FIRST CLASS
IN THIS UNIT YOU LEARN HOW TO:
• say more about yourself and other people
• ask and answer common questions
• ask follow-up questions and maintain conversations
• describe how well you use different languages
• pay more attention to the language in texts
• tell better stories

SPEAKING

1  Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.
   • Look at the photo of a language class. What do you think is happening?
   • Where do you think it was taken?
   • What do you think they’re learning?
   • Would you like to have a class like this? Why? / Why not?

2  Work with a new partner. Discuss the questions.
   • Why are you learning English?
   • What English classes have you done before?
   • Do you know anyone in this class?
   • Are you still friends with people from previous classes? Tell your partner as much as you can about each person.
LISTENING

1 Listen to two conversations in which people meet for the first time. Answer the questions for each conversation.
   1 Where do they meet?
   2 Why are they there?

2 Work in pairs. Try to answer the questions below. Then listen again and check your answers.
   **Conversation 1**
   1 How is Alfie feeling? Why?
   2 Is Holly a new student?
   3 When did Alfie start studying French?
   4 What does he think his strengths and weaknesses are?
   5 According to Holly, where is French an official language?
   **Conversation 2**
   6 How did Noah feel about the talk he attended?
   7 Where is Noah from – and where is he living now?
   8 When did Noah move to his current home?
   9 Has Giuliana visited the city Noah is living in?
   10 What does Noah do for a living?

3 With your partner, take turns to tell each other as much as you can about the last new person you met.

VOCABULARY Talking about people

4 Check you understand the words in bold in the sentences below. Then decide which two words / phrases in the box could replace each word / phrase in bold so you are talking about the same subject. The first one is done for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portugal</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>only child</th>
<th>sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>an office</td>
<td>a translator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>separated</td>
<td>a twin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>warehouse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 My friend Marcin is from Poland.
2 My husband’s a software engineer.
3 My brother works in a university.
4 My mum speaks good French and a bit of Russian.
5 My sister’s doing a degree in Law at the moment.
6 My parents are really into travelling.
7 My friend Imke is the youngest of six kids.
8 My aunt Maria is single.

5 Think of one more word or phrase that could replace each word / phrase in bold.

6 Work in groups. Use language from Exercises 4 and 5 to say five true things about people you know.
DEVELOPING CONVERSATIONS

Asking follow-up questions
After someone answers a question we have asked, we often ask a second related question. This helps us to find out more details and to keep the conversation going.

A: So have you studied here before?
B: Yeah, last term.
A: Oh really? OK. And did you enjoy it?
B: Yeah, it was amazing.

12 Match the questions (1–6) with the pairs of possible follow-up questions (a–f).

1 What are you studying?
2 Have you studied here before?
3 What do you do when you’re not studying?
4 Do you have any brothers or sisters?
5 What did you do at the weekend?
6 What do you do?

a Whose class were you in? / Where did you learn your English?
b What year are you in? / What does that involve?
c Older or younger? / What do they do?
d Where do you work? / Do you enjoy it?
e How often do you do that? / Did you get anything nice?
f How long have you been doing that? / What kind of music are you into?

13 Write one more follow-up question you might ask after someone answers questions 1–6 in Exercise 12.

14 Listen to six short conversations. What follow-up questions do you hear?

CONVERSATION PRACTICE

15 Choose six questions from this lesson that you think are good to ask people when you first meet them. Then think of two other questions you could also ask.

16 Choose one of these tasks.

a Work with the whole class and have conversations to get to know other students.
b Imagine you are at a party for language students. Look at File 1 on page 187. Choose a person to pretend to be. Then have conversations to get to know other people. Ask and answer questions in the role of the person you chose.

1 To watch the video and do the activities, see the DVD ROM.
VOCABULARY Talking about languages

1 Work in pairs. How many of the languages in the picture do you recognise?

2 Complete the sentences about using foreign languages with these words and phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>accent</th>
<th>express</th>
<th>fluently</th>
<th>mastered</th>
<th>picked it up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>accurate</td>
<td>get by</td>
<td>mastering</td>
<td>struggling</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 I’m not very ________, but I can hold a conversation and make myself understood.
2 I know the basics – enough to ________, when I’m travelling there.
3 I really ________, with French when I was at school, so I just gave up.
4 I get frustrated when I can’t ________, myself.
5 I never went to class. I just ________ from talking to people.
6 I’m a bit embarrassed to speak sometimes because I know I have a strong ________.
7 I grew up bilingual so I speak Spanish and Japanese ________. 
8 I’m not interested in ________ the language, I just want to be able to read it for my job.

3 Work in groups. Use some of the language from Exercise 2 to discuss these questions.
• What languages have you studied?
• What languages do you know at least a few words in? What can you say?
• How did you learn? Do you use these languages now? How well do you know each one?

READING

4 You are going to read an article about ‘hyperglots’ – people who speak many languages. Work in pairs. Look at the photos and the title opposite then discuss how these words and numbers might be connected to the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>72 a parrot</th>
<th>translator</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>two weeks</td>
<td>globalisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>genes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mistakes</td>
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5 Read the article and check your ideas from Exercise 4.

6 According to the article, are the sentences true (T) or false (F)?
1 Mezzofanti spoke 72 languages fluently.
2 Some people who heard Mezzofanti speak probably couldn’t know if he was fluent.
3 There is no proof that Mezzofanti really was multilingual.
4 Globalisation will create more hyperglots.
5 Hyperglots often possess genetic advantages.
6 Hyperglots aim to speak all their languages fluently.

7 Work in pairs. Read the comments that follow the article and discuss these questions.
• Which comments do you agree with and which do you disagree with? Why?
• What did you find most interesting about the article?
• Did you read anything about the habits of hyperglots that could help you study better?

Understanding reading texts and improving your vocabulary involves more than just learning single words. You also need to notice the connected words and grammar.

8 Find these words in the article and notice the connected words and grammar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>far</th>
<th>evidence</th>
<th>growing</th>
<th>allow</th>
<th>terms</th>
<th>opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9 Work in groups. Cover the article and complete the sentences. Then check your ideas.
1 But ________ far ________?
2 There ________ evidence ________ he could use many languages.
3 There will ________ growing ________ in the future.
4 Top ________ may ________ genes ________ allow ________ get the ________ their training.
5 They often ________ limited ________ terms ________ individual languages.
6 They ________ opportunities ________ language closer to home.

10 Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.
• Think of two examples where there are growing numbers of something. Why are they growing?
• How is your English in terms of vocabulary, speaking, listening etc.? What can you do to improve these different aspects?
• What opportunities do you have to practise English?
Michael Erard’s new book investigates the master linguists or ‘hyperglots’

The 18th century Italian priest Cardinal Giuseppe Mezzofanti is a legend among linguists. They say he studied 72 languages, 30 of which he mastered. He spoke another nine fluently, though not perfectly, and could hold a basic conversation in at least eleven more. And all that without leaving Italy! One story suggests he picked up Ukrainian in just two weeks, after meeting a visitor from there.

But how far is this true? Certainly, the figure of 72 is too high and some people perhaps exaggerated how fluent he was. He lived at a time when travel was difficult and learning other languages was still unusual. Therefore, many reports of his abilities come from visitors who were probably struggling to express themselves in Italian. There were also those who, while appreciating his good accent and accurate grammar, described him as merely a parrot who said nothing of interest. However, according to Michael Erard, author of the book Mezzofanti’s Gift, there is sufficient evidence to believe he could use many languages.

Erard also argues that there are many hyperglots in the world today and that, with globalisation, there will be a growing number in the future. For example, Alexander Arguelles is fluent in around twenty languages and has studied 60. He studies nine hours a day, down from fourteen before he got married! The Hungarian translator Kato Lomb worked with sixteen, and you can watch a YouTube video of Alex Rawling speaking eleven languages at the age of twenty.

A central question of the book is whether hyperglots are born or made. Are their achievements genetic or do hyperglots have secrets that normal language learners can learn from? Erard’s conclusions agree with research on highly talented people in other areas such as sport and music. These people generally have advantages they are born with; top athletes may have genes that allow them to get the most from their training; hyperglots seem to possess excellent memories and have brains that are more efficient in processing speech sounds. However, becoming the best also requires a lot of hard work. Some argue that the difference between a top performer and someone who’s just ‘very good’ is that the top performer has practised for 10,000 hours instead of 6,000.

The fact is that most ordinary language learners lack these natural advantages and simply don’t have that much time. So is there any hope for us? Erard believes there is and that research on hyperglots can offer some useful lessons. For example, they often have limited ambitions in terms of individual languages: they’re happy to get by, or to be only able to read, or not to have a perfect accent. They’re practical: if they can’t travel, they look for opportunities to use the language closer to home. Some simply imagine conversations in their heads. They also use other techniques like learning words in context. Finally, they’re never afraid to make mistakes or appear stupid and so never give up.
SPEAKING

Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.

- Where and when do you use English outside the classroom?
- What do you do most: read, listen, speak or write?
- When was the first time you used English outside a classroom? What did you talk about? How successful was it?
- What’s been your best moment using English outside the classroom? Why was it good?

LISTENING

Listen to three people telling stories connected to speaking a foreign language. Match two sentences to each speaker (1–3). There are two sentences you do not need.

a They helped someone by using a foreign language.

b Their parents fell in love in Rio de Janeiro.

c They have an unusual family background.

d They were involved in a misunderstanding.

e Their parents speak together in a foreign language.

f They filmed an animal attacking someone.

g They changed their behaviour as a result of the experience.

h They work with people from other countries.

3 Listen again and complete the sentences with three words in each space. Contractions count as one word.

1 a Two Chinese guys ________ me and stopped me.

   b They started talking really fast, you know, and I ________ at all!

   c I asked them to slow down, and then, ________ of my bad Chinese and gesture, I explained ...

2 a He worked in the engine room and she was ________.

   b My mum said Dad was a really good dancer, ________ very difficult to believe.

   c They also said it ________ about whose country to live in.

3 a We go all over the place ________ unusual wild animals.

   b We often need ________ local people to act as guides or cooks for the film crew.

   c Anyway, last year we were filming in Sumatra in ________ a forest ...

4 Work in groups. Discuss the questions.

- Which of the stories did you like the best? Why?
- Do you know any families where they speak more than one language? Why?
- Have you ever been on a cruise? When? Where?
- Have you ever helped anyone in the street? Where? What did you do?
- Do you know any ‘false friends’ – words that look or sound the same, but have a different meaning in different languages?
GRAMMAR Narrative tenses

5 Look at these sentences from the stories. Then complete the rules below.
   a They first looked really surprised and then they started talking really fast, you know.
   b It was actually the first time I'd spoken to anyone Chinese outside of my class.
   c They first met when they were both working on a cruise ship.
   d Neither spoke each other’s language, but my mum had worked in Germany before.
   e Last year we were filming in the middle of a forest … and one time at dinner I was talking to the guide and I tried to ask about ‘the people of the inner forest’ …

   We use three main tenses when telling stories: the past simple, the past continuous and the past perfect simple.
   - Past simple: add _______ to the infinitive (without to) of the verb. Some past forms are irregular, e.g. _______.
   - Past continuous: use _______ / _______ + -ing form of the verb.
   - Past perfect simple: use _______ + past participle. Some participles are irregular, e.g. _______.

6 Look at the sentences in Exercise 5 again and answer the questions.
   1 Which tense is the most common in telling stories?
   2 Which tense is often used at the beginning of the story to give background information?
   3 Which tense shows the events followed each other in order?
   4 Which tense shows the ‘past in the past’ – an action that happened before something else we talked about?
   5 Which tense shows an action was unfinished or stopped by another action?

7 Read this story about how another person’s parents met. Decide if the past simple forms are correct or not. Correct the ones which are wrong.

I love the story of how my parents met. My dad was twenty. One day my dad took an overnight train to Prague in Czech Republic and during the night he fell asleep. When he woke up, he realised they were in Prague so he rushed to get off the train. He saw a policeman looking at someone’s papers and he suddenly realised he hadn’t his passport or money or phone. He ran back to the train. He sat down, but then this guy came up to him and asked him something in Czech. He then said in English, ‘What’s the matter?’ and so my dad explained. So basically, this guy, who was called Anton, helped him. He took my dad home, given him something to eat, let him phone his parents to get some money – everything. And later that evening my dad met Anton’s parents … and he met his sister. And that’s how he met my mother!

SPEAKING

13 Choose two of these ideas for stories. Spend a few minutes thinking about what happened and how you will tell the stories.
   - the first time your parents met
   - the first time you met your best friend / wife / husband / boyfriend / girlfriend
   - a time when you forgot or lost something important
   - a time you had a good or funny experience using a foreign language
   - a time a stranger helped you or you helped a stranger

14 Work in groups. Share your stories.