



大学英语口语教程

College Spoken English Course

—Developing Verbal Strategies
for Communication

顾问 王海啸
编著 肖莉
审订 汪学立



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Preface

College Spoken English Course: Developing Verbal Strategies for Communication is for college students who want intensive training to improve their skills of oral communication in English so that they can use the language freely whenever they find themselves in an English speaking environment. The choice of materials, the design of the exercises, and the arrangement of the contents are also geared in a way that may help those who are preparing for different kinds of spoken English tests, such as the CET-SET and the TSE of TOEFL or IELTS.

After taking the course, students are expected to be able to conduct conversations in English that will exhibit the following qualities:

- a. **Spontaneity** (e.g., a response is made as soon as a situation calls for it or a stimulus is given.)
- b. **Appropriateness** (e.g., the language is suitable for the status of the speaker and for the particular situation the speaker is in. Of course, to be appropriate it has to be grammatically acceptable and accurate in the first place.)
- c. **Clarity** (e.g., the pronunciation of each phoneme is clear enough for others to distinguish, and so, understand.)
- d. **Fluency** (e.g., the sounds in the speech are so well handled that they are smooth, like those of a native speaker. The speaking has a noticeable rhythm typical to the English language.)

The following is the general organization of the textbook:

The first three units establish the general structure of English conversations. They introduce some basic principles for the organization of a complete conversation so that learners know how to start a conversation in a proper way, how to encourage it, and how to end it naturally and friendly in various situations.

The other twelve units concentrate on key aspects of conversational development. Here students learn to use proper English to do different things, for instance, getting information from others, describing places, people, and events, or giving opinions.

In terms of the internal organization of each unit, the following principles are adopted:

- a. Each unit provides principles and/or techniques for good conversations. The principles and techniques should be presented in such a way that learners take them in through their own observation and discussion rather than through the lectures of an instructor.
- b. There are ample exercises in each unit for learners to apply a principle or technique for practice. Each exercise series gives maximum amount of assistance to learners at the beginning to practice using a particular principle or technique. Then the support will be reduced gradually to set learners free in their conversations or talks.
- c. Each unit creates a space for real communication to take place so that when students are asked to do an exercise, they won't take it as a mere exercise but a good chance for them to make friends, to get the information they really want from others or to give opinions they are eager to give. The class atmosphere is warm and students are active. It will be a pleasure both for students to learn and for the teacher to teach in such a class with the help of the material.
- d. Each unit must also make a point to improve students' pronunciation so that after the course, they can speak clearly and fluently. However, the pronunciation section should not be too long. Instead it only picks out elements that are vital to the clarity and fluency of one's speech and presents them in such a way that students can quickly get hold of the elements and put them into oral English practice.

The materials in this book have been developed from the handouts of the *Spoken English Course* that I have taught for the past three years at Nanjing University. As there have been increasing demands for oral English lessons at my university, more of my colleagues have tested the materials out on their students and they have given me many valuable suggestions. Having given the handouts three years to mature, I finally decided to have them published in a book, for both my students and my colleagues who have enjoyed working with the materials. The students say that the content is interesting and useful; the teachers say that it is easy to use and the results

are good. Therefore I'd like to share it with you. I'd appreciate it greatly if you could give me some feedback after using the materials.

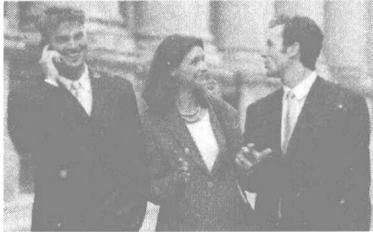
I should like to acknowledge the great help of Prof. Wang Xueli who supervised and edited the book, and gave me, while I was compiling, constant help, detailed advice, and the benefit of her broad knowledge and excellent command of the English language. Meanwhile, as a colleague, she was always ready to give me her warm-hearted encouragement, friendship, and support.

I should also like to thank Prof. Wang Haixiao, Chair of the Department of Applied Foreign Language Studies, Nanjing University, for encouraging me to get the book published.

I am very grateful to Prof. Chen Aifu and all the other colleagues of mine for their comments and ideas.

Xiao Li

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Starting a Conversation

Introduction

Do you know how to start a conversation? When you see people you know well, it is not too difficult. When you meet strangers or casual acquaintances, however, you may find it a bit hard to begin a conversation. Yet, very often it might seem rude not to speak to them at all in an English-speaking culture. For instance, when you are sitting or standing next to someone you know only slightly, or you are waiting for a class to start, an elevator to arrive, or a meeting to begin, it would be awkward if you were completely silent. This unit will help you become more sophisticated in dealing with such situations.

Observation

► Task 1

Instructions: *Listen to the following conversations and observe how the speakers open them. Answer the questions that follow each conversation.*



Dialog A

Situation: *At an evening party for the school anniversary, Josh finds himself standing next to a girl he doesn't know.*

Josh: Excuse me. Do you know when the

Questions

1. Is this a friendly conversation?
2. How does Josh start it?

band's going to start playing?

The girl: I'm not sure — maybe about nine.

Josh: Have you heard of the band? I don't think I have.

The girl: I guess it's a good band. I learned from a newspaper that they've recorded some good songs.

Dialog B

Situation: *George is attending a big ball held by a friend of his. Presently, he feels hot and goes out of the ballroom to get a cool breeze. When he steps into the garden, he sees a woman near the entrance who raises her head and smiles at him.*

Questions

1. How does George start the conversation?
2. How does Catherine respond to what he has just said?
3. What do they say to continue the conversation?

George: Great ball, isn't it?

Catherine: Yes, really. The music is beautiful and the dancers are terrific.

George: By the way, my name is George Tallerman. I'm an engineer. I work at Edison Consolidated in New York.

Catherine: Hi, I'm Catherine Turner from Brookline Botanic Garden. I'm a horticulturalist.

► **Comments:**



Native speakers of English often open this type of conversation by talking about the weather or their current physical surroundings, such as the room or building they are in, the sidewalk where they are standing, or the class or meeting they are going to attend. In other words, they tend to begin by talking about their shared situation or experience.

Task 2

Instructions: Read the following typical conversational starters. Try to find out how they are grouped. For example, the conversational starters in the first group are all enquiries.

Typical Conversational Starters

Excuse me. Haven't we met before?

Excuse me. Is this seat taken? / Is anyone sitting here? / Anyone sitting here?

I'm sorry to trouble you, but do you know if the bus has left?

Forgive me for asking, but aren't you Alan Baxter?

How old is the little dog?

Do you come here often?

Have you heard the news about ...?

1. These conversational starters are enquiries.

Nice / Lovely day, isn't it?

Isn't the weather great today?

Fairly mild / cold / warm for this time of the year.

What a nice / lovely morning!

It looks like it's going to rain, doesn't it?

2. They are comments on _____.

Those are lovely apples, aren't they?

It's a lovely wedding, isn't it?

Interesting play, isn't it?

Nice picnic, isn't it?

I hope this course will be interesting.

Great party, isn't it?

Everything looks delicious. I don't know what to try first.

3. They are comments on _____.

*The traffic in this city is simply incredible.
The service on this line is getting worse and worse.
Can you believe it? The price of gasoline has gone up again!*

4. They are _____.

*Have you got the time please?
Could you please tell me what this says? I'm afraid my eyesight isn't too good.
Could you please keep an eye on my suitcase for a moment?*

5. They are _____.

Task 3

Instructions: *Get into pairs and complete the following conversations with the help of the hints given in the brackets.*

1 At a picnic

A: _____? (*Comment on the picnic.*)

B: Sure is. The food is terrific.

A: _____. (*Introduce yourself. Your name: Michael Smith.*)

B: Hi, I'm Jennifer Hill.

2 During a coffee break at a conference

A: _____? (*Comment on the conference.*)

B: Yes, and all the papers presented this morning are thought-provoking.

A: By the way, _____. I'm from _____. (*Introduce yourself. Your name: Lawrence King; your work place: National Seismological Center in L.A.*)

B: Hi, I'm Martha Bridges from Air Pollution Control Administration here in Washington.

3 During the intermission of a concert

A: _____? (*Comment on the concert.*)

B: Yes, _____. (*Respond to the comment.*)

A: This is my first time to the Lincoln Center. Do you often come here?

B: Not very often, about once or twice a year.

4 At a bus stop

A: Excuse me, _____? (*Make a request.*)

B: No, not since I've been here.

A: _____. (*Make a complaint.*)

B: You said it. And I've been waiting here for more than 15 minutes.

5 In a waiting room of a clinic

A: Excuse me, _____? (*Make a request.*)

B: Um, no, no. Oh! I'll just move my bag.

A: Thanks. _____. (*Comment on the weather.*)

B: Yes, it has caused so many bad cases of flu.

6 At a party

A: _____? (*Comment on the party.*)

B: Yeah, really.

A: _____? (*Make a request: you want to sit here.*)

B: Of course, help yourself.

A: Thanks. Do you know many people here?

B: No, I don't. How about you?

A: Me neither. Actually I only met Steve a month ago. We taught at the same school.

B: Oh, so you're a teacher?

A: Yeah, _____. (*Introduce yourself. Your name: James Park; your profession: a geography teacher.*)

B: Hi, I'm Barbara Songbird.

A: Nice to meet you. And what do you do, Barbara?

B: I'm a student at Harvard.

A: Oh, are you? And what are you studying?

B: Law.

A: Really?

B: Yes, I want to be a lawyer one of these days. Say, would you like to have a drink?

A: Sure. Thanks.

► Task 4

Instructions: *Get into pairs and develop a brief conversational exchange with your partner in each of the following situations. The exchanges are supposed to include:*

- 1) a polite conversational starter, and
- 2) an appropriate response.

Situation 1 You are waiting in a line at the canteen. When you look around, you notice a former high school classmate whom you are barely acquainted with standing behind you.

Situation 2 It's a rainy day. You arrive at the bus stop, where one of your colleagues, who you don't know well, has already been waiting anxiously for the bus.

Situation 3 You have a meeting with people from other departments. You walk into the conference room a little early. One participant is already in the room, waiting for the meeting to begin.

Situation 4 You are at a barbecue. Your friend who has invited you is now busily attending to the other guests. You find yourself standing quite close to a young man or a young woman.

Situation 5 You are studying at an American university. On the first day of your class, you come to the classroom a little early and would like to sit in the middle of the first row where you can hear and see better. But there is already a student sitting next to your ideal seat.

Situation 6 It is a sunny morning on your winter vacation. You are visiting Greenwich Observatory. You arrive there about 10 minutes before it opens. There are a few other tourists waiting at the gate. You find yourself standing close to one of them.

Task 5

Instructions: *Imagine that you are at a party, where everyone stands with a drink, chats for a few minutes with a guest and then moves on to another guest. Take a few seconds to look at the following names, occupations and places of work. You may find them helpful when you try to assign a role to yourself. Of course, you can use your own imagination and invent names, occupations, places of work, and other information about yourself when you chat. You may also change a role when you move around the class.*

Names and occupations

Surnames	Given Names		Occupations
	Male	Famale	
Adams	Alan	Alice	journalist/editor/publisher
Bloomer	Brian	Bonnie	computer programmer
Carrie	Chester	Cynthia	bus/taxi driver/pilot/sailor
Decker	David	Delia	engineer/auto mechanic
Edwards	Edgar	Edith	teacher/professor/TA/librarian
Fielding	Frank	Freda	manager/salesman/secretary

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Surnames	Given Names		Occupations
	Male	Famale	
Gibson	Garret	Gladys	painter/sculptor/freelance photographer
Hodgson	Hector	Hilda	janitor/security man/fire man/mailman
Ingram	Isaac	Ingrid	doctor/dentist/surgeon/nurse
Jenkins	Johannes	Jessie	psychologist/psychiatrist
Kelvin	Kenny	Kathy	singer/dancer/pop singer
Lipton	Lancelot	Lesley	composer/pianist/violinist
Mailer	Merlin	Marcia	banker/accountant/cashier
Newman	Nigel	Nancy	scientist/volcanologist/archaeologist
Osborn	Oliver	Olga	barber/hairdresser/beautician
Prescott	Patrick	Phyllis	farmer/gardener/carpenter/plumber
Redmond	Roger	Rhoda	waiter/waitress/pizza man/baker
Sandberg	Sigmund	Sandra	athlete/swimmer/tennis player/boxer

Places of work:

Bloomer & Marin Law Firm	Department of Psychology, Columbia University
National Geographic Association	National Weather Bureau
ACME Electronics	Warner Brothers/Disney
City Bus Company	CCTV/NBC
Northwest Airlines	McDonald's/KFC/Noodle King
St. Mary's Hospital	Passage/Nike/Elle/Napoleon
Hopkins Cancer Center	Time Magazine/Christian Science Monitor
Broadway Beauty Salon	California Sunflower Farm
Lincoln Center	Central Park/St. James Park
Metropolitan Museum of Art	Citibank/Bank of China

By the way, you may need the following expressions to make self-introductions or third-party introductions.

● **Self-Introductions**

May I introduce myself? I'm ... (formal)
How do you do? My name is ... (formal)
Please let me introduce myself. I'm ... (formal)
Hello. My name is ...
Hi, I'm ... (informal)

● **Third-Party Introductions**

A, it's my pleasure to introduce you to B ... (formal)
A, I'd like to introduce you to B ... (formal)
A, let me introduce you to B ...
A, I'd like you to meet B ...
A, have you met B? ...
A, this is B. B, A is ... (John, this is Mary. Mary, John is ...) (informal)

Now stand up and have a lively party! Talk to as many people as possible.

Homework



1. Look for conversational starters in other dialogs, books, movies or TV programs. Be ready to present some of them in class. Find a partner when you present in order to show more clearly how the first speaker initiates the chat and how the other responds.
2. Suppose at a party you meet someone who is really interested in you and wants to know more about you. Apart from your name and

occupation, what else do you think you can tell him or her? Here are some aspects of your real life you can talk about.

- Family:** Parents/grandparents/childhood
- Friends:** Many or just a few? What do they talk about and do together?
- Education:** Schools you've attended/favorite teachers/favorite subjects/future plans
- Recreation:** Hobbies/sports/TV/radio/movies/the Internet/evening or weekend activities/favorite books and magazines
- Travel:** Places visited/parts of own country you know well/ places you dream of visiting

Now get a partner and chat in the ways suggested here.