

## Needs analysis and clarifying language Student A

Interview your partner and make brief notes in the gaps provided (for your teacher to read).

**Don't show your partner the sheet** while you are asking questions or **don't ask them to write anything** themselves, using the phrases on the right to clear up any communication problems instead. Please also use similar language if you need to ask the teacher anything.

Full name		<p><b>Useful language</b> Pardon?/ Sorry?</p> <p>Can you say that (just) one more time?/ Can you say that again?</p> <p>I'm afraid I don't (fully) understand.</p> <p>Sorry, I still don't understand.</p> <p>Do you mean...?</p> <p>Did you mean to say...?</p> <p>What does... mean?</p> <p>Can you give an example (of...)?</p> <p>Can you explain a little more about...?</p> <p>Can you speak a little louder?</p> <p>Can you say that again a little more slowly?</p> <p>How do you spell...?/ Can you spell... for me?</p> <p>Can you explain that another way?/ Can you explain that in other words?</p>
English studies (present, past and future)		
Other studies (present, past and future)		
Jobs (present, past and future)		
Things interested in for this class		
Topics in the news	Classroom activities	
Things not interested in for this class		
Topics in the news	Classroom activities	
The best ways to improve your spoken English		

*Fold your worksheet so that you have to listen to your partner when they ask you similar question but can use the phrases to ask if anything about the questions isn't clear.*

## Needs analysis and clarifying language Student B

Do the same as your partner did, but **use the more difficult words** to make your questions and **only use the explanations in brackets if your partner asks you for confirmation.**

Given name (= first name)		<b>Useful language</b> Pardon?/ Sorry?  Can you say that (just) one more time?/ Can you say that again?  I'm afraid I don't (fully) understand.  Sorry, I still don't understand.  Do you mean...?  Did you mean to say...?  What does... mean?  Can you give an example (of...)?  Can you explain a little more about...?  Can you speak a little louder?  Can you say that again a little more slowly?  How do you spell...?/ Can you spell... for me?  Can you explain that another way?/ Can you explain that in other words?
Academic history (= past education)		
Current courses (= things you are studying now)		
Work experience (= past and present jobs)		
Preferred profession (= future job you want)		
Current self-study (= using English outside class now)		
Previous English studies (= past classes and self-study)		
Things interested in as content for this class		
Current affairs topics (= things in the news)	Aspects of oral academic English (= giving opinions, academic presentations, etc)	
Things least interested in as content for this class		
Current affairs topics	Aspects of oral academic English	
The best methods for improving oral language skills (= getting better spoken English)		

See if you can remember the checking and clarifying phrases from the previous speaking task. What is wrong with all the examples below?

- Eh?/ What?
- Say again./ Please repeat.
- I don't get it./ I have absolutely no idea what you're trying to say./ You've lost me.
- Now I'm even more confused./ I still don't get it.
  
- I can't hear you./ Speak up!/ You're speaking too quietly.
- Slow down!/ Too fast!
- Please spell that./ Spelling?
- Please try to say that another way.
  
- Meaning?/ And that means?/ What on earth does... mean?
- For example?/ Like what?
- And?/ So?/ Go on!
  
- So, you mean..., right?
- Surely you mean.../ You meant to say..., right?

Work in pairs to try to correct them. Write at least one better example per line.

Check your answers with the previous page. Other answers might be possible, so check with your teacher if you think your version might be okay.

The phrases above are divided into sections by function. Try to label them.

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Match the phrases above to the functions below.

- **Asking for (more) explanation**
- **Asking for changes in how something is explained**
- **Checking your understanding**
- **Showing your general lack of understanding**

Try to brainstorm more phrases with the same functions.

What similar functions can you think of for the person who is explaining?

*Brainstorm suitable phrases for these functions.*

**Giving more explanation**

**Mentioning the other person's (probable) lack of understanding**

**Checking the other person's understanding in general**

**Checking the other person's understanding of something specific**

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*Try to make polite versions of these impolite forms and match the finished sentences to the functions above.*

- You don't know how to spell that, do you?
- You look like you have no idea what I'm talking about./ You're staring at me with a blank face./ I'm not seeing the spark of comprehension.
- You probably won't understand that explanation, so...
  
- Am I speaking slowly enough for you?
- Do you understand?/ Do you understand what I said?/ Got it?/ Are you still with me?
  
- Do you understand the word...?
  
- Obviously I mean.../ Any idiot should be able to see that I mean...
- ... which everyone knows means...
- If you need a simpler explanation,...

*Compare with the answer key, checking the other sentences you came up with your teacher.*

*Test each other in pairs, first seeing if you can identify the function from the phrases then seeing if you can brainstorm the phrases for each function (with your partner helping you if you get stuck).*

*Use similar phrases to explain a recent news story to your partner.*

*Use as many of those phrases as you can in the speaking activity on the next page.*

## Suggested answers

### Showing your general lack of understanding

Eh?/ What? – **Pardon?/ Sorry?**

Say again./ Please repeat. – **Can you say that (just) one more time?/ Can you say that again?**

I don't get it./ I have absolutely no idea what you're trying to say./ You've lost me. – **I'm afraid I don't (fully) understand.**

Now I'm even more confused./ I still don't get it. – **Sorry, I still don't understand.**

### Checking your understanding

So, you mean..., right? – **Do you mean...?**

Surely you mean.../ You meant to say..., right? – **Did you mean to say...?**

### Asking for (more) explanation

Meaning?/ And that means?/ What on earth does... mean? – **What does... mean?**

For example?/ Like what? – **Can you give an example (of...)?**

And?/ So?/ Go on! – **Can you explain a little more about...?**

### Asking for changes in how something is explained

I can't hear you./ Speak up!/ You're speaking too quietly. – **Can you speak a little louder?**

Slow down!/ Too fast! – **Can you say that again more slowly?**

Please spell that./ Spelling? – **How do you spell...?/ Can you spell... for me?**

Please try to say that another way. – **Can you explain that another way?/ Can you explain that in other words?**

### Giving more explanation

Obviously I mean.../ Any idiot should be able to see that I mean... - **Hopefully it's clear that I mean.../ Hopefully I've made it obvious that...**

... which everyone knows means... - ...which many people know means.../ ..., which is **usually defined as .../ The most common definition of that is...**

If you need a simpler explanation,... - **A simpler (but less precise) definition is.../ A more straightforward explanation is.../ In simpler terms,.../ Simply put,.../ To simplify (somewhat/ quite a lot),...**

### Mentioning the other person's (probable) lack of understanding

You don't know how to spell that, do you? – **That's quite difficult to spell./ Not many people know how to spell that./ I'm not sure if you will know how to spell that or not.**

You look like you have no idea what I'm talking about./ You're staring at me with a blank face./ I'm not seeing the spark of comprehension. – **You don't seem (entirely) happy with my explanation, so.../ I can see from your face that I haven't explained it properly, so.../ I can tell from your voice that it still needs some explanation so...**

You probably won't understand that explanation, so... - **Not many people understand that explanation, so.../ That's probably not a good enough explanation, so...**

**Checking the other person's understanding in general**

Am I speaking slowly enough for you? – **Am I going through it too quickly?/ Am I speaking too quickly?**

Do you understand?/ Do you understand what I said?/ Got it?/ Are you still with me? – **Have I explained (myself) properly?**

### Checking the other person's understanding of something specific

Do you understand the word...? – **Are you familiar with the word...?/ Have you come across the term... (before)?/ I don't know if you've come across that concept before./ Are you familiar with...?**