

CONVERSATION

Conversation Champions

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Levels	<i>High beginner to advanced</i>
Aims	<i>Use multimodal integrative language skills in practice of targeted vocabulary and language functions</i> <i>Increase fluency in creative oral production</i>
Class Time	<i>90 minutes</i>
Preparation Time	<i>15–30 minutes (plus 10 minutes first time only)</i>
Resources	<i>Handouts (Appendixes A–F)</i>



Conversation Champions is a scaffolded task-based extension activity for instruction of targeted vocabulary and language structures. It begins with recognition of these vocabulary and language structures in a listening activity, continues with dialogue creation, and concludes with dialogue presentations that showcase the forms in authentic, original conversations. As a culminating activity, such as at the conclusion of a unit, Conversation Champions works well for either practice, reinforcement, assessment, or all three.

PROCEDURE

1. If desired, prepare an audio recording of the sample conversation (Appendix A). Once the recording is made, preparation time in the future is dedicated to assembling handouts.

Phase One: Listening Activities (25 minutes)

2. Divide students into two groups. Distribute the Info Gap Questions handout (Appendix B). Students receive only the part/column designated for their group.
3. Prepare students to listen and fill in the Info Gap Questions handout. Direct them to take notes on the paper while listening, paying special attention to the vocabulary words used and their context.
4. Present a brief sample conversation including target vocabulary. Either play the audio recording or read the text. If the text is read, ask for student volunteers to read the two parts of bank teller and customer aloud to the class. Remind each group to listen for different vocabulary items.
5. Repeat the listening to allow students to check their handout.
6. Distribute the Cloze of Sample Conversation handout (Appendix C). Pair students from Group 1 with Group 2. Tell them to review their notes and complete

the handout based on the combination of the content from their respective Info Gap Questions sheets.

7. Lead the class in a review of the answers, highlighting use of target structures.

Phase Two: Dialogue Creation Activity (45 minutes)

8. The same student pairs choose from preselected topics to create a meaningful, real-life dialogue including a required number of target vocabulary words and grammar structures. Distribute the handout Student Instructions (Appendix D) and review the directions and requirements with the class.
9. Move around the room, clarifying or offering assistance as needed. While students are working, prepare rubrics with student names.

Phase Three: Dialogue Presentation Activity (20 minutes)

10. Student pairs present their dialogues before an audience of peers. The audience members use student rubrics (Appendix E) to note the number of vocabulary words and structures used by each pair. Simultaneously, the instructor evaluates the dialogue presented by each pair using the teacher rubric (Appendix F).
11. The audience then votes on the pair that best demonstrates targeted forms.
12. The selected student pair is recognized as “Conversation Champions.”

CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Instructors should introduce, review, and quiz students on a limited list of target vocabulary and grammar structures at least one week in advance of this culminating activity.
2. Pair students sensitively across language capability levels and culture groups.
3. While student pairs are collaborating on dialogues to present, they’re naturally using the targeted forms repeatedly in authentic, original conversations that could be graded separately from the final product.
4. Students can provide a recording and text of their performed dialogue via a class website. It can be used as an assessment or sample conversation for future use.
5. This activity can be based on a range of topics at any level, such as household chores, directions, housing issues, a job search, or academic research.