

# Way Ahead

English for Advanced Conversation Classes

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# Preface

*Way Ahead* is a conversation course that is aimed at advanced learners of English (C1–C2 level). It is a thoroughly inspiring course that takes the learner on a journey into new and previously unexplored areas of the English language. The book is ideal for people who want to move beyond normal language-course topics and instead be challenged by more in-depth or unusual talking points.

The focus of *Way Ahead* is on providing fun and engaging exercises that improve the student's confidence and fluency when talking in English. At the same time, it allows the learner to study some of the more awkward parts of the English language such as prepositions, antonyms, similes, and cultural language such as bingo calls and Shakespearean idioms.

*Way ahead* takes the student on a linguistic journey that moves through four themes, each one travelling further out into the world. Topics include subjects as diverse as perspectives, tools, finance, celebrations, migration and innovation.

Throughout the whole course learners take part in fun games, quizzes and exercises that introduce and revise the more challenging lexical and grammatical features of the English language. As well as purely discussing topics, students are also encouraged to brainstorm, role-play and debate so that they improve their confidence in talking in a variety of different roles and situations. At the end of the book are glossaries for low-frequency vocabulary, and audio material is available for every chapter.

We hope that you will enjoy this book and, by the end of this course, are sure that your conversation skills will be way ahead!

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## Symbols



### Discussion

Conversation exercises.



### Reading

Texts to be read aloud. May also involve practising pronunciation.



### Listening

Exercises involving listening to a recording or someone reading aloud.



### Expressing your opinion

Conversation exercises particularly aimed at practising the functions and vocabulary needed to effectively get your own opinion across. Debating.



### Vocabulary

Tasks to help you widen your vocabulary.



### Structures

Tasks involving grammar practise.



### Performance

Exercises that involve role play or presentation situations.

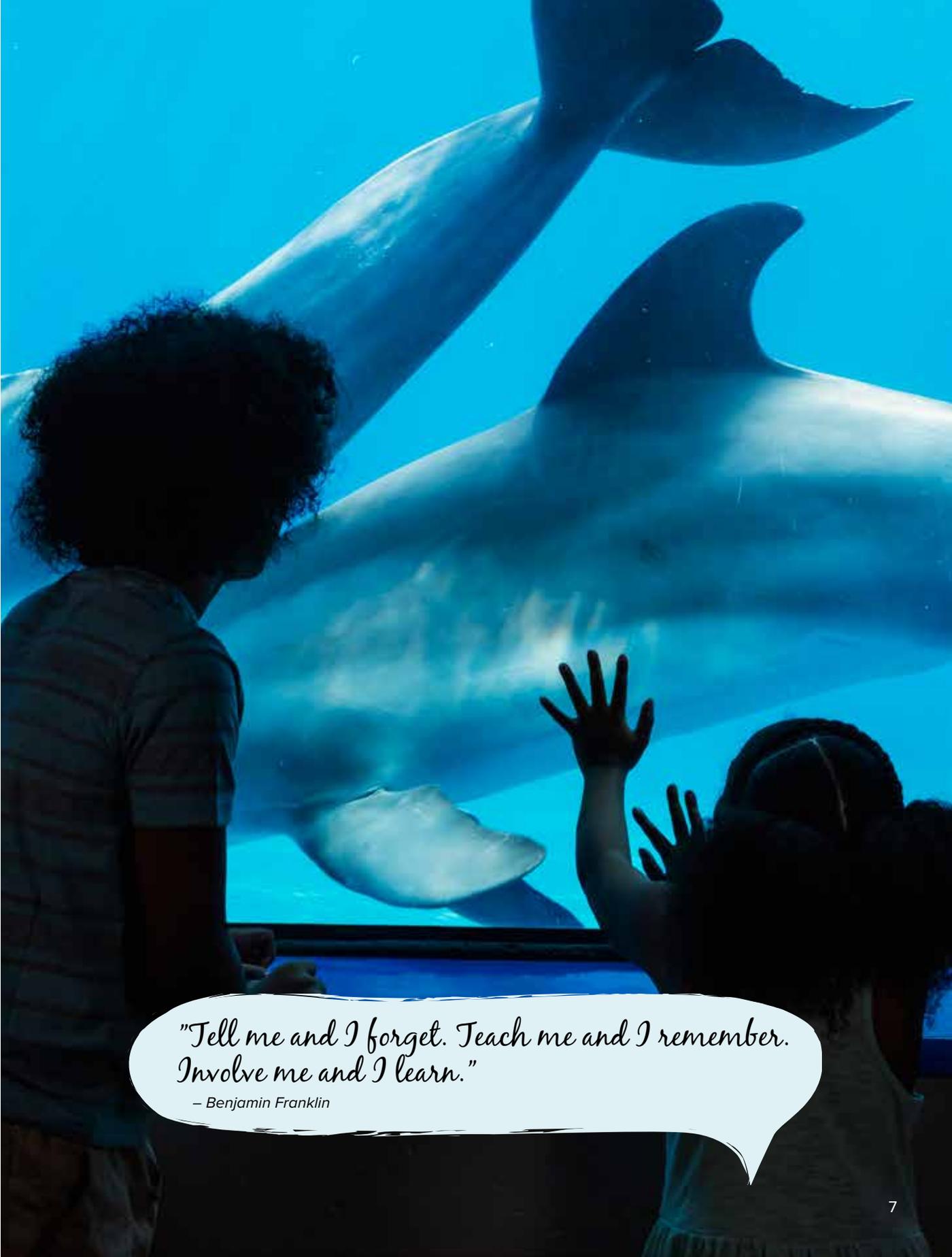


### Game or quiz

A game played in groups or pairs, or a quiz: a competitive test of general knowledge.

*"To have another language is to possess  
a second soul."*

*– Charlemagne*



*"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.  
Involve me and I learn."*

*– Benjamin Franklin*



## Lead in

### 1. Getting to know you

This first task is based on a classical personality questionnaire, the "Proust Questionnaire", which was popularised by Marcel Proust, the French novelist.

**Write a quick response to each question. Feel free to skip any that make you uncomfortable. Next, discuss your answers in pairs. Then, choose a couple that you will share with the class.**

1. What do you like doing most?
2. What do you dislike doing most?
3. Where would you most like to live?
4. How would you describe yourself?
5. What is your best quality?
6. What is the trait you like least in yourself?
7. What do you value most in your friends?
8. What is the trait you detest most in others?
9. What is your idea of happiness?

10. What is your idea of misery?
11. What is your greatest fear?
12. Which living person do you most admire?
13. Which living person do you most despise?
14. Which talent would you most like to have?
15. What do you consider your greatest achievement?
16. What is your most treasured possession?
17. Who are your favourite writers?
18. Who is your hero of fiction?
19. Who are your heroes in real life?
20. What is your motto?



## 2. What's your level?

In order to set goals for yourself in your language learning, it is important to have an awareness of your current level of language proficiency. **The European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe** has developed a tool to help you self-evaluate your level of proficiency in the language skills of listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing. The levels are based on the six reference levels described in the **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**. The descriptors in the CEFR specify progressive mastery of each skill, which is graded on a six-level scale from basic levels (A1, A2) to intermediate levels (B1, B2), to proficient levels (C1, C2) of language knowledge and usage.

- a) You can self-evaluate your language skills by using the *European Language Portfolio (ELP)* interactive tool, which you can find on the internet by searching the key words: *ELP Self-evaluate your language skills*. The test should take less than 10 minutes. The tool requires Adobe Flash.
- b) When you have completed the self-evaluation, compare and discuss your results with a partner. Are the results what you expected?

## 3. Personal language portfolio

The Council of Europe has also developed the **European Language Portfolio (ELP)**, which you can use to record your language learning achievements and your experience of learning and using languages. You can find the template for the ELP by searching the internet for the key words: *European Language Portfolio*.

**Complete the template and then compare and discuss your portfolio with a partner. How are your experiences similar or different?**





## 4. English today



English, like other languages, is constantly changing. Moreover, since the English language has never had a formal regulator, norms are developed out of usage. Norms that become established and widely accepted are known as standard English.

The **Merriam-Webster** dictionary defines standard English as:

*"The English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood."*

The two most widely established and prestigious varieties of English are standard British and American English. However, other varieties, such as Australian and Indian English are also gaining wider acceptance.

The norms of standard English(es) change over time, and authoritative dictionaries, such as the **Oxford English Dictionary**, take a descriptivist rather than prescriptivist approach. That is to say that they describe how people use the language rather than attempting to dictate how the language should be used. For an example try looking up *shall* in the **Oxford Learner's Dictionaries** online. In the grammar notes, you will find the following:

*"shall / will In modern English, the traditional difference between shall and will has almost disappeared, and shall is not used very much at all. Shall is now used only with I and we, and often sounds formal and old-fashioned. People are more likely to say:*

*I'll (= I will) be late*

*and*

*You'll (= you will) have your turn next."*

Today, it is estimated that there are around two billion speakers of English worldwide, of which only a quarter are native-speakers of English. In fact, English is currently the most widely used lingua franca in business, academia and politics around the world. This is bound to have an impact on the English language.

### Discuss in small groups.

1. What implications could this have for the English language?
2. What implications could this have for you as a learner or user of the language?

## 5. Strategies for learning and communicating in English

Reflect on strategies for learning and communicating in English.

a) Discuss the questions below in pairs.

1. What strategies do you use for learning and practising your English?
2. Do you look for opportunities to use (speak, write, listen and read) English? Explain your answer.
3. Do you have clear goals and a plan for improving your English skills? Explain your answer.
4. Do you try to find out how to be a better learner of English? Explain your answer.

b) What English learning strategies have you used before?

You can choose more than one.

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>What interaction strategies do you use?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. You try to explain in other words when you can't remember a word.</li> <li>b. When you do not understand something, you ask for clarification.</li> <li>c. You pay attention when you hear someone speaking English.</li> <li>d. Anything else?</li> </ol>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>What vocabulary learning strategies do you use?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. You use a monolingual dictionary, such as the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries.</li> <li>b. You use new English words several times so you can remember them.</li> <li>c. You connect the sound of a new English word to an image of the word to help remember it.</li> <li>d. You use flashcards or other tools to learn new English words.</li> <li>e. Anything else?</li> </ol>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>What reading strategies do you use?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. You first skim an English passage, then read it more carefully.</li> <li>b. You read English without looking up every new word.</li> <li>c. You try to guess the meaning of unfamiliar English words.</li> <li>d. You try to find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that you understand.</li> <li>e. You try to translate for meaning and not word-for-word.</li> <li>f. Anything else?</li> </ol>





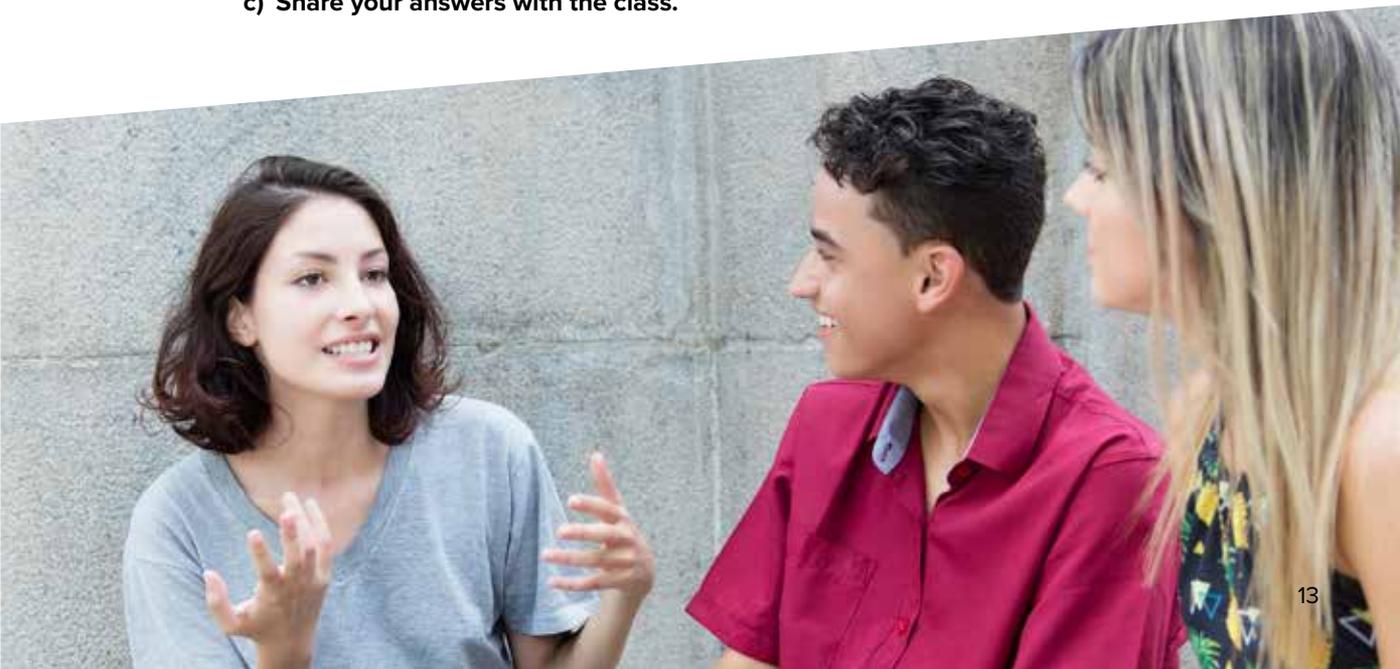
## 6. Beliefs about language learning

a) Work individually to mark the statements below with A (agree) or D (disagree).

1. English is easy to learn as a foreign language.
2. The only reason that some people cannot learn a second language is that they are insufficiently motivated.
3. Watching television and movies in English are two of the best ways to learn English.
4. Using a monolingual dictionary is more useful than using a bilingual dictionary.
5. It is important that the teacher always corrects mistakes immediately.
6. Language games take up valuable class time.
7. Speaking exercises between students in pairs or small groups are not useful.
8. Speaking exercises between students in pairs or small groups can even be detrimental because students can pick up each other's mistakes.
9. It is possible to achieve native-like English language competence.
10. It is important to help students eliminate their foreign accent.
11. Learning a foreign language is the same as learning other academic subjects.
12. When reading English, I should look up every word I don't know.

b) In groups of four, discuss your answers and try to reach a group consensus.

c) Share your answers with the class.





## 7. Dictionary skills



In pairs, complete the following exercises using an online dictionary such as the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries.



a) Which parts of speech are the following words? Write *noun*, *verb*, *adjective* or *adverb* next to each word. Note that some words have more than one function.

1. appropriate     \_\_\_\_\_
2. fair             \_\_\_\_\_
3. minute         \_\_\_\_\_
4. product         \_\_\_\_\_
5. strand          \_\_\_\_\_
6. stately          \_\_\_\_\_

Several of the words in exercise a) are **homographs**. A homograph means a word that is spelt like another word but has a different meaning from it, and may have a different pronunciation. For example, *bow* pronounced /baʊ/ can mean "to move your head or the top half of your body forwards and downwards as a sign of respect or to say hello or goodbye", or when pronounced /bəʊ/ it can refer to a weapon used for shooting arrows.

b) Complete the definitions below with a suitable word from the box.

fitting      leave      permission      seconds      thin      small

Word	Definition	Example
strand	a single _____ piece of thread, wire, hair, etc.	She plucked a <b>strand</b> of hair from his head.
	to _____ somebody in a place from which they have no way of getting away	The strike left the tourists <b>stranded</b> at the airport.
minute	equal to 60 _____	It's eight <b>minutes</b> to five.
	extremely _____	The apartment is <b>minute</b> .
appropriate	suitable or _____ for certain purposes	That kind of language is not <b>appropriate</b> for the classroom.
	to take something without _____	He was accused of <b>appropriating</b> company funds.

c) Underline the stressed syllable of each of the words below.

1. minute (noun)                      minute (adjective)
2. produce (noun)                     produce (verb)
3. project (noun)                     project (verb)
4. record (noun)                     record (verb)
5. reject (noun)                     reject (verb)

d) Complete the table with the noun of each word.

Word building	
Verb	Noun
arrive	
depart	
enjoy	
explain	
produce	
sign	
succeed	
sleep	

e) Complete the table with the irregular past form of the verbs.

Irregular past form	
Verb	Irregular past form
bleed	
cling	
creep	
dig	
flee	
learn	