

◆ Unit 5 ◆

Asking Clarification Questions to Show You Want to Understand

Part One ◆ *Focus on the Conversation Strategy*

Exercise 1: With a partner, read the two dialogs below.

The woman is giving information to the man. After you read the dialogs, decide if the man was *an active listener* in *Dialog 1* or *Dialog 2*.

Dialog 1

1. **Woman:** Can you go shopping today?
2. **Man:** Sure. What do you need?
3. **Woman:** First, you can get some money from the bank. Then go to the grocery store and get some rice. After that, pick up some apples and bananas at the fruit store. Also, we need stamps from the post office. OK?
4. **Man:** Could you repeat that?



Dialog 2

1. **Woman:** Can you go shopping today?
2. **Man:** Sure. What do you need?
3. **Woman:** First, you can get some money from the bank.
4. **Man:** OK. How much should I get?
5. **Woman:** About \$35. Then, go to the grocery store and get some rice.
6. **Man:** I'm sorry. What should I get?
7. **Woman:** Some rice. After that, pick up some apples and bananas at the fruit store.
8. **Man:** OK.
9. **Woman:** Also, we need stamps from the post office.
10. **Man:** I'm sorry. I didn't understand.
11. **Woman:** You should get stamps at the post office.

Question: Was the man a more active listener in *Dialog 1* or *Dialog 2*? _____

Exercise 2:



Listen to the speakers. After each sentence, choose a response. (Teachers: See script at the end of this handout.)

1. (Listen to your friend.)
You choose: a) I see.
b) Excuse me. What did you say?

2. (Listen to your friend.)
You choose: a) That's too bad.
b) Excuse me. What did you say?

3. (Listen to the waiter at a restaurant.)
You choose: a) Great!
b) Could you repeat that, please?

4. (Listen to your teacher.)
You choose: a) I got it.
b) Excuse me. Could you repeat that?

5. (Listen to the bus driver.)
You choose: a) OK.
b) I'm sorry. I didn't understand.

6. (Listen to your mother.)
You choose: a) Wonderful!
b) I'm sorry. What did you say?

7. (Listen to your doctor.)
You choose: a) I understand.
b) Excuse me. Could you repeat that, please?

8. (Listen to your boss.)
You choose: a) I see.
b) I'm sorry. What did you say?

Part Two ♦ *Practicing the Conversation Strategy*

Sarah's Chart	Ho's Chart
Brother's name: Bill	Brother's name: _____
His age: <i>blah blah</i> (23)	His age: _____
His job: <i>blah blah</i> (teacher)	His job: _____
His favorite music: classical	His favorite music: _____

Note: *blah blah* is a word that you don't understand, so ask your partner for clarification.

Exercise 3: Sarah is giving information about her chart to Ho.



¹⁾ Look at Sarah's and Ho's charts above. Sarah is going to describe her chart to Ho, and Ho will fill in his chart. Notice that Sarah's chart has *blah blah* sometimes and the answers are in parentheses.

²⁾ Look at the dialog below for a short time (about one minute).

³⁾ Listen to the dialog but look only at Sarah's and Ho's charts above. Do not look at the dialog below.

⁴⁾ Listen to the dialog again and fill in the blanks below.

1. **Sarah:** I'll tell you about my brother, and you can fill in the chart, OK?
2. **Ho:** All right. Let's _____.
3. **Sarah:** My _____ name is Bill.
4. **Ho:** I see.
5. **Sarah:** He is *blah blah* _____ old.
6. **Ho:** I'm _____. Could you _____ that?
7. **Sarah:** Sure. He is _____ old.
8. **Ho:** I _____ it.
9. **Sarah:** Next, his _____ is a *blah blah*.
10. **Ho:** Excuse me. _____ did you say?
11. **Sarah:** I said that he is a _____.
12. **Ho:** All _____.
13. **Sarah:** Finally, his _____ music is classical.
14. **Ho:** I got _____.

Exercise 4:

Clarifications

*Excuse me. What did you say?
 Could you repeat that?
 I'm sorry. I didn't understand.
 Excuse me. Could you repeat that?*

Student A

Step 1: Tell Student B the information in the box. When you see *blah blah*, say “*blah blah*.” Student B will ask you to repeat. Then say the information clearly.

1. My neighbor's name: Ami
2. Her favorite drink: *blah blah* (coffee)
3. During free time: plays computer games
4. Most expensive thing that she owns: *blah blah* (her car)
5. Sickness now: *blah blah* (headache)
6. Pet: *cat*

Step 2: Student B will tell you some information for the box. Fill in the box.

When Student B says “*blah blah*,” ask for clarification.

1. Student B's son's name: _____
2. Hobby: _____
3. Favorite food: _____
4. Bad habit: _____
5. Favorite sport: _____
6. Weight: _____

Step 3: Fill in your side. Then fill in Student B's side. (See next page.)

This is your side. Write some information.
Then tell Student B the information.
Say “blah blah” sometimes.

1. My friend’s name: _____
2. Favorite food: _____
3. Job: _____
4. Favorite thing to do: _____
5. Number of children: _____

This is Student B’s side. Student B
will tell you some information.
Then you will fill in this side.

1. My relative’s name: _____
2. Hobby: _____
3. Bad habit: _____
4. Favorite type of movie: _____
5. Favorite drink: _____

Exercise 4 continued:

Clarifications

*Excuse me. What did you say?
Could you repeat that?
I'm sorry. I didn't understand.
Excuse me. Could you repeat that?*

Student B

Step 1: Student A will tell you some information for the box. Fill in the information. When Student A says “*blah blah*,” ask for clarification.

1. My neighbor's name: _____
2. Her favorite drink: _____
3. During her free time: _____
4. Most expensive thing that she owns: _____
5. Sickness now: _____
6. Pet: _____

Step 2: Tell Student A the information in the box. When you see *blah blah*, say “*blah blah*.” Student A will ask you to repeat. Then say the information clearly.

1. Student B's son's name: *blah blah* (Ken)
2. Hobby: *blah blah* (cooking)
3. Favorite food: pizza
4. Bad habit: talking on the telephone too much
5. Favorite sport: *blah blah* (tennis)
6. Weight: *blah blah* (158 pounds)

Step 3: Fill in your side. Then fill in Student A's side. (See next page.)

This is your side. Write some information.
Then tell Student A the information.
Say “blah blah” sometimes.

1. My relative’s name: _____
2. Hobby _____
3. Bad habit: _____
4. Favorite type of movie: _____
5. Favorite drink: _____

This is Student A’s side. Student A
will tell you some information.
Then you will fill in this side.

1. My friend’s name: _____
2. Favorite food: _____
3. Job: _____
4. Favorite thing to do: _____
5. Number of children: _____

Exercise 5:

Read this four-line dialog with your partner. The word *blah blah* has no meaning, so when you hear it, ask your partner for clarification.

<p>Student A sees this part of the dialog. Student A starts . . .</p> <p>Student A responds to Student B with one of the sentences in square 3.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Student B sees this part of the dialog and responds with one of the sentences in square 2.</p> <p>Student B responds to Student A with one of the sentences in square 4.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
<p>1. What time does the library close?</p>	<p>2. • I think it closes at <i>blah blah</i>. • It has some books.</p>
<p>3. • I'll probably take the bus. • I'm sorry. What did you say?</p>	<p>4. • If it rains, we'll stay home. • It closes at 6 p.m.</p>

Exercise 6:

Student A

Step 1: Read line 1. Student B will choose a response and read it. Then you choose a response and read it, etc.

1. Hi Lee. Is it OK to join you?
3. • How was your <i>blah blah</i> ? • Because it cost too much to fly.
5. • I said, “How was your weekend?” • We’ll probably order pizza.
7. • I see. Was it very old? • Excuse me. What did you say?

Step 2: Student B will start. Then you choose and read a response, etc.

2. • Yes, I know how to fix computers. • Pretty good. How about you?
4. • Sorry. Could you repeat that? • Well, he doesn’t eat very much.
6. • They will probably leave at noon. • That’s too bad. Do you want <i>blah blah</i> ?
8. • Do you want to use my cell phone? • OK. See you later.

Step 3: Change parts with your partner. You will be Student B and do Ex. 6 again.

Step 4: While you wait for your classmates to finish, you can . . .

- talk to your partner about any topic that you want.
 - ask your partner these questions and have a conversation.
1. What did you do last weekend?
 3. Do you use a cell phone often?

Exercise 6 *continued:***Student B**

Step 1: Student A will start. Then you choose and read a response, etc.

2. • Sure. Have a seat. • No, her name is Joan.
4. • I found it under my bed. • Sorry, I didn't understand.
6. • Oh, it was super! We went to the <i>blah blah</i> . • Yes, the movie had a good ending.
8. • Only my brother stayed home. • We went to the beach. It was super!

Step 2: Read line 1. Student A will choose a response and read it. Then you choose a response and read it, etc.

1. Hi. How's it going?
3. • I'm fine, but I can't <i>blah blah</i> . • No, I missed the news.
5. • I'm sorry to hear that. • I can't find my cell phone. I need to call home.
7. • No, that's too tall for me. • Excuse me. I didn't understand what you said.

Step 3: Change parts with your partner. You will be Student A and do Ex. 6 again.

Step 4: While you wait for your classmates to finish, you can . . .

- talk to your partner about any topic that you want.
 - ask your partner these questions and have a conversation.
2. Do like going to the beach?
4. Do you think that cell phones are sometimes a problem?

Exercise 7:

Step 1: Look at the chart. Also, look at the *Choices* under the chart.



Step 2: Listen and fill in the chart. Ask for clarification if you don't understand.

Country	A person from Canada	A person from Mexico	A person from Korea
Favorite subject			
Sickness			
Job			
Marriage		<i>married</i>	

<i>Choices</i>						
Subject:	science	art	geography	math	cold	history
Health:	flu	sore throat	headache	doctor		stomach ache
Job:	actor	nurse	cook	divorced		
Marriage:	single	engaged	married			

Step 3: One person is engaged. Who is it? _____

Step 4: Listen to the questions and write the answers.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

This is Hong's chart

Apartment color	white	red	blue
My relative	<i>uncle</i>	³ <i>grandfather</i>	¹ <i>sister</i>
Favorite fruit	<i>apples</i>	<i>pears</i>	<i>bananas</i>

2

4

This is Pablo's chart

Apartment color	white	red	blue
My relative	<i>uncle</i>		
Favorite fruit		<i>pears</i>	

Exercise 8:

Look at Hong's and Pablo's charts above. Hong has all the information in her chart, but Pablo's chart has only some information. Hong tells Pablo the information, and he writes it in his chart. Hong will explain "square" number 1, *sister*, then square number 2, *apples*, etc. With a partner, read the dialog and fill in Pablo's chart. Don't look at Hong's chart.

1. *Hong*: I'll describe the chart to you. My sister lives in the blue apartment.
2. *Pablo*: Excuse me. What did you say?
3. *Hong*: My sister lives in the blue apartment.
4. *Pablo*: OK. I got it
5. *Hong*: My uncle likes apples.
6. *Pablo*: All right.
7. *Hong*: My grandfather likes pears.
8. *Pablo*: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?
9. *Hong*: Sure. My grandfather likes pears.
10. *Pablo*: OK. Next?
11. *Hong*: The person who lives in the blue apartment eats bananas.
12. *Pablo*: Could you spell "bananas," please?
13. *Hong*: Yes. It's B-A-N-A-N-A-S.
14. *Pablo*: Thank you. Now, I think we're finished.

Exercise 9:

Student A

Step 1: Describe the information in the chart below to Student B. First, look at the numbers in the chart. Describe the information in this order. In other words, start with square number 1, *dancing*, and then describe square number 2, *steak*, etc.

Job	clerk	cook	teacher
Favorite TV programs	⁴ news	⁹ game shows	³ movies
Hobby	⁷ fishing	¹ dancing	¹² traveling
Favorite food	² steak	¹¹ spaghetti	⁸ fish
Bad habit	¹⁰ smokes	⁶ eats ice cream	⁵ shopping

Step 2: Compare your chart with Student B's.

Step 3: Student B will describe the information in the chart below. Listen and fill in the chart. If you don't understand Student B, ask for clarification.

Person	student from New York	student from Paris	student from Hong Kong
Pet			
Expensive thing they have			
How they travel to work			
Free time activity			

Step 4: Compare your chart with Student B's.

Step 5: While you wait for your classmates to finish, you can . . .

- change parts with your partner. You will be Student B and do Ex. 9 again.
 - talk to your partner about any topic that you want.
 - ask your partner these questions and have a conversation.
1. What do you like to do during your free time?
 3. What is the most expensive thing that you have?

Student B

Step 1: Student A will describe the information in the chart below. Listen and fill in the chart. If you don't understand Student A, ask for clarification.

Job	clerk	cook	teacher
Favorite TV programs			
Hobby			
Favorite food			
Bad habit			

Step 2: Compare your chart with Student A's.

Step 3: Describe the information in the chart below to Student A. First, look at the numbers in the chart. Describe the information in this order. In other words, start with square number 1, *ring*, and then describe square number 2, *bicycle*, etc.

Person	student from New York	student from Paris	student from Hong Kong
Pet	⁹ <i>bird</i>	³ <i>fish</i>	⁴ <i>snake</i>
Expensive thing they have	¹ <i>ring</i>	¹² <i>computer</i>	⁷ <i>watch</i>
How they travel to work	¹¹ <i>bus</i>	⁸ <i>car</i>	² <i>bicycle</i>
Free time activity	⁶ <i>rides horses</i>	⁵ <i>watches TV</i>	¹⁰ <i>reads books</i>

Step 4: Compare your chart with Student A's.

Step 5: While you wait for your classmates to finish, you can . . .

- change parts with your partner. You will be Student A and do Ex. 9 again.
 - talk to your partner about any topic that you want.
 - ask your partner these questions and have a conversation.
2. Do you have a pet?
 4. Do you have a bad habit?

Unit 5 Script and Teacher's Notes

Teacher's introduction script: *If someone is talking to you and you don't understand, it's important to tell that person. If you say, "I'm sorry, I didn't understand," it shows that you want to understand them. It also shows that you think that they are interesting. And it shows that you think their ideas are important. In this unit, we will practice expressions that you can use when you don't understand someone.*

Unit 5 Exercise 2. •

Pause after each sentence to allow the students time to circle an answer. Then resume with the restatement where appropriate. You can use "blah" for each of the syllables in the missing words. For example, computer software – blah BLAH blah BLAH blah.

1. (*friend*): I think I need some help with my [*garble*]. I said I think I need some help with my computer software.
2. (*friend*): My car is having some problems.
3. (*waiter*): Today, we have a special dish. It's [*garble*]. Our special is fish in a tomato sauce.
4. (*your teacher*): For homework, I want you to [*garble*]. Please do exercises 5 and 6 in your book.
5. (*bus driver*): It costs 50 cents to ride the bus.
6. (*mother*): Your grandmother is coming to visit us next week.
7. (*doctor*): I recommend that you take [*garble*] I said, take two of these pills twice a day for 4 weeks.
8. (*boss*): We [*garble*] so you should come to work earlier tomorrow. We had a problem with a machine, so come to work earlier tomorrow.

Unit 5 Exercise 3. •

- 1 Sarah: I'll tell you about my brother, and you can fill in the chart. OK?
- 2 Ho: All right. Let's start.
- 3 Sarah: My brother's name is Bill.
- 4 Ho: I see.
- 5 Sarah: He is [blah blah] years old.
- 6 Ho: I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?
- 7 Sarah: Sure. He is 23 years old.
- 8 Ho: I got it.
- 9 Sarah: Next. His job is a [blah blah]?
- 10 Ho: Excuse me. What did you say?
- 11 Sarah: I said that he is a teacher.
- 12 Ho: All right.
- 13 Sarah: Finally, his favorite music is classical.
- 14 Ho: I got it.

Unit 5 Exercise 7. •

Step 2 Give sufficient time for the students to write the answers in this step. They have been instructed to ask for clarification if they don't understand.

1. The person from Mexico is married.
2. The cook is from Korea.
3. The person from Canada likes history.
4. The cook has the flu.
5. Next to the person who likes history is the person who likes science.
6. The person from Canada is divorced.
7. The doctor is married.
8. The cook likes art.
9. The married person has a stomachache.
10. The actor has a cold.

Exercise 7, Step 4 •

Give sufficient time for the students to write the answers in this step. Ask them to write short answers—not full sentences.

1. What subject does the person from Canada like?
2. Is the actor married?
3. Does the person from Korea like history or art?
4. Who has a stomach ache?
5. Is the person from Korea married?
6. Who likes science?
7. What sickness does the person from Canada have?