1. Click printer icon (top right or center bottom).
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SL41: Talking with Strangers

Student Name: _____ Student ID Number: _____

Instructor: _____ Level: _____ Date: _____

For media links in this activity, visit the LLC ESL Tutoring website for Upper Level SDLAs. Find your SDLA number to see all the resources to finish your SDLA.

All listening and activities have been adapted from "Step Up 1: Listening, Speaking, and Critical Thinking" with permissions of the authors, Margaret Teske and Peggy Marcy.

Section 1: Introduction

In the United States, some questions are considered "too personal" to ask strangers or acquaintances; these questions should be avoided. If questions are not personal enough, the conversation will end quickly. Semi-personal questions balance between too personal and not personal enough. Aim for semi-personal questions if you want to keep speaking to the person.

Organize the questions as:

A Too personal,

B Semi-Personal or

C Not Personal Enough.

Part 1: Type A, B or C next to each question.

___ 1. Are you married?

___ 2. It's really raining hard, isn't it?

___ 3. How much do you weigh?

___ 4. Have you seen any good movies lately?

___ 5. How was your vacation?

___ 6. Are you mixed race?

___ 7. What time is it?

___ 8. How much money do you make?

___ 9. Do you have a job? How's your job going?

___ 10. What's your next class?

___ 11. How old are you?

___ 12. How do you feel about the President?

___ 13. What do you think of that baseball team?

___ 14. Do you have any suggestions?

Part 2: Compare the answers in Part 1 to your native language/home country. Which of the "too personal" questions are okay to ask anyone in your native language/home country? What are some examples of questions you would only ask close friends or family in your native language/home country?

langlab@mtsac.edu

Section 2: Ways to Keep Conversations Going

Talking to strangers can be scary. But with a little hard work, you will be prepared. You need to show the other person that you are friendly and interested in talking. There are good ways to do this and bad ways. One key is to ask questions so the conversation lasts longer.

Good Ways

A. Ask semi-personal questions.
B. Ask for the other person's opinion.
C. Ask for an agreement. (For example, "What do you think?")
D. Answer questions AND add more information.

Bad Ways/Conversation Killers

E. Complain or make negative comments.
F. If you don't show interest in the other person.
G. Don't ask questions of the other person.
H. Talk only about yourself (even if this is easy or comfortable).
I. Give short or one-word answers to questions.

Reply with Agreement

Another way to extend a conversation is to respond with agreement. This helps you find "common ground" with each other. It is easier to keep talking when you have something in common. Here are some short expressions to show that you agree.

J. I know (what you mean).
K. I can see that.
L. I agree with you (there or on that point).
M. Exactly! You get it.
N. That's really true.

O. I guess so.
P. I'm afraid you're right.
Q. Yeah, I heard the same thing.
R. I hope you're right.
S. You hit the nail on the head

[Listen to the conversation](#) for Section 2. Listen as many times as necessary. **First,** mark whether each conversation includes/ends with a good way or bad way to keep a conversation going. Think about how you feel when you hear the conversations. Would you want to keep talking to that person? **Then,** next to each conversation, write a letter from the lists above. If you think there are multiple bad ways or multiple good ways, write all the letters you think are involved. You will discuss these with your tutor. (Hints: Four conversations are "bad.").

	Good	Bad	Letter/Reason from Lists
1.	____	____	_____
2.	____	____	_____
3.	____	____	_____

4. _____ _____ _____

5. _____ _____ _____

6. _____ _____ _____

7. _____ _____ _____

8. _____ _____ _____

Section 3: Practice Extending Conversations

Your goal is to make these conversations longer in good ways. Add at least an agreement and a question to keep each conversation going. You may use ideas from Sections 1 & 2. Or you may create your original ideas. **Do not copy answers from Section 2 listening conversations.**

Conversation 1

Person A: Hey, is that the book for this class?

Person B: Yeah. It's really heavy and expensive. I think we'll have to work very hard, don't you think?

Person A: _____

Conversation 2

Person A: Do you know anything about this professor?

Person B: I heard that she is pretty hard.

Person A: _____

Conversation 3

Person A: Haven't I seen you at the Valley View Apartments? Do you live there?

Person B: Yeah. I just moved in before this semester. Do you live there, too?

Person A: _____

Person B: _____

Conversation 4

Person A: Hi, haven't I seen you in another class today?

Person B: _____

Person A: _____

Person B: _____

Conversation 5
Person A: What's the name of the book for this class?

Person B: _____

Person A: _____

Person B: _____

Person A: _____

Section 4: What Did I Learn?

Complete this table BEFORE meeting with a tutor.

Communication Skill	I can't do this YET.	I can do this WITH help.	I can do this WITHOUT help.	I can TEACH this to a classmate.
I can identify questions that are "too personal" in the USA as compared to my language/country.				
I can ask a stranger a good question.				
I can keep a conversation going.				

Here are some words/phrases I need to practice.

Good job!
**Now make an appointment
with a tutor on the LLC ESL Tutoring Website
(www.mtsac.edu/llc/passportrewards/llctutoring).**

Section 5: Practice with a Tutor!

Meet with a tutor. Give this paper to the tutor. The tutor will review your work and talk with you.

Grading Rubric

Possible Points	Need Practice (0-1 Point)	Good Job (2-3 Points)	Excellent Work (4-5 Points)
Content	Not enough information provided in responses and often does not use correct vocabulary.	Provides most important information in responses and some of the time uses correct vocabulary.	Provides all necessary information in responses and most of the time uses correct vocabulary.
Skill: Speaking	More than 6 mistakes saying words; needs guessing more than 3 times.	Not more than 5 mistakes saying words; needs guessing on 1-2 words or sentences.	Not more than 2 mistakes saying words; needs no guess about meaning.
Oral Fluency	Speaks mostly in phrases, individual words; many pauses.	Sometimes speaks in complete sentences; several pauses.	Speaks in complete sentences; a couple pauses okay.

*Students must receive at least 10 points to move on   **Possible Points: _____ / 15**

Tutor Comments:

☐ **Congratulations! Keep going.**
You have successfully completed this SDLA and are ready to continue to the next.

☐ **Work on this more.**
You have not yet mastered this SDLA. It is recommended that you complete it again.

Tutor Signature: _____   Date: _____