4) [https://youtu.be/pXT OyBINUW4] (to 00:37) and choose the answer which best summarizes what the man thinks.
- a) People in New York don't like talking to strangers, but he wants to show them it's not that hard.
 - b) It is not easy for him to meet people but he wants to try.
 - c) He is worried that nobody will want to talk to him.
8. Before watching the second part, try to guess the answers to the questions below. Then, watch the second part of the [video](#) (00:37-03:09) and check if you were right.
- a) Why didn't some people want to talk to the man?
 - b) What did the man talk about with people?
9. Match what the man said to the person or people he said it to. Then, watch the second part of the [video](#) (00:37-03:09) again and check your answers.
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| a) The man who wants to have a quiet lunch. | 1) Aw, you guys are the best. |
| b) The man eating in the car. | 2) I don't think I've ever met a butcher before. |
| c) People sitting at a café table. | 3) I'm just trying to meet people. |
| d) People eating on the stairs. | 4) Nice to meet you, though! |
| e) The man wearing a black hat. | 5) You're smart as hell. |
| f) The woman sitting on the stairs. | 6) How did you get into juggling? |
| g) The man sitting on the grass. | 7) Where are you guys from? |

VOCABULARY TIP

you guys

you can use it in an informal conversation when you are talking to two or more people (instead of using 'you')

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10. Watch the last part of the [video](#) (from 03:09) and tick the words the man uses to describe his experience.

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| a) eye-opening | c) refreshing |
| b) unexpected | d) awesome |

11. Discuss the questions.

- Why do you think the man called the experience 'eye-opening'?
- Is making friends more difficult now than in the past? Why/Why not?
- How often do you try to make friends? Is it easy for you?

12. Think of a way to start a conversation in the situations below.

- a) You are on a plane. Talk to the person next to you.
- b) You are waiting for the first lesson of an English course. Talk to a person who also looks like a student.
- c) You are in the park with your children. Talk to someone who also came to the park with their children.
- d) You are waiting in a queue in a shop. Talk to the person in front of you.
- e) You are at a café waiting for a barista to make you a take-away coffee. Talk to the barista.
- f) You are at a party. Talk to the person who is sitting alone.
- g) You are in a city you don't know very well and you think you're lost. You see a group of people talking to each other. Talk to them.

13. Your teacher will give you some phrases to use. In pairs, Student A picks a situation in ex. 12 and starts a conversation. Student B responds. Continue the conversation for as long as you can. Then, Student B chooses a different situation and talks first. Try to use all the phrases you got from your teacher!