

# Part I Person-to-Person Talks

## *Principles and Strategies*

We talk to people all the time — in different social settings, for various purposes. We talk to exchange information, to solve problems, to persuade, or simply to impress. The talk can be casual or serious depending on different occasions. There are, however, a few principles that are key to an effective and pleasant conversation:

- Create a hospitable space and be a good listener. Show your interest in what the other person says. Give them feedback even if it is only a smile or an “hmm”. Try not to interrupt in the middle of a sentence.
- Be willing to ask questions and encourage each other’s contributions. They are the best tools you have to get the other person to share information and engage in the conversation. The best questions are the open-ended ones.
- Be ready to share information. A quality conversation combines receiving information with giving out. For example, after asking your friend where she is from and responding with what you know about that place, you might want to offer her information about your hometown as well.
- Be ready to connect diverse perspectives. A conversation might have a focus on core concerns, but good talkers are happy to increase new ideas and expand on the diversity and density of the conversation.
- Remember not to get too personal in the first few talks with a person. It is not a good idea, in the Western culture, to ask about such private matters as marriage or income, which are considered acceptable in the Chinese context.
- Do not talk for too long at a time. Note the rhythm and leave room for interaction.

# Unit one Campus and Academia



## Useful Expressions



### ☺ STARTING A CONVERSATION ☺

What a nice day!

Hi, have you got a moment?

Excuse me, is this seat taken? Would you mind if I sit here?

Excuse me, do I know you from somewhere? Are you in the same biology class with me?

Uh, could you help me out here? I am trying to...

## I Read and Think

### Text 1

#### The Aim of a University Education

*John Henry Newman*

If then a practical end must be assigned to a university course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the social life, and its end is fitness for the world.

It neither confines its views to particular professions on the one hand, nor creates heroes or inspires genius on the other. Workers indeed of genius fall under no art; heroic minds come under no rule; a university is not a birthplace of poets or of immortal authors, of founders of schools, or leaders of colonies, or conquerors of nations.

It does not promise a generation of Aristotles or Newtons, of Napoleons or Washingtons, of Raphaels or Shakespeares, though such miracles of nature it has before now contained within its precincts. Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, although such too it includes within its scope.

But a university training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the idea of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life.

It is the education which gives a man a clear, conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them. It teaches him to see things as they are, to go right to the point, to disentangle a skein of thought, to detect what is sophistical, and to discard what is irrelevant. It prepares him to fill any post with credit, and to master any subject with facility.

It shows him how to accommodate himself to others, how to throw himself into their state of mind, how to bring before them his own, how to influence them, how to come to an understanding with them, how to bear with them.

He is at home in any society; he has common ground with every class; he knows when to speak and when to be silent; he is able to converse; he is able to listen; he can ask a question pertinently, and gain a lesson seasonably, where he has nothing to impart himself; he is ever ready, yet never in the way; he is a pleasant companion, and a

comrade you can depend upon; he knows when to be serious and when to trifle, and he has a sure tact which enables him to trifle with gracefulness and to be serious with effect. He has the repose of a mind which lives in itself, while it lives in the world, and which serves him in public, and supports him in retirement, without which good fortune is but vulgar, and with which failure and disappointment have a charm.

The art which tends to make a man all this, is in the object which it pursues as useful as the art of wealth or the art of health, though it is less susceptible of method, and less tangible, less certain, less complete in its result.

**Question:** Do you agree with the author's idea about the aim of university education? Is what he proposes still relevant for the realities today? Has your own experience at college confirmed or contradicted what was said by him?

## Text 2

### How to Talk to Professors

*Dustin Wax*

I realize that many students are intimidated by their professors. This is especially so when students need something — a favor, special help with an assignment, a second chance on a test. It doesn't need to be that way. If you approach your professors with the same basic respect and decency you offer everyone else you interact with, you'll probably find that they react with the same.

There are, though, a few things you should keep in mind when you talk to your professors, especially if you're going to be asking for a particular favor:

- Call them by the right title. A “Doctor” is someone with a PhD; not all professors have a PhD. “Professor” is usually appropriate, unless you've been told otherwise. I prefer to be called by my first name, and I make that point clearly on the first day

of class; if your professor hasn't said anything about this, you're better off not using their first name.

- Tell the truth. It's a sad fact, but true nonetheless, that we grow pretty jaded and take all student excuses with a grain of salt. If you feel you absolutely must lie, at least make it a huge flaming whopper of a lie, so the professor can get a good laugh when they share it at the next faculty meeting.
- Be clear and concise. Unless you're paying a "social call", get to the point quickly: tell your professor what you need or want and be done with it. Don't spend 30 minutes explaining your childhood and family arrangements and how hard it is getting a job with a few felony convictions on your record for a 10-point assignment. Simply say "Professor, I missed an assignment, can I make it up? Can I do something else?"
- Pay social calls. Most professors like talking to students — it's part of the reason we took the job. Chances are, though, that s/he spends the majority of her or his office hours playing Minesweeper and reading email, because students almost never drop in on her/him. Pay your professor a visit or two, just to talk. Tell him or her about the work you're interested in or about problems you're having. Build relationships with your professors — at the very least, they'll remember you when you call up three years later asking for a reference letter.
- Prepare for disappointment. Depending on how far you've let your studies slide, there might not be anything a professor can do and still be fair to the rest of her or his students. Or it might not be technically possible: arranging make-up tests, for example, is difficult. Your professor probably spent hours writing his or her syllabus, and probably spent another hour explaining it to you at the beginning of the class, so he or she's got a lot invested in the rules it explains. They especially hate it when people don't do an assignment and then ask for a way to make it up; it throws off their whole "rhythm" to read an assignment from 6 weeks ago. So often a professor won't or can't help you. Your only option might be to shift into damage control, see

what you can do, and ask honestly if you should continue in the class.

As I said, most professors will respond in kind if you treat them openly and decently. We didn't become professors because we wanted to make students' lives miserable. We became professors out of a passion for our disciplines and a desire to share our knowledge with you. As a general rule, professors respect commitment and genuine curiosity, and will go out of their way to help if they feel that you are honestly interested in doing well. On the other hand, professors get to feeling pretty used by the numerous students who work hard only at gaming the system, and if they feel you're one of those students, they're not likely to bend very far to make life easier for you.

(<http://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/advice-for-students-how-to-talk-to-professors.html>, excerpted and adapted for teaching purposes.)

**Questions:** Do you have problems communicating with your professors? Has Professor Wax's essay shed any light on this matter for you? Talk about the perplexities you encounter when trying to reach out to your professors and ask each other for solutions.

## II Listen and See

### Video 1

1-1-1 Students sharing their experience at a Duke-Fudan exchange program.

(From [www.asianmideast.duke.edu](http://www.asianmideast.duke.edu))

**Questions:** Have you considered going abroad as an exchange student? What do you expect to gain from the experience overseas?

### Video 2

1-1-2 An alumnus talking about college life with an undergraduate.

(From movie *Liberal Arts*)

**Question:** Suppose one day you return to school as an alumnus/alumna and have a chance to talk to the younger students, what would you say to them?

### **III In-Class Activities**

#### 1. Snowball game

Please write down on a piece of paper three questions that you would like to know about the other students in your class, fold the paper into a snowball, throw your ball as far as you can. Then each student has to answer the questions on the paper that hits him/her. Provide as many details as possible. Please note that the questions you write should not be too personal, neither should they be general questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”.

#### 2. Striking up a conversation

Suppose you are having a crush on the boy/girl who works part-time at the school library/cafe/language centre. Strike up a conversation with him/her, get to know each other a bit, and see if you can ask him/her out sometime soon.

#### 3. Casual talk

You have just moved into a new dormitory. Now the four of you are having your first late night conversation with no specific topics. You might want to, for example, introduce yourself to your roommates, talk about campus life, or comment on the lessons or professors, etc.

### **IV After-Class Pair/Group Work**

#### 1. Role play

Have a casual conversation with your family upon returning home on your first winter vacation. Describe your college life, laugh or quarrel with them.

## 2. Role play

A freshman comes to you, in hopes that you can give him/her some advice on his/her choice of major. Talk to him/her with your experience and understanding.

### **SAMPLE DIALOGUE: AT THE AIRPORT**

**Amelia:** Excuse me. Is this the right counter to check in for flight A8012 to Los Angeles?

**Airline clerk:** Yes. May I see your passport please?

**Amelia:** Sure. Here it is.

**Airline clerk:** Thanks. Have you got any baggage to check in?

**Amelia:** Oh yes, just this suitcase please. By the way, I suppose I can take this handbag as my carry-on luggage?

**Airline clerk:** Yes sure. Would you like to sit by the window or by the aisle?

**Amelia:** By the aisle, please. It's a long flight and I think it would be nice to be able to move about a bit.

**Airline clerk:** OK. Here's your boarding pass. Please go to Gate 5 to board the flight. Have a nice trip!

**Amelia:** Thanks a lot. Have a nice day!



## Unit Two Jobs and Internships

### Useful Expressions

#### ☺ ASKING FOR INFORMATION ☺

Excuse me. Do you happen to know anything about...?

Would you mind if I ask you about...?

I am wondering if you could tell me about...?

I am wondering if you could help me out here. I really need to know...

I don't suppose you (would) know...?

## I Read and Think

### Text 1

#### A List of Good Work Ethics by Employees

*George Lawrence*

Effective employees are critical to the success of a growing business. An experienced manager or owner is always able to recognize and filter out the good from the bad. Employees who consistently demonstrate good work ethics can be invaluable assets. Here are some key characteristics to be recognized in such employees.

### Reliability

A reliable employee is punctual, follows through on his tasks and shows up ready to work. Business owners cannot afford to keep employees who are not reliable. If an employee consistently arrives late to work and routinely fails to follow through or complete his tasks, the company loses time, money and business.

### Positive and Helpful Character

Small businesses often have a close, tightly knit, familial atmosphere. It is natural to experience some growing pains or rough days. In general, good employees usually have a positive attitude and are willing to help each other out. Negativity and dissent can spread like a disease and damage workplace morale and productivity. Employees should show initiative to make themselves useful and act as teammates to one another.

### Proper Communication

Strong interpersonal skills can help form cohesive teams among employees and make handling challenges easier. Employees must communicate effectively and understand the difference between constructive criticism and destructive griping. Related to interpersonal skills is an employee's outward appearance. If the job calls for professional attire, the employee should dress the part. Strong interpersonal skills involve understanding a little about office politics — the employee should know when to speak up and when to listen.

### Altruistic and Goal-Oriented

Good employees are often altruistic and goal-oriented. While receiving a paycheck is a strong motivator, a good work ethic is also putting yourself aside to work toward the greater good of the company as a whole. Doing so leads to working toward goals rather than putting in the minimum effort. To foster good work ethics, an employer must also possess strong work ethics. If you treat your employees as a means to an end, your employees will not respect you or the business. Work on team-building, show respect to your employees, but also be stern and mete out discipline when necessary.

(<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/list-good-work-ethics-employees-21503.html>, excerpted and adapted for teaching purposes.)

**Questions:** Suppose you are at a job interview. How do you demonstrate to the interviewer that you have good work ethics? Can you relate the characteristics to your personal experiences?

## Text 2

### My Internship Experience

*Alan Raisman*

Internships are an important part of the college experience. I had a couple of internships throughout my four years in college, and each helped me gain the networking experience and the work experience I need for a career.

The summer after my sophomore year, I became an Ash intern for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society or HIAS in Philadelphia. The Ash internship program allowed me to serve as an intern at a Jewish agency or organization in Philadelphia for four days a week and serve as a mentor for a Jewish high school student every Friday. The internship at HIAS appointed me to work at an immigration law firm. During my internship, I revised the Annual Report, I worked with prominent law firms in Philadelphia to create Holocaust reparation clinics, and I created a biography book for their Board of Trustees. The internship introduced me to the field of law, and offered me the opportunity to network with members of HIAS' Board of Trustees. Every Friday, I served as a mentor for a junior in high school, helping him understand the collegiate lifestyle and allowing him to gain networking experience with college students. The mentorship experience allowed my mentee to understand the importance of work experience and the importance of networking experience as well, and it offered him information I wish I received while in high school.

During the spring semester of my junior year, I served as an intern with Pennsylvania Senator Rob Wonderling. He represented Pennsylvania's 24th district in the

Pennsylvania Senate. I researched the problem of Pennsylvania Brain Drain, working on the YouLead Initiative, legislation helping to keep Pennsylvania college graduates in the state upon graduation from school. The internship allowed me to meet, interact, and network with Senator Wonderling's staff, and I learned about various pieces of legislation being researched by other staff members and interns. The internship also introduced me to the workings of the Pennsylvania state government, and my interest caused me to add the Government and Law major in the middle of my internship.

The summer after my junior year, I served as an intern at the National Institute of Justice, the research arm of the United States Department of Justice. I worked in their International Center. As an intern, I researched less-lethal weaponry and the anti-Mafia movement in Italy. The research experience helped me in further developing my work experience. We had a flash mentoring session with agency directors, and we had the privilege of speaking one-on-one with agency directors after our internship graduation. This internship experience proved to me that selecting a small college in a small city has its advantages, for I am only competing with a handful of International Affairs and Government majors at Lafayette College who applied for an internship with the federal government, compared with the hundreds of applicants from American University I may have been competing with if I were to attend school there.

Internships helped me gain the work experience and the networking experience needed to progress through college and into a career. I am very grateful for the internship opportunities given to me, and I highly recommend searching for internship opportunities as soon as possible, whether in high school, college, or beyond. Work experience and networking experience are very helpful in life, and developing those tools early can benefit greatly in years to come.

(<http://voices.lafayette.edu/2010/03/21/my-internship-experience/>, excerpted and adapted for teaching purposes.)

**Questions:** Have you got any plans for internships during college? What kind of companies or organizations do you expect to intern for? What do you want to learn from the internship experience?

## II Listen and See

### Video 1

1-2-1 Talk show on college student entrepreneurship.

(Excerpt from abc TV.)

**Question:** If you are to start up your own business, what business would you launch and why?

### Video 2

1-2-2 A job interview.

(Excerpt from movie *The Pursuit of Happiness*.)

**Question:** Suppose you are taking a job interview for a position that you really want. How would you want to impress your interviewer and how would you get yourself prepared?

## III In-Class Activities

### 1. Mock interview

You are shortlisted as a candidate for a certain position in the Outdoor Club/ Collegiate News Agency/ Stray Cats Shelter Organization... at your university. Now you are taking an interview with the head of the association. Try to explain to him/her why you want the position, what you can do for the association, why they should choose you over other candidates, etc.

### 2. Starting up a \_\_\_ studio

You and your friend excel at making powerpoints/posters/... and you believe this can help your fellow students while making some money. Now the two of you are having a

discussion on starting up a studio.

### 3. A talk with your parents

You are thinking about taking a gap year after graduation, to see the world and to know yourself. Your parents, however, do not like the idea. They urge you to find a job and start your adult life “like everybody else.” Talk with them and see who gets convinced.

## **Iv After-Class Pair/Group Work**

### 1. Role play

Suppose you are the boss of a start-up company. Now you are thinking about recruiting new employees to work as event planners/ sales people/ designers/... Work together with your secretary to draft a want ad to post on the internet.

### 2. Role play

Suppose you are interning at an international consulting firm. You feel that your mentor at the firm has not been giving you the kind of instructions that you want. Frankly you think you are not learning anything useful but running office chores like photocopying. Talk with him/her about this in a polite, sincere and effective way.

## **SAMPLE DIALOGUE: AT THE HOTEL**

**Receptionist:** Good afternoon. Welcome to the Greenwich Hotel. How can I help you?

**Amelia:** Good afternoon. I have a reservation through bookings.com. It's under the name of Amelia Foster.

**Receptionist:** Let me check. Yes, Ms. Foster, we have reserved for you a single room with ocean view for two nights.

**Amelia:** That's correct.

**Receptionist:** Can I have your ID card please?

**Amelia:** Sure. Here you go.

**Receptionist:** OK. Could you sign here at the bottom of this form, please?

**Amelia:** Sure.

**Receptionist:** That looks fine. Your room is 507. Here's your room key, Ms. Foster. You can take the elevator right opposite the counter to the fifth floor. Breakfast is served on the second floor from 7 am to 10 am.

**Amelia:** OK. Thanks. Is there wifi in the room?

**Receptionist:** Yes, all rooms have wifi. Here's the password.

**Amelia:** Great. Thank you. Oh, can I have a wake-up call for tomorrow morning at 8 o'clock?

**Receptionist:** Certainly.

**Amelia:** Thanks.

**Receptionist:** My pleasure. Have a nice stay here!

## Unit Three Dating and Relationships

### Useful Expressions

#### ☺ MAKING AN APPOINTMENT ☺

Are you free Friday afternoon?

Have you got any plans for the weekend?

I am thinking of going shopping this afternoon. Would you like to join me?

A couple of my friends are coming to my apartment for a party tonight. Would you care to come as well?

How does Thursday sound to you?

Can I see you sometime soon?

## I Read and Think

### Text 1

#### **"At least I'm not with the wrong person": Six New Yorkers on Loving the Single Life**

*Rose Hackman*

This Valentine's Day, when everyone is praising the virtues of coupledness, Rose



Hackman talks to six people who treasure what it means to be unattached.

**Yasmin Ali, 29: “My relationship with myself is rock solid”**

At the end of the day you only have yourself. I want to make sure that the relationship that I have with myself is rock solid. Being single means I can concentrate on that. I can evolve spiritually and emotionally without someone expecting you to be the same, without someone saying: “No, I thought you were like this way.”

I grew up with a classic Disney princess complex, like thinking my self-worth will only be validated once I’m with a man or a knight in shining armor. It’s becoming more and more apparent that some guy — or any guy at all — is not going to “complete” my life.

**Janey Byun, 32: “The only thing I liked about marriage was the tax break”**

I have been married before. The only thing I liked about it was the tax break. Now that I’m single, I don’t have to answer to anybody. No one is paying the bills except for me. I don’t have any responsibilities, except for the ones I pick for myself.

I have many friends. I am never in want for a bar or a restaurant companion. It can get lonely, though. Especially when it’s cold. Then I want a cuddle buddy.

**Maxime Leroy, 26: “The possibility of a spontaneous encounter”**

I am not a huge fan of being single. But it does mean I am able to meet interesting people and spend a lot of quality time with friends.

I don’t date five people at the same time. If I am seeing someone romantically, it’s because that man is the right person for me at that moment. I don’t date like most Americans do.

That’s one of the reasons why dating apps are not for me. I do not want to be looking at 100 people at the same time. I prefer the possibility of a spontaneous encounter.