



Making conversation

1 **1.1** Listen to some business people chatting at two of the corporate events on page 5 and answer the questions.

Conversation 1

- a What's the connection between Helen Keating, James McRae and Alan Sullivan?
- b When Helen asks James 'Mind if I join you?', how does he reply?
N _____ a _____ a _____ B _____ m _____ g _____
- c What excuse does Helen make for leaving the rest of the party?

- d Two of the following mean 'That can't be true.' Which two?
You're joking! You're fooling! You're kidding!
- e Helen and James use several expressions to refer to memories. Can you remember the first three words of each expression? Contractions (*it's, you're, etc.*) count as **one** word.

- _____ somewhere before?
- _____ me to forget a face.
- _____ recognised you.
- _____ back to me now.
- _____ remember spending most of the evening fighting off some creepy little guy called Alan.

Conversation 2

- a How would you describe relations between Mr Ishida and Mr Thompson?
warm amicable cordial cool strained frosty
- b Mr Thompson uses the word 'so' five times during the conversation:
So, Mr Ishida, let me freshen your glass.
So, how are you enjoying the match?
So, tell me, have you been to one of these big tournaments before?
So, do you still play?
So, shall we return to our seats?

Why does he need to use it so often?
What's the equivalent word or expression in your own language?

- c Mr Ishida says he's too old to play table tennis now. Mr Thompson replies 'Oh, I'm sure that's not true.'
Is he: paying Mr Ishida a compliment? calling him a liar?
- d Mr Thompson tries to use his background knowledge to keep the conversation going. Complete his remarks below.
- I h _____ you're quite a tennis fan.
 - I u _____ the Japanese arc world table tennis champions.
 - I s _____ the Nikkei's looking strong. That m _____ be good news for you.
 - I r _____ somewhere that things were improving. Or a _____ I mistaken?
- e What word is Mr Ishida avoiding by saying the following?
Not at the moment, thank you. Not really. Not especially.
Not any more. As a matter of fact, ...

Fluency 2 Work with a partner. Practise avoiding saying 'no'.

The no-no game

Prepare

- Write down eight false (but believable) statements about yourself, your job, your family, your interests, your company or your country. When you are ready, swap lists with a partner.

Play

- Imagine the two of you are chatting at a conference or corporate event. Take it in turns to make wrong assumptions about each other using the lists as a starting point but adding remarks of your own if you can.
e.g. *I hear you're based in Rotterdam.*
I understand you're a keen golfer.
I believe your company's about to be involved in a merger.
I read somewhere that Russia will be joining the EU soon.
- Your objective is to get the other person to say 'no'. Their objective is the same. Use the expressions opposite to help you avoid saying 'no'.
- Whoever says 'no' first loses.

Useful expressions

- Not very.
- Not really.
- Not especially.
- Not exactly.
- Not yet.
- Not any more.
- Not at the moment.
- Not as far as I know.
- Actually, ...
- As a matter of fact, ...

3 **1.2** Listen to some business people chatting at the other two corporate events on page 5 and answer the questions.

Conversation 1 a What sort of people are the Hamiltons? Compare your impressions with a partner. _____

b Put the words in the following greetings and introductions in the correct order.

- Dan call please me _____
- meet last to both pleasure at a you _____
- mentioned name Julian's course your of _____
- Fiona calling me mind do don't you you you? _____

c It's common when someone joins a group at a party to tell them a bit about the conversation you've just been having. Complete the following:

_____ talking _____ wondering _____ discussing _____ saying _____ trying _____

_____ what a marvellous party this is.

_____ these new tax laws they're bringing in.

_____ about you – how are things?

_____ what this pile of dirty laundry was doing in an art gallery.

_____ to work out what this whole thing must have cost.

d Why does Dan say to Alistair 'I wonder if we could have a word?' when they're already talking? _____

e All the expressions below mean 'I'm going'. Which also mean 'but I'm coming back'? Some of them were in the conversation you just listened to.

It's been nice talking to you. Would you excuse me a moment?

I'll have to be going. I'll be right back.

If you'll excuse me. Is that the time?

Don't go away. I'll catch you later.

We were just