

Making sure you understand

Ask students what they do if they're in a conversation (or Speaking exam) and don't understand what the other person says to them. Elicit suitable sentences to use in that situation, some examples are below.

- ▶ I'm afraid I didn't quite catch that.
- ▶ Would you mind repeating that, please?
- ▶ Would you mind saying that again, please?
- ▶ (I'm) sorry, (but) what was that again?
- ▶ (I'm) sorry, (but) what did you just say
- ▶ (I'm) sorry, (but) I missed that.
- ▶ (I'm) sorry, (but) I didn't catch that.
- ▶ (I'm) sorry, (but) I didn't hear what you said.

There's no need to write these on the board, as the students will work with them in Activity 1.

Perhaps draw students' attention to the fact that 'to repeat' needs a direct object, eg 'that', 'the last word', etc – 'Can you repeat, please?' isn't correct.

This worksheet will help you with:

- ▶ conversation in all situations
- ▶ GESE Grade 5 and 6 conversation phases
- ▶ ISE I, conversation task

Activity 1

Complete each sentence with the missing word. You can use the same word more than once. Make sure you write the correct form of the word.

- 1 I'm sorry, what was.....**that**.....again?
- 2 Sorry, I.....**missed**.....that.
- 3 I'm afraid I didn't quite.....**catch**.....that.
- 4 Would you mind.....**repeating**.....that, please?
- 5 I'm sorry, what did you just.....**say**.....?
- 6 Sorry, but I didn't.....**catch**.....that.
- 7 Would you.....**mind**.....saying that again, please?
- 8 A I live in Pembroke Street. It's spelt P..
B Sorry, did you.....**say**.....'P' or 'B'?
- 9 A I'm go to Banff for my summer holiday.
B Sorry, but.....**where**.....did you say you're going?
- 10 A That house is really dilapidated!
B Sorry, what does the last word.....**mean**.....?

Activity 2

Sometimes you'll need to check that you've understood correctly. You can do that like this:

A My aunt's coming to stay with me for a week. Can you come up with some ideas for entertaining her?

B Sorry, but am I right in thinking you'd like me to suggest things you could do with your aunt?

Or

B Can I just check that you'd like me to suggest things you could do with your aunt?

Write B's reply to each of these.

1 A So what have you been up to recently?

B (Possible answer) Sorry, but am I right in thinking you'd like me to say what I've been doing recently?

2 A What do you think about eating in restaurants as opposed to eating at home?

B (Possible answer) Can I just check that you'd like me to compare eating in restaurants with eating at home?

Activity 3

First model this activity with a fairly fluent student talking about one of the topics below, and you responding.

In pairs, take turns to speak and listen for a minute or two. When you speak, choose a topic you're familiar with. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ What you're going to do in the next few days
- ▶ Your favourite sort of music
- ▶ Mobile phones
- ▶ Somebody you like or admire
- ▶ Friends

When you listen, use sentences like the ones in Activity 1 to make sure you hear and understand everything.



Star test-taker activity



Here are four sentences about making sure you understand the other person. At the beginning of each sentence, write 'True' or 'False'.

.....False.....If you don't hear what the other person has said, it's polite to say 'Repeat, please.'

If you don't understand what the other person has said, it's polite to say 'Sorry, I didn't quite

.....True.....catch that.'

If you aren't quite sure what the other person has asked you to do, it's polite to say 'Sorry,

.....True.....did you say...'

If you aren't quite sure what the other person has asked you to do, it's polite to begin 'Can

.....True.....I just check.'