

# CREATING Compelling Conversations

REPRODUCIBLE SEARCH AND SHARE ACTIVITIES FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS



*A new collection of webquest activities from the following **Compelling Conversations** titles:*  
**Compelling Conversations – Vietnam ★ Compelling Conversations – Japan ★ Compelling American Conversations**  
**PLUS over 40 new Search and Shares**

*Eric H. Roth and Teresa X. Nguyen*  
EDITED BY *Andrea Schmidt*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Language: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field: \_\_\_\_\_ Future Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Why do you want to speak better English? Give three reasons.
  - a
  - b
  - c
- 2 How can speaking better English help you?
- 3 What activities or methods have you found most helpful in improving your English? Why?
- 4 What is the most helpful English class that you have had? Tell us more about that class.
- 5 What are some reasons some people sometimes dislike English class?
- 6 How else could speaking more fluent English change your life outside of school?
- 7 Can you list three topics that you would like to discuss with your classmates this semester?
  - a
  - b
  - c
- 8 What are your strengths as an English language learner?
- 9 What are some challenges that you want to work on this semester?
- 10 What three things can you do this semester to improve your English?



### Getting to Know Each Other: Ice Breakers

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Let's get to know each other better! Search for a video on YouTube (in English) about icebreaker (or ice breaker) activities and/or questions to start conversations. Then, answer the following questions.

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Web address: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_ Publication date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Describe the video you chose. In what context are these people being introduced?

2 Name one icebreaker that was featured in the video you chose.

3 Have you used this icebreaker before? When? Was it useful?

4 What opinions are expressed in the video?

5 What did you learn from watching this video?

6 What was the most interesting part for you? Why?

7 Write five new vocabulary words, idioms, or expressions related to the topic.

a

b

c

d

e

8 Why did you choose this video?

9 How would you rate the article on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?

10 What is your favorite question to start conversations with? Why?

**“Do the best you can, and don’t take life too serious.”**

—Will Rogers (1879-1935), American actor and humorist



## Finding English Pronunciation Tips on YouGlish

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know **YouGlish.com** yet? Go to the impressive pronunciation site. Put in a word that you have trouble saying clear enough in English. Listen to five different authentic speakers use the word. Read the pronunciation tips listed on website. Now compare that word to a similar, but different word. Repeat this activity for a phrase, an academic term, and a minimum pair (sea/she, sink/think, live/leave). Listen carefully, take notes, and share the pronunciation tips with your classmates.

- 1 What word did you first choose? Why?
- 2 What was the first video shown? Who was the speaker?
- 3 What pronunciation tips did YouGlish.com provide for this word?
- 4 What were some similar words? List a few.
- 5 Which word from your list did you choose to compare with the original word?
- 6 What phrase did you choose? Why?
- 7 What academic term or specialized word did you choose? Why?
- 8 Which minimal pair did you choose? Why?
- 9 What pronunciation tips did you learn?
- 10 How can you use YouGlish.com to improve your pronunciation?

“The bold adventurer succeeds the best.”  
– Ovid (43 B.C.E. – 17 C.E.), Roman poet





## Searching for My Dream Vacation Home: Airbnb

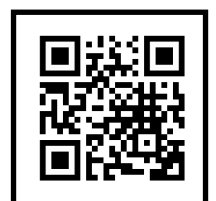
Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Where is your dream vacation home? First, go to **airbnb.com** and choose your dream vacation destination. Second, search for your dream vacation home. How many bedrooms? How many bathrooms? Does it have a view? Describe your dream vacation home. Use the vocabulary you learned in this lesson —and your imagination!

Destination: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 What does the outside of your dream vacation home look like?
- 2 How would you describe the area? (Search Google Maps for the neighborhood.)
- 3 What does the inside of your dream vacation home look like?
- 4 Describe your favorite room.
- 5 How is your favorite room decorated?
- 6 What else makes this home special?
- 7 What activities will you do on this vacation?
- 8 What other information can you share about your fantasy vacation?
- 9 Who will stay with you in your dream vacation home? Why?
- 10 What five adjectives describe your dream vacation home?

“There is a role and function for beauty in our time.”  
—Tadao Ando (1941- ), Japanese architect





## Appreciating Pets

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have pets? What makes a good pet? What makes a good pet owner? Search for an informative article about caring for pets. After that, please answer the questions below:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Web address: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_ Publication date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Provide a brief summary of the article you chose. What was the main idea?
- 2 Why did you choose this article?
- 3 What is the author's opinion on pets?
- 4 Which ideas from the article/video do you agree with? Why?
- 5 Identify five verbs in the article.
  - a
  - b
  - c
  - d
  - e
- 6 What do you like the most about the article?
- 7 How could the article be improved?
- 8 How would you rate the article on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?
- 9 What do you look for in pets?
- 10 What advice can you share with a new pet owner?

“Dogs are our link to paradise. They don’t know evil or jealousy or discontent.”  
—Milan Kundera (1929–today) – Czech-born French writer



## Celebrating Birthdays

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone has a birthday. The day you came into this world marked a significant change for those around you.

Do you know what the world was like the day you were born? Do you know how life changed for your family that day? Conduct an Internet search and talk to a relative to find out what life was like when you were born. Take notes and answer the following questions. Discuss your findings with your classmates.

- 1 Where were you born? Describe the place where you were born.
- 2 Who was present at your birth?
- 3 What were some surprises surrounding your birth?
- 4 What was happening in the world when you were born? What were some major news stories at this time?
- 5 What songs were popular when you were born?
- 6 What were some popular movies that year?
- 7 Who are some famous people who share your birthday?
- 8 Who do you typically celebrate your birthday with? Why?
- 9 Do you have any special plans to celebrate your next birthday? Why?
- 10 What has been the best year of your life so far? Why?

**“The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.”**

—Oprah Winfrey (1954–), American star and philanthropist



## Handling Culture Shock

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Culture shock occurs when a person feels disoriented in a new environment because they are unfamiliar with the local lifestyle and customs. It's a common experience for immigrants, international students, tourists and ex-pats alike! Choose a video about culture shock online, watch and take notes. Then answer the following questions.

- 1 How does the video you chose describe culture shock?
- 2 Is there more than one kind of culture shock? Explain.
- 3 According to the video, how long does culture shock typically last?
- 4 List five tips for overcoming culture shock provided in the video.
  - a
  - b
  - c
  - d
  - e
- 5 What do you appreciate about being in the United States?
- 6 What do you find uncomfortable about American culture?
- 7 What are some ways that American culture is different from yours?
- 8 How would you rate the video on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?
- 9 Have you experienced culture shock? In what ways?
- 10 What advice would you offer an international student coming to the U.S. for a year?

**“Coming back to America was, for me, much more of a cultural shock than going to India.”**

—Steve Jobs (1955-2011), American entrepreneur and Apple co-founder







### Reviewing Movies

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Can you recommend an excellent movie? First, select one of your favorite films. Second, go to **imdb.com** or **metacritic.com** and research your selected film. Third, take notes. A strong movie review will combine both facts and opinions. Use this short worksheet to describe the movie and prepare to share your informed opinion with your classmates.

Movie Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Year released: \_\_\_\_\_ Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Actors/Actresses: \_\_\_\_\_ Awards: \_\_\_\_\_

How many times have you watched the movie? Where?

#### Plot Information:

- 1 Where and when does the movie take place?
- 2 Who is the main character? Can you briefly describe another important character?
- 3 What happens in the movie?
- 4 What is the best part? Why?
- 5 Does the movie surprise the audience? How?
- 6 Who do you think would like this movie?
- 7 How could the movie be better?
- 8 How would you rate the movie on a scale of 1–5, with 5 being the highest? Why?
- 9 Can you choose five adjectives to describe this movie? Why?

“Every great film should seem new every time you see it.”  
—Roger Ebert (1942–2013), American film critic





## Should You Buy It?

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Product reviews are increasingly popular, and you can find many places to share reviews. For your next class, pick a consumer product to review. Do some research online about the product. Find at least two sources of information. Then fill in this worksheet and create a product review. Share with your classmates.

Product: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Source: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 Do you own the product?
- 2 What is the purpose of the product?
- 3 Who is the target audience for this product? Who usually uses it?
- 4 How is the product used?
- 5 What is the best feature of this consumer product?
- 6 What competitors does the product have? Does this product have a competitive advantage?
- 7 Are there some possible dangers or misuses of the product?
- 8 What did you learn from your research about this product?
- 9 Would you recommend this product to your classmates? Do you have some concerns about this product?
- 10 How would you rate the product on a scale of 1–5, with five being the highest? Why?

“The customer is always right.”  
—American proverb



## Looking at Languages

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

All of the world's languages, estimated at least 6,000, have stories. English, for example, has become the world's most influential language in business and science over the last 50 years.

Besides English, what language are you curious about? Can you tell us more about another language? Go to to Wikipedia to gain more information about another language spoken on planet Earth. Take notes and answer the following questions. Discuss your research with your classmates.

- 1 What language did you choose to study today? Why did you pick it?
- 2 Where is this language usually spoken? How many people, approximately, speak it?
- 3 Can you tell me a bit more about this language?
- 4 Where is this language an official language?
- 5 Is this an ancient or modern language? How do you know?
- 6 What are five words that English borrows from this language?
  - a
  - b
  - c
  - d
  - e
- 7 Who are some famous people who speak this language?
- 8 What music or movies are created in this language? Can you give some examples?
- 9 How similar is this language to English? In what ways?
- 10 In what situations would knowing how to speak this language be helpful?

**“The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.”**

—Oprah Winfrey (1954–), American star and philanthropist

**Sharing Restaurant Recommendations**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Everyone has different opinions on which restaurants are the best of the best. We'd like to hear yours! Give us your recommendations on where to find the best breakfast food, pizza, and ethnic food of your choice (ex. Italian, Chinese, Mexican) locally. Then, answer the following questions and share your recommendations with the class!

Questions:	Best Breakfast:	Best Pizza:	Best Ethnic Food:
What is the name of the restaurant?			
How long has it been in business?			
Is this establishment part of a chain or independently owned?			
What is the average price of a meal at this establishment?			
What menu item is this place's "claim to fame?"			
What menu item do you order most frequently here? Do you have a "usual?"			
Why do you recommend this place? What makes it special?			
Name one advantage this eatery has over competitors.			
Name one disadvantage this eatery has over competitors.			
Does the average Yelp rating for this place fit your experience there? Why?			

**"You learn a lot about someone when you share a meal together."**  
—Anthony Bourdain (1956-2018), American chef and author

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## Extension Activities

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### 1. GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER: ICE BREAKERS (PG. 2)

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Can you introduce yourself to your classmates? Create a 60 to 90-second video introduction for your peers. Please include your name, two things that you like, a favorite movie, a favorite song, and a favorite dish/meal. Finally, let us know two things that you want to learn this year.

### 2. REVIEWING PRONUNCIATION TIPS ON YUGLISH (PG. 3)

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- a) What are some important English words in your field or major? Watch 3 clips from YouGlish featuring the word. Select one to explain to your classmates in a 60 to 90-second video. Send your video to your instructor for feedback.
- b) What other minimal pairs (ex: sat vs. sit, buy vs. boy, trip vs. tip) can you think of? Choose a minimal pair you sometimes have trouble pronouncing. Make a 60 to 90-second video of yourself using the pronunciation tips you discovered on YouGlish with these minimal pairs. Send your video to your instructor for feedback.

### 3. SEARCHING FOR MY DREAM VACATION HOME: AIRBNB (PG. 4)

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What does your dream vacation home look like? Find an ideal vacation home and create a PowerPoint presentation describing it. Be prepared to share your presentation with your classmates.

### 4. APPRECIATING PETS (PG. 5)

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What is some helpful, sound advice on pet ownership? Compose a 300-500-word advice article about owning pets. Upload your article to the class blog and share your insights.

### 5. CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS (PG. 6)

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What was life like the week you were born? Interview a family member about the week you entered the world. Write a letter summarizing your interview to another relative.

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## Extension Activities

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### 6. HANDLING CULTURE SHOCK (PG. 7)

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What is culture shock? Write a short essay explaining culture shock and providing advice to recent arrivals in the United States. Share your video on the class blog and assist immigrants and international students in managing culture shock!

### 7. REVIEWING MOVIES (PG. 8)

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Are there any movies that you would like to recommend? Write a 200 to 500-word movie review and include at least one illustration and cite the source. Share your review on the class blog.

### 8. SHOULD YOU BUY IT? (PG. 9)

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Can you write a persuasive product review? Write an Amazon product review of 100 to 250 words. You may include properly cited illustrations.

Did the product you reviewed exist a decade ago? How did it change? Compare an older model with the most current version in a venn diagram.

### 9. LOOKING AT LANGUAGES (PG. 10)

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How similar is the language you chose to English? Compare and contrast English with this language with a chart. Be prepared to give a brief presentation to your classmates explaining your reasoning.

### 10. SHARING RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS (PG. 11)

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How do you start the day? Describe your favorite breakfast restaurant. Write a short Yelp recommendation for this restaurant and share on the class blog.

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## ABOUT CHIMAYO PRESS 127

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## About Chimayo Press

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### Sophisticated English for Global Souls

CHIMAYO PRESS is an independent educational publishing company committed to publishing niche books that create compelling conversations, deepen relationships, and celebrate the human spirit. We launched in 2005 with one advanced level English as a Second Language (ESL) title—Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations on Timeless Topics—from authors Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson. This fluency-focused English textbook has blossomed into a series that meets the varying needs of English language learners and teachers in over 50 countries.


Compelling Conversations has also become the foundation for an expanding number of ESL and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) titles. The Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations series includes national versions for Vietnamese learners of American English (2011), American immigrants and refugees (2012), Japanese English language learners (2015). In 2012, we also published It's a Breeze: 42 Lively Lessons on American Idioms. In 2016, Compelling Conversations Vietnam - Speaking Exercises for Vietnamese Learners of English (Teresa X. Nguyen and Roth) took the series to a new level.

Janet Levine and Laurie Selik expanded the series to include professional books for native English speakers. Compelling Conversations for Fundraisers: Talk Your Way to Success with Donors and Funders (2016) continues the focus on building stronger relationships through better conversations. Future titles will include Compelling Conversations for Call Center Professionals and Compelling Conversations for Global Business Professionals.

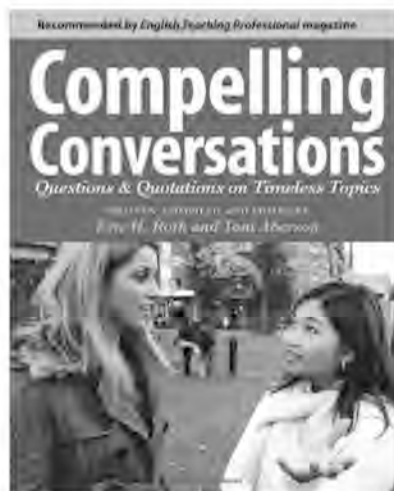
As a small publisher, we are grateful for each purchase of our books. We have a growing list of both nonfiction and fiction titles—our authors include working English teachers, radio professionals, and screenwriters. Each distinctive book reflects the passion and perspectives of the authors. Visit [www.ChimayoPress.com](http://www.ChimayoPress.com) to see our growing catalog. English language teachers, tutors, and students are also invited to visit [www.compellingconversations.com](http://www.compellingconversations.com) for more conversation materials and teacher tips.

Chimayo Press is named for our amazingly communicative, talented, and loving first border collie. We met Chimayo soon after a visit to the inspirational New Mexico town on a cross-country trip from Chicago to Los Angeles back in the 20th century. That's Chimayo's image in our logo. Would you like to review this book? We'd love to receive your feedback, read a positive review on Amazon, and start another new conversation!

Ask more. Know more. Share more.  
Create Compelling Conversations.

 [www.CompellingConversations.com](http://www.CompellingConversations.com)

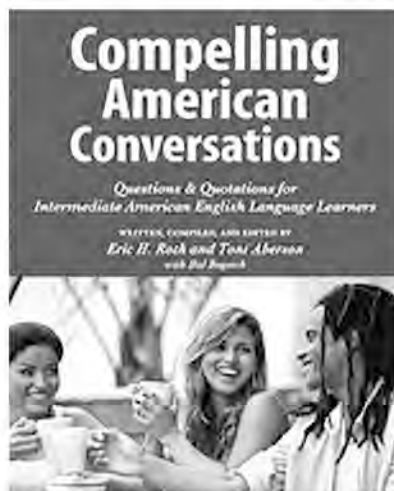
## Critical Praise for the Compelling Conversations Series



### Compelling Conversations

"In my own teaching, I have found questions and quotations to be highly effective in promoting student discussion. Questions are useful in that they require a response from the listener. Asking them also helps students master the tricky rules of the interrogative. Quotations are brilliant flashes of wit expressed in the shorest space possible, often just a sentence or two. The authors have compiled a formidable collection of quotations by famous people. The authors also add some wise proverbs here and there. My two favorites were 'Recite patience three times and it will spare you a murder' and 'When money talks, truth keeps silent,' which are from Korea and Russia. In sum, *Compelling Conversations* is a recommended resource for teachers who want to make their conversation classes more learner-centered. It should be especially appealing to those who wish to escape the confines of the Presentation-Practice-Production approach and do without a formal grammatical or functional syllabus. It reflects the authors' considerable professional experience, and would be a notable addition to any English teacher's bookshelf."

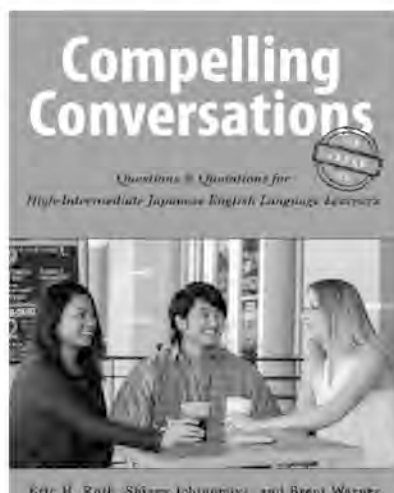
—Hall Houston English Teaching Professional magazine (January 2009)



### Compelling American Conversations

"How can so much learning be in just one book? *Compelling American Conversations* is all that an ESL teacher or student needs to use in their course. With clear, easy-to-follow directions, students learn necessary details about American English and culture, practice critical thinking, and expand vocabulary and idioms as they converse in real, natural adult English. Included in the "Search and Share" component are marvelous lessons on using the Internet. An extra bonus is that any of the conversations, quotes, etc. can be used as writing prompts. The book is fun and stimulating and, fortunately, very accessible for the intermediate learner."

—Planaria Price, author of *Life in the USA*



### Compelling Conversations - Japan

"As an ESL teacher and accent reduction coach, I regularly encounter frustrated students from Japan who don't feel comfortable speaking English. *Compelling Conversations - Japan* will prove very useful to Japanese English Language Learners ... It's more than just a conversation book; it's also a cross-cultural awareness book, filled with proverbs and cultural insights. In addition, it features valuable English pronunciation exercises focusing on the sounds that are difficult for native Japanese speakers. It also contains numerous fun and thought-provoking conversation topics relevant to a person from a Japanese cultural background."

—Lisa Mojsin, Author, *Mastering the American Accent*

## MAKE EACH LESSON UNIQUE!

How do we create more compelling conversations in our English classroom? Why not give English students both a choice and a voice in their learning materials?

A staple of the Compelling Conversations series, the “Search and Share” activity asks students to take a more active role in their English classes. Designed primarily for intermediate and advanced English learners, these popular, adaptable speaking activities allow students to research and share their personal interests with classmates in a safe, focused manner on chosen themes. Result? Students bring authentic materials into our English classrooms, creating unique and memorable class discussions.

This extensive collection of reproducible Search and Share lessons encourages curiosity, deepens research skills, expands vocabulary, and sparks group discussions. What will your students choose? What will they share? Let’s find out!

### PRAISE FOR SEARCH AND SHARE ACTIVITIES

“The questions asked are both information-based and open-ended, providing ample opportunity for challenging and meaningful conversation practice. Any EFL instructor.... is sure to find Roth’s latest work an invaluable resource.”

— **Carl W. Hart**, EFL Instructor, author of *Secrets of Teaching ESL Grammar*

“I have been using the Compelling Conversation Series for the last ten years in my college classes....Most other ESL books are not geared towards relevant conversations that encourage students to talk. Our students love the series to the point that the conversations spill over into their breaks and lunchtime.”

— **Mark Treston**, Director, Global Innovation Schools  
[www.globalinnovationus.com](http://www.globalinnovationus.com)

“A valuable addition to the English classroom.... Empowering students to discuss topics and points they themselves find interesting is a sure fire way to improve recall.”

— **Ben Worthington**, *IELTSpodcast.com*

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[www.thelanguageschool.us](http://www.thelanguageschool.us)



**ERIC H. ROTH** teaches international graduate students the pleasures and perils of academic writing and public speaking in English at the University of Southern California (USC). For the last 20 years, he has taught English and writing to high school, adult, community college, and university students. He has also taught citizenship classes and directed an adult education center in Los Angeles that assisted over a thousand refugees become naturalized American citizens. Roth has also taught in France, Spain, and Vietnam, and traveled to over 40 countries. Finally, Roth has co-authored four English language training (ELT) textbooks in the Compelling Conversations series.



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