

# **STARTING THE CONVERSATION**

**STUDY NOTES**



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**Scenario 1****A friend/someone you know well**

Jack and Marko are friends who know each other quite well.

Jack:	<u>So, how's it going?</u>
Marko:	Not bad. Yourself?
Jack:	Yeah. Good, thanks. <u>What've you been up to?</u>
Marko:	Pretty busy. Mainly work stuff.

So, how's it going?

“How are you?” very common in informal conversations.

What've you been up to?

An informal way to ask “What have you been doing recently?”

**Other ways to start a conversation with a friend/someone you know well:**

How're things?

Similar to “How's it going?”

What's new?

So, any news?

**Scenario 2****A colleague at work**

Paula and Tom are colleagues who know each other very well.

Paula:	<u>Any plans for the weekend?</u>
Tom:	Yeah, actually. We're thinking of going to see the new James Bond movie.
Paula:	Oh yeah? I've heard it's pretty good.
Tom:	Yeah, me too.
	(pause)
	<u>How about you? What are you up to?</u>

Any plans for the weekend?

A great way to start a conversation with a colleague at the end of the week.

How about you?

A great question to turn the conversation around and show that you're also interested in the other person.

What are you up to?

An informal way to ask “What are your plans?”

**Other ways to start a conversation with a colleague from work:**

Did you do anything last night?	A very common question to ask a colleague you know well.
How was your weekend?	A typical question to ask on Monday.
I hear the coffee machine is broken again.	Use something from everyday office life to start a conversation.
Did you hear about Mike? He's just been fired.	Use an interesting/shocking/surprising piece of information to start a conversation.

**Scenario 3****An old friend/colleague**

Sascha and Peter used to work together. They haven't seen each other for a few years.

Sascha:	<u>Peter?</u>
Peter:	Hi Sascha!
Sascha:	Thought it was you. My god! <u>Long time, no see!</u>
Peter:	I know! It must be about 5 years.
Sascha:	At least! <u>How've you been?</u>
Peter:	Good, thanks. Yourself?

Peter?	Say the person's name like a question when you're surprised to see them.
Long time, no see!	A typical phrase to use when we haven't seen someone for a long time.
How've you been?	A great question to ask someone when you haven't seen them recently.

**Other ways to start a conversation with an old friend/colleague:**

So, what've you been up to?	See scenario 1
You haven't changed much.	You look the same as I remember you.
How's life? You look great! It's been ages!	It's been a long time since we've seen each other.

## Scenario 4

A business person who you have spoken to/had correspondence with, but haven't met in person (formal)

Sandra is at a conference when she sees Mr Carr, an executive at Confex. Their companies do business together, but they have never met. Sandra recognises Mr Carr from the company website.

Sandra:	<u>Excuse me, it's Mr Carr, isn't it?</u>
Mr Carr:	Yes, that's right.
Sandra:	<u>Hello, I'm Sandra Conti from Ventava. We've spoken on the phone several times.</u>
Mr Carr:	Ah yes, of course! Nice to see you, Ms Conti. How are you?
Sandra:	Good, thanks. How are you?
Mr Carr:	Very well, thanks.
Sandra:	<u>It's nice to finally meet you in person.</u>
Mr Carr:	Yes, you too.

Excuse me, it's Mr Carr, isn't it?

A friendly and polite way to start a formal conversation.

Hello, I'm Sandra Conti from Ventava. We've spoken on the phone several times.

Professional introduction with name and company name. Then Sandra helps Mr Carr to make the connection by talking about their telephone contact.

It's nice to finally meet you in person.

A great formal phrase to use when you meet someone face-to-face for the first time after knowing or having contact with them for a longer time.

**Other ways to start a conversation with a business person who you have spoken to/had correspondence with, but haven't met in person (formal).**

Mr Carr?

Even if you know it's the person, say their name like it's a question to get their attention and start the conversation.

Hello Mr Carr. I'm Sandra Conti from Ventava.

A more direct way to start the conversation – say hello and introduce yourself in a professional way.

## Scenario 5

A business person who you have spoken to/had correspondence with, but haven't met in person (informal)

Mathieu is at a conference when he sees Bianca. Their companies do business together, but they have never met. They sometimes speak on the phone, so he recognises her voice when he hears her talking to another person nearby.

Mathieu:	<u>Hi, you're Bianca, right?</u>
Bianca:	Yeah.
Mathieu:	<u>I'm Mathieu from TMG. We've spoken on the phone quite a bit.</u>
Bianca:	Ah yes, Mathieu! I thought I recognised the voice. How's it going?
Mathieu:	Great, thanks. <u>How about you?</u>
Bianca:	Pretty good, thanks.
Mathieu:	<u>It's nice to finally put a face to the name.</u>
Bianca:	Yeah, absolutely. (pause) So, are you enjoying the conference so far?

Hi, you're Bianca, right?	Mathieu knows it's Bianca, but he makes it into a question just to make sure and to start the conversation.
I'm Mathieu from TMG. We've spoken on the phone quite a bit. How about you?	Informal introduction with name and company name. Then he helps Bianca to make the connection by talking about their telephone contact. See scenario 2
It's nice to finally put a face to the name.	A great informal phrase to use when you meet someone face-to-face for the first time after knowing or having contact with them for a longer time.

**Other ways to start a conversation with a business person who you have spoken to/had correspondence with, but haven't met in person (informal).**

Bianca?	Say the person's name like it's a question.
How are you?	A friendly way to continue after starting the conversation.
It's great to finally meet you.	A friendly phrase to use when you've had contact for a long time but have never met.
I can't believe we've never actually met before	

## Scenario 6

## A stranger in a business environment

Hannah and Tobi are at a conference. They have never met before. Hannah wants to make new contacts, so she decides to start a conversation with Tobi.

Hannah:	<u>This coffee isn't great, is it?</u>
Tobi:	No, it's terrible!
Hannah:	Yeah, I thought the coffee machine in our office was bad, but this is even worse.
Tobi:	Really? Where do you work?
Hannah:	I work for DLX. <u>I'm Hannah.</u>
Tobi:	Hi, I'm Tobi.

This coffee isn't great, is it?

Hannah sees that Tobi is also drinking coffee from the machine so she uses this as a way to start the conversation.

I'm Hannah.

A simple and informal introduction.

## Other ways to start a conversation with a stranger:

Hi there! I'm Hannah.

A more direct way to start – an informal greeting and introduction.

This weather is just fantastic, isn't it?

Use your surroundings to start a conversation – standing outside the conference centre taking a break and enjoying the nice weather.

What a great presentation!

Use something you and the other person have just experienced together to start a conversation.

## Scenario 7

## A stranger at a private event (informal)

Sara and Esra are at Nina and Ali's party. They haven't met before. Sara is at the buffet and decides to start a conversation with Esra.

Sara:	<u>The food is great, isn't it?</u>
Esra:	Yeah. Everything's really tasty!
Sara::	Absolutely. Have you tried the hummus? It's so good.
Esra:	No, I'll have to try a bit later.
	(pause)
Sara::	<u>I'm Sara, by the way.</u>
Esra:	Hi, I'm Esra.
Sara:	Hi.
	(pause)
Sara:	<u>So, how do you know Nina and Ali?</u>
Esra:	I went to college with Nina.

The food is great, isn't it?	They are both standing at the buffet, so Sara uses the food to start the conversation.
I'm Sara, by the way.	A friendly and informal way to introduce yourself, especially if you've already been talking for a little while.
So, how do you know Nina and Ali?	A great question for this situation to keep the conversation going.

**Other ways to start a conversation with a stranger at a private event:**

Hi there! I'm Sara.	A more direct way to start – a friendly and informal greeting and introduction.
What a lovely place!	Use your surroundings to start a conversation.
I love this song!	Use something you and the other person can both see or hear to start the conversation.