

89 ESL

Conversation Sheets

From the ESL Conversation Class at Agincourt Pentecostal Church, Toronto

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A New Year

1. What did you do on New Year's Day? What did you do on New Year's Eve?
2. Are you looking forward to this year? Why or why not?
3. Do you have any special plans for this year? For yourself? Your family?
4. In your country, do people celebrate the new year (January 1)? Do they do anything special to celebrate?
5. What are "New Year Resolutions"? Do you make them? Can you share yours?
6. How long do you think people keep their New Year Resolutions? Do they break them easily? Why?
7. What new things are you hoping to learn this year?
8. Would you like to try out a new diet? How? And why?
9. Are there new hobbies that you are hoping to take up? What are they?
10. Would you like to set up a new routine for the new year? How?
11. Are there old habits that you want to break, and new habits that you want to start?
12. What new things are you hoping to buy this year?
13. What skills would you like to improve on?
14. Are there new places that you want to visit this year? Where?
15. Who would you like to get to know better this year?
16. What are some of the broken things you want to mend this year?
17. What are some lost dreams that you may want to pursue again this year?
18. One meaning of the English prefix "re" is "to do again": for example, re-start = start again; re-assure = assure again. What other words do you know that begin with "re"? How does the meaning of the word include the meaning of "again"?
19. Discuss the following quotes. What do they mean? Which one do you like best?
 - a) "I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it." --Pablo Picasso
 - b) "Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account." --Oscar Wilde
 - c) "A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams." --John Barrymore

Airplanes and airports

1. How old were you when you went on your first flight? Where did you go?
2. Do you like to travel by airplane? Why or why not?
3. What was the longest flight you have ever taken?
4. What seat do you prefer: window, center or aisle?
5. What are three things you're supposed to do before the flight takes off?
6. What do you like to do during the flight? Does the plane provide anything to do to pass the time?
7. What are some movies you remember seeing on the plane?
8. What do you do when you experience turbulence?
9. Have you ever met a new friend on a flight or in an airport?
10. What should be done with obese people who practically take up two seats?
11. Can you sleep during the flight?
12. Have you ever seen a female pilot? Why do you think that most pilots are men?
13. Would you like to be a flight attendant? Why or why not?
14. Are most flight attendants female? Is being a flight attendant considered a good job in your country? What do you think are the qualifications?
15. Are planes really safer than cars? (a british study shows that flying is 176 times safer than walking, 15 times safer than driving and 300 times safer than a motorbike.)
16. What airline did you travel on to come to canada? Do you remember what you ate on the flight? Was it good?
17. Have you ever spent a night at an airport? Were you able to sleep?
18. Do you like toronto's international airport? Why or why not?
19. Which other countries' airports have made a special impression on you?

Being a Tourist

1. When you visit a new place, what is something you usually like to do? (e.g.visit the museum)
2. Where did you go on your last vacation? Would you recommend it to others?
3. How do you know when someone is a tourist?
4. When you travel, do you want people to know that you are a tourist or do you like to look like the people around you?
5. Do you like to lie on the beach on holiday? Why or why not?
6. When you travel, how many stars is the minimum for your hotel?
7. Describe the nicest hotel you have ever stayed in.
8. Describe the worst hotel you have ever stayed in.
9. What are some important services for you to receive when you stay in a hotel?
10. Do you think staying at an all-inclusive resort is a good way to spend a holiday? Why?
11. Have you ever had a bad vacation? Talk about it.
12. Here are some touristy things to do in Toronto. How many of these things have you done?:
 - a) go up the CN tower
 - b) visit the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum)
 - c) spend a day on Centre Island
 - d) go shopping at the Eaton's Centre
 - e) go to Niagara Falls
 - f) visit the Science Centre
 - g) spend a day at the zoo
 - h) go for a walk at the Harbourfront
13. If a friend or relative visited you from your hometown, where would you take them in Toronto?
14. Make a list of the things that you never travel without.
15. What are some tips for keeping your money safe when you are travelling?

Best Ways

What is the best way to...

- 1) save energy in your house?
- 2) save money in grocery shopping?
- 3) lose weight?
- 4) remember people's names?
- 5) prepare your tax return?
- 6) encourage your children to learn and use your native language?
- 7) get to Pearson International Airport from where you live?
- 8) get to know more Canadian friends?
- 9) get Canadian working experience?
- 10) improve your English pronunciation?
- 11) understand your spouse?
- 12) get your children away from the computer?
- 13) learn skating?
- 14) (Can you think of more?)

Birthdays and Age

1. In your country, is it common to ask people their age? How about their birthdays?
2. Is there a difference between men and women?
3. When is your birthday? Are you looking forward to it? Why?
4. If you had a choice, which month would you choose your birthday to be in? Which day? Why?
5. Does any of your family members' birthday fall on the same month as yours? Are the days close together?
6. Why are children excited about their birthdays? Did you become less and less excited as you grew up? At what age did this start to happen? Why?
7. When you were a child, what age was "old" to you? How about now?
8. Do you feel "old"? Sometimes? Why or why not?
9. Are people generally living longer? How does this affect how people look at "old age"?
10. What do you typically do on your birthday? Who do you celebrate your birthday with?
11. Do you usually receive birthday presents? Cards? From whom?
12. When you were a child, did you have birthday parties? How about now?
13. What were some memorable birthdays you've had? As a child? As an adult? Tell us about it.
14. Do you sing "Happy Birthday" in the same tune in your country? Does your country have another version of the birthday song?
15. What other cultural "birthday food" do you have in your native cuisine besides the cake?
16. Discuss the following quotes. What do you think they mean? Which do you like best?
 - a) If we could be twice young and twice old we could correct all our mistakes.
~ Euripides
 - b) We turn not older with years, but newer every day. ~ Emily Dickinson
 - c) We are always the same age inside. ~ Gertrude Stein
 - d) Very few people do anything creative after the age of thirty-five. The reason is that very few people do anything creative before the age of thirty-five. ~ Joel Hildebrand
 - e) Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been. ~ Mark Twain
 - f) Real birthdays are not annual affairs. Real birthdays are the days when we have a new birth.
~ Ralph Parlette

Books and Reading (Part I)*

1. Have you ever re-read a book? Which? Why? How many times?
2. Do you have a library card yet? Do you like to browse in bookstores?
3. What book, or author, has influenced you the most? How?
4. Have you ever joined a book club? Did your club focus on a genre?
5. Did your mother read to you as a child? Did you have a favourite story? What was it?
6. Did you have a favourite book character as a child?
7. Where did you first learn to read? At home? School?
8. What language did you first learn to read in?
9. What were your favourite books as a child? Who was your favourite author? Why?
10. What kind of books does your mother read? Your father? Your children? Your siblings?
11. What did you like to read in high school? Why?
12. What was your favourite book that you had to read in school?
13. What was your least favourite book that you were assigned to read? Why?
14. As a teenager, did you have any favourite books, comics, or magazines? Can you describe them?
15. Do you read emails? Postcards? Websites? Blogs? Newspapers? Magazines?
16. Which magazine or newspaper sections do you scan? Why?
17. Who are some famous writers from your country?
18. Who are some famous writers who write in your native language?
19. Read the following quotes about books and reading. Which is your favourite and why?
 - a) “Beware of the man of one book.”
 - b) “Good children's literature appeals not only to the child in the adult, but to the adult in the child.”
 - c) “A library is a hospital for the mind.”
 - d) “People die, but books never die.”
 - e) “Show me the books he loves and I shall know the man far better than through mortal friends.” ~ Dawn Adams
 - f) A book is a garden, an orchard, a storehouse, a party, a company by the way, a counsellor, a multitude of counsellors. ~ Henry Ward Beecher

* Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

Books and Reading (Part II)

1. Are you a fast reader or a slow reader? Is there a difference in reading in your first language and in English?
2. What things do you scan? What things do you read in detail? (Newspaper, magazines, emails, novels, academic books... etc.)
3. Do you read a lot of novels? Do you read a lot of non-fiction?
4. What is the longest book / novel you've ever read? Tell us about it.
5. Have you read books that have been turned into movies? Which ones? Which did you like better: the book or the movie?
6. When you visit bookstores, which sections do you usually go to?
7. Do you enjoy browsing books in bookstores? Why (or why not)?
8. Do you enjoy browsing books on the internet? Why (or why not)?
9. Do you think people read less nowadays? Why?
10. How often do you buy a new book? A used book?
11. Do you buy books online? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
12. Did you ever "judge a book by its cover"? How important are covers of books?
13. If you have a choice, would you buy a softcover or hardcover version of the same book? Why?
14. When reading a novel, do you jump to the end to read the ending before you get there?
15. Do you think we can always know what the author means, exactly?
16. In your opinion, what part does the reader's imagination play in the reading process?
17. What are some idioms connected with books or reading in your language?
18. Read the following quotes. Which do you like best and why?
 - a) "To acquire the habit of reading is to construct for yourself a refuge from almost all the miseries of life." ~Somerset Maugham
 - b) To read a writer is for me not merely to get an idea of what he says, but to go off with him and travel in his company. ~ André Gide
 - c) These are not books, lumps of lifeless paper, but minds alive on the shelves. ~ Gilbert Highet
 - d) The best of a book is not the thought which it contains, but the thought which it suggests; just as the charm of music dwells not in the tones but in the echoes of our hearts. ~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

Care-giving and Self-care

1. Have you taken care of someone on a long-term basis? If so, what is their age?
2. What is the difference between taking care of children and taking care of frail elderly people? Which is more demanding?
3. What kinds of jobs involve care-giving? Would you like to have that kind of job?
4. Which is “easier”: taking care of someone in your family or taking care of someone as part of your job?
5. Do you think women are better at care-giving? Why?
6. In your culture, are you expected to take care of your parents when they are old? Are you expected to take care of needy people outside your family?
7. Have you taken care of people with long-term illnesses? If so, tell the group your experiences.
8. Have you taken care of people with special needs? What are some of the challenges and rewards?
9. In your opinion, what is “self-care”?
10. What do people do to care for themselves?
11. Is it ‘selfish’ to care for ourselves? Why or why not?
12. Do you have a word for ‘self-care’ in your language? Is this something that is familiar in your culture?
13. Are you good at caring for people? Are you good at caring for yourself?
14. When you are giving intensive care to another person, would it be easy to care for yourself at the same time? What tends to happen?
15. How do we avoid “burnout” in care-giving?
16. What negative feelings can come up in care-giving? What are some ways to deal with them?

Change* (Part I)

1. How have clothing fashions changed during your lifetime?
2. Do you dress differently than you did five years ago? How?
3. How have your looks changed in the last ten years?
4. What's your reaction to a woman changing her looks with make-up? Hair dye? Plastic surgery?
5. Can you name three important technological changes in your life?
6. What type of technology has helped the most people? Why?
7. Do you try and keep up with technological changes? What skills have you added in the last five years?
8. What social changes have happened in your native country in your lifetime?
9. What political changes have happened in your native country in your lifetime?
10. What is a custom or tradition that you would like to change in your native country? Why?
11. What social changes would you like to see in Canada?
12. What three political changes would you like to see in the world?
13. Has nature changed in the last 100 years? How?
14. Has human nature changed in the last 100 years? If so, how?
15. Do you know these proverbs? What do they mean? Which one(s) do you agree with most?
 - a. Don't change horses in midstream.
 - b. A leopard can't change its spots.
 - c. Change is in the air.
 - d. It's time for a change.
 - e. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
 - f. Old habits die hard.
 - g. Change for change's sake.
 - h. You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.
 - i. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

* Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

Change (Part II)

16. What important changes typically occur in a person's life when they are in their 20s, 40s and 60s?
17. In your opinion, which of these are most difficult to go through?
18. What do you think is the most important change that can occur in a person's life? (e.g. getting married, having a baby, etc.)
19. Do you like the change of seasons in a year? Why? Do you like weather changes?
20. Is it easy for you to change your eating habits? Why or why not?
21. Is it easy for you to change your sleeping habits? Why or why not?
22. What kind of changes would you like to see in your daily routine?
23. Do you move the furniture around in your house often? Why or why not?
24. How many times have you moved houses in your life? Do you think moving houses is a big change?
25. Do you have a motto in life? Has it changed?
26. What are some unpleasant changes in life? Have you experienced any of them?
27. What are some sudden, unexpected changes in life? What are some ways to deal with them?
28. Is moving to live in a different country a big change for you? In what ways?
29. If you were to go back to your home country to live, do you think you would return to life as it was before, as if you had not lived abroad? Why?
30. Is change constant in life?
31. Read these quotes on change. Do you agree with them? Which is your favourite?
 - a. "Change your thoughts and you change the world."—Norman Vincent Peale
 - b. "There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered."—Nelson Mandela
 - c. "Things do not change; we change."—Henry David Thoreau
 - d. "We did not change as we grew older; we just became more clearly ourselves."—Lynn Hall
 - e. "We must be the change we want to see in the world."—Gandhi

Chinese New Year

1. When is Chinese New Year this year? What year is the coming year?
2. Why is Chinese New Year called Spring Festival? What do you say to others when you see them on New Year's Day?
3. How long do the celebrations last?
4. Do you miss Spring Festival in your hometown? What do you miss most? Is it the time when you get most homesick? Why or why not?
5. What childhood memories of Spring Festival do you have?
6. What did you like most about the Festival as a child? As an adult?
7. What did/do you dislike most?
8. Are there celebrations in Toronto around the time of Chinese New Year? Where? What kind?
9. Would you go to some of these celebrations and do you think you'll enjoy them?
10. How will you celebrate with your friends and family here this year?
11. Let's talk about the traditions of Chinese New Year. There may be variations across different towns and provinces. Discuss the traditions in your area around these themes:

A. Food

- a) What kind of food is eaten in a typical family meal on New Year's Day and subsequently? What are the reasons and symbolism behind those foods?
- b) What kind of snacks or delicacies are served to your guests when they visit?
- c) The Candy Tray: what do you put in it?

B. Decorations

- a) How do you decorate your house?
- b) What kinds of plants and flowers are popular, and what do they symbolize?

C. Social customs

- a) What do you do during the 15 days of Chinese New Year celebrations?
- b) When do you pay visits to relatives and friends? Is there a particular order? Are there days that you must refrain from visiting?
- c) What gifts do you typically bring when you visit others' house? Does the host/hostess give anything back?
- d) What are your customs surrounding the red pockets? Is it an important part of the celebration? Do you think this is a good custom?

D. Other customs

- a) What do you do around house cleaning? What is the standard and how is this cleaning different from usual?
- b) What else must be "new"?

E. Taboos and superstitions

- a) Are there things we must not do during the time of the New Year? What are they? Why?
- b) What are some things we must not say? Any special word or phrases?

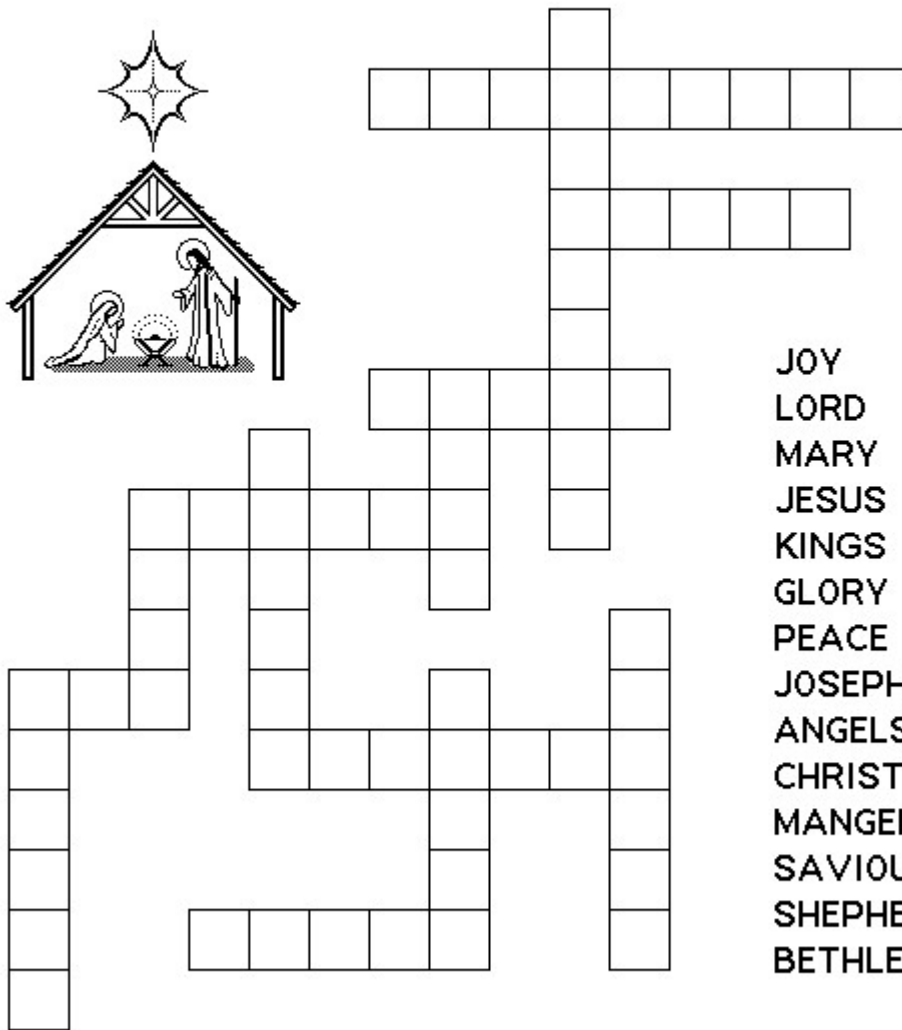
Christmas (Part I)

1. What signs of Christmas do you see right now around people's homes and in the shopping malls?
2. What do you observe people doing this time of the year?
3. Is it the same in your country? Is Christmas a holiday?
4. Do people celebrate Christmas in your country? If so, how?
5. What did you do at Christmas while you were in your country?
6. What do you know about Christmas traditions in Canada? Tell your group about the following:
 - a) Christmas shopping and gifts
 - b) Christmas dinner
 - c) Christmas decorations
 - d) Special Christmas food – gingerbread house; eggnog; fruitcake; Christmas cookies; candy canes etc.
 - e) Santa Claus
 - f) The nativity scene
7. Do you decorate your home for Christmas? Do you want to?
8. Have you ever had a Christmas tree in your home? Would you like to have one? How do we decorate a Christmas tree?
9. Do you write and send Christmas cards to your friends? How about e-cards or email greetings?
10. Talk about the following activities around Christmas. Which ones do you think are meaningful? Would you like to participate in some of them?
 - a) going to Christmas concerts
 - b) giving to charity – e.g. food banks
 - c) going to church
 - d) family reunion
 - e) Christmas party
 - f) Buying and receiving gifts
 - g) Sending Christmas greetings by mail, email, phone, etc.
11. What are some Christmas movies you have seen? Can you describe them?
12. What are some Christmas songs that you know?
13. Do the crossword puzzle on the next page. The words are from the Christmas story in the Bible. Do you know the story? Use some of these words to tell it. If not, ask your teacher to tell you the story.

Christmas Crossword

Make all the words fit into this crossword.

Each word is only used once.



JOY
LORD
MARY
JESUS
KINGS
GLORY
PEACE
JOSEPH
ANGELS
CHRIST
MANGER
SAVIOUR
SHEPHERDS
BETHLEHEM

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From <http://www.kidsdomain.com/holiday/xmas/word/cross2.gif> (accessed December 5, 2009)

Christmas (Part II)

1. What are you doing to celebrate Christmas this year?
2. What food will you eat on Christmas?
3. What are some common Christmas colours?
4. What are some Christmas symbols that you know?

Christmas Symbols

1. *Star*

- a) Why is the star a Christmas symbol?
 - b) Why is Light important at Christmas time?
- The Christmas star announced the birth of Christ
 - Many songs were written about it
 - The star appeared on many of the first Christmas cards in the 1840s
 - Stars were placed on the tops of Christmas trees

2. *Christmas Tree*

- a) Where do you often see Christmas trees?
 - b) Who has a Christmas tree in their home?
 - c) How do people decorate their Christmas trees?
- The Christmas Tree originated in Germany in the 16th century.
 - It was common for the Germanic people to decorate fir trees, both inside and out, with roses, apples, and coloured paper.
 - It is believed that Martin Luther was the first to light a Christmas tree with candles. While coming home one dark winter's night near Christmas, he was struck with the beauty of the starlight shining through the branches of a small fir tree outside his home. He duplicated the starlight by using candles attached to the branches of his indoor Christmas tree.
 - The Christmas tree was brought to America by the Pennsylvania Germans in the 1820s.

3. *Wreath*

- a) Where do you see wreaths?
 - b) How is the wreath a symbol of Christmas?
- Circular in shape – everlasting life, circle of family, God's unending love
 - Hangs on the door – "Welcome"
 - Made of evergreen – eternal life in Christ

4. *Poinsettias*

- a) Where have you seen this 'Christmas flower'?
 - b) What colour are they?
 - c) Have you bought one for your home?
- Poinsettias are native to Mexico.
 - They were named after America's first ambassador to Mexico, Joel Poinsett. He brought the plants to America in 1828. The Mexicans in the 18th century thought the plants were symbolic of the Star of Bethlehem. Thus the Poinsettia became associated with the Christmas season.

- The actual flower of the poinsettia is small and yellow. But surrounding the flower are large, bright red leaves, often mistaken for petals.

5. *Candy cane*

- Do you like candy canes?
 - What is the typical flavour of the candy cane?
- In the late 1800s a candy maker in Indiana wanted to express the meaning of Christmas through a symbol made of candy. He came up with the idea of bending one of his white candy sticks into the shape of a candy cane.
 - The plain white peppermint stick symbolizes the purity and sinless nature of Jesus.
 - The three small stripes he added symbolize the pain inflicted upon Jesus before His death on the cross. There are three of them to represent the Holy Trinity.
 - A bold stripe was added to represent the blood Christ shed for humankind.
 - The candy cane looks like a shepherd's staff because Jesus is the shepherd of humankind.
 - If you turn it upside down, it becomes the letter "J" symbolizing the first letter in Jesus' name.

6. *Christmas food*

- What Christmas food have you eaten?
 - What food do you like or dislike?
- Meats are traditionally an important part of the holidays, most notably turkey, ham, goose, and fish. Pastries are also very popular at Christmas.
 - Each family has their own Christmas food traditions, whether they be roasted turkey, stuffed sausage, plum pudding, sweet potatoes, or fruit cakes.
 - *Fruit cakes* – Fruitcake has been popular since the Romans mixed pomegranate seeds, pine nuts, and raisins into a barley mash. Later, during the medieval period, honey, dried fruits, and spices were added, and bread dough was sometimes substituted for the barley mash. In the 18th century, there were laws to restrict fruitcake to special celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, and weddings.
 - *Egg nog* – Eggnog was served during the Christmas and New Year's holiday season, and most often in a social setting. It was almost always made as an alcoholic drink, and in large quantities.

7. *St. Nicholas*

- Who is St. Nicholas and why is he a symbol of Christmas?
- There are many stories about this man who gave to the poor. It is said that he stopped storms at sea; he got grain to feed the hungry; and he performed miracles.
 - One story tells of how St. Nicholas dropped gold down a poor man's chimney. The gold fell into the stockings which were hung by the fireplace to dry.
 - The Feast of St. Nicholas is held every year in Bari (southern Italy) where he is buried. A statue of the saint is carried out to sea by boat. When the boats return to shore much celebrating takes place.



Christmas (Part III)

What do you know about the story of Jesus' birth? Can you tell part of the story by using these words or phrases?

- a) Bethlehem
- b) No room at the inn
- c) Mary and Joseph
- d) The shepherds
- e) Angels
- f) Three wise men, the star

Let's read about the birth of Jesus from the Bible.

Luke 2:1-20 (*New International Reader's Version: NIRV*)

¹ In those days, Caesar Augustus made a law. It required that a list be made of everyone in the whole Roman world. ² It was the first time a list was made of the people while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be listed.

⁴ So Joseph went also. He went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea. That is where Bethlehem, the town of David, was. Joseph went there because he belonged to the family line of David.

⁵ He went there with Mary to be listed. Mary was engaged to him. She was expecting a baby.

⁶ While Joseph and Mary were there, the time came for the child to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her first baby. It was a boy. She wrapped him in large strips of cloth. Then she placed him in a manger. There was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby. It was night, and they were looking after their sheep. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them. And the glory of the Lord shone around them. They were terrified.

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy. It is for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. ¹² Here is how you will know I am telling you the truth. You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a large group of angels from heaven also appeared. They were praising God. They said,

¹⁴ "May glory be given to God in the highest heaven!
And may peace be given to those he is pleased with on earth!"

¹⁵ The angels left and went into heaven. Then the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby. The baby was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After the shepherds had seen him, they told everyone. They reported what the angel had said about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things like a secret treasure in her heart. She thought about them over and over.

²⁰ The shepherds returned. They gave glory and praise to God. Everything they had seen and heard was just as they had been told.

Based on what you read, discuss these questions:

1. Are there any words that you don't understand in the story?
2. Who is Caesar Augustus? What did he order?
3. Where did Joseph travel for the census?
4. What family did Joseph belong to?
5. Who traveled with Joseph?
6. Describe what you think their journey would have been like? Would you like to make a similar trip?
7. What happened to Mary and Joseph once they arrived?
8. In verse 8 shepherds are introduced. What is their job?
9. Who appeared to the shepherds in the field?
10. Is this believable? Do you think this actually took place? Why or why not?
11. What message did the angels bring to those in the fields?
12. Why is the birth of Jesus good news and why did the angels tell the shepherds not to be afraid?
13. Where did the shepherds go after the angels left and what did they find when they arrived?
14. Why did Jesus come as a little baby, being born in humble place?
15. What parts of the Christmas story takes faith to believe that they actually took place? (eg. virgin birth, angels, etc.)
16. Why do we celebrate Christmas according to this story?

Clothes and Fashion

1. About how much money do you spend on clothes a year?
2. Do you like shopping for new clothes?
3. What piece of clothing do you spend your money on the most? Why?
4. Do you think it is important to wear fashionable clothes?
5. Do you wear jewelry? What kind? when?
6. Do you wear the same size clothes this year as you wore last year? Do you think people feel different when they wear different clothes?
7. Have you ever made your own clothes? What did you make?
8. What are some of the strangest fashions you have seen? What colours do you think look good on you?
9. Do you think high heel shoes are bad for a person's health?
10. What fashions that you see today do you think will be out of fashion within two years? Who in your group has the biggest feet? Do you ever have trouble buying shoes?
11. Do you like to get dressed up? How often do you get dressed up?
12. Is it possible to be beautiful without wearing any make-up, earrings or other accessories?
13. Look at what you are wearing right now. Do you have any stories about anything you are wearing?
14. Are there any articles of clothing that women in Canada wear that are not appropriate in your country?

College and University

1. What kind of professor do you like?
2. Do you think it is important for university students to participate in *extracurricular activities*? (like sports, clubs, etc.)
3. What would you say if your 17-year-old child told you he or she didn't want to go to university or college?
4. What is the most important thing you learned in college or university?
5. If you could do your university studies again, what would you do differently?
6. Do you remember your favourite class in university?
7. What do you think is the reason people drop out of college or university?
8. Did you have to pay a lot to go to your college or university? Do you know how much it costs to study the same program here in Canada?
9. Canadian citizens pay for less than half of their college or university education. The government pays the rest. Do you think this is good or bad? Why?
10. What are 2 of the best universities in your country? Do you know 2 in Canada that have a good *reputation*?
11. Should university students have freedom to choose their own courses or is it better if the university chooses some for them? Why do you think so?
12. Did you always attend your classes in college or university?
13. Did you like taking classes in the morning, afternoon or the evening at university? Why?
14. Is there anything parents can do to help their children prepare for university?
15. What is the difference between 'college' and 'university' in Canada?
16. Which do you prefer to go to, college or university, if you were to attend one of them here? Which would you like your children to go to? Why?
17. In your opinion, what is the most important purpose of university education? Would it be to prepare young people for a career, to train them to think, to enhance their social skills, or other purposes?

Colours

1. Can you name the colours of the rainbow? Have you seen a rainbow?
2. Do you know these colour words? Can you find something in the room with these colours?
a) Beige b) magenta c) turquoise d) violet e) crimson f) amber
3. What is your favourite colour? Why?
4. Have your favourite colours changed with your age? If they have, what does this tell you about the different stages of your life?
5. Do you have a colour that you hate? Why?
6. Do you know anyone who is colour-blind?
7. Do people always agree on and name a colour the same way? For example, what appears to me as “blue” might appear to be “green” in another person’s eyes. Why do people “see” colours differently?
8. Was there ever a black-and-white TV in your home? When?
9. Have you watched black-and-white movies? In English? In your language?
10. Why do people sometimes prefer black-and-white pictures to colour pictures?
11. When is colour most important to you: in deciding what to wear, in cooking, in decorating, or anything else?
12. When are you most aware of the colours in nature?
13. In your opinion, what emotions are associated with these colours?
a) red b) white c) blue d) black e) orange f) purple
14. Do you dream in colour?
15. Do you think animals see colour?
16. Do you know the underlined idioms in the sentences below?
 - a) The woman was caught red-handed when she tried to steal some cosmetics.
 - b) The man realized that the grass is greener on the other side when he saw that his new job had many problems too.
 - c) Many businesses complain about the red tape that they must deal with in order to get anything done with the government.
 - d) The new airport is a white elephant and nobody wants to use it.
 - e) My friend passed the course with flying colours and she now wants to go out and celebrate.
 - f) The man is the black sheep in his family and has not made a success of his life.

Comparisons

Complete these common idioms of comparison with the appropriate adjective. Do you have similar expressions in your language?

quick	old	sick	quiet	light
slow	busy	cute	blind	weak

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. As _____ as a feather | 6. As _____ as a mouse |
| 2. As _____ as a beaver | 7. As _____ as a bat |
| 3. As _____ as a button | 8. As _____ as a dog |
| 4. As _____ as molasses | 9. As _____ as a kitten |
| 5. As _____ as a wink | 10. As _____ as the hills |

Explain these Chinese idioms to your teacher. What are the 'hidden' meanings? Why are the comparisons used in each case?

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1. 外國的月亮特別圓 | The moon is fullest in a foreign land. |
| 2. 君子之交淡如水 | The friendships between great people are as plain as water. |
| 3. 巧婦難為無米炊 | Even the clever wife will be stuck if the rice runs out. |
| 4. 夏蟲不可語冰 | Insects of the summer should not speak of ice. |
| 5. 醉翁之意不在酒 | The heart of a drunken old man is not on the wine. |
| 6. 臥虎藏龍 | Crouching tiger, hidden dragon. |
| 7. 唇亡齒寒 | If the lips die, the teeth will be cold. |
| 8. 上樑不正下樑歪 | If the upper beam is slanted, the lower beam will be also. |
| 9. 對牛彈琴 | Playing the zither in front of a cow. |
| 10. 弦外之音 | The musical note outside of the string |

Can you think of more Chinese idioms like these?

Do you think metaphors are natural and indispensable to human language and thinking?

Crime and Punishment

1. What do you consider minor crimes?
2. What are some terrible crimes?
3. What are some things that are illegal in your country but legal in Canada?
4. What crimes are commonly punished for a fine?
5. What crimes lead to jail terms?
6. What is capital punishment? Is it enforced in your country? If so, how and for what crimes?
7. Do you agree with capital punishment?
8. Do you feel safer where you live now than in your hometown? Why or why not?
9. Have you ever witnessed a crime? What happened? Did you call the police?
10. Do you know anyone who have been robbed, scammed or burglarized?
11. Do you know any friends in law enforcement? What do they do?
12. What neighbourhoods in Toronto are known for high crime rates?
13. Would you feel safe going to those neighbourhoods?
14. What do you think about these two quotes on “punishment”?
 - a) It is not the severity of punishment that acts as a deterrent. It is its inevitability.
~John Endsley
 - b) Distrust all in whom the impulse to punish is powerful. ~ Friedrich Nietzsche
15. Read the following story. What is the “punishment” for the man? Do you think he will learn his lesson?

Once there was a man who was such a golf addict that he was neglecting his job. Frequently he would call in sick as an excuse to play.

One morning, after making his usual call to the office, an angel up above spotted him on the way to the golf course and decided to teach him a lesson. "If you play golf today, you will be punished," the angel whispered in his ear.

Thinking it was only his conscience, which he had successfully whipped in the past, the fellow just smiled. "No," he said, "I've been doing this for years. No one will ever know. I won't be punished."

The angel said no more and the fellow stepped up to the first tee where he promptly whacked the ball 300 yards straight down the middle of the fairway. Since he had never driven the ball more than 200 yards, he couldn't believe it. Yet, there it was. And his luck continued. Long drives on every hole, perfect putting. By the ninth hole he was six under par and was playing near-perfect golf. The fellow was walking on air. He wound up with an amazing 61, about 30 strokes under his usual game. Wait until he got back to the office and told them about this! But, suddenly, his face fell. He couldn't tell them. He could never tell anyone. The angel smiled.

(From <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/p/punishment.htm> accessed October 18, 2009)

Culture

1. What do you think is interesting about your culture?
2. In your culture is it polite to be direct when you talk to someone? To whom is it OK and to whom is it not OK?
3. What has surprised you when you've met people from other countries?
4. How do young people in your culture behave differently from older people?
5. Do young people in your country behave the same way as young people in Canada?
6. Are there many people of different cultures in your country?
7. Have you ever felt confused by the actions of someone in Canada? What happened?
8. If you could change one thing about your culture, what would it be?
9. What aspects of Canadian culture do you admire?
10. If you could change one thing about Canadian culture, what would it be?
11. What is good about being in and learning about another culture that is not your own?
12. What does it mean to be "bi-cultural"? Is it possible? Is it desirable?
13. In your country, is it OK for people from different cultures to marry?
14. In your opinion, what is good and not so good about inter-cultural marriages?
15. Is there anything in Canadian culture that is considered rude that is not rude in your culture?
16. If a group of people just came to your country from overseas, what advice would you give them?
17. Do you think "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" is always good advice? Why or why not?
18. Read the following short dialogue. If you were Yang, what would you say next to Susan, who is a Canadian?

Susan: Yang, it's good to see you again. How do you like your new job?

Yang: It's a very nice place to work. I'm very happy.

Susan: We miss you.

Yang: How's everything at B&G?

Susan: You know, the usual. Aren't you glad you left?

Yang: _____

Directions

1. Do you have a good sense of direction? Do you get lost easily?
2. If you lose your way, do you usually ask people for directions?
3. Are people friendly when you ask for directions? Is there a difference in Canada and in your country?
4. What do you do when you want to find your way:
 - a) in a mall
 - b) out of a subway station
 - c) when walking on the street
 - d) when driving?
5. Are you good at using maps?
6. Are you a good navigator?
7. Have you ever used a compass? When? Tell us about the experiences.
8. When you are trying to locate a place you haven't been before, do you rely on a map, landmarks, or a sense of intuition?
9. What helps to improve one's sense of direction?
10. How good are you at explaining directions and drawing a map for others? Have others followed your directions and got lost?
11. Have you gone on a highway which is the opposite direction of where you want to go? What did you do?
12. What does GPS stand for? Do you possess one? If so, talk about the experience of using it.
13. Would you recommend using a GPS? Will it replace map reading eventually?
14. Whose directions do we follow in life? What do we do when we "lose our way" in life?
15. What is a detour? Have you encountered detours in driving or travelling on a bus?
16. What would be a "detour" in life? How do we find our way back to the main route or the right path?

Disaster

1. The following words refer to different natural disasters. Do you know all of them?
 - a) Flood
 - b) Earthquake
 - c) Volcano
 - d) Tornado
 - e) Hurricane
 - f) Typhoon
 - g) Cyclone
 - h) Drought
 - i) Blizzard
 - j) Tsunami
 - k) Avalanche
2. Which of these have you experienced personally? Tell your story. Were you in danger?
3. Which of these have affected people you know?
4. Which sometimes happen in Canada?
5. Which are common in the country you are from?
6. What disasters have you heard in the news recently?
7. What can you do to prepare in advance for a disaster?
8. How much warning time do people normally have to prepare for typhoons, hurricanes, and earthquakes?
9. How much warning time do people normally have for tsunamis?
10. What sorts of preparations would you make if a tsunami was going to hit your area?
11. Why do people leave when a typhoon is coming?
12. What has your family done in the past to prepare for a disaster?
13. Do you have extra food and water in your house?
14. Do you have an electric generator in your house?
15. What are some essential things you would need in your house in order to be prepared for a disaster?
16. What things should every Canadian have in their car to prepare them for emergencies?
17. Do you know where the evacuation area is in your neighbourhood?
18. Where are some safe places to be in your house?
19. What are some things you should do as soon as possible? For example, watch TV, check gas and water.

Do You Match?*

1. Are you married? If so, is your spouse in this country?
2. If you are single, do you want to get married? How soon?
3. Why do (did) you want to get married (if you do/did)?
4. Do (did) you have a checklist of qualities for a potential spouse?
5. What are the three main qualifications on your checklist? Partner? Provider? Lover? Friend?
6. When did you fall in love? Did one person fall first? Who?
7. How did you know your lover was the one? How did your thinking evolve?
8. Did you ever have moments of doubt? How did you resolve them?
9. Do you think people should live together before they get married? Why? Can you share some examples?
10. Are sex, love and marriage linked in your mind, or is each separate? How are they different?
11. What are some endearing qualities of your companion?
12. Do you like your partner's friends? Do you respect them? Why?
13. What advice have your parents and close friends given you? Your extended family? How important is their opinion in your decision? Why?
14. Do you think you are marrying only an individual or are you also marrying your spouse's family? How would you describe your (potential) in-laws?
15. What does your partner do that annoys you?
16. Do you expect to be the pilot, co-pilot, or passenger in the marriage? Why?
17. What are the benefits of being single? What are the benefits of being married?
18. Do you have children? How many?
19. How important are children in a marriage?
20. Do you think marriages go through different stages or seasons? How?
21. What do you think are the secrets of a lasting and fulfilling marriage?

* Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

Doctors and Medicine

1. Do you know what kind of doctors are referred to in the following? Have you visited them?
 - a) Ophthalmologist
 - b) Optometrist
 - c) General Practitioner (GP)
 - d) OB/GYN (obstetrician-gynecologist)
 - e) Pediatrician
 - f) Gerontologist
 - g) Cardiologist
 - h) Psychiatrist
 - i) Dermatologist
 - j) Oncologist
 - k) Neurologist
 - l) Dentist
 - m) Orthodontist
2. Do you have a family doctor? If not, where do you go for help when you are sick?
3. How long in your experience do you often have to wait in a doctor's office?
4. What procedures did you follow in your country when you needed to see a doctor? Did you have to make appointments?
5. When you were a child, were you often sick? Could you share any experience of going to the doctor as a child?
6. When you were a child, were you afraid of taking medicine? What helped you do so?
7. Did you ever aspire to become a doctor? Why or why not?
8. What qualities do you think a good doctor should have?
9. Have you met doctors who possess these qualities? Have you met doctors who don't?
10. Can every disease be cured by medicine? What are some alternative ways of treating illnesses?
11. What treatments are popular in your native country apart from medicine?
12. What are the risks of surgery? What do we have to know before undergoing a surgery?
13. Whose opinion will you ask for if you have to make major medical decisions?
14. What are some reliable sources of up-to-date medical information?
15. Do you know what a "Power of Attorney" is? When will a hospital need to see one?
16. Do you think Ontario has a good healthcare system? Why or why not?
17. What is the healthcare system like in your country? Do you have to pay for doctor consultations, medicine, or hospital stays?
18. Can you use your own words to explain these phrases? Can you give an example of each?
 - a) Chronic disease
 - b) Life-threatening illness
 - c) Terminal illness
 - d) Hereditary disease
 - e) Contagious disease

Driving Cars^{*}

1. Do you have a driver's licence? When did you get it?
2. Where did you take your driving test? How many times did you take it?
3. When did you first learn to drive? What did you find most difficult when you were learning to drive?
4. Did you drive a car in your own country? How was driving different in your country?
5. If you don't drive now, would you like to drive some day? Did you have driving lessons?
6. What expenses are associated with owning and driving a car?
7. Where do you usually drive? Do you drive during rush hour? Off-hours?
8. Do you drive to school or work? How long is your commute? How is the traffic?
9. What is the age requirement to legally drive in your native country?
10. Do your parents drive? When did they get their first car? Do you remember it?
11. When did you get your first car? Can you describe it?
12. How old do you think one should be to drive? Why?
13. Have you ever bought a car? How did you choose it?
14. What suggestions do you have for buying a used car?
15. Do you enjoy driving? How do you feel when you drive? Relaxed? Nervous?
16. How can you tell if somebody is a good driver? Are you one?
17. Have you ever gotten a traffic ticket? How did it happen?
18. Do you prefer driving on side streets, main roads, or the highway? What are your reasons?
19. Have you ever been involved in a car accident? What happened?
20. What tips for safe driving can you share?
21. What is the longest distance you have ever driven? Were you the only driver?
22. How often do you get a ride from others? Who would you ask for a ride? Is it generally easy to ask someone for a ride?
23. Discuss the following idioms in bold. What do you think they mean?
 - a) My neighbours are **driving me up the wall** with their loud music.
 - b) One day I will have my own business, but that's a long way **down the road**.
 - c) Most of the music they play is pretty **middle-of-the-road**.
 - d) We will have to give up on this project, it's reached **the end of the road**.

^{*} Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

Easter (Part I)

1. Is there a word for 'Easter' in your language? What does it mean?¹
2. Do you celebrate Easter in your country? Are there other festivals that are celebrated around the same time in your country?
3. **Do you know what happened on Easter Day?** Read the following to find out. (from <http://christiananswers.net/godstory/eternity1.html>)

Background: After Jesus died on the cross, two believers took Jesus' body, wound it in linen grave clothes dipped in spices, and laid His body in a tomb. Then, as requested by the Jewish leaders, the tomb was sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers.

Now, after three days, there was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the tomb's door. In fright, the Roman soldiers trembled and then ran away. When followers of Jesus came to the tomb and saw the stone moved, they were confused.

Suddenly, two men stood by them in shining garments, saying, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen. Remember how He told you before that He must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again?"

Then they remembered His words.

- a) Would you say this was a supernatural event?
- b) How did Jesus' followers feel when they saw that the tomb was empty? If you were one of them, how would you feel?
- c) What words of Jesus' did they remember? How did this help them in that situation?

4. Read the following quote.

"The story of God's self-sacrifice ... is the story with a cross at its center but not at its end: its plot moves toward the upsetting of all things, the Great Reversal in which the dead Jesus was raised from the tomb, and along with him our hope that death be swallowed up by life eternal." (Donald McCullough, *The Wisdom of Pelicans*)

Do you understand the quote? How does the next reading help us to understand more?

5. What do Christians believe about Easter?

⁶ We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. ⁸ And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. ⁹ We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. ¹⁰ When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. ¹¹ So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:6-11; NLT)

- a) According to this passage, what happens when we "die with Christ"? (v. 7)
- b) How can we be sure that we who die with Christ will also live with Him? (v. 9)
- c) What does it mean when Christians say they 'put their trust in Jesus who died and rose for us'?
- d) Does that make sense to you? Is that something you have ever thought about doing?

¹ See <http://www.religioustolerance.org/easter7.htm> for a list of 'names of Easter in various languages' (accessed March 22, 2009).

Easter (Part II)

- 1) What are some symbols of Easter that symbolize new life?
- 2) What do you remember from the previous lessons about the Easter story? Try re-tell the story using these terms:
Cross, mocked, beaten, third day, angels, empty tomb
- 3) Where do you think the resurrected Jesus is now?

What else happened on Easter Day?

The same day in the evening, Jesus came to the disciples and stood among them and said, “Peace to you.”

But they were terrified, thinking that they were seeing a spirit.

So He said, “Look at my hands and my feet, it is really Me. Touch me and see, for a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, like you see I have. Everything happened as I told you it would because all the writings that described me in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, had to be fulfilled.”

Then He opened their understanding, saying, “It is written in the Scriptures that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. And you have seen these things.”*

- 1) How did the disciples feel when they saw Jesus? Why?
- 2) What did Jesus show them?
- 3) If you were one of the disciples, would you believe Jesus?
- 4) What is “new” about this appearance of Jesus?
- 5) Read the following quotes. How do they relate to the reading above?
 - a) “The man in Christ rose again, not only the God. That is the whole point.” (C. S. Lewis)
 - b) “The resurrection is God's way of revealing to us that nothing that belongs to God will ever go to waste. What belongs to God will never get lost—not even our mortal bodies.” (Henri J.M. Nouwen)
 - c) “Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17; NLT)
 - d) “The resurrection gives my life meaning and direction and the opportunity to start over no matter what my circumstances.” (Robert Flatt)
- 6) What does it mean when Christians say they ‘put their trust in Jesus who died and rose for us’?
- 7) Does that make sense to you? Is that something you have ever thought about doing?
- 8) How might someone do that?

One way of doing it is to talk to God and say:

Dear Lord Jesus, Thank you for going to the Cross and dying for my sins. Thank you that you rose to life again so that we can have new life. I am sorry for my sins, and I want to trust in you for the rest of my life. Please help me to do so. Amen.

* (from <http://christiananswers.net/godstory/eternity1.html>)

Idioms to do with “change” and new beginnings

(<http://www.english-at-home.com/idioms/idioms-of-change/>; 03-26-09)

like a breath of fresh air = someone or something who has new, fresh ideas or behaviour

shake things up (a shake up) = to change things a lot

give something a new lease of life = to renew something so that it lasts longer

breathe new life into = to give new energy to something

get a fresh perspective = to get a different point of view

go back to the drawing board = to have to start again because something didn't work

start with a clean sheet = to have another chance, perhaps because you have made serious mistakes

make a fresh start / make a clean break = to start something again

Choose the correct idiom from the list and fill in the blanks:

1. After working for the old boss for 20 years, the new boss seems like _____.
2. Let's put the problems behind us and _____.
3. He's paid for his mistakes, and now he can _____.
4. Let's ask the sales department for their opinion. They can bring us _____.
5. This sports club needs to increase its members to _____ our finances.
6. Those tablets have given our pet dog _____.
7. Conflicts in a marriage often _____ a lot, but they can be good if handled properly.
8. Unfortunately the plans didn't work out. We'll have to _____.

Preparing for Easter (1) – Easter Symbols

1. What do you see in the malls and shops around Easter time?
2. What are some symbols of Easter?
3. Why do you think they become symbols of Easter? What do they signify?
4. The butterfly is one of the symbols of Easter. What do you know about the life of a butterfly?
5. Study the diagram. What is amazing about the life of a butterfly?



6. Read the following excerpt:

“Are caterpillars told of their impending resurrection? How in dying they will be transformed from poor earth-crawlers into creatures of the air, with exquisitely painted wings?” (Malcolm Muggeridge, “Impending Resurrection”)

New words:

- a) In this diagram, what does “resurrection” mean?
- b) What is the closest experience you’ve had seeing another person “come back to life”, from a state of unconsciousness?
- c) How have you seen a wasted and useless life become useful again? What made the person change?
- d) What do you know about Jesus and His Resurrection in the Bible?
- e) Notice that the caterpillar “dies” to become a butterfly. How is this similar to “The Phoenix” below?

The Phoenix

The phoenix is a mythical bird. It lived for 500 years between rejuvenations. Every 500 years, it created a nest for itself made of spices and herbs, sat on it and set itself on fire. When the fire died down, an egg would be found among the ashes from which the phoenix would hatch. Thus the phoenix lived on and did not die. (adapted from <http://users.netnitco.net/~legend01/cassym.htm>; 03-22-09)

Glossary

Mythical – exists in myth or legend, not real

Rejuvenations – becoming young again

Ashes – the powdery substance left after something has burnt

Hatch -- to bring a bird's eggs to life by sitting on them

Education

1. What was your favourite subject in school?
2. Who selects the college you will attend -- you or your parents?
3. How much free time does a high school student in your country have?
4. Do parents home-school their children in your country? What do you think of home schooling? Do you know anyone who was home-schooled?
5. Do you think that most parents decide what university their child will attend?
6. What are some ways a person can continue to learn?
7. Does education guarantee a good job? Which is more important, the essential skills in life you've learned to develop on your own or the artificial structure in college about the "real" life?
8. Which high schools and colleges are the best in your country?
9. We should not just prepare for life, but live it. Do you agree?
10. What kind of world do you think this would be if people never went to school?
11. Should education be free?
12. What do these quotes mean? Do you agree with them?
 - a) "Education is when you read the fine print. Experience is what you get if you don't." (Pete Seeger)
 - b) "It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows." (Epictetus)
 - c) "You learn to speak by speaking, to study by studying, to run by running, to work by working; and just so, you learn to love by loving. All those who think to learn in any other way deceive themselves." (Saint Francis de Sales)

Entertainment and Hobbies

1. What did you watch on TV yesterday?
2. What is one of your favourite TV shows? Why do you like it? When is it on?
3. Do you listen to classical music? Why or why not?
4. Have you ever been to a play? If so, when was the last time?
5. Have you ever been to Disneyland? Tell me about it.
6. Have you ever been to the theater? Tell me about it.
7. Have you ever hosted a party? Tell me about it.
8. Have you ever tried skiing or water skiing? Tell me about it.
9. How far in advance do you begin planning a vacation?
10. How often do you visit museums? When was the last time?
11. What are some games that you don't like to play? Why?
12. What are some good books that you have read?
13. What is the best book you have ever read? Where do you usually read?
14. What are some things you can do without spending a cent?
15. What do you do in your spare time?
16. What games are popular in your country? Why are they popular?
17. Describe some traditional games from your country. Can you teach me how to play?
18. What is your favourite holiday? Why?
19. What kind of music do you like?
20. What kind of things do you like to read?
21. What's the most popular holiday in your country? When is it? How is it celebrated? What holidays have you celebrated in Canada? What do you know about them?

Environment

1. Do you always recycle? Be honest!
2. How many bags of garbage do you throw out in a week?
3. How often is garbage collected in your neighbourhood in Toronto?
4. What do you think about the Green Bin program in Toronto?
5. If the government decided to put in more subway lines, where would you suggest they go?
6. How often do you wear sunscreen? Do you put it on your children every day? Why or why not?
7. Which is more important: a good standard of living, or protecting the environment?
8. Who do you think is more responsible for pollution, individual people or the government? Explain.
9. Do you know about any anti-pollution programs in your community? What about programs in your native country?
10. Do you usually drink bottled water? Why or Why not?
11. How often do you buy organic food? Why?
12. What types of energy are popular in your native country?
13. Do you think overpopulation is an important environmental issue? Why or why not?
14. Should gas for cars be more expensive? Why or why not?
15. Many people think we should send our garbage into space. What do you think?
16. Match the words in the left column with those in the right. Do you know the meaning of each of these phrases? Which of these present the greatest threat to the environment, in your opinion?

non-renewable	species
nuclear	warming
ozone	fumes
endangered	energy
ecological	waste
global	crisis
exhaust	layer

Exchange

1. What is the current exchange rate between the currency of your native country and Canadian currency? How does it compare with a week ago, a month ago, a year ago?
2. In what ways does the exchange rate affect you personally?
3. Have you ever taken goods back to a store for an exchange? If so, how often?
4. What are some reasons for exchanging merchandise?
5. Do you prefer a refund or an exchange? Why?
6. What are some usual conditions for an exchange of merchandise?
7. Are you familiar with the idea of “gift exchange”? When do people do it?
8. Do you like exchanging gifts?
9. Have you ever been in a situation where you wish you could go through someone else’s experience for him/her? Tell us about it.
10. Read the following story. How is God like the boy’s father?

The small boy had been consistently late for dinner. One particular day his parents had warned him to be on time, but he arrived later than ever. He found his parents already seated at the table, about to start eating. Quickly he sat at his place, then noticed what was set before him--a slice of bread and a glass of water. There was silence as he sat staring at his plate, crushed. Suddenly he saw his father's hand reach over, pick up his plate and set it before himself. Then his dad put his own full plate in front of his son, smiling warmly as he made the exchange. When the boy became a man, he said, "All my life I've known what God was like by what my father did that night." (*Homemade*, May, 1989; from <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/s/substitution.htm>)

11. Discuss the following quotes about Exchange. Which one do you like best?
 - a) All the gold which is under or upon the earth is not enough to give in exchange for virtue. ~Plato
 - b) Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; an argument an exchange of ignorance. ~Robert Quillen
 - c) Because it appears to me a hazardous thing to exchange my soul for my shadow. ~Adelbert von Chamisso

Fame

1. Would you like to be famous?
2. Who is the most famous person in your country today?
3. Do you know what infamous means? Who is the most infamous person in your country today?
4. What would you like to be famous for doing?
5. Do you think movie stars' lives are interesting?
6. Why do you think people are interested in the lives of movie stars?
7. Do you like to know what is happening in the lives of the leaders of your country?
8. Many people think that Princess Diana would still be alive today if she weren't trying to get away from curious photographers. What do you think?
9. Do you know who these famous Canadians are:
 - a) Terry Fox
 - b) *Ben Johnson*
 - c) James Naismith
 - d) Norman Bethune
 - e) Alexander Graham Bell
 - f) Lucy Maude Montgomery
10. Is there a famous person that you'd like to be like?
11. Who do you think was the most famous person in the history of the world?
12. What do you think it is like to be the daughter of the president of the United States?
13. Read the little story below. Do you agree with Cato?

Cato the Elder, on observing statues being set up in honor of others, remarked: "I would rather have people ask 'Why isn't there a statue to Cato?' than 'Why is there one?'"

(Thomas Masson, *The Best Stories in the World*. From <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/f/fame.htm>)

14. Read the following quotes on Fame. Which one do you like best?
 - a) "Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, and riches take wings. Only one thing endures and that is character." ~ Horace Greeley
 - b) "It is strange to be known so universally and yet to be so lonely." ~ Albert Einstein
 - c) "Fame is a bee. / It has a song / It has a sting / Ah, too, it has a wing." ~ Emily Dickinson

Fire

1. When you were small, what were you told about fire?
2. How old were you when you first lighted a match?
3. Did you use or see 'real fire' in cooking in your home country?
4. Have you ever burnt anything in your home and caused a small 'fire'?
5. Do you have candles at home? What do you associate candles with?
6. Is fire essential to humankind? Can we live without fire? Why?
7. Can we touch fire? What happens when we do? Have you tried to touch it as a child?
8. What does the Olympic torch symbolize?
9. What idioms can you think of in your language that have to do with fire?
10. Have you seen or experienced a fire? A forest fire? If so, tell us about it.
11. What are easily destroyed by fire? What cannot be destroyed by fire?
12. Read the following two stories about a burning tree. Then answer the questions that follow.

A Story of Fire

Many, many years ago people did not have warm, cosy houses like ours to live in. They lived in caves where it was both dark and cold. Once when a great storm was raging a tree was struck by lightning and the flash set it on fire. It happened to fall near a cave where some of the cave people were hiding. They were frightened at first and huddled in a group. After the storm was over they ventured out to look at the burning tree. One of them took a burning branch and brought it into the cave. They discovered that it made the cave both warm and light. They wanted the fire to keep on burning so they fed it with sticks and dry leaves. From this time on fire became a great blessing to man. (By Ida Wolchok, from <http://bookofshortstories.com/stories/the-story-of-fire.htm>)

Moses and the Burning Bush

Moses was taking care of the flock of his father-in-law Jethro. Jethro was the priest of Midian. Moses led the flock to the western side of the desert. He came to Horeb. It was the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him from inside a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire. But it didn't burn up. So Moses thought, "I'll go over and see this strange sight. Why doesn't the bush burn up?" The Lord saw that Moses had gone over to look. So God spoke to him from inside the bush. He called out, "Moses! Moses!" "Here I am," Moses said. "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals. The place you are standing on is holy ground." He continued, "I am the God of your father. I am the God of Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. And I am the God of Jacob." When Moses heard that, he turned his face away. He was afraid to look at God. (*The Bible*, Exodus 3:1-6)

- a) How are the stories similar? How are their endings different?
- b) What is fire a symbol of in the first story? In the second story?
- c) How did the people in the first story feel? How did Moses feel? Why?
- d) Which story do you like better? Why?

Flowers and Plants

1. What is the national flower of your country? What is the national flower of Ontario?
2. What flowers are common in your hometown? When do you see them?
3. In general, do you see more or fewer flowers in Toronto than in your hometown?
4. Do you know any beautiful gardens in Toronto or nearby? Which ones have you been to?
5. Do you like cut flowers? Do you buy them for your home? If so, how often?
6. Do you have a favourite flower? What is it?
7. Which occasions or festivals would you buy flowers for in your hometown? In Canada?
8. Have you ever received flowers from someone special? Talk about it.
9. Do you like wild flowers? Why or why not?
10. Have you visited greenhouses before? What flowers or plants can you find in them? Where are some greenhouses in Toronto?
11. Do you have plants in your home? Are you good at taking care of them?
12. Have you had other people take care of your plants? Did they do a good job?
13. Why do people like to have plants or flowers in their home?
14. Do children like plants or flowers? Why?
15. What do you think about artificial flowers? What material are they made of?
16. Do you display artificial floral designs in your home? Why or why not?
17. Do you know how to make dried flowers or pressed flowers? Can you tell us how?
18. Are you good at arranging flowers? Are there particular styles that you like?
19. What are bonsai? Do you like them?
20. Here are some expressions related to flowers and plants. Do you know what they mean? Can you guess?
 - a) You reap what you sow.
 - b) The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.
 - c) She really has a green thumb.
 - d) You should nip that in the bud.

Free Time and Hobbies

1. Do you have enough free time?
2. Do you have free time on Sundays?
3. Do you have much free time during the day?
4. Do you have much free time in the evenings?
5. Do you have much free time in the mornings?
6. What do you like to do in your free time?
7. What are you doing this weekend?
8. What did you do last weekend?
9. Where do you spend your free time?
10. Who do you spend your free time with?
11. Look at the list of leisure activities below. Which ones do you like best? Which ones do you not like?
 - going shopping
 - going to the cinema
 - chatting
 - playing computer games
 - playing sports
 - reading
 - relaxing
12. Do you have a hobby?
13. Why do you choose this hobby?
14. How long have you had your hobby?
15. Which hobbies are the most popular in your country?
16. Read the following quotes on leisure. Which one(s) do you agree with? Which one do you like most?
 - a) We give up leisure in order that we may have leisure, just as we go to war in order that we may have peace. ~Aristotle
 - b) It is in his pleasure that a man really lives; it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self. ~Agnes Repplier
 - c) The real problem of leisure time is how to keep others from using yours. ~Arthur Lacey
 - d) If you are losing your leisure, look out; you may be losing your soul. ~Logan P. Smith

Friendship

1. Are there any famous stories of friendship in your culture? Describe them.
2. Describe one of your closest friends. How did you meet?
3. Do you have any childhood friendships that are still strong today?
4. Do you have any long distance friends? How do you keep in touch with your long-distance friends?
How often do you see your long-distance friends?
5. Do you think it is a good idea to borrow money from a friend? Why or why not?
6. Do you make friends easily? Has a friend ever let you down (disappointed you)?
7. Have you ever been betrayed by a friend?
8. How many people do you consider your "best friends?" Why are they your best friends?
9. What life lessons have you learned from your good friends?
10. Should parents be involved in choosing their children's friends? If you have children, are you happy with your child's choice of friends?
11. Is there anything you would NEVER do for a friend?
12. Which definition of "a friend" below do you like best?
 - a) "One who multiplies joys, divides grief, and whose honesty is inviolable."
 - b) "One who understands our silence."
 - c) "A volume of sympathy bound in cloth."
 - d) "A watch that beats true for all time and never runs down."
 - e) "A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."
13. What is your own definition of a friend? Think for a few minutes and write it down. Then share it with your group.
A friend is _____

Full or Empty?

1. When you see half a glass of water, would you say the glass is half full or half empty?
2. Is your fridge full or empty now? Why? Do you like to keep it full most of the time?
3. If you drive, is your gas tank full or empty right now? When do you usually fill it up? Do you often wait till it hits the “empty” mark?
4. Is your wallet full or close to empty?
5. Is your stomach full right now? Half-full? Empty?
6. When you eat, do you always fill your stomach to the full? Why or why not?
7. Have you ever fasted? For what reason?
8. If you have fasted for more than a day, what was it like when you tasted food again?
9. What is the opposite of “a full moon”?
10. On a typical weekday, is your schedule full? How about a typical weekend?
11. Do you like it when you have a full schedule? Why or why not?
12. Does fullness always mean satisfaction? Why or why not?
13. Does fullness bring freedom? Why or why not?
14. In your opinion, what is a full life like? What is an empty life like?
15. What would you like your heart to be full of? What would you like your heart to be empty of?
16. Do you know these idioms (in bold)? What do they mean?
 - a) I suspect Amy is not very smart. She chatters constantly, and as they say, **empty vessels make the most sound**.
 - b) The last of her children had recently moved out and she was suffering from **empty nest syndrome**.
 - c) I get the impression he's been **running on empty** for months now. A holiday will do him good.
 - d) The neighbours had their televisions on **at full blast**.
 - e) I'm very busy at work, and I've got a **full plate** at home too.
 - f) When we got to Vicki's place the party was **in full swing**.
 - g) Mary is very unpopular because she's so **full of herself**.

Getting to Know You

1. What is your name? Where are you from?
2. How long have you been in Canada? What month did you arrive?
3. What were your first impressions of Canada / Toronto?
4. What do you think now?
5. Why did you decide to come to Canada?
6. Are you confident that your dreams will come true?
7. Who came to Canada with you? Who did you have to leave behind? Will they come and visit?
8. What do you like most about Canada?
9. What do you like most about your country?
10. What is more important to you? Why?
11. What is one big difference between Canada and your home country?
12. What do you miss most about your country?
13. Who do you miss most?
14. What do you hope to be doing one year from now?
15. Where do you hope to use the English you learn?
16. Are you planning to do more study? In what field?
17. Are you planning to look for a job in Toronto? If so, what kind of job – short-term, longer-term?
18. Do you think it will be easy to look for a job?

Gifts

1. Do you like receiving gifts? Do you enjoy choosing and giving gifts?
2. Did you receive gifts for Christmas in your country? Have you received Christmas gifts in Canada?
3. What is one precious gift you received as a child?
4. What is one precious gift you received as an adult?
5. Do you enjoy wrapping gifts? Are you good at it?
6. Do you like to receive gift certificates? Have you bought and given gift certificates?
7. What are some gifts that are free?
8. What is one gift that you desire now?
9. What kinds of gifts last?
10. Do you like gift exchange at parties? Why or why not?
11. In your culture, what is the polite way of handling gifts when you receive them?
12. In your culture, are you obliged to return gifts if you receive them from others? What are some examples?
13. Read the following story about a Christmas gift. Underline the words you don't know. What is the lesson of the story?

A Brother Like That

A friend of mine named Paul received an automobile from his brother as a Christmas present. On Christmas Eve when Paul came out of his office, a young man was walking around the shiny new car, admiring it. "Is this your car, Mister?" he asked. Paul nodded. "My brother gave it to me for Christmas." The boy was astounded. "You mean your brother gave it to you and it didn't cost you anything? Boy, I wish ..." He hesitated. Of course Paul knew what he was going to wish for. He was going to wish he had a brother like that. But what the lad said jarred Paul all the way down to his heels. "I wish," the boy went on, "that I could be a brother like that." Paul looked at the boy in astonishment, then impulsively he added, "Would you like to take a ride in my automobile?" "Oh yes, I'd love that." After a short ride, the boy turned and with his eyes aglow, said, "Mister, would you mind driving in front of my house?" Paul smiled a little. He thought he knew what the lad wanted. He wanted to show his neighbours that he could ride home in a big automobile. But Paul was wrong again. "Will you stop where those two steps are?" the boy asked. He ran up the steps. Then in a little while Paul heard him coming back, but he was not coming fast. He was carrying his little crippled brother. He sat him down on the bottom step, then sort of squeezed up against him and pointed to the car. "There she is, Buddy, just like I told you upstairs. His brother gave it to him for Christmas and it didn't cost him a cent. And some day I'm gonna give you one just like it ... then you can see for yourself all the pretty things in the Christmas windows that I've been trying to tell you about." Paul got out and lifted the lad to the front seat of his car. The shining-eyed older brother climbed in beside him and the three of them began a memorable holiday ride. That Christmas Eve, Paul learned what Jesus meant when he said: "It is more blessed to give..."

Dan Clark

Source: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/415025/Chicken-Soup-For-The-Soul-Jack-Canfield-and-Mark-Hansen>

If you have time, discuss these questions about the story:

1. Were there any sentences or parts you didn't understand?
2. Describe Paul's character using several adjectives. Would you like to be him? Explain why or why not.
3. Describe the young man in the story using 4-5 adjectives.
4. Whom do you admire most in the story? Paul or the young man? Explain your answer.
5. If you could interview Paul, what questions would you like to ask him?
6. Have you ever been in a very difficult situation (eg. sick, lonely or having no money) and someone gave you something that was extremely meaningful? How did you feel? If you feel comfortable tell the story to the class.

Good Friday

Describe this picture of Jesus. What do you know about this event? Relate your Homework reading to this picture.



Read the following quotes about Good Friday. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. "The highest act of love is the giving of the best gift, and, if necessary, at the greatest cost, to the least deserving. That's what God did." [John Piper]
2. "Jesus went to the cross because God is holy and sin must be punished." [John K. Hutcheson, Sr.]
3. "It has been the cross which has revealed to good men that their goodness has not been good enough." [Johann Hieronymus Schroder]

Questions:

1. How can "love" go together with something so terrible as crucifixion?
2. Quote #2 mentions "holy" and "sin". How are they in conflict? How might the Cross resolve or reconcile this conflict?
3. Explain quote #3. What is "good"?

Read the following Bible passages.

What do Christians believe about Good Friday?

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21; NLT).

For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. ²⁵ For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us. God was being entirely fair and just when he did not punish those who sinned in former times. ²⁶ And he is entirely fair and just in this present time when he declares sinners to be right in his sight because they believe in Jesus. (Romans 3:23-26; NLT).

What is good about Good Friday?

Health

1. What are some signs of being healthy?
2. What do your friends or relatives do to stay healthy?
3. What do you do to stay healthy?
4. Have your health habits changed in the last few years? How?
5. What is something that many people should do, but don't do to stay healthy?
6. Do you know any home remedies for common ailments?
7. How do you treat a sore throat? Minor cut? Headaches?
8. What are some causes of back pain? What are some possible remedies?
9. Do you take daily vitamins? Which ones? Why?
10. Is there a disease or condition which is common in your family? What steps have you taken to prevent this illness?
11. How often do you wash your hands? What other precautions do you take to prevent the spread of germs?
12. Do you eat healthy food? Do you have any unhealthy eating habits?
13. How much sleep do you usually get? Is your sleep restful, or do you toss and turn?
14. How often do you feel tired or exhausted? What can you do to feel more energetic?
15. Do you exercise regularly? What are your favourite exercises?
16. Do our emotions and thoughts affect our health? How?
17. Have you ever stayed in a hospital? How was the experience?
18. Do you go for annual check-ups? Do you think that is important?
19. How often do you catch a cold? When was the last time you had a cold?
20. Discuss the following quotes about health. Which one do you like best?
 - a) The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like and do what you'd rather not. ~ Mark Twain
 - b) In a disordered mind, as in a disordered body, soundness of health is impossible. ~Cicero
 - c) The part can never be well unless the whole is well. ~Plato
 - d) Those obsessed with health are not healthy; the first requisite of good health is a certain calculated carelessness about oneself. ~Sydney J. Harris

Heroes^{*}

1. Who are some heroes in cartoons or movies?
2. Do you have a favorite film hero? Who? Why?
3. Who are some classic heroes and heroines in literature?
4. Who are some traditional heroes in your native country? What did they do?
5. What is the difference between a hero and a role model?
6. What's the difference between a hero and a star?
7. Can you name someone who is a star and not a hero? Who?
8. What is the difference between a hero and an idol?
9. Can you name someone who has been idolized, but is not a hero?
10. What is the difference between a celebrity and a hero?
11. Must one be brave to be a hero? Can you think of an exception?
12. Are all brave people heroes? Why do you say that?
13. Do heroes have to be virtuous? Can you think of an exception?
14. Who are some heroes with flaws? Do all heroes have flaws?
15. Do heroes always sacrifice for others? If so, can you think of an exception?
16. Must one do something physical to be a hero? Can you think of an exception?
17. Is everyone who performs an outstanding physical feat a hero?
18. Did you regard anyone in your family a hero while you were growing up? Do you still?
19. Have you looked up to a friend as your hero? What makes you feel so?
20. What do you know about "the Highway of Heroes" in Toronto?
21. Discuss the following quotes. What do they mean? Which one is your favourite?
 - a) "One cannot always be a hero, but one can always be a human."—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
 - b) "Who is a hero? He who conquers his urges."—The Talmud
 - c) "Time makes heroes but dissolves celebrities." – Daniel J. Boorstin
 - d) "The hero is one who kindles a great light in the world, who sets up blazing torches in the dark streets of life for men to see by." – Felix Adler
 - e) "A hero is a man who is afraid to run away." – English Proverb
 - f) "A hero has faced it all: he need not be undefeated, but he must be undaunted."
– Andrew Bernstein

^{*} Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson, *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006), Unit 45.

Home

1. Do you like the place where you are living? Why or why not?
2. How are homes different in your home country and in this country?
3. How have you changed your home since you've started living there?
4. How long have you lived where you are living now? How many different homes have you lived in?
5. Which one did you like the best? Why?
6. Which one did you like the least? Why?
7. Is your home in a convenient location?
8. What do you think is the worst colour for a living room?
9. What things in your home couldn't you live without? What things in your house could you easily live without?
10. What's your favourite room? Why?
11. Where would your dream home be?
12. Do you get along well with your neighbors?
13. How well do you know them?
14. Would you prefer to live in a house or an apartment? Why?
15. Describe how you go about buying a house in your country. Can you borrow money from a bank? Is it easy to buy and sell houses?
16. Which of these quotes do you like best?
 - a) When a man leaves home, he leaves behind some scrap of his heart. (Frederick Buechner)
 - b) Home is an invention on which no one has yet improved. (Ann Douglas)
 - c) My home is in Heaven. I'm just travelling through this world. (Billy Graham)
17. What do the following underlined idioms mean?
 - a) By the end of the week she was beginning to feel more at home in her new job.
 - b) I visit Chicago so often, it's become a home away from home for me.
 - c) The food was okay, but nothing to write home about.

Homelessness

1. What goes through your mind when you hear the word ‘homeless’?
2. Do you ever give money to homeless people? Why or why not?
3. Is homelessness a problem in your country?
4. What does the government in your country do for the homeless?
5. Where do you see homeless people in Toronto? How are they like?
6. What do you think when you walk past homeless people?
7. Have you ever stopped to talk to homeless people? What questions did you or would you ask them?
8. Why do you think people become homeless?
9. Have you known anyone who is homeless? Did you have any experience of being “homeless”, even just for a night?
10. Do you think you will ever become homeless? Why or why not?
11. What does the word “hospitality” mean?
12. Have you ever extended hospitality to people you don’t know? Tell us about it.
13. Is having a home or shelter a basic human need? How does it compare with the need for food and water?
14. How difficult do you think it is for homeless people to get back into employment and get a place to live?
15. Do you think homelessness will ever disappear, even in rich countries?
16. What do you think it would be like to suddenly become homeless, for example, because of natural disasters or war?

Honesty

1. Read the following story. Do you believe it is true?

CHARLOTTETOWN - A P.E.I. man is thanking total strangers for their kindness, honesty and quick reaction.

Ian Walker, a rental property owner, was about to make a deposit at a Charlottetown bank on Monday when a strong gust of wind blew a bag containing \$10,300 dollars out of his hand.

The money flew down the street, onto sidewalks and under parked cars.

Passersby scattered to help Walker collect his money and when all was said and done, every single dollar had been returned to him.

Walker says one young man returned almost \$1,500.*

2. Would this kind of incident happen in your native country? Why or why not?
3. Do you think that people in Canada are generally more honest? Why or why not?
4. What is your definition of “honesty”?
5. List the situations in which one can be honest or dishonest. (For example, in tests or exams, filing tax returns, etc.)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

6. What does it mean to be honest in each of these situations? Have you been dishonest in any of these situations?
7. What is a “white lie”? What is a “half truth”?
8. How important is honesty in your relationships with family and friends?
9. Is it possible to be “too honest”?
10. When would you prefer to be not completely honest with those close to you?
11. What are some consequences of being dishonest with people?
12. How can we honour someone and be honest with him/her at the same time?
13. Is it possible to be dishonest with yourself? Explain.
14. What are some consequences of being dishonest with yourself?
15. Do you agree with the saying “Honesty is the best policy”? Why or why not?

* The story appeared on the news site <http://www.canadaeast.com/news/article/656129> on May 4, 2009.

Joy

1. Are you a joyful person? Explain.
2. Do you know anyone who strikes you as a joyful person? Describe him/her.
3. Do these things in life bring you joy? Why or why not?
 - a) cooking
 - b) physical exercise
 - c) checking off a to-do list
 - d) taking a nap
 - e) eating
4. Which of the following brings you the deepest joy?
 - a) giving birth to a child
 - b) falling in love
 - c) doing meaningful work in line with your passions
 - d) heart-to-heart talks with friends
 - e) (anything else?)
5. Which of the joys in (4) above are most long-lasting?
6. What other feelings usually come with joy? (Think of adjectives: e.g. relaxed, light-hearted, energetic, creative, etc.)
7. Is joy a mood? What kills your joy?
8. Is it possible to be joyful under the following circumstances? If so, how?
 - a) when you are sick
 - b) when you are stuck in traffic
 - c) when you fail an exam or do badly in an interview
 - d) when there is very little money in your bank account
 - e) when you are apart from your family
9. Are children usually joyful? What kind of things will bring a smile on a child's face?
10. Can adults be as joyful as children? Explain your answer.
11. What do the following underlined idioms mean?
 - a) Jill: I don't understand why someone would pay millions of dollars to have some old painting. Jane: Because a thing of beauty is a joy forever.
 - b) We are expecting a bundle of joy next September.
 - c) When I got my grades, I could have burst with joy. Bill was not exactly bursting with joy when he got the news.
 - d) Tommy leapt for joy because he had won the race. We all leapt for joy when we heard the news.
 - e) "And this is our little pride and joy, Roger." Fred pulled up in his pride and joy and asked if I wanted a ride.
 - f) She was so happy, she wept for joy. We all wept.
12. Discuss the following quotes on joy. What do they mean? Which ones do you like best?
 - a) "Happiness is natural; joy is spiritual." (Kenny Martin)
 - b) "Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy." (Thich Nhat Hanh)
 - c) "Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony." (Mahatma Gandhi)
 - d) "Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls." (Mother Teresa)

Lifestyle

1. Are you an organized person? If so, in what ways?
2. If you are not, would you like to be more organized? Why or why not?
3. Are you more organized at work or at home?
4. Is organization important in most jobs? Which professions require a lot of organization?
5. Is your desk (or work area) organized? Is it cluttered?
6. Do you have an energetic lifestyle? Do you typically accomplish a lot in one day?
7. Do you prefer to do one thing at a time or to multi-task?
8. Are you active? Do you prefer to go out and do things or to stay at home to relax when you have time?
9. Reading the following story. What is it trying to say to us?

Leaning on his fence one day, a devout Quaker was watching a new neighbour move in next door. After all kinds of modern appliances, electronic gadgets, plush furniture, and costly wall hangings had been carried in, the onlooker called over, "If you find you're lacking anything, neighbour, let me know and I'll show you how to live without it."

10. What does a simple lifestyle mean to you?
11. Do you lead a hectic life? Are you always in a hurry to do something or go somewhere?
12. Do you have a demanding daily or weekly schedule? Explain.
13. How important is "rest" to you? What makes you feel most restful?
14. How often do you take vacation? What do you do when you take a vacation?
15. What is a workaholic? Would you consider yourself one?
16. What kind of lifestyle characterizes the people of your native country?
17. How does this compare with the lifestyle of most Canadians?
18. If you could change your lifestyle, what changes would you make?
19. What can we learn from other cultures about how to live?
20. What can we learn from ancient cultures about how to live?

Listening to Music

1. What kinds of music do you like to listen to? What kinds do you not like? Why?
2. What kinds of music do your children or teenagers like to listen to? Do you listen to the same?
3. How often do you listen to music and when? What else would you be doing at the same time?
4. Do you like to listen to music and work at the same time? Why or why not?
5. How loud do you like your music to be? Is there a difference when listening to the car radio, with headphones at home, and putting on music in a party?
6. Where do you get most of your music from? For example, through the internet, CDs, radio, etc.
7. Do you have an ipod? MP3 player? If so, how have your habits of listening to music changed?
8. Do you listen to music of your own culture more or western music?
9. What is your definition of “classical” and “popular” music?
10. Does “music” mean “songs” to you? Do you listen to music without words or lyrics?
11. How is music important to human beings?
12. What do people use music for? For example, in advertising, in propaganda, etc.
13. Do you think music should be for enjoyment or entertainment only rather than having particular “aims” or “purposes”?
14. Read the following quotes about music. Which one do you like best?
 - a) “Music and silence combine strongly because music is done with silence, and silence is full of music.” ~ Marcel Marceau
 - b) “When the music changes, so does the dance.” ~ African Proverb
 - c) “The aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.” ~ Johann Sebastian Bach
 - d) “Most people live and die with their music still unplayed. They never dare to try.”
~ Mary Kay Ash
 - e) “Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.” ~ Berthold Auerbach

Money and Shopping^{*}

1. What is the name of money in your native country? What does it look like?
2. How much is a dollar in your native country's currency?
3. How much does seeing a movie cost in your country? How much does lunch?
4. Can you compare shopping in Canada with your native country?
5. What are some bargains in your native country? Why?
6. Are you a thrifty shopper? Can you give an example?
7. Do you know someone who collects loose change? What do you do with the coins?
8. Do you know anybody who collects coins as a hobby?
9. Do you have any shopping tips for bargain hunting?
10. Are you an impulsive shopper or do you shop with a list?
11. When do you like to splurge? On what?
12. Do you prefer to go shopping by yourself or with someone else? Why?
13. Do you have a favourite mall, shopping centre or market in Toronto?
14. Have you ever wasted money? How?
15. How often do you go out to restaurants? What do you look for in restaurants?
16. Do you tip in your native country? In Canada? For what services?
17. Can you think of some extravagant ways to spend money?
18. Do you know the following money words and phrases? Discuss their meaning.
 - a. I can't **squander** money on silly things like electronic toys and fancy clothes I don't need.
 - b. **Sticking to a budget** can be tough... everything costs so much money.
 - c. I live **paycheck to paycheck** and have to watch how I spend my money.
 - d. I've **maxed out** two of my credit cards on things like vacations, cars, and expensive restaurants.
 - e. **Put away** money for retirement.
 - f. I really have to budget carefully **to make ends meet**.
 - g. My brother loves shopping and buying things – he's a **shop-aholic**.

^{*} Questions adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

More Proverbs^{*}

For each of the following sets:

1. Match the two halves of the proverbs or common English sayings.
2. Talk about: what do they mean?
3. Do you agree?
4. Do you have a similar saying in your culture?
5. When do we use these sayings?

I.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. The more one knows, | a. the mice will play. |
| 2. The bigger they are, | b. the harder they fall. |
| 3. When the cat's away, | c. do as the Romans do. |
| 4. When in Rome, | d. the less one believes. |
| 5. When in doubt, | e. do nothing. |

II.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Robbing Peter | a. to tango. |
| 2. There is more than one way | b. to learn. |
| 3. It takes two | c. to pay Paul. |
| 4. Never too late | d. to skin a cat. |
| 5. Fools rush in where angels fear | e. to tread. |

III.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Beauty is | a. the best medicine. |
| 2. Honesty is | b. in the eye of the beholder. |
| 3. Experience is | c. the best policy. |
| 4. Laughter is | d. the best teacher. |
| 5. Knowledge is | e. bliss. |
| 6. Ignorance is | f. Power. |

IV.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. There's no smoke | a. among thieves. |
| 2. Give credit | b. where credit is due. |
| 3. There is honour | c. with fire. |
| 4. Fight fire | d. without fire. |
| 5. You can't make an omelette | e. without breaking eggs. |

^{*} Adapted from <http://a4esl.org/q/j/ck/ma-proverbs.html> (accessed December 6, 2009)

Movies (Part I)*

1. Do you like movies? Where do you usually see movies?
2. How often do you watch movies? At home? In theatres? On the internet?
3. Where do you find movies to watch at home? Library? Cable TV? Blockbuster?
4. Do you own any movies? Which? Do you repeatedly watch them?
5. Have you figured out a way to see movies for free? How?
6. Can you compare movie theatres in your homeland with those in Canada?
7. How much does it cost to see a movie in a theatre in your hometown? How much does it cost here?
8. What might annoy you at a movie theatre? Using phones? Babies crying? Other?
9. Do you have a favourite movie theatre? A preferred place to sit?
10. Have you ever seen a celebrity or famous person? Where? Tell us about it
11. Can you think of some tourist sights related to the movie industry?
12. What movies have you seen that took place in cities in the United States? What movies have you seen that took place in other countries?
13. Have you ever seen movies being filmed? Where? What was the atmosphere?
14. Have you ever acted in a play or movie? Can you describe your experience?
15. Do you watch English movies? Do you use subtitles?
16. What are some famous movies you have seen? What movies are “classics”, in your opinion? Can you give some examples?
17. Do you know what movies are playing in the theatres now? Do you look at movie listings?
18. Do you read or listen to movie reviews? Would you choose a movie based on what you read or heard in a review?
19. Do you watch DVDs at home? What are some advantages and disadvantages of watching movies on DVD compared to going to the theatres?
20. In your opinion, what are the future trends for movie watching? Will movie theatres survive? Why or why not?

* Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

Nature

1. Do you enjoy nature? What are some things in nature that you particularly like?
2. Were you close to nature in your home country? Are you close to nature now?
3. Do you think children are closer to nature than adults? How and why?
4. Which do you like best: mountains, seas, trees or stars? Why?
5. Do you like animals? Why or why not?
6. Do you like to watch documentaries about nature on TV? What are some special things in nature that were talked about?
7. Do you like to take pictures of scenes in nature? What special phenomena have you tried to capture using a camera?
8. In English, we say “mother nature”. In your language, is nature thought of as female or male? Why do you think this is the case?
9. Gravity is a law of nature. What other “laws of nature” can you name?
10. What are some “wonders of nature” in this world? Can you name them?
11. How many of these wonders of nature have you seen in person? Which one would you most like to see?
12. What is the best wonder of nature from your country?
13. Do you think that different cultures appreciate nature in different ways? If so, how?
14. Do you think that when we are closer to nature, we are closer to God? Why or why not?
15. Is there a Creator behind nature? What is your opinion?
16. What does nature tell us about God?
17. Discuss the following quotes on nature. Which one do you like best?
 - a) One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. ~William Shakespeare
 - b) How strange that Nature does not knock, and yet does not intrude! ~Emily Dickinson
 - c) Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished. ~Lao Tzu
 - d) What makes the desert beautiful is that somewhere it hides a well. ~Antoine de Saint-Exupery
 - e) Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better. ~Albert Einstein

New and Used

1. Have you ever bought used clothing? If not, will you? Why?
2. Have you ever donated old clothes to charity? If so, to which organizations?
3. If you own a car, is it new or second-hand? What are the advantages of buying a used car? What are the risks?
4. Have you bought used books? Where did you get them?
5. What other things have you bought used? Would you recommend it?
6. Have you been to garage sales? Have you bought things from garage sales?
7. If you are to buy a house in Toronto, would you like to buy a new house or an older house? Why?
8. In your country, is it common to buy second-hand stuff? What about in Canada?
9. When would you consider the following “new”, and when do you think they are “not new” anymore? After how long?
 - a) a car
 - b) a house
 - c) a hairstyle
 - d) a habit
 - e) a baby
 - f) a computer
 - g)
10. Do you like the following things new or old?
 - a) shoes
 - b) leather
 - c) purses
 - d) friends
 - e) newspapers
 - f) refrigerators
 - g) furniture
 - h)
11. What do the following idioms mean?
 - a) The operation was such a success -- it really has given her a new lease of life.
 - b) After working for the old boss for 20 years, the new boss seems like a breath of fresh air.
 - c) Why don't you turn over a new leaf and surprise everyone with your good characteristics?
 - d) He's paid for his mistakes, and now he can start with a clean sheet.
 - e) Let's ask the sales department for their opinion. We can get a fresh perspective from them.
 - f) We'd done a lot of climbing in Scotland, but the Himalayas were a whole new ball game.

New Friends

1. Do you have a lot of friends in your country? Do you still keep in touch? How and how often?
2. Do you have a lot of friends in Toronto? How did you meet these friends? Are they good friends?
3. What did you do with your friends when you got together in your country?
4. What do you do with your friends here?
5. Do you like parties? Have you been to parties since you came here? What kind?
6. Do you have Canadian friends? How many? How did you meet them?
7. Would you like to have more Canadian friends? Why?
8. What are some difficulties in making friends with people from another country?
9. If you have children, are they making a lot of friends here? Have they encountered difficulties?
10. If you are still in Canada five years from now, do you think your friends will be mostly people from your own country? Why or why not?

The Golden Rule:

“Do to others what you would have them do to you.”

- a) Do you have a similar saying in your culture?
- b) Is it a good rule in friendship? Why?
- c) Is it true with friends from different cultures?
- d) Is it always easy to do? Why?

Have you heard of these sayings from the Bible? What do you think of them?

“It is better to give than to receive.”

“Love your neighbour as yourself.”

What would you do in the following situation?

You have a very good friend that you can always trust. You go out often and enjoy a rich friendship. A few days ago you called this friend and found out that he or she was no longer answering your calls. You have tried many times since then. You know that his/her circumstances have not changed, as you still hear about him/her from other friends. You are getting desperate. Suddenly you remember something you have said and the look on his/her face last time you met together. What will you do next?

Pain and Pain Relief

1. In your culture, is it okay to talk about “pain” outside the doctor’s office?
2. If so, what kinds of pain do you talk about? Physical pain? Emotional pain?
3. How many words can you think of in your language for “pain”? Do they all mean the same thing?
4. What are some related words in English?
5. Here are some adjectives for pain. Do you know them? How well can we describe pain in words?

Stabbing pain	Shooting pain
Burning pain	A sharp pain / a dull pain
Stinging pain	
6. Do you suffer any chronic pain in any part of your body? For example, migraine headaches, pain in the joints etc. Do you wish that it would go away?
7. Which is worse: back pain or neck pain? Toothache or stomach ache? A sprained ankle or a broken finger?
8. Do you think the pain of childbirth is the most severe pain a person can endure? Why or why not?
9. Do you think women have a greater ability to endure pain than men? Why do you say so?
10. What causes emotional pain? In your opinion, which of the following cause most hurt to people?

a) rejection by those closest to you	d) unfair treatment
b) isolation from friends	e) being the scapegoat
c) insults or harsh words	f) being despised
11. Can pain be a good thing?
12. What are some common medicines or methods to reduce/relieve pain when people have:

a) a flu	c) severe injuries in an accident
b) an operation	
13. Do you think medicines help with emotional pain? Why or why not? What are some other ways to deal with emotional pain?
14. In your country, do you have psychologists or psychiatrists or psychotherapists? Is it common for people to consult them?
15. Read the following quote. Do you agree?

“The symptoms and the illness are not the same thing. The illness exists long before the symptoms. Rather than being the illness, the symptoms are the beginning of its cures. The fact that they are unwanted makes them all the more a phenomenon of grace – a gift of God, a message from the unconscious, if you will, to initiate self-examination and repair.” ~ M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*

Paintings

1. Do you like looking at paintings? Why or why not?
2. How would you describe the differences of western paintings and the traditional paintings in your country?
3. What do these types of paintings depict?
 - a) still-life
 - b) landscape
 - c) abstract
 - d) portraitAre the traditional paintings in your country classified in the same way? If not, what is the difference?
4. Do you know these western paint media? Which do you like best among them?
 - a) oil paint
 - b) water-colour
 - c) acrylicWhat media do your country's traditional paintings use?
5. What are some famous paintings in the world? Can you describe them? Do you know what makes them so famous?
6. What is the difference between "sketching", "drawing" and "painting"?
7. Did you enjoy drawing or painting as a child? Do you now? Why (or why not)?
8. Have you ever taken drawing or painting lessons? Tell us your experiences.
9. Have you ever followed a book and taught yourself to draw or paint?
10. What are some characteristics of children's drawing / painting?
11. Why do small children naturally draw and like to colour?
12. Do you enjoy visiting galleries or art exhibitions? Why / why not?
13. In your opinion, how important are the following in paintings?
 - a) perspectives
 - b) use of empty space
 - c) mix of colours and shades
 - d) whether the objects / people / scenery "look real"
 - e) the "meaning" of the picture
14. Where are some galleries in or near Toronto? Have you been to any of them? If you have, what do you like or remember most?
15. Who are the Group of Seven?
16. How have your country's traditional paintings evolved in history? Have they always been the same?
17. Discuss the following quotes. Which one do you like best?
 - a) Art consists of limitation. The most beautiful part of every picture is the frame. ~G.K. Chesterton
 - b) I don't paint things. I only paint the difference between things. ~Henri Matisse
 - c) Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up. ~Pablo Picasso
 - d) One of the best things about paintings is their silence - which prompts reflection and random reverie. ~Mark Stevens

Pets and Animals

1. Have you ever had a pet? If so, tell us about it.
2. In your country, is it common for people to have pets in their homes? What kinds of pets?
3. When you were a child, did you like animals? Do you like animals now?
4. How do people in your country treat animals? How do Canadians treat animals?
5. What are some good things about having a dog? How about a cat?
6. Would you like to have a dog or a cat? Would your children like to?
7. Do you think animals feel pain?
8. Do you think animals have feelings?
9. Do you think animals try to express their feelings?
10. Do you like birds? Why?
11. What are some kind things we can do to animals or birds?
12. What are some cruel things we can do to animals or birds?
13. What things can we learn from the animal world?
14. Do you like to watch documentaries or movies on animals? Can you give an example?
15. Which animal or bird or insect do you admire most? Why?
16. Which are you most afraid of?
17. In your opinion, which animal is strongest?
18. Have you been to the Toronto Zoo? What impressed you most?
19. Read the famous fable below. What do you think the moral is?

A Lion was awakened from sleep by a Mouse running over his face. Rising up angrily, he caught him and was about to kill him, when the Mouse piteously entreated, saying: "If you would only spare my life, I would be sure to repay your kindness." The Lion laughed and let him go. It happened shortly after this that the Lion was caught by some hunters, who bound him by strong ropes to the ground. The Mouse, recognizing his roar, came and gnawed the rope with his teeth and set him free, exclaiming:

"You ridiculed the idea of my ever being able to help you, expecting to receive from me any repayment of your favor; now you know that it is possible for even a Mouse to confer benefits on a Lion." (<http://www.aesopfables.com/>)

Playing Music

1. Did you learn to play any musical instruments? Which one(s)?
2. Did you take lessons or teach yourself to play?
3. Why did you pick that instrument?
4. Do you still play? If not, why not?
5. Are your children learning musical instruments?
6. How did you find a music teacher for your children?
7. What do you think a good music teacher should be like?
8. What are the benefits of children learning a musical instrument?
9. If you play an instrument, have you played together with other people?
10. If you have never learnt to play an instrument, would you like to learn now? Why or why not?
11. Which musical instrument(s) do you like best? And which instrument(s) do you like least? Why?
12. Are you more familiar with western instruments or the traditional instruments of your country? Tell us about the latter.
13. Read the following story. Discuss the questions that follow.

The Concert

Wishing to encourage her young son's progress on the piano, a mother took her boy to a Paderewski concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted an old friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her.

Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through a door marked "NO ADMITTANCE".

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that the child was missing.

Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive grand piano on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Then leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child, and he added a running obbligato. Together, the old master and the young novice transformed what could have been a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience.

(Adapted from: <http://www.acousticbylines.com/quotes-jokes-stories/paderewski.htm>)

- a) Who are the main characters of the story?
- b) What did the little boy do while his mother was not looking?
- c) Why was the mother shocked?
- d) What did the piano master do to save the situation?
- e) What adjectives would you use to describe the piano master?
- f) What would you do if you were the piano master?
- g) What is the message of the story?

What do you think? (Proverbs)

The following are some proverbs in English. First, discuss what they mean. Then say whether you agree or disagree with each of them. Give reasons.

1. Children should be seen and not heard.
2. No pain, no gain.
3. The best things in life are free.
4. Honesty is the best policy.
5. The end justifies the means.
6. Winning is everything.
7. Money is the root of all evil.
8. There is no good war and no bad peace.
9. Your best friend is yourself.
10. It's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.
11. Money is the root of all evil.
12. Spare the rod and spoil the child.
13. A closed mouth catches no flies.
14. Behind every successful man there is a woman.
15. Never judge a movie by its preview.
16. Money makes the world go round.
17. The best defence is a good offence.
18. Seeing is believing.
19. Time heals all wounds.
20. A penny saved is a penny earned.

Questions

1. Do you like asking questions:
a) at work b) in school c) when you're talking with friends?
2. When you were a child, did you like asking questions?
3. If you have children, do they ask a lot of questions? What kind of questions do they ask?
4. When do children stop asking questions? What does that mean to you?
5. Why are some people afraid of asking questions?
6. What kinds of questions do you like in an exam? (e.g. multiple choice, essay, oral, etc.)
7. Are you better at asking questions or answering questions when you are talking with friends?
8. What happens if a friend or an acquaintance asks you a question that you don't want to answer? Can you give examples of situations in which this happens?
9. What is a "rhetorical question"?
10. What are some question words in English? (e.g. "what")
11. What are some typical questions in job interviews in Canada?
12. Which professions need good questioning skills?
13. What are some "hard questions" in life?
14. Do hard questions in life always have answers?
15. Read and discuss the following quotes. Which one do you like best and why?
 - a) "What you do not understand, treat with reverence and be patient, and what you do understand, cherish and keep." ~Augustine of Hippo
 - b) "You know children are growing up when they start asking questions that have answers." ~ John J. Plomp
 - c) "Computers are useless. They can only give you answers." ~ Pablo Picasso
 - d) "Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day." ~ Rainer Maria Rilke
 - e) "Judge others by their questions rather than by their answers." ~ Voltaire

Remembrance Day

1. What do you know about Remembrance Day in Canada?
2. Does your country have a similar day?
3. Read about the origin of Remembrance Day. Discuss any difficult words. Then answer these questions:
 - a) How do Canadians observe Remembrance Day? What are the ceremonies?
 - b) What does Remembrance Day commemorate?
 - c) What is the symbol for Remembrance Day?

November 11th is Remembrance Day in Canada. The country honours those who died in wars. Many communities have ceremonies. At 11:00 A.M., everyone is silent for two minutes.

World War I ended on November 11th, 1918. The armistice -- the agreement ending the war -- was signed that morning. The fighting ended at 11:00 AM that day. It was the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

After the war, many countries celebrated November 11th. In English-speaking countries, it was called Armistice Day.

In 1931, the Canadian Parliament changed the holiday's name to Remembrance Day.

As Canadians fought in more wars, the purpose of Remembrance Day changed. It was no longer only a reminder of the end of World War I. It became a day to honour all people who had died in wars.

The poppy is a symbol of Remembrance Day. During World War I, a Canadian army doctor named John McCrae wrote a poem about poppies growing in a cemetery. This poem -- "In Flanders Fields" -- became very famous. Now, poppies remind many people of those who died in wars. Around November 11th, they wear artificial poppies to honour those dead.

New words:

4. Have you ever worn a poppy on Remembrance Day? Will you wear one? Why or why not?
5. Have you observed Remembrance Day in any other way?
6. What kind of music do we associate with this day?
7. Do you remember those who were killed in wars in your country? What do you do?
8. Have you ever observed minutes of silence to honour those who died? Was it a public ceremony?

In Flanders Fields



A Poppy

In Flanders fields the **poppies** grow
Between the crosses, row on row
That mark our place: and in the sky
The **larks** still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

A red flower

*A bird
Barely heard*

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

*F. Continue the
fight*

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from **failing** hands we throw
The Torch: be yours to hold it high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

G. Dying

John McCrae



John McCrae was a Canadian poet who served as a medical officer in the Boer War and World War I. This poem honours and commemorates the men who died in the horrific battles in Flanders. It is said that he was inspired to write this poem after seeing the blood red poppies grow on the graves of his friends around Flanders. The poppy has since become a symbol of veterans worldwide. This poem was published in December 1915.

Roots*

1. Do you have a “family tree”? How many generations back can you trace your family?
2. In what ways are you proud of your roots?
3. In what ways have you already “set down roots” in Canada?
4. In what ways do you plan to set down roots in Canada?
5. Do you have roots in several different countries or cultures? If so, which ones?
6. How could “getting to the roots of a problem” help you fix it?
7. Does this always help? Are there times when “getting to the roots of a problem” alone is not enough to fix it?
8. Give an example of a time when you solved a problem first by finding out its roots, then fixing it.
9. What kinds of roots would you like to give your children?
10. In what ways do you “root for” – or cheer on, or encourage -- your children, if you have them? Who are some other people in your life you are “rooting for”?
11. There is a saying: “There are two gifts we can give our children: one is roots, the other is wings.”
What do you think it means?
12. In your culture, which is more emphasized in raising up children: roots or wings?
13. In what ways have you, or will you, give your children “wings”? If you don’t have children, are there other people in your life you are encouraging, thereby giving those people wings?
14. Name some different kinds of plants with roots.
15. What kinds of roots can you eat?
16. What kinds of roots can destroy things?
17. What is the most expensive kind of edible root you can think of?

* Adapted from SOCEM Conversation Sheets

Spring^{*}

- 1) What images spring to mind when you hear the season “spring”?
- 2) How do you feel when spring arrives?
- 3) What things about spring do you like most and least?
- 4) What happens in spring in your country?
- 5) In what ways is spring the best season?
- 6) Do you always do spring cleaning?
- 7) Are spring onions best eaten in spring?
- 8) Is spring the same in all parts of the world?
- 9) Are there any special events that take place in spring in your country?
- 10) What do you like to do in spring that you can’t do at other times of the year?
- 11) Does spring make you look forward to the year?
- 12) How would you feel if there wasn’t spring?
- 13) What does spring the season have in common with ‘spring’ the verb?
- 14) Would you like it to be spring forever?
- 15) What’s your favourite spring memory?
- 16) What clothes do you like to wear when spring arrives?
- 17) Do you think spring feels differently to people of different ages?
- 18) What adjectives would you use to describe spring?
- 19) “Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world.” ~ Virgil A. Kraft. Do you agree?
- 20) “Spring is nature's way of saying, ‘Let's party!’” ~ Robin Williams. Do you agree?

^{*} From www.esldiscussions.com/s/spring.doc; accessed March 20, 2010.

Stress

1. What are common reasons for stress in people's personal lives?
2. Have you felt stress recently? Describe a recent stressful experience.
3. What physical symptoms do you have when you are stressed?
4. When you're stressed, are you fearful? Are you sad? Are you angry?
5. How do others know when you're stressed? Do you yell? Become silent?
6. Do you remember feeling stressed as a child? Why?
7. Which brings you most stress: work, school, family, finances, health?
8. Are there specific activities that make you stressful? For example, speaking in front of a large group of people.
9. Does socializing make you more stressful or less stressful? Does solitude?
10. Do you think a stress-free life is possible? Is it desirable?
11. Have you ever been to a spa or had a massage? Did it help you relieve stress?
12. What kind of music relaxes you and relieves stress?
13. Do you exercise or play sports to lessen your stress? How often? Does it help?
14. Do you eat more or less when you're stressed? Do you have any special comfort foods?
15. Does shopping reduce stress for you or does it create stress for you?
16. Do you pray when you're stressed? Does it help?
17. What are some unhealthy ways that people use to reduce stress?
18. Does technology create more stress for people, in your opinion?
19. Is life more stressful now than 50 years ago? Why?
20. How are the following quotes related to stress? Do they give you insights into reducing stress?
 - a) The aspects of things that are most important to us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. ~ Ludwig Wittgenstein
 - b) Precisely the least, the softest, lightest, a lizard's rustling, a breath, a flash, a moment - a *little* makes the way of the best happiness. ~ Frederick Nietzsche
 - c) To know you have enough is to be rich. ~ Lao-Tzu
 - d) Dare to be naive. ~ Buckminster Fuller
 - e) In the hope of reaching the moon men fail to see the flowers that blossom at their feet. ~ Albert Schweitzer

Talents

1. Can you swim very well? When did you learn? Do you think it is difficult to learn? Do you think it is difficult to teach?
2. Can you sing very well? Do children take singing lessons in school in your country?
3. Can you play a musical instrument? Which one? Which one would you like to play?
4. Who in your family is the best at drawing?
5. Are you good with directions or do you get lost easily?
6. Can you decorate a room?
7. Can you fix things around the house? (Are you 'handy'?)
8. Are you organized? Who in the group is the most organized person?
9. Do you enjoy doing puzzles or math problems?
10. Who in the group has run the farthest at one time? (e.g. 1 km, 5km, ...)
11. Is there a talent that you wish you had? Why?
12. Could you make money from any of your talents? Which one(s)? How?
13. Which talents do you enjoy seeing other people use? (E.g. do you enjoy watching people sing or dance or play sports?)
14. What is a 'child prodigy'? Do you know any?
15. Read this short story on Talent.
 - a) Are there words or expressions you don't understand?
 - b) What is the lesson in this story? Do you agree?

Bertoldo de Giovanni was the teacher of Michelangelo, the greatest sculptor of all time. Michelangelo was only 14 years old when he came to Bertoldo, but it was already obvious that he was enormously gifted. Bertoldo was wise enough to realize that gifted people are often tempted to coast rather than to grow, and therefore he kept trying to pressure his young prodigy to work seriously at his art.

One day he came into the studio to find Michelangelo toying with a piece of sculpture far beneath his abilities. Bertoldo grabbed a hammer, stomped across the room, and smashed the work into tiny pieces, shouting this unforgettable message, "Michelangelo, talent is cheap; dedication is costly!"

(adapted from Gary Inrig, *A Call to Excellence*, at <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/t/talent.htm>)

Teeth and Smiles

1. Do you like your smile? Why or why not?
2. Do you remember losing a tooth when you were a child?
3. Do you know the legend of the tooth fairy?
4. Have you ever lost one of your adult teeth?
5. Do you think a smile is important?
6. Is there anytime it is rude to smile in your culture?
7. Can you remember a time that you couldn't stop smiling?
8. How often do you brush your teeth? Do you floss?
9. How often did you visit the dentist in your home country?
10. How often do you visit the dentist here in Toronto?
11. Did you wear braces? For how long? Are they expensive in your country?
12. When you see people smile, can you tell when the smiles are real and when they are fake?
13. Do you think you smile more or less than when you were living in your home country?
14. What do you think about tooth jewelery? (diamonds, gold teeth, etc.)
15. Do you know any superstitions or sayings about teeth?
16. Discuss the following quotes on “smile”:
 - a) All people smile in the same language. ~Proverbs
 - b) A smile is the chosen vehicle of all ambiguities. ~Herman Melville
 - c) One word or a pleasing smile is often enough to raise up a saddened and wounded soul. ~Therese of Lisieux
 - d) Count your nights by stars, not shadows; count your life with smiles, not tears. ~Italian Proverb

Thanksgiving

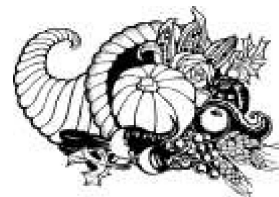
1. What do you know about Thanksgiving in Canada?
2. What foods are associated with Thanksgiving? Which of those have you eaten?
3. What is your favourite Thanksgiving food?
4. What are some Thanksgiving traditions?
5. What day is Thanksgiving celebrated in the United States? Canada?
6. Do you have a similar festival in your country? What is it called? What are some of the traditions?
7. How do Canadians decorate their homes for Thanksgiving? What are the themes and colours?
8. What do you plan to do on Thanksgiving this year?
9. Do you know how to cook a turkey? If you do, was it a success last time you did it?
10. Why do you think people celebrate Thanksgiving Day?
11. What does “Thanksgiving” mean to you?
12. What are some of the things you are thankful for?
13. Have you ever said “thank you” to God, or a god?
14. Read the following paragraphs about how Thanksgiving started in Canada. What were the reasons for giving thanks?

Canadian Thanksgiving

The first North American Thanksgiving was celebrated in 1578 when the English Navigator, Martin Frobisher, held a formal ceremony in Newfoundland. He did this to give thanks for surviving the long sea journey. Other settlers arrived in Newfoundland, and the tradition was continued by them.

In 1879, Parliament declared November 6th a national holiday of Thanksgiving. Over the years this date changed, and on January 31, 1957, Parliament declared the second Monday in October of each year to be “A Day of General Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed”.

New words:



10 Things to Know Before Your First Thanksgiving in Canada*

- 1. It's the second Monday in October.** So it's on a different date every year. For the first few years I lived in Canada, I didn't realize Thanksgiving was coming up until I saw ads for turkeys. Check your calendar and be ready.
- 2. It's a statutory (legal) holiday.** Schools and most businesses will be closed. Some stores, especially drugstores and supermarkets, stay open. But the supermarkets will probably not have any more turkeys. (See #5.)
- 3. It's not just for church members.** Though Thanksgiving was started to give thanks to God, it was started by the government, not by any religion. Non-Christians and people with no religion also celebrate Thanksgiving.
- 4. The traditional meal is roast turkey.** The turkey is usually filled with stuffing made of bread and spices. (You can get instant stuffing.) Sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, and pumpkin pie are also traditional parts of the meal.
- 5. If you're in charge of buying the turkey, you need to do it at least a week before Thanksgiving Day.** It can be very hard to find a turkey, or even pieces of turkey, in the stores a few days before Thanksgiving. Also, frozen turkey can take several days to defrost.
- 6. Canadian Thanksgiving is different from U.S. Thanksgiving.** It's earlier, of course, but that's not all. Thanksgiving in the U.S. was first celebrated by a group of settlers called the Pilgrims. They were a religious group who wore special clothes. Americans see many pictures of them around their Thanksgiving. The first Canadian Thanksgiving was celebrated by Martin Frobisher, an explorer, and his crew. We don't see many pictures of them.
- 7. No one expects a card or a gift.** You may see Thanksgiving cards in the stores, but sending them is not a custom, as it is at Christmas.
- 8. Thanksgiving is important to children.** If you have children in school, they'll hear a lot about Thanksgiving. They will make Thanksgiving art projects and hear about other families' celebrations. They will probably be happy to help you get ready for the holiday.
- 9. Canadians expect to spend Thanksgiving Day with their families.** People may visit relatives out of town. Anyone who works on Thanksgiving must be paid extra money. If you're staying with a Canadian family, they'll probably want you to eat dinner with them, at least.
- 10. The most important thing: It's a day to enjoy.** Try not to feel pressured. Thanksgiving is not about having a perfect day. It's about being thankful for the good things in your life. And there are lots of good things about life in Canada.

* From <http://ezinearticles.com/?10-Things-to-Know-Before-Your-First-Thanksgiving-in-Canada&id=1505833> (accessed October 4, 2009)

The Law (Part II)

1. Discuss the following quotes on “law”:

a) “The law is the light that reveals how dirty the room is, not the broom that sweeps it clean.”

~Dr. Phil Williams, *DTS*, 1976.

i) Do you agree?

ii) What would sweep the room clean?

b) “I have spent all my life under a Communist regime, and I will tell you that a society without any objective legal scale is a terrible one indeed. But a society with no other scale but the legal one is not quite worthy of man either.”

~Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008) *Russian novelist, dramatist and historian*.

i) Why?

ii) Is there a third alternative?

2. Read the following story and answer the questions that follow.

A husband and wife didn't really love each other. The man was very demanding², so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow. He insisted that she read them over every day and obey³ them to the letter⁴. Among other things, his "do's and don'ts" indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done. After several long years, the husband died.

As time passed, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her. Soon they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation. One day as when was cleaning house, she found tucked away⁵ in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had drawn up for her. As she looked it over, it dawned on her that even though her present husband hadn't given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband's list required anyway. She realized she was so devoted to⁶ this man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation⁷.

(http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/l/law_a_safeguard.htm; accessed March 6, 2010)

a) What does this story say about “law”?

b) In your opinion, what are the limitations of law?

c) How does this story relate to the two quotes in question (1)?

3. What are some famous laws in history and in different countries that you know about?

4. Can you name some of the “The Ten Commandments”? Do you know whose law they are?

5. What is the most important law in your country?

6. What is the most important law (or legal principle) in Canada?

7. Do you think “the legal system” is a western idea? If a country is not, or not primarily, governed by the rule of law, what can it be governed by?

² requiring high performance

³ to do what is asked or ordered

⁴ to obey precisely, with attention to detail

⁵ put away, hidden

⁶ dedicated, showing great care

⁷ requirement to do something; a feeling one must do something

The Olympics (Part I)

1. Are you following the Winter Olympic Games on TV? Why or why not?
2. What events have you watched for the past few days? Which did you find most interesting?
3. Can you name some of the winter sports that are played in the Winter Olympics?
4. Are you familiar with any of these sports? Do you know their rules?
5. Which of these winter sports have you tried, if any? Tell us your experiences.
6. What does the Olympic torch symbolize?
7. Have you visited any Olympics Stadium in the world? Do you recognize pictures of famous ones?
8. Do you think that there is too much commercialism surrounding the Olympic Games? Why or why not?
9. Do you think that the Olympic spirit of friendly and fair competition is still rigorously maintained in the Games? Why or why not?
10. Do you know the following vocabulary to do with the Olympics?
 - a) medals
 - b) the Athlete's Oath*
 - c) the Olympic flag
 - d) doping
 - e) sportsmanship
 - f) scorekeeper
 - g) referee
 - h) preliminaries
 - i) amateur

The following is a story about a Special Olympics. Discuss any new words, then the questions at the end.

A few years ago, at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash. At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win.

All, that is, except one little boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry. The other eight heard the boy cry.

They slowed down and looked back. Then they all turned around and went back...every one of them. One girl with Down's Syndrome bent down and kissed him and said, "This will make it better." Then all nine linked arms and walked together to the finish line. Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story.

Why are people still telling the story?

"A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." How does this quote relate to the story?

* "In the name of all the competitors, I promise that we shall take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport, and the honour of our teams."

The Olympics (Part II)

1. Have you been following the Olympic events on TV? What did you find most interesting to watch so far?
2. How is Canada doing so far? How is your country?
3. Do you cheer for the Canadian athletes or those of your own country? Why?
4. How do you feel when Canada won a medal? When your country won a medal?
5. What sports is your country best at? Is it represented in this Winter Olympics?
6. Do you know all of these Olympic events?*

Summer	Winter
kayaking	boxing
down hill skiing	snowboarding
swimming	diving
hockey	speed skating
curling	hurdles
gymnastics	track & field
figure skating	luge
volleyball	basketball
biathlon	ski jumping
tennis	wrestling
skeleton	cross country skiing

7. The table below shows the name of nationalities categorized by suffixes (the endings of a word). Can you think of more examples and complete the table?*

-sh	-ese	-i	-an / -ian	-ch	other
British	Burmese	Bahraini	American	Czech	Filipino
Finnish	Chinese	Iraqi	Australian	Dutch	Greek

8. Read the following about “Competition”. Try to guess the meaning of the underlined words. Do you agree with the author in the last paragraph?*

Athletes compete or play against each other in hopes of winning. That might mean crossing the finish line first or putting on a perfect performance. Throughout the Games, the contestants are supposed to play with a spirit of sportsmanship, which can be defined as the character and conduct worthy of a sportsman. This means that they are to play with honour, seeking only to do their very best in their sport, and not specifically to defeat the other players.

Unfortunately, some athletes and coaches have taken to cheating or doping, in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage. Steroids, drugs that encourage muscle strength and stamina, are one of the banned substances that give athletes an extra, and illegal, advantage.

However, the Games carry on and remain popular. They show us that humanity is capable of engaging in friendly competition. We should keep in mind what the father of the modern Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, once said: "Olympism is not a system, it is a state of mind."

* adapted from <http://www.englishclub.com/esl-articles/olympic-games.htm> (accessed February 14, 2010)

Time

1. What is the time difference between your country and Canada? What time is it now in your country?
2. Do you own a clock or a watch that has world time? How often do you use it?
3. Are you a person who is always on time? How often are you late?
4. Would you describe yourself as “time-conscious”?
5. Would you describe yourself as “a last-minute person”?
6. Have you attended time-management courses? Are they useful?
7. In your culture, is it important to stick to an agreed schedule in meetings at work? In social meetings? What about in Canada?
8. What is a time capsule?
9. Why do we experience the passing of time differently: for example, when we are happy and excited, time passes very quickly, and vice versa? What does this say about the nature of time?
10. What is eternity? Can you think about it easily?
11. Is there anything or anyone who is not bound by time?
12. What are some ways people leave a legacy?
13. In English, we say “time flies” or “time is money”. In your culture (and language), what do you compare time to?
14. Do you know these time words (or phrases)? Can you explain the situations in which we use them?

15. time off

16. timely

17. show time

18. timeless

19. downtime

20. to kill time

21. flexitime

22. to buy time

23. Read the following quotes about time. Do you agree with them?
24. More time is wasted not in hours but in minutes. A bucket with a small hole in the bottom gets just as empty as a bucket that is deliberately kicked over. (Source Unknown)
25. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end. (Seneca)
26. Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for it is the stuff life is made of. (Benjamin Franklin)
27. Time is what prevents everything from happening at once. (John Archibald Wheeler)
28. As if you could kill time without injuring eternity. (Henry David Thoreau)

Toronto

1. What are the different kinds of public transportation in Toronto? Can you name them?
2. Have you taken all of them? Which is your favourite?
3. Do you think that Toronto is clean? How does it compare with other cities you have been to?
4. Is the standard of living in Toronto high? How does it compare with your hometown, or other cities in the world?
5. What is the population of the Greater Toronto Area?
6. Do you prefer living in the city or in the suburb? Why?
7. Can you name the different ethnic neighbourhoods in Toronto? For example, which areas have a high concentration of Jews, Italians... etc.?
8. Where are some well-to-do areas in Toronto? Where are some “poorer” areas?
9. Can you name the colleges and universities in Toronto?
10. Where is the nearest hospital to you? Do you know other hospitals in Toronto? What are some of them famous for?
11. What are some famous buildings in Toronto?
12. Have you been to “Doors Open Toronto” in the past? What places did you visit?
13. What are some “fun” places you would like to take your kids to during holidays?
14. Which museums, galleries or concert halls have you visited in Toronto?
15. Have you ever taken advantage of Museum and Arts Pass (“MAP”) for free admission? If so, tell us how it works.
16. Do you visit the local library often? Why / why not?
17. If a friend of yours visits Toronto for two days, where would you take him/her to?
18. What do you like most about Toronto? What do you dislike most?

Travel (Part I)

1. Did you live near any tourist attractions in your hometown? If so, what were they?
2. What did you travel to see in your native land?
3. What spot in your homeland was most interesting to you? Why?
4. Which spots in your country would you most like to travel to? Why?
5. Which of these appeal to you most: historical places, natural scenery or fun places?
6. In which other countries have you travelled?
7. Do you usually plan where you will go before you leave?
8. Do you make reservations ahead of time?
9. Do you travel alone or with others?
10. Of the places you have been, which was the prettiest?
11. Of the places you have been, which was the most educational? How?
12. Have you visited places that made you scared? Where and why?
13. In the countries you visited, which people were the friendliest? Which people were the least friendly?
14. What languages have you spoken while travelling?
15. What are some useful phrases to learn in a foreign language? Why?
16. Do you like to use travel guidebooks? Which ones? How are guidebooks useful?
17. What are some other good sources of travel information?
18. Do you like package tours? What are some advantages and disadvantages of going on package tours?
19. Read these quotes about travel. What do they mean? Do you agree with them?
 - a) "There are no foreign lands. It is the traveller only who is foreign." ~Robert Louis Stevenson
 - b) "The traveller sees what he sees; the tourist sees what he has come to see." ~ G.K. Chesterton
 - c) "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." ~Lao Tzu
 - d) "One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." ~Henry Miller
 - e) "All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware." ~Martin Buber

Travel (Part II)

1. While travelling, were you ever afraid?
2. While travelling, were you ever lost? Where were you?
3. Have you ever asked a person on the street to help while you were travelling? What happened?
4. Have you ever been cheated by a store or a restaurant while you were travelling in a foreign country?
Describe your experience.
5. Have you ever lost your luggage? Did you get it back eventually?
6. Have you ever lost your travel documents during a trip?
7. What are some accidents that could happen when one travels?
8. What are some essential items to bring when travelling to a foreign country?
9. More and more people travel for work nowadays. Do you think it is a good idea?
10. Can business travel be fun? Have you been on business trips?
11. What is the longest flight you have been on? How long did it take?
12. What are your experiences with jet-lags? What are your ways of handling them?
13. Have you ever missed a flight? What happened?
14. Have you ever been on the standby list for a flight?
15. Where do you exchange money when you travel? Is foreign money confusing?
16. Here are some idioms to do with travelling and transport. Read the sentences together and discuss what the bolded idioms mean.
 - a) The English test was no problem for Tom. He **sails through** it!
 - b) Sarah's new job involves so much travelling that she is **living out of a suitcase** most of the time.
 - c) Building a school before knowing the age of the population is **putting the cart before the horse**.
 - d) The hotel was substandard, but it was a case of **any port in a storm**; all the others were full.
 - e) I managed to get my order through before the end of the special offer – but I nearly **missed the boat**!
 - f) It's getting late and we've got a long way to go. Let's **hit the road**.
 - g) OK! We've got all we need, so let's **get the show on the road**!

Twenty-one Reasons Why English Is Hard to Learn*

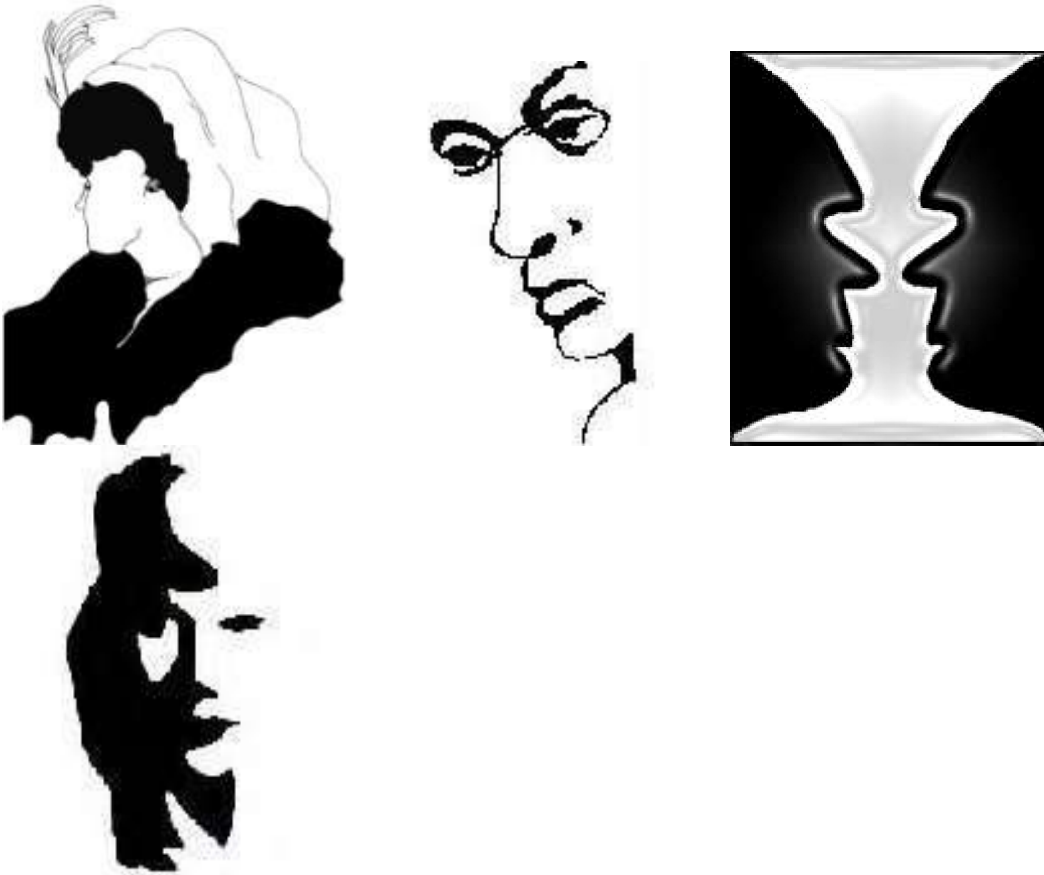
The following sentences all contain “trick” words. Notice how the spelling, pronunciation, parts of speech and meaning of those words are the same or different. Your teacher will help you out. Pick and choose from them and have fun.

1. The bandage was wound around the wound.
2. The farm was used to produce produce.
3. The dump was so full it had to refuse more refuse.
4. We must polish the Polish furniture.
5. He could lead if he would get the lead out.
6. The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
7. Since there was no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present.
8. A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
9. When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
10. I did not object to the object.
11. The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
12. There was a row among the oarsmen on how to row.
13. They were too close to the door to close it.
14. The buck does funny things when does are present.
15. A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
16. To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
17. The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
18. After a number of injections my jaw got number.
19. Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
20. I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
21. How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

* <http://www.thatwasfunny.com/twenty-one-reasons-why-english-is-hard-to-learn/206>; accessed February 21, 2010.

Two-way

1. Look at these pictures. What do you see? Describe them.



2. Look at the following sentences. Can they have more than one meaning? How?
 - a) Visiting teachers may be boring.
 - b) The chicken was ready to eat.
 - c) She runs through the sand and waves.
 - d) The shooting of the hunters was terrible.
 - e) Father is roasting in the kitchen.
 - f) Mother was seated by the bishop.
3. ***For the adventurous:*** in the italicized part below, each sentence has a double meaning. Read each sentence slowly, several times, to find out why this is the “ideal letter” for the following situation:

Have you ever been in a position where someone asks you for a reference to get a job and you find yourself in an awkward position? You don't want to lie, but you really can't tell the truth because it will hurt. Robert Thornton, professor of economics at Lehigh University, once composed the ideal letter to fit the situation:

I am pleased to say that this candidate is a former colleague of mine. In my opinion you will be fortunate to get this person to work for you. I recommend him with no qualifications whatsoever. No person would be better for the job. I urge you to waste no time in making this candidate an offer of employment. All in all, and without reservation, I cannot say enough good things about him, nor can I recommend him too highly.

(<http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/a/ambiguity.htm>; accessed February 27, 2010)

4. In the use of your native language, how often do people talk with “double meaning”? What are the situations and the purposes? How effective is such talk?
5. Do you often talk this way? Why?
6. What is a “two-edged sword”? Have you heard that the Bible is a two-edged sword? What does the following verse say about the Bible?
“For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.”
(Hebrews 4:12; *New Living Translation*)

Valentine's Day

1. Do you celebrate Valentine's Day in your country? If so, how?
2. When you think of the Western Valentine's Day what symbols, people or activities do you associate with it?
3. Who might you give gifts to on Valentine's Day? What kinds of gifts would you give?
4. Who might you receive gifts from on Valentine's Day? What kinds of gifts might you receive?
5. Imagine a perfect Valentine's Day. Who would you be with? Where would you go? What would you do? How would you feel? Describe it.
6. How do the following types of love differ:
 - a parent's love for a child?
 - a child's love for a pet?
 - a boyfriend's love for a girlfriend?
 - a wife's love for her husband?
 - a grandchild's love for a grandparent?How are they the same?
7. What are some ways in which you show your love for others and in which others show their love for you on a daily basis, not just on Valentine's Day?
8. Do you know the story about Valentine's Day? Read the following, then re-tell it in your group.

Stories about the origin of Valentine's Day abound. One popular legend traces the holiday back almost 2000 years. The Roman emperor Claudius made it illegal for young men to get married without his permission because he thought marriages and families were the reasons the young men would not go to war. One priest, St. Valentine, defied the emperor's command and secretly performed marriages. When Claudius found out, he had Valentine thrown in jail. Then, on February 14, Valentine was executed. About two centuries later, the church named February 14 Valentine's Day in his honour. Today, people give flowers, candy, cards, and gifts to the people they love on this special day.

9. Does your country have a different Valentine's Day? When is it celebrated? What is the story behind it?
10. What other famous love story do you know in your native literature? In western literature? Can you tell the stories?

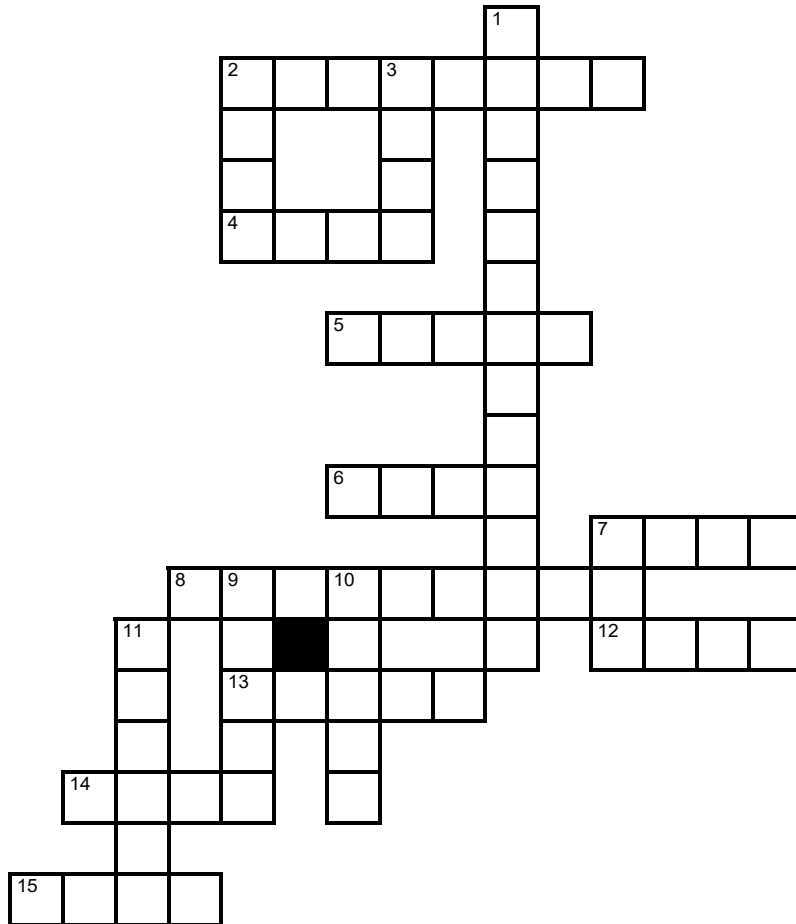
Valentine's Day Trivia

Did you know that...

- ❖ Teachers will receive the most Valentine's Day cards, followed by children, mothers, wives, and then, sweethearts.
- ❖ 15% of U.S. women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day.
- ❖ About 3% of pet owners will give Valentine's Day gifts to their pets.
- ❖ Cupid, another symbol of Valentine's Day, became associated with it because he was the son of Venus, the Roman god of love and beauty. Cupid often appears on Valentine cards holding a bow and arrows because he is believed to use magical arrows to inspire feelings of love.
- ❖ In the United States, 64% of men do not make plans in advance for a romantic Valentine's Day with their sweethearts.
- ❖ 70% of those celebrating the holiday give a card, followed by a telephone call (49%), gift (48%), special dinner (37%), candy (33%) restaurant meal (30%), and flowers (19%).



Valentine's Day



Across

2. The month of Valentine's Day
4. A Valentine's Day emotion.
5. He shoots love arrows.
6. Touch lips.
7. Something you wear on your finger.
8. A Valentine's Day treat.
12. Go on a _____. Go somewhere with your boyfriend or girlfriend.
13. What cupid shoots.
14. Present.
15. Something a poet writes.

Down

1. A day for love.
2. _____ in love. Start to love someone.
3. The flower of love.
7. Valentine's Day color.
9. The symbol of love.
10. People often exchange these on Valentine's Day.
11. Something often written on Valentine's Day cards.



Voice

1. Do you have a loud voice or a soft voice? Do your parents and siblings have loud or soft voices?
2. What are some professions that need a loud, clear voice?
3. If you have a soft voice, do you think you are disadvantaged in social and job situations?
4. Have you ever lost your voice because of illness? How did it feel?
5. What habits, food or drinks are good for our vocal cords?
6. What medicines or homemade remedies would you use if you have a hoarse voice?
7. What is the difference between “noise” and “voices”?
8. What do you know about voice projection in speaking and singing?
9. What do you think a man’s voice should be like? A woman’s voice? How do you feel when you encounter exceptions?
10. Would you recognize the voice of the following people if you hear it on the phone?
 - a) your family members
 - b) a friend you haven’t seen in 10 years
 - c) a telemarketer
 - d) your English teacher
 - e) a distant relative
 - f) a new acquaintance you just met 2 days ago
11. Is it true that we sometimes know what to do because we “hear a small voice in our heart”? Tell us your experiences. Whose voice do you think that is?
12. Do you usually hear your own voice when you read aloud together in a group? When you sing together in a group?
13. Were you ever a member of a choir? Did you sing the higher part or the lower part?
14. Discuss the underlined idioms on “voice”. What do they mean?
 - a) How can I drive safely when you're all screaming at the top of your voice?
 - b) The protestors gave voice to their anger at Parliament.
 - c) Please lower your voice or you'll disturb the people who are working.
 - d) I was too timid to raise my voice against the injustices of the day.
 - e) With her passionate pleas for peace, she was a lone voice in the wilderness.
 - f) It is a very rare event when my family speaks with one voice about anything.
15. In your culture, are you encouraged to voice your opinion:
 - a) with your parents
 - b) in meetings at work
 - c) in politics (e.g. by protests, petitions etc.) ?
16. Do children have a voice in your home?

War and Peace

1. Have you lived in a country that was having a war? Have you visited a place that had had a war in the past?
2. What do you think is the most common reason for war in the world? What are some other reasons?
3. Are there any good reasons for war? Why or why not?
4. Do you think war creates jobs in a country?
5. If you had a lot of power, what would you do to keep peace in your country?
6. Do you think every country needs an army?
7. Should people be allowed to keep guns in their homes? Why or why not?
8. Do you know any songs about peace? Do you think these songs make a difference in the world?
9. Have you read any books about life during a war? Tell the story.
10. Do you think it's important for children to study about war in school? Why or why not? What should they learn?
11. Does your country have mandatory (necessary) military service for men or is it voluntary (your choice)? Do you think it should be mandatory? Why or why not?
12. In the history of your nation, what was the most important war? What consequences did it bring?
13. Did your parents experience a time of war? Did they ever tell you stories? If so, would you pass on those stories to your children?
14. When you were young, were you taught not to forget the wars your country had fought in the past? Why do you think we were urged to remember them?
15. How can there be true peace among nations and among people of different nations?
16. If two countries were "enemies" in the past, could their next generation live in peace? Do we need "forgiveness"?
17. Read and study the following quotes on war. Do you agree? Which is your favourite?
 - a) War does not determine who is right - only who is left. ~Bertrand Russell
 - b) The direct use of force is such a poor solution to any problem: it is generally employed only by small children and large nations. ~David Friedman
 - c) You cannot prevent and prepare for war at the same time. ~Albert Einstein
 - d) All wars are civil wars, because all men are brothers. ~François Fénelon

Waste and Recycle

1. Do you like the word “waste”? What do you associate it with?
2. How do the following kinds of waste affect you?
 - a) waste of time
 - b) waste of money
 - c) waste of talent
 - d) waste of energy
 - e) household waste
 - f) toxic waste
 - g) nuclear waste
3. What can we do to reduce the different kinds of waste listed above? Go through each of them.
4. What other kinds of waste can you think of?
5. What are some opposites of the verb “to waste”?
6. What can we do to save time?
7. What can we do to conserve energy?
8. What can we recycle?
9. What can we re-use?
10. Do you like to keep things or to throw away things? Why?
11. What about the people you live with? Are they the same as you or the opposite?
12. Do you have a clean desk or a cluttered desk? Are you happy with it?
13. Is recycling household waste common in your country?
14. Do you like the recycling system in Toronto?
15. Do you know or have you known anyone who is/was “wasting their lives”? How?
16. How can such lives become useful again?

Water

1. Do you like drinking water? How much water do you drink every day? How much should we drink every day?
2. Do you drink tap water? Filtered water? Bottled water? Boiled water?
3. Do these different kinds of water taste different? Which tastes best?
4. How much percentage of the earth is covered by water?
5. What is the percentage of water inside the human body?
6. How long can a person survive without water?
7. Which uses more water:
 - a) taking a bath or taking a shower
 - b) washing dishes by hand or using a dishwasher
 - c) washing a car or watering a garden
8. What are some ways of saving water at home?
9. Have you experienced a water shortage where the government restricts the use of water? Tell us how it was like.
10. Have you been dehydrated? How did you feel?
11. What idioms to do with water do you know in English? In your language?
12. Look at the following idioms in bold. Can you guess what they mean? Do you have similar expressions in your language? Can you think of situations in your life where the idioms apply?
 - a) All the other children in the school had rich, middle-class parents, and she was beginning to feel like **a fish out of water**.
 - b) We're going to **be in deep water** if the bank refuses to authorize a bigger loan.
 - c) I can't seem to **get my head above water**. Work just keeps piling up.
 - d) Most of the arguments put forward by our opponents simply do **not hold water**.
 - e) When my father said I couldn't have the car, he **poured cold water on** my plans.
 - f) Jill: I told Katy about all the jobs that are available at our company, but she hasn't applied for any of them.
Jane: **You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink**.
 - g) Perhaps you should go to a couple of meetings to **test the waters** before you decide whether to join the club.
 - h) Talking about food **makes my mouth water**.

Weather and Seasons

1. What is the weather like today?
2. What is the temperature? Is it hot or cold? Is it humid or dry?
3. What season are we in?
4. Do you like this kind of weather?
5. How many seasons have you experienced in Canada? Which ones?
6. Which season do you like best in Canada? Why?
7. Which season do you dislike most?
8. What is the weather like in your hometown?
9. How many seasons do you have?
10. What is the hottest and the coldest weather in your hometown?
11. What are the average temperature in summer in your hometown?
12. Does it snow there?
13. What are some extreme weather conditions in your hometown?
14. Do you think the weather affects how we feel? How?
15. Do people in your country like to talk about the weather?
16. Do people in Canada like to talk about the weather? Why?
17. What do the following underlined idioms mean?
 - a) John is a fair-weather friend. He was nice to me when I had a good job and a lot of money, but ever since I lost my job, he has stopped seeing me.
 - b) I've been feeling under the weather lately and have lost my appetite.
 - c) I can't go to the party on Saturday because I'm snowed under with work.
 - d) She has musical talent so learning to play the piano is a breeze for her.
 - e) He is a very cautious person. Every month he saves half of his salary for a rainy day.
 - f) That politician is full of hot air. He makes a lot of promises but never keeps them.

Weddings and Marriage

1. How many guests are at a typical wedding in your country? What would be considered a big wedding?
2. Who pays for a wedding in your country?
3. In Canada, the most popular months for weddings are June and September. What are they in your country?
Why do you think so?
4. Have you ever been to a boring wedding? Why was it boring?
5. Do you know the following expressions about weddings? What do they mean:
 - a) Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue _____
 - b) They exchanged vows _____
 - c) Throwing bouquet _____
 - d) A bridal registry _____
6. What food is traditionally served at a wedding in your hometown?
7. Are there any traditional gifts for weddings?
8. Do people send invitations to weddings? How do people tell the couple that they will come to the wedding?
9. What is the legal age to marry in your country?
10. What is the typical age for men to marry? For women?
11. Do you know about your parents' wedding? Tell the story.
12. What do you think about arranged marriages? Where in the world is this still common?
13. Do you know anyone whose marriage was arranged?
14. Have you been to a wedding in this country?
15. Have you been to a wedding at a church? If so, what do you think about it?
16. Why do people get married in churches?
17. What are some of the most important rituals in a wedding in your country? What do they symbolize?
18. Here is what a traditional wedding vow looks like in English:

“I, (name), take you (name), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part.”

 - a) Do you understand all the words and grammar?
 - b) Do you have something similar in your language?
 - c) Do you think exchanging vows in a wedding is important?
 - d) In this country, many couples prefer to write their own vows. Do you think it is a better idea?

Preparing for Easter (2) – What Happens After Death?

1. How long do people in your country usually live?
2. What age would you like to live until? Why?
3. Are funerals in your country typically associated with a certain religion?
4. What do people wear to go to a funeral in your country?
5. Have you been to a funeral in Canada? If so, how is it similar or different compared with the ones in your country?
6. What feelings are associated with funeral homes?
7. What associations does a cemetery have in your culture?
8. What do you think happens after a person dies?
9. Is your belief typical of your culture? What does your culture believe about death and dying?
10. Do you believe in ghosts or spirits?
11. What do “heaven” and “hell” mean to you?
12. Have you seen the movie “The Passion of the Christ” by Mel Gibson? What do you remember about it?
13. At what age did Jesus die?
14. Do you know why Jesus had to die?
15. What happened to Jesus after his death?
16. Where do you think Jesus is now?
17. What does this have to do with us and our lives?

We will find out more as Good Friday and Easter approaches.

For Homework, read the following:

What happened on Good Friday? (from *)

Jesus was arrested and was tried, in a mock trial. He was handed over to the Roman soldiers to be beaten and flogged with whips. A crown of long, sharp thorns was thrust upon his head.

Jesus was forced to carry his own cross outside the city to Skull Hill. He was so weak after the beating that a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, was pulled from the crowd and forced to carry Jesus' cross the rest of the way.

Jesus was nailed to the cross. Two other criminals were crucified with him, their crosses were on either side of him. A sign above Jesus read "The King of the Jews."

*<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/easter/goodfriday.htm>; 10/03/09

What Is Your Personality?*

1. Which three adjectives would you use to describe your personality?
2. Are you shy or outgoing? When are you most outgoing?
3. Are you daring or cautious? In what ways?
4. Are you usually patient or impatient? Can you give an example?
5. Are you quiet or talkative? When are you most talkative? Least?
6. Would you call yourself a leader or a follower? Why?
7. Are you generous or selfish? Are you too selfish or over generous?
8. In what ways are you rigid? In what ways are you flexible?
9. In what ways are you traditional? In what ways are you modern?
10. If pessimistic is 1 and optimistic is 10, what would your number be on the scale? Why did you decide on that number?
11. On a scale of 1-10, how assertive are you?
12. Are you more of an extrovert or more of an introvert?
13. Is your personality more like your mother or your father? In what ways?
14. Which colour would you use to describe your personality?
15. Which animal would you use to describe yourself? Tiger? Mouse? Why?
16. Which animal year are you according to Chinese astrology? Does this fit?
17. Have you ever taken a personality test from a magazine or online? Was it helpful? Was it fun? Was it accurate?
18. Which season of the year best describes your personality? In what ways?
19. Do people in your culture tend to be quiet or talkative, in general? How about people in Canada?
20. Do people in your culture tend to be more assertive or shy? How about Canadians?
21. Do you think your personality is more inborn or shaped by culture? Explain.
22. Has your personality changed since you came to Canada? How?

* Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)

What would you say?

For Intermediate Students:

Here are some common situations in everyday Canadian life. What do you say in each situation? For each situation, discuss if anyone in the group has ever experienced it, then work as a group to make dialogues for each. Practice the dialogues in pairs.

1. A telemarketer calls during dinner and you are not interested in their product or service?
2. A homeless man asks you for money on the street?
3. You broke your sister's favourite dishes?
4. Someone you don't know very well asks you how old you are?
5. You forgot your mother's birthday?
6. You want to buy an item located behind the cashier?
7. You arrive late to a meeting because you couldn't get a taxi?
8. Your friend fell badly while skiing and looks hurt?
9. The man in the seat next to you is smoking?
10. Your child is playing with matches?
11. You need more time to finish an exam.
12. You are invited to dinner at a colleague's house and they serve you something that you really don't like. It tastes very bad.

For Beginning Students:

What do you say when...

1. You are sitting on a bus and a very pregnant woman gets on the bus. You want to give your seat to her?
2. In a large English class, you cannot see the board clearly because you are sitting at the far end of the room and someone is blocking your view?
3. At the doctor's, you have waited for a long time in the waiting room. The time of your appointment has long passed. You need to leave in 15 minutes or so because you have something else lined up.
4. The air-conditioner in your apartment unit is not working. You need to tell the management office.
5. At Tim Horton's, after you ordered a coffee and a donut, you discover they charged too much.
6. You were invited to a party at a Canadian friend's home. When you get there you discover that everyone else has brought a dish to share, but you haven't brought any.
7. You fall on the sidewalk because the road is very slippery. Someone you don't know helps you get up and asks if you need further help.
8. Someone keeps offering you more food but you are really full.

Work

1. At what age do young people get their first job in your hometown?
2. Are you a 'workaholic'? Why do you think so?
3. Make a list of 5 specific places where you can find out about jobs in Toronto. (for example – the *Employment News*)
4. What job would you never like to have?
5. What is the perfect job for you?
6. What job would your parents like for you to have?
7. If you have children, what job would you like for your child/ren to have?
8. What is the most important thing an employer in Toronto is looking for?
9. Have you ever done something very wrong at work? Tell about what happened.
10. Do you remember something funny or exciting that happened at work? Tell about what happened.
11. What do people usually do in your hometown after they retire?
12. What are you going to do after you retire? Will you stay in Canada?
13. What do these quotes mean? Do you agree? Which is your favourite?
 - a) Anything that is worth doing is worth doing poorly.
 - b) I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it. (Pablo Picasso)
 - c) Gardening requires lots of water -- most of it in the form of perspiration. (Lou Erickson)
14. Have you heard of these proverbs / idioms? What do they mean? Do you have a similar saying in your language?
 - a) Too many cooks spoil the broth
 - b) Many hands make light work
 - c) Jack of all trades, master of none
 - d) All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy

You and Your Parents*

1. Where are you in your family's birth order?
2. How old were your parents when you were born?
3. Did your parents ever live with their parents?
4. When you were a baby, who was your primary caretaker?
5. What activities do you remember doing with your mother?
6. What activities do you remember doing with your father?
7. Do you remember playing with your parents? What did you play?
8. When you were a child, were you ever punished? How? Why?
9. Which of your parents was the main disciplinarian in your family?
10. Were the rules different for girls than for boys? What about family expectations for girls and boys?
11. Do you remember helping either of your parents with chores? Which ones?
12. Do you know any parents that hovered over their children like a helicopter? Is it a good way of parenting? Why or why not?
13. What did your parents expect from you as a teenager? Did you rebel?
14. Which parenting duties do you think your parents did well?
15. What would you like to change about the way your parents treated you as a child? A teenager? Why?
16. Are you close with your father or mother now? What do you do together?
17. Do you resemble either of your parents? How?
18. What are you grateful to your parents for?
19. How important is respect for your parents in your culture?
20. What do parents expect their children to do as they grow old?
21. Read the following quotes. Which one do you like most?
 - a) To bring up a child in the way he should go, travel that way yourself once in a while. ~Josh Billings
 - b) Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you. ~Robert Fulghum
 - c) The hardest part of raising a child is teaching them to ride bicycles. A shaky child on a bicycle for the first time needs both support and freedom. The realization that this is what the child will always need can hit hard. ~Sloan Wilson

* Adapted from Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson (eds.), *Compelling Conversations* (Chimayo Press, 2006)