



Everyday English

Tutor Resources for the AMEP

Learning English

Intermediate

Tutor Resources for the AMEP

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Theme: Learning English

Topic: Everyday English

| Task | Language focus | Learning activities | Resources |
|--|--|---|--|
| 1. Can participate in a casual conversation with topic changes | <p>Vocabulary gambit, remark, redirect, interrupting, pot plant, allergic, criticise, prior engagement, accidentally</p> <p>Structure Excuse me, I'm sorry but, it's really nice but, In my opinion, I disagree, I agree</p> | <p>Discuss the questions about the learner</p> <p>Practise strategies for changing topics</p> <p>Discuss the situations</p> | <p>Worksheet 1: Talking about yourself</p> <p>Worksheet 2: Casual conversation</p> <p>Worksheet3: Saying the right thing</p> |
| 2. Can understand some common idioms | <p>Vocabulary idiom, literal, figurative, expression, Aussie, slang, coward, deceitful, decision, non-existent, grapevine, bush, exhausted, temper, mythical, uncultured, bundle</p> | <p>Discuss idioms</p> <p>Match idioms to meanings</p> <p>Answer questions about stories</p> <p>Match Australian slang to meanings</p> <p>Extension activity Search for idioms and related activities on the Internet</p> | <p>Worksheet 4: Idioms</p> <p>Dictionary</p> <p>Worksheet 5: Two sisters (animal idioms)</p> <p>Worksheet 6: A decision (plant idioms)</p> <p>Flash cards 1: Aussie slang</p> |

Theme: Learning English

Topic: Everyday English

Casual conversations

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Task 1: | Can participate in a casual conversation with topic changes |
| Vocabulary: | gambit, remark, redirect, interrupting, pot plant, allergic, criticise, prior engagement, accidentally |
| Language structure: | Excuse me, I'm sorry but, it's really nice but, In my opinion, I disagree, I agree |

Activity instructions

Discuss the questions about the learner

📄 Worksheet 1: Talking about yourself

As a warm up activity read the questions and discuss together. (It's advisable to select only a few questions at a time. The list of questions can be revisited at the end of the session or during another session.)

Practise strategies for changing topics

📄 Worksheet 2: Casual conversation

Write the following 'fillers' on a piece of paper: Oh, Mmm, Well, But, You know, Um.

Ask questions: Have you heard these expressions? Do you use them?

Explain that these words are used to do various things: enter a conversation, signal a change of topic, or keep the conversation going. Stress the importance of practising these fillers to make their language more fluent.

A. Learner reads the information about gambits. Discuss.

B. Learner reads the list of gambits.

Learner categorises each gambit according to the parts of a conversation and completes the table. Ensure that the learner understands the words used to describe the parts of a conversation.

Answers

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Greeting | Hi, how are you?/How's it going?/How are things? |
| Including someone | What about you...? So, what do you think... |
| Interrupting /changing topics | By the way, ... That reminds me of something I saw/heard/read... Oh, sorry, I just remembered something I wanted to say... Sorry, but did you hear...? Can I just butt in for a minute/second/moment...? Oh, I was meaning to tell you, ... Oh, I forgot to tell you... |
| Bringing back to topic | Oh sorry. What were we talking about? Anyway, we were talking about... |
| Agreeing | Uh huh. Yeah. |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | Mmm, I know (what you mean). |
| Disagreeing | Mmm. Do you really think so? Well, I don't know about that... But, just a minute, ... |
| Finishing up | Oh, look at the time. I've got to get a move on. Oh, sorry, but I have to go... Well, it was nice talking to you, but... |

- C. Learner reads the information about changing topics.
Give other examples of how to change topics using gambits from part B.
- D. Using topics from the list, model how to change topics in a conversation.
Learner chooses two topics and practises changing topics using gambits.
Repeat, using other topics.

Discuss the situations

Worksheet 3: Saying the right thing

Learner reads the description of each situation.

Explain any new vocabulary.

Discuss together. Encourage the learner to use gambits and structures such as: in my opinion, I agree, I disagree etc. to enhance fluency.

Discuss any differences between Australia and their country in handling such situations.

For example, the learner may not think it is appropriate to ask a teacher for their pen back because it might be disrespectful in their culture. It's important to explain what is generally acceptable in Australian culture.

Idioms

Task 2: Can understand some common idioms

Vocabulary: idiom, literal, figurative, expression, Aussie, slang, coward, deceitful, decision, non-existent, grapevine, bush, exhausted, temper, mythical, uncultured, bundle

Preparation

Prepare flash cards 1.

Activity instructions

Discuss idioms

📄 Worksheet 4: Idioms

📄 Dictionary

- A. Learner looks up the meanings of the words in their dictionary.
Learner reads the information about idioms.
Discuss. Ask: Do you have idioms in your language?

Match idioms to their meanings

📄 Worksheet 4: Idioms

- B. Learner reads the sentences on the left. Explain new vocabulary.
Learner reads the meanings on the right and matches them to the idioms.

Answers

1 – e, 2 – f, 3 – d, 4 – a, 5 – b, 6 – c

Ask learner if they have similar idioms in their language. Discuss.

Answer questions about stories

📄 Worksheet 5: Two sisters (animal idioms)

- A. Introduce the activity by explaining that many idioms or sayings contain animal words.
Learner reads the story.
Ask learner to guess what the idioms mean.

- B. Learner reads the idioms and matches to their meanings.

Answers

1 – i, 2 – d, 3 – f, 4 – h, 5 – c, 6 – g, 7 – b, 8 – e, 9 – a

Ask learner if they have similar idioms in their language. Discuss.

Ask questions: Is there a black sheep in your family?

Do you know someone who is as quiet as a mouse?

Are you a book worm?

Do you fight like cat and dog with anyone?

Do you know someone who can talk until the cows come home?

Check for understanding by asking the learner to put some of the idioms in sentences. (The learner may find this task quite difficult.)

- C. Learner reads the statements and writes true or false.

Answers

1 – False, 2 – True, 3 – False, 4 – False, 5 – True, 6 – False, 7 – True, 8 – True, 9 – False

📄 Worksheet 6: A decision (plant idioms)

A. Introduce the activity by saying that some idioms contain words about plants.
Learner reads the story.
Ask learner to guess what the idioms mean.

B. Learner reads the questions and chooses the most appropriate answer.
Discuss each idiom and give examples to help explain the meanings.

Answers

1 – b, 2 – b, 3 – a, 4 – a, 5 – b, 6 – c, 7 – b, 8 – c

Ask learner if they have similar idioms in their language. Discuss.

Ask questions: Do you know anyone who has turned over a new leaf?

What makes you feel bushed?

Have you ever barked up the wrong tree?

Check for understanding by asking the learner to put some of the idioms in sentences. (The learner may find this task quite difficult.)

Match Australian slang to meanings

📄 Flash cards 1: Aussie slang

Explain that in Australia we have many idioms or slang language that is unique to us.
Put flash cards randomly and face up on the table.

Learner matches the slang expressions with the plain English meanings.

Many of the meanings are not obvious so the learner will probably need help to match them.

Explain meanings and discuss.

Check for understanding by choosing some of the easier expressions for the learner to put into sentences.

Extension activity

Search for idioms and related activities on the Internet

There are many Internet sites with lists of idioms and activities such as online quizzes.

The learner may like to learn more about idioms by looking at these sites.

Worksheet 1: Talking about yourself

Discuss these questions.

1. Who or what has been the most helpful to you since you came to Australia?
2. What is the most interesting place you have been to in Australia?
3. What do you think is the best thing about where you live?
4. What do you think is the worst thing about where you live?
5. What is your closest public transport?
6. What is the best time of the day for you?
7. What is the most enjoyable way to spend the weekend?
8. What qualities do you most admire in people?
9. What kinds of things annoy/upset you or even make you angry?
10. When you're angry, what is the best way for you to get over it?
11. What is/was the best present you have ever received?
12. When you were a child, did you have a favourite toy? What was it?
13. What subject did you like best at school?
14. Who was your best friend at school?
15. What is the worst meal you have had?
16. Is there anything that you had to do that you really hated?
17. What was your best holiday or excursion?
18. What is the nicest thing that happened to you this week?
19. When and where do you feel the most comfortable and relaxed?

Worksheet 2: Casual conversation

A. Read about gambits in casual conversations.

A **gambit** is a remark which is used to open or redirect a conversation. We often use gambits to change topics in a casual conversation. We use them to make a connection between the last topic and a new topic, to keep a conversation going or to finish a conversation. If you use gambits your conversation will sound more fluent.

B. Complete the table with a gambit from the box. Some have already been done for you.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What about you...? • Hi, how are you?/How's it going?/How are things? • Oh, sorry. What were we talking about? • That reminds me of something I saw/heard/read... • By the way, ... • Uh huh. • Oh, I was meaning to tell you, ... • But, just a minute, ... • Anyway, we were talking about... • Oh, I forgot to tell you... • Yeah. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well, it was nice talking to you, but... • Oh, sorry, I just remembered something I wanted to say... • Oh, look at the time. I've got to get a move on. • Can I just butt in for a minute/second/moment...? • Sorry, but did you hear...? • Well, I don't know about that... • Oh, sorry, but I have to go... • Mmm. Do you (really) think so? • So, what do you think... • Mmm, I know (what you mean). |
|--|--|

| Parts of a conversation | Gambits |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Greeting | |
| Including someone | |

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| Parts of a conversation | Gambits |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Interrupting/changing topics | |
| Bringing back to topic | <i>Oh sorry. What were we talking about?</i> |
| Agreeing | |
| Disagreeing | <i>Mmm. Do you really think so?</i> |
| Finishing up | |

C. Read about changing topics.

When you want to change a topic you usually need to make a connection between the last topic and the new topic. For example, if you are talking about cars and you want to talk about favourite music you can link the two topics in some way.

You could say:

You know, I really need a car with a CD player. I like to listen to music in the car. What about you? Do you like music?

or

Oh, talking about cars, I heard a great program on the car radio last night. It was about Chinese music....

D. Choose two topics from the list below. Make a connection between the topics by using a gambit.

cars

parties

weather

favourite music

something from the news

mobile phones

watching sport

buying clothes

Worksheet 3: Saying the right thing

*Discuss the following situations with your tutor.
What would you say in your country/ in Australia?*

1. Your neighbour gives you a pot plant for a present. You are allergic to plants and start sneezing.
2. Someone in your family has just criticised your cooking.
3. You are invited to dinner by a friend but you already have a prior engagement. You are going to your brother's birthday party.
4. You drop some money at the market. Someone else picks it up and says it's theirs.
5. Your husband/wife/friend has just cooked you dinner. You try it and it tastes awful.
6. A friend gives you a present. You open it and dislike it.
7. Your teacher has borrowed your pen but has forgotten to give it back.
8. A friend borrowed \$100 two months ago and hasn't given it back.
9. It was your best friend's birthday last Friday but you forgot. You remember today.
10. You are in a cafe and the waiter accidentally spills some coffee on your top.

Worksheet 4: Idioms

A. Look up the meanings of these words then read about idioms.

| | | |
|-------|---------|------------|
| idiom | literal | figurative |
|-------|---------|------------|

In conversational English we often use idioms: these are words and expressions that are not **literal** but are **figurative**. That is, they usually mean something different from what the individual words mean.

Idioms vary from place to place: there are expressions in Britain and America that we don't use in Australia and vice versa. For this reason, they are not always found in the dictionary.

B. Read the sentences containing idioms and match them with their meaning.
They all use animals to describe people.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I've been working on this all week and I still haven't finished it. I'm such a snail ! | a. someone who is quiet and shy |
| 2. You're a pig ! You've already eaten two pizzas and now you want another one! | b. someone who goes to bed late |
| 3. Don't buy anything from those sharks . They'll rip you off, for sure. | c. a coward |
| 4. She's such a mouse . She never says a word to anyone. | d. someone who is deceitful and can't be trusted |
| 5. I can't believe you go to bed after midnight. You're such a night owl . | e. someone who moves very slowly |
| 6. Are you going to jump in or are you chicken ? | f. someone who is greedy |

Worksheet 5: Two sisters (animal idioms)

A. Read the story and match the idioms with their meanings.

Wendy and Julie are sisters but they couldn't be more different. Wendy is shy and **as quiet as a mouse** and she is also very smart. She is a **book worm** but she is **as blind as a bat** so she needs to wear glasses to read. Julie is **the black sheep of the family**. She is often very loud and she can talk **until the cows come home**. She is always **horsing around** and getting into trouble. Julie is not as clever as Wendy. At school she has to **work like a dog** to get good results. Because they are very different, the two sisters often **fight like cat and dog** but they are also good friends. One thing they do have in common is they are both **early birds**. They usually get up early in the morning and watch TV together... that is if they can agree on which program to watch!

B. Match the idioms with their meanings.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. as quiet as a mouse | a. someone who does something before others, someone who gets up early |
| 2. bookworm | b. to work very hard |
| 3. as blind as a bat | c. for a very long time |
| 4. the black sheep of the family | d. someone who reads a lot |
| 5. until the cows come home | e. to argue and fight a lot |
| 6. horsing around | f. having very bad eyesight |
| 7. work like a dog | g. to play around/be foolish |
| 8. fight like cat and dog | h. different to other family members |
| 9. early bird | i. making very little noise, shy |

C. Write **True** or **False** to the statements.

| | True/False |
|---|------------|
| 1. If you work like a dog you are very lazy. | |
| 2. If you get to work first you are an early bird. | |
| 3. People who horse around are very serious. | |
| 4. The black sheep of the family is similar to everyone else in the family. | |
| 5. A shy person is often as quiet as a mouse. | |
| 6. A person who is as blind as a bat can see really well at night. | |
| 7. Bookworms probably like libraries and bookshops. | |
| 8. Brothers who argue a lot, fight like cat and dog. | |
| 9. If you talk until the cows come home you must be a farmer. | |

Worksheet 6: A decision (plant idioms)

A. Read the story.

My job is no **bed of roses**. I get paid well but I work very long hours. I get to work early in the morning and arrive home when it's dark. But from today I've decided to **turn over a new leaf**. I am no longer going to work until I am **bushed**. I have decided that the long hours are not good for me. **In a nut shell**, my health has been suffering and my social life has been non-existent.

I am going to let my boss know about my decision today. I don't want him to hear it **through the grapevine**. When I tell my boss about my decision, I won't **beat around the bush**. I will just tell him straight out that I can't continue working like this. If he thinks that I am not happy with the pay then he will be **barking up the wrong tree**. My salary is not the problem. Yesterday I worked a 12-hour day. Then, when I got in the car to drive home I had a flat battery. I didn't get home until after ten o'clock and I was exhausted. That was **the last straw**. From now on my health comes first.

B. Circle the correct meaning for each idiom.

1. A **bed of roses** means...
 - a. A nice garden with roses in it.
 - b. A comfortable easy situation.
 - c. A bed made out of rose petals.
2. To **turn over a new leaf** means...
 - a. to buy a new plant for your garden.
 - b. to start over again, to start a new and better life.
 - c. turn the page of a book.
3. If you are **bushed** you...
 - a. are very tired and exhausted.
 - b. have fallen into a bush.
 - c. have a big bushy beard.
4. If you say something **in a nutshell**, you...
 - a. use just a few words.
 - b. talk with nuts in your mouth.
 - c. talk for a very long time.
5. To hear something **through the grapevine** means...
 - a. you hear something announced on the TV.
 - b. you hear something from a person who heard it from someone else.
 - c. you hear the wind blowing the grapevines.
6. If someone **beats around the bush** they...
 - a. hit a small tree.
 - b. hide behind a bush.
 - c. don't give a direct answer.

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7. If you are **barking up the wrong tree**...
 - a. you are a dog.
 - b. you are wrong about the reason for something.
 - c. you cut down the wrong tree.

8. **The last straw** means...
 - a. there is no more straw left in the shed.
 - b. the drinking straws have all gone.
 - c. the final thing after a series of bad things, the thing that finally makes you angry.

Flash cards 1: Aussie slang



| | |
|---------------------|--|
| She'll be apples! | Everything will be fine! |
| True blue | Something that is really Australian |
| Bloke | An Australian male |
| An Aussie battler | Someone who works hard to earn a living |
| That's bang on | That's exactly right |
| I'll give it a bash | I will try it |
| You little beauty! | A sign of approval of something that someone has done well |

| | |
|---|---|
| To do your block | To lose your temper |
| A booze bus | A police van for testing drivers' alcohol level |
| Bunyip | An Australian mythical creature (like a dragon) |
| It's chock a block or chockers | Totally full so you can fit no more in |
| You'll be waiting till the cows come home | You'll be waiting all day |
| I'll go and have a Captain Cook | I'll go and have a look at something |
| He's dropped his bundle | He has lost control of the situation |
| Getting a good earbashing | Someone talks to you for a long time |

| | |
|---|---|
| Hit the sack | Go to bed to sleep |
| See you in a jiffy! | See you soon! |
| You must have kangaroos loose in the top paddock! | You must be crazy! |
| You are leading me up the garden path | You are trying to trick me |
| An ocker | An Aussie that likes beer, sport and women and is rather uncultured |
| Pull your head in | Mind your own business |
| That's a rip-off! | That's too expensive! |
| It's a ripper! | It's really great! |