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# INTRODUCTION



This is a book about talking, something you do every day. You are probably quite good at it. You make friends. You tell people what you want and need. You have conversations about things that interest you.

But are there times when you find it hard to talk? Do you ever have times like these?

- You want to start a conversation, but you can't think of what to say.
- You want to ask for something, but you feel a little shy.
- You want to say "no" to someone, but you end up saying "yes."

This book will help you deal with these and other problem situations. It will also help you develop conversation skills.

Part of each lesson calls for reading. Much of the reading consists of short scenes that will be fun to read aloud.

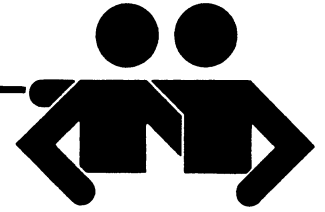
Part of each lesson calls for writing. In much of this writing you write what you would say in different situations.

The last part of each lesson calls for talking. This is really the most important part. The best way to improve conversation skills is to talk.

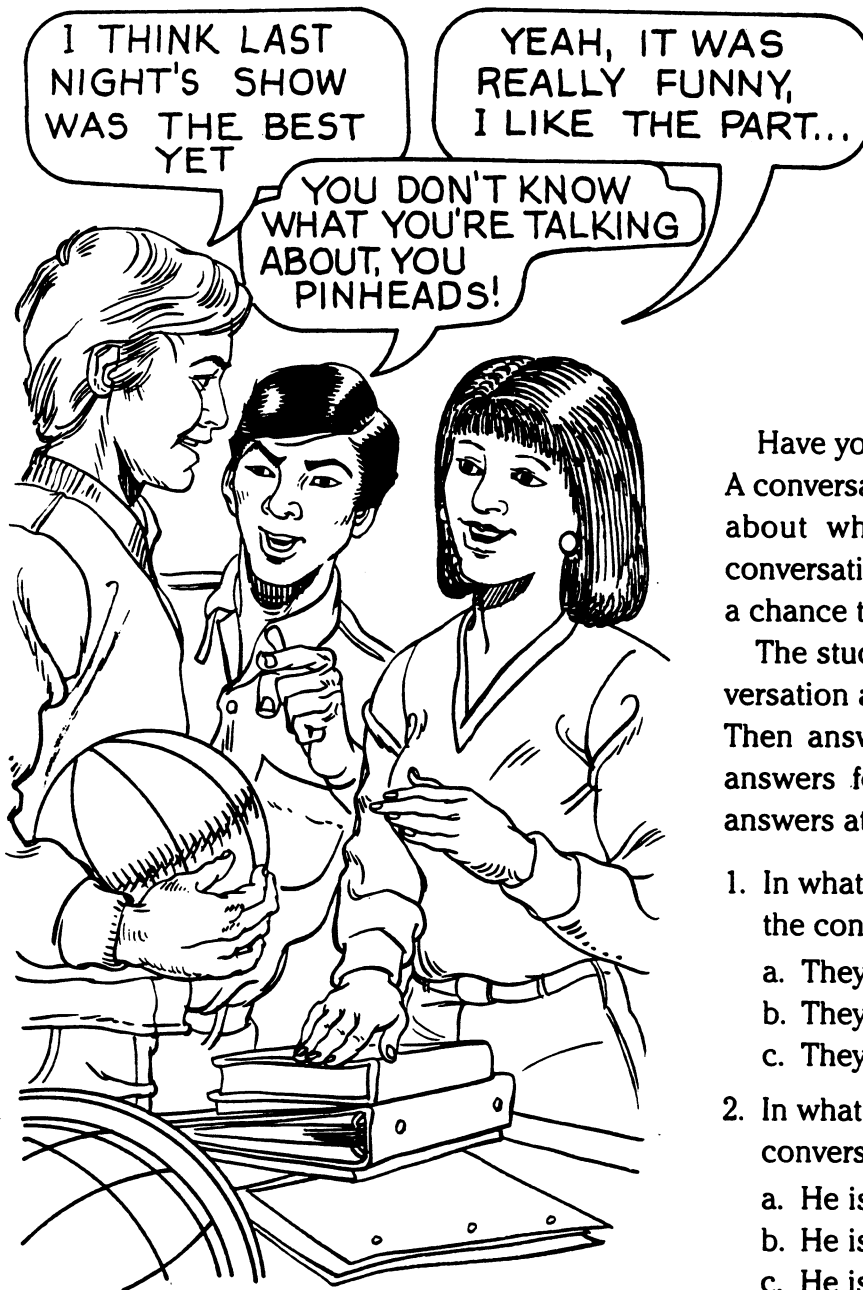
The book and your teacher will show the way. But only practice will help you improve. You will need to try things that may be new to you.

And what will you get for your hard work? If you really apply yourself, you should:

- Find it easier to make new friends.
- Find it easier to get along with people.
- Do better in schoolwork.



# HAVING A CONVERSATION



Ed

Gary

Lynne

Have you had any good conversations lately? A conversation is when two or more people talk about whatever interests them. In a *good* conversation, everyone takes part. Everyone has a chance to talk. And no one's feelings are hurt.

The students in the picture are having a conversation about a TV show. Look at the picture. Then answer the questions below. Circle two answers for each question. Then check your answers at the bottom of the page.

1. In what two ways are Ed and Lynne helping the conversation?
  - a. They are asking questions.
  - b. They are being friendly.
  - c. They are listening to each other.
2. In what two ways is Gary hurting the conversation?
  - a. He is interrupting Lynne.
  - b. He is not looking at the others.
  - c. He is calling the others an unkind name.

Answers 1. b, c 2. a, c

## Test Yourself

Here is a test you can take to see how well you do in conversations. Answer the questions as honestly as you can. The test will give you a good idea of the skills you have. It will also point out the skills you might wish to improve.

Read each question. Then answer it by ticking a box on the right.

### Do You Have Good Conversation Skills?

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
1. Are you willing to talk about something that may not be your favorite topic?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you tell others about your ideas and feelings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you ask questions when you don't understand something or want more information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you give others a chance to speak?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. When others are speaking, do you listen closely to what they have to say?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Suppose you suddenly have something you want to say. Do you wait for the person who is speaking to finish before you speak?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Suppose you disagree with something someone has said. Do you let the person know politely, without calling the person unkind names?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How did you do? If you honestly answered "Always" or "Usually" to most of the questions, congratulations! You already have some good conversation skills. If you answered "Sometimes" or "Never" to some questions, then you know what you need to improve. You will have a chance to do that soon.

## Guidelines for Good Conversations

Make a list of guidelines for good conversations. Just turn the questions in the test on page 3 into statements. The statements have been started for you.

1. Be willing to talk about \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Tell others about \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Ask questions when \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Give others a chance \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Listen closely to \_\_\_\_\_

---

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6. Suppose you suddenly have something to say. Wait for  
the person who \_\_\_\_\_

---

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7. Suppose you disagree with something someone has said.  
Let the person know politely, without \_\_\_\_\_

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