

Downloadable resource 8:

300 Conversation questions for teens

This resource corresponds to **Chapter 15: Getting them talking.**

Content

This document contains 300 conversation questions suitable for teenage students. The questions are grouped into 20 different topics, with 15 questions on each.

Rationale

I draw upon these questions regularly and find them useful:

- ▶ in the first week of class when I am trying to listen to each student speaking
- ▶ throughout the year for fluency practice and topic preparation
- ▶ for reduced groups and one-to-one classes/tutorials

I find that having 15 questions on each topic allows students to settle into a speaking activity for some time, giving the teacher a chance to tune in and listen to one or two pairs as they speak. At other times I will display blocks of only five questions at a time, so that students concentrate on extending their answers and pushing their partner as interviewer.

These questions were originally designed for use with all language levels and I have used them with groups ranging from B1 to C1.

Finally, not every question will suit every student or group, context or culture. Just as with coursebook material, if you do not like a question, or do not think it is going to work, my advice is to skip it and move on to the next one.

1 Neighbourhood

Think of three adjectives to describe your neighbourhood.

Are there any shops in your neighbourhood?

How well do you get on with your neighbours?

Do you live in the centre of town?

How far from here do you live?

Is there a main street in your neighbourhood? If so, describe it.

What are the most well-known buildings in your neighbourhood?

What's the best thing about your neighbourhood?

What's the worst thing about your neighbourhood?

Do you actually *like* your neighbourhood?

If you had to live in another neighbourhood, which would it be?
When you go out with friends, do you stay in your neighbourhood?
Are your friends from your neighbourhood?
Have you lived in your neighbourhood all of your life?
Has your neighbourhood changed in any way?

2 Family

Who do you get on best with in your family?
Do you clash with anyone?
Who do you spend most time with?
In terms of character, who do you resemble?
In terms of appearance, who are you like?

What's the best thing about your family?
Do you always eat together?
Do you watch TV together?
Do you go places together?
When do you get together with uncles, aunts and grandparents?

Do you have a favourite uncle or aunt?
Do you have cousins of your own age? If so, describe one.
Does your family have a pet?
What do you talk to your parents about mostly?
How much time do you spend on your own each day? Do you like it?

3 My Room

What colour is your room?
Have you got anything on the walls?
How much time do you spend in your room?
What's the furniture like?
What have you got next to your bed?

Do you share a room or have one all to yourself?
Do you keep your room tidy?
Does anyone tidy your room for you?
How private is your room?
Do you have a secret place where you keep/hide private stuff?

Do you like your room?
How would you improve it?
Is your room warm in winter and cool in summer?
What can you see from the window of your room?
Can you hear the neighbours shouting or moving about from your room?

4 Self

If you were an animal, what animal would you be?

What's your favourite colour? Why?

What things are you really into?

Is there anything in this world you can't stand?

How would you describe yourself?

How many people *really* know you?

Are you a relaxed person?

Are you a patient person?

Is your life like you want it to be?

What do your teachers say about you?

Do you often laugh at other people?

Why do your friends enjoy being with you?

Do you know what your star sign is? (Zodiac)

Do you know what Chinese year you were born in? (dog/dragon etc.)

Which element best describes you? (earth, water, fire, air)

5 Friends

How do your friends describe you?

When do you see your best friends?

Do your friends go to your school or to other schools?

What do you do when you get together with your friends?

Why are your friends important?

How do you communicate with friends electronically?

When you go out, how many are there usually in your group?

Describe one of your best friends.

How many good male friends do you have?

How many good female friends do you have?

Who is your newest friend?

What qualities do you look for in a friend?

Do you ever stay over at friends' houses?

How many online friends do you have?

Have you ever made a friend over the internet?

6 Animals

Do you have a favourite domestic animal?

Do you have a favourite wild animal?

Can you ride a horse?

Have you ever ridden a camel?

Will you get any pets when you've left home?

If you were an animal, what would you be?
Do you enjoy watching wildlife documentaries?
Which do you think are the most beautiful animals?
Have you ever stroked a goat or a donkey?
Have you ever held a snake?

Which is the most beautiful bird for you?
Have you ever drunk sheep's milk or eaten goat's cheese?
Have you ever cleaned out a fish tank or a hamster's cage?
Do you have any clothes made from leather?
Have you ever held a rat, ferret or Guinea pig? Would you?

7 Early childhood

Where did you grow up?
Were you a quiet or a difficult baby?
Where were you born (home/hospital)?
Do you know what time you were born?
When's your birthday?

Did you go to a nursery or kindergarten?
What was your favourite toy when you were 8?
Do you have any favourite photos of when you were little?
What was your favourite TV programme when you were 6?
Did you have a cuddly toy when you were 4?

Can you remember your first day at primary school? Was it okay?
Can you remember your first teacher? Describe him or her.
Did you have a favourite food when you were younger?
Who played with you a lot when you were little?
Were you a big or a small baby?

8 Food

Is there any food you are particularly fond of?
Is there any food you can't stand?
Are you allergic to any foods?
What food do you go for when you eat at a restaurant?
What's your all-time favourite dish?

Do you generally prefer vegetables or fruits?
Do you like sweet foods?
Have you ever had food poisoning?
Does any food give you gas or indigestion?
Is there any food you wouldn't eat at night?

Do you ever eat standing up?
Do you ever eat in your bedroom?
Which raw vegetables do you like?
If you eat pizza, what's your favourite topping?
What, for you, is the perfect breakfast?

9 School

Which year are you in?
How long have you been at your current school?
How many students are there in your class?
How many students are there in your school, approximately?
Where do you sit in class?

Who do you sit next to in class?
What's the best thing about your school?
What's the worst thing about your school?
Who was your favourite teacher when you were in primary?
Do you find school relaxing or stressful?

Which is your favourite place in the school and why?
In what year will you finish school?
Do you normally arrive early, on time or late to school?
What are the first five things you do when you get to school?
If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

10 Music

Do you have any favourite groups?
Do you have a favourite singer?
What are your three favourite styles of music?
Do you ever listen to songs in other languages?
When do you normally listen to music?

Where do you get your music from?
Can you play a musical instrument?
When's the last time you heard live music?
Do you often listen to music on headphones?
Do you have an MP4 or something similar?

Does the music you listen to influence the clothes you wear?
Who is your favourite music celebrity?
Can you dance to your favourite music?
Do your friends all listen to the same music as you?
Do you ever listen to music with your parents?

11 Sport

Do you do sports at school? What?

Do you do any sports outside of school?

Which sport do you enjoy most?

Do you think sport should be obligatory at school?

What are three very boring sports for you?

Are there any sports that you hate doing?

Are there any sports you like to watch on TV but not do?

Who is your favourite sports celebrity?

Do you look forward to PE classes at school?

Do you like strategy games like chess?

Have you ever tried a sport on ice (skating/ice-hockey)?

Can you play pool, billiards or snooker?

Have you ever practised a martial art like judo or karate?

Do you like watching boxing or full contact sports?

Do you like sports with animals (horse riding/dog shows/falconry)?

12 English

Do you ever use English outside of class?

What was the last film or episode that you saw in English?

What's the easiest thing about English for you?

What's the most difficult thing about English for you?

Who is your favourite English speaking celebrity?

Can you tell the difference between different accents in English?

What mark did you get for your last English exam?

What do you know about your English teacher/s this year?

When did you start learning English?

Do you ever text or email in English?

Do you ever listen to songs in English?

Do you think you will need English in the future?

Do you have an online English dictionary marked as 'favourites'?

What is the name of your English course book this year?

Do you know any English speaking teenagers?

13 Internet

What are 3 things you use the internet for?

What's the most annoying thing about the internet?

Do you have a screen saver/background photo on your computer?

Do you have your own laptop/PC/Mac/tablet?

What was the last thing you downloaded?

Which of your friends knows the most about the internet?

On average, how long do you spend online a day?

How many email accounts have you got?

How many social network accounts have you got?

Do you have access to the internet at school?

Do you have a fast or slow connection at home?

Does your town or city have free Wi-Fi in public places?

When is the last time you got a virus from the internet?

Do your parents (try to) restrict your internet access?

Do you know anyone with their own blog or website?

14 Programmes

Are you watching any series at the moment?

Do you ever watch TV while you eat your lunch or dinner?

For you, what's the best programme of all time?

Have you ever seen *The Walking Dead*?

Do you know what *Stranger Things* is about?

Have you ever watched an episode of *House*?

Do you know what *Big Bang Theory* is about?

What's the most popular series made in your country?

What's the most popular series with your friends?

What was the last film that you saw at the cinema?

Which TV channel do you watch the most?

Who is your favourite actress?

Who is your favourite actor?

What type of film do you like the most?

What makes a good film for you?

15 Future

What's your biggest ambition?

Where can you see yourself living in 15 years' time?

If possible, would you like to study at university?

Do you have any idea about what job you would like to do?

Do you ever get fed up of people asking you what job you'll get?

What's your priority for this year?

What are your plans for the next 5 years?

Would you prefer to work for a company or for yourself?

Do you think you'll want children?

Would you prefer to share a flat with friends or live alone?

In which cities would you be happy living?

What would you like to learn more about in the future?

Do you ever make 'to-do' lists?

At the beginning of the year, do you make promises to yourself?

What's more important, the past, the present or the future?

16 Travel and holidays

Do you ever speak English on holiday?

Did you go anywhere on holiday last summer?

When was the last time you missed a bus, train or plane?

What's the best thing about staying in hotels or hostels?

Do you like camping?

Do you ever go on school trips?

Do you take a lot of photographs during the school holidays?

Do you ever write postcards when on holiday?

Do you have to catch a bus or a train every day?

What is the longest journey that you have made?

Have you ever made a friend on holiday?

Do you read when you go on holiday?

Do you find it easy or difficult to get to sleep in other places?

Would you ever go on holiday on your own?

Where do you want to visit in the future?

17 Hobbies

What is your number one hobby?

What else are you keen on?

How much time do you spend on your favourite hobby?

What's the most dangerous hobby you have?

What's the most expensive hobby you have?

Is your favourite hobby tiring or relaxing?

Is your favourite hobby mental or physical?

Are you into sport?

Do you have the same hobby as your friends?

Are there any hobbies you'd like to take up?

Do you like cooking?

Do you like building or making things?

Is studying a hobby?

Can shopping be a hobby?

Is graffiti a hobby?

18 Weekends

- What time do you get up at the weekend?
- Which night do you prefer to go out on - Friday or Saturday?
- If you have homework, when do you do it?
- What did you do last weekend?
- What are you going to do next weekend?

- Are Sundays the same as Saturdays for you?
- What's the worst thing about the weekend?
- What's the best thing about the weekend?
- Do you eat anything special or different at the weekend?
- Do you ever get bored at the weekends?

- Are there any special programmes you watch at the weekends?
- What would be your perfect weekend?
- Do you ever go in to school at a weekend?
- Do you visit family at the weekend?
- Do you wear the same clothes at the weekend?

19 Telephones

- Have you got a phone at the moment?
- What telephone would you like to get next?
- Have you got a favourite make of phone?
- How long do you spend talking on the phone each day?
- Do you use your phone for anything else?

- Has your best friend got the same phone as you?
- Do you have a fixed landline at home?
- Who pays your phone bill?
- Do you have a limit on how much you can speak on the phone?
- Do you have a screensaver photo on your mobile?

- Can you think of five reasons why you call people?
- What was the last text message you sent?
- Where is your mobile right now?
- When did you get your first mobile?
- Do you think that children under ten years old need mobiles?

20 Routines

- How long does it take you to get ready in a morning?
- What are the first five important things you do in a morning?
- What motivates you to get out of bed?
- Who or what normally wakes you up?
- How many hours sleep do you normally get each night?

Do you sleep on your front, side or back?

At what time do you eat your meals?

Do you always go to bed at the same time?

Describe your daily routine in one minute.

Does your weekend routine differ from your routine during the week?

How do you remember important things you need to do?

Do you think you have enough free time?

How would you like to change your routine?

Do you find routine relaxing or boring?

What do you like about your daily routine?