

Talking with Americans

On and Off Campus



***Conversations
for Listening and Speaking***

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UNIT TWO

“How are you?”

1. Think and Talk

How do you say “How are you” in your language?
What are some common responses?
Is it a real question?

2. American Expressions and Idioms

Do you know these words and phrases? Find them in the conversation on the next page. Then try to understand them. Then listen to the conversation.

they just **walk right by**

It’s no **big deal**.

smile and **walk on**

nothing more

that might **work**

hang in there

catch on

3. Listen

An international student (*IS*), Chinwe, is commenting to Raoul, an American friend (*AF*), on the greeting "How are you?"

AF: Hi, Chinwe. How are you?

IS: Do you really want to know, Raoul?

AF: What do you mean?

IS: Well, Americans don't really want to know my answer to "How are you?" Sometimes they just walk right by before I can say anything.

AF: Chinwe, it's no big deal. They just expect you to say, "Fine, good," or "OK " and smile and walk on. It's just a greeting, nothing more.

IS: In my country, it is a real question – and we always answer, like, "My back is killing me," or "My neighbor cheated me," whatever is going on. And then we talk for a while.

AF: Well, if you want a real conversation, you could always say, "Things could be better." That might work.

IS: Do you think I will ever learn to talk like an American?

AF: Of course you will. Just hang in there! You'll catch on.

IS: I hope so.

4. Fill in the Gaps

AF: Hi, Chinwe. How are you?

IS: Do you _____ want to know, Raoul?

AF: What do you mean?

IS: Well, Americans don't _____ want to know my answer to "How are you?"
Sometimes they just walk _____ _____ before I can say anything.

AF: Chinwe, it's no big _____. They just expect you to say, "Fine, good,"
or "OK " and smile and walk _____. It's just a greeting, _____ more.

IS: In my country, it is a _____ question – and we always answer, like ,
"My back is killing me," or "My neighbor cheated me," whatever is going on. And
then we talk for a _____ .

AF: Well, if you want a _____ conversation, you could always say, "Things could
be better." That might _____.

IS: Do you think I will ever learn to talk _____ an American?

AF: Of course you will. Just _____ there! You'll _____ .

IS: I hope so.

5. Listen and Repeat

do-you-**REALLY**-want-to-**KNOW**-ra**OUL** Δ

WELL ≈ a**MER**icans-**DONT**-really want-to-**KNOW**

my-**ANS**wer-to how-**ARE**-you Ø

SOMEtimes-they-just-**WALK-RIGHT-BY** be**FORE**-i-can-say-**ANY**thing Ø

in-**MY**-country ≈ its-a-**REAL-QUEST**ion ≈

and-we-**AL**ways-**ANS**wer ≈ like ≈ my-**BACK**-is-**KILL**ing-me ≈

or-my-**NEIGH**bor **CHEAT**ed-me ≈

WHATEVer-s-going-**ON** ≈ and-then-we-**TALK**-for-a-**WHILE** Ø

do-you-**THINK** ill-**EVER** learn-to-**TALK** like-an-a**MER**ican Δ

i-**HOPE**-so Ø

6. Talk Like an American — Listen and respond. With a partner, preferably a native speaker who will say the *(AF)* American friend's lines, practice saying the *(IS)* international student's lines, using the lines in activity 3 (the second page of the unit) as prompts. Look at your line, then look at your partner and say it — naturally, like an American. Try not to read the line while you speak.

Δ = rising question intonation

≈ = slight pause

Ø = sentence final intonation

Gaps between words or phrases represent a very slight pause.

UNIT TWELVE

Cheating

1. Think and Talk

What is cheating?

How do students cheat when taking a test?

What can happen if you cheat?

2. American Expressions and Idioms

Do you know these words and phrases? Find them in the conversation on the next page. Then try to understand them. Then listen to the conversation.

You **flunked**?

I know you **hit the books**

That's **a no-no**

took the test **away**

kicked out of school

it **doesn't matter**

get yourself over to her office

right now

3. Listen

Talib, an international student (*IS*), has a serious problem. He talks to Willy, an American friend (*AF*).

AF: So, how did you do on the last test?

IS: I got an "F."

AF: You flunked? I don't believe it. What happened? I know you hit the books pretty hard this week.

IS: Yeah, but the teacher said I cheated.

AF: And did you?

IS: Well, I took some note cards to class, Willy, but I swear to God I never used them.

AF: You should NOT have brought them to class. That's a no-no. Did you look at them?

IS: Yeah, but before the test started. Right after that, they just fell out of my pocket, and that's when the teacher saw them on the floor and took the test away.

AF: Talib! You can't do that! You can't even bring them into the classroom. You could get kicked out of school for that!

IS: But I *didn't* use them!

AF: Man! It doesn't matter. You need to talk to the teacher, like, get yourself over to her office right now!

IS: Can you come with me?

4. Fill in the Gaps

AF: So, how did you do on the _____ test?

IS: I got an "F."

AF: You _____? I don't believe it. What happened? I know you _____ the books pretty hard this week.

IS: Yeah, but the teacher said I _____.

AF: And did you?

IS: Well, I took some note cards to class, Willy, but I _____ to God I never used them.

AF: You should NOT have brought them to class. That's a _____ - _____. Did you look at them?

IS: Yeah, but _____ the test started. Right after that, they just _____ out of my pocket, and that's when the teacher saw them on the floor and _____ the test away.

AF: Talib! You can't do that! You can't even bring them into the classroom. You could get _____ out of school for that!

IS: But I *didn't use them!*

AF: Man! It doesn't _____. You need to talk to the teacher, like, _____ yourself over to her office right now!

IS: Can you _____ with me?

5. Listen and Repeat

i-**GOT**-an-**F** ∅

YEAH ≈ but-the-**TEACH**er-said i-**CHEAT**ed ∅

WELL ≈ i-**TOOK**-some-**NOTE-CARDS**-to-class ≈ **WILly** ≈
but-i-**SWEAR**-to-**GOD** ≈ i-**NEV**er-**USED**-them ∅

YEAH ≈ but-be**FORE**-the-test-**START**ed ∅

Right-after-**THAT** they-just-**FELL-OUT**-of-my-**POCK**et ≈
and-**THATS**-when the-**TEACH**er **SAW**-them-on-the-**FLOOR** ≈
and-**TOOK**-the-**TEST**-a**WAY** ∅

but-I-**DIDNT**-**USE**-them ∅

can-you-**COME**-with-me Δ

6. Talk Like an American — Listen and respond. With a partner, preferably a native speaker who will say the *(AF)* American friend's lines, practice saying the *(IS)* international student's lines, using the lines in activity 3 (the second page of the unit) as prompts. Look at your line, then look at your partner and say it — naturally, like an American. Try not to read the line while you speak.

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Gaps between words or phrases represent a very slight pause.

UNIT NINETEEN

Late to Class

1. Think and Talk

What time does your class start?
Are you usually on time or late?
Why is it important to be on time?

2. American Expressions and Idioms

Do you know these words and phrases? Find them in the conversation on the next page. Then try to understand them. Then listen to the conversation.

getting underway

get out of work

get home

make it on time

we're **sticklers**

as well

As a matter of fact

are supposed to

Three strikes and you're out.

My hands are tied.

give me a break

look the other way

just this once

3. Listen

Salma, an international student (*IS*), and her American teacher (*AT*) are talking about coming to class on time.

AT: Salma, I need to talk to you about your attendance. The course is just getting underway and you've been late three times, AND you've missed two classes.

IS: I know, Ms. Riley, but I do not get out of work until 4:00, and I have to get home, feed my daughter, and rush over here. I just can't make it on time.

AT: Well, in this country, it's very important to be on time, especially if you have a job. And here at the Center we're sticklers for being on time as well. As a matter of fact, we teachers are supposed to lower your grade if you are often late.

IS: I am trying, Ms. Riley, I am trying, but it is hard. And next week I have something very important, so I will be absent.

AT: What's so important?

IS: It's my daughter's birthday.

AT: Salma, that would be your third absence! Three strikes and you're out. That's our policy. Sorry, my hands are tied.

IS: Oooo, Ms. Riley, please give me a break.

AT: All right, I'll look the other way, but just this once.

4. Fill in the Gaps

AT: Salma, I need to talk to you about your _____. The course is just getting _____ and you've been late three times, AND you've missed two classes.

IS: I know, Ms. Riley, but I do not get _____ work until 4:00, and I have to get home, feed my daughter, and rush over here. I just can't _____ it on time.

AT: Well, in this country, it's very important to be _____ time, especially if you have a job. And here at the Center we're sticklers for being on time _____. As a matter of fact, we teachers are supposed to lower your grade if you are often late.

IS: I am _____, Ms. Riley, I am trying, but it is _____. And next week I have something very _____, so I will be absent.

AT: What's so important?

IS: It's my _____ birthday.

AT: Salma, that would be your third _____! Three _____ and you're out. That's our policy. Sorry, my _____ are tied.

IS: Oooh, Ms. Riley, please give me a break.

AT: All right, I'll look the other _____, but just this once.

5. Listen and Repeat

i-**KNOW** ≈ **MS-RILEY** ≈ but-i-**DONT-GET**-out-of-**WORK** until-**FOUR-o-CLOCK** ≈
and-I-have-to-get-**HOME** ≈ **FEED**-my-**DAUGHTer** ≈ and-**RUSH**-over-**HERE** ∅
i-just-cant-**MAKE**-it-**ON-TIME** ∅

i-am-**TRYing** ≈ **MS-RILEY** ≈ i-am-**TRYing** ≈ but-it is-**HARD** ∅

and-**NEXT**-week I-have-**SOMETHING** **VERY**-im**PORT**ant ≈
so-I-ll-be-**AB**sent ∅

its-my-**DAUGHTers**-**BIRTH**day ∅

Oooo ≈ **MS-RILEY** ≈ **PLEASE-GIVE**-me-a-**BREAK** ∅

6. Talk Like an American — Listen and respond. With a partner, preferably a native speaker who will say the *(AT)* American teacher's lines, practice saying the *(IS)* international student's lines, using the lines in activity 3 (the second page of the unit) as prompts. Look at your line, then look at your partner and say it — naturally, like an American. Try not to read the line while you speak.

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