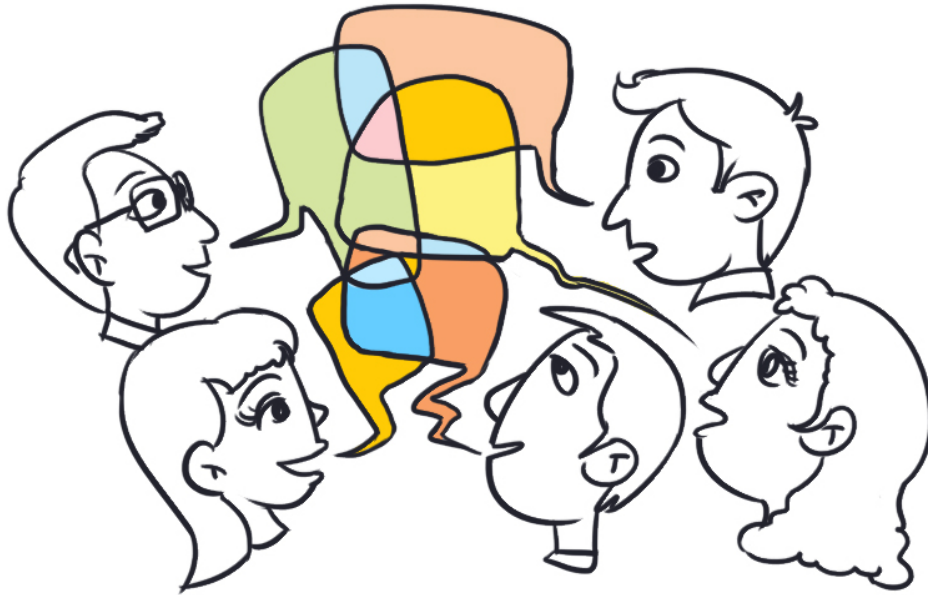


# 50 Conversation Classes



From [ESLGamesBox.com](http://ESLGamesBox.com)

# Conversation topics

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- 2 Annoyances
- 3 Animals
- 4 Art
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# Introduction

I believe that the secret of language learning is to give learners a reason to speak and to scaffold their speaking with lexis and grammatical structure as they are needed. The most fruitful conversations arise spontaneously and there is an art to listening well and asking the right questions in order to uncover the nuggets of universal interest which provoke stimulating class discussion. However, sometimes, despite our best efforts, no nuggets are immediately upturned. Sometimes learners are too tired or reticent to open up immediately and then it is the teacher's role to give learners a gentle push into areas we hope will create intellectual arousal and opportunities for the teacher to support them with appropriate input.

## About the materials

The activities in this book are intended merely to facilitate and support rich and stimulating conversation. The material is not designed to produce standardised lessons. Each unit contains many possible branching off points which the teacher and students can choose to pursue in more depth or to accept at face value.

While these conversation activities require little preparation, they do require that the teacher works hard during the session. The output produced will be unpredictable and the areas of support needed can be wide-ranging. It may help to have a language reference book at hand and to be unafraid to openly refer to it or better still have the learners look up grammatical rules for themselves.

## How to use the material

Give a copy of the activity page to each learner and have them read the quote and give their reaction to it. Then put them into pairs or small groups to try and unscramble the *mixed up vocabulary* items. After 10 minutes or so, go through the answers together.

Next have learners look at the idioms. Feel free to go off-track as questions arise from the presented language. Maybe they have similar idioms in their own language, maybe they find the construction unusual or funny. Make it clear that it's not mandatory that learners are able to reproduce each of these idioms, but that understanding and inferring their meaning is the main goal. If learners have grammar questions you can address them in depth or stress that the main focus of this section is understanding and move on.

The *grammar bit* is deliberately located at the bottom of the page so it can be easily omitted from your photocopies if think it is unsuitable for the class. This section is not designed to lead into a full on grammar drill but instead to give learners exposure and repetition of a particular structure as well as reassuring learners that explicit grammar learning is being represented.

Of course, you can go into a longer more structured grammar explanation at this (or any other) point. One way to work with the *grammar bit* is to have students copy the structure but change the context, either through putting a sentence on the board and having the class make changes to it as a group, or asking learners to create their own grammatically similar sentence.

The last step is to give groups of learners a deck of shuffled question cards placed face down on the table in front of them. You may choose to pre-teach any vocabulary you think might be unfamiliar at this point, or leave it to the groups to figure out the meaning for themselves (or ask for your help).

Learners take it in turns to turn over the top card and ask their question to the other group members. The questions should be asked to each member in turn in order to give everyone a chance to speak but spontaneous group discussion shouldn't be discouraged. Be on hand to take notes and help out where needed. Finally, when the conversations are dying out, or after a specified time limit, go over anything interesting you heard during the activity and ask groups what other information they found out during their conversations. Further discussion may well spring up again during this final section.

# 1 Age

*“My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty. She's ninety-seven now, and we don't know where the heck she is.”*

— Ellen DeGeneres

## Mixed up vocabulary

**coddihol** - (n) the time when you were young

**tenrgeae** - (n) someone aged between 13 and 19

**piennerso** - (n) someone who has finished their working life

**mldeid-adge** - (adj) to be neither young nor old

**mutaer** - (adj) behaves like an adult, not childish

**rtreteienm** - (n) the period after you finish your working life

**tlddore** - (n) a very young child

## Idioms and collocations

Ben wants to be an archaeologist when he *grows* \_\_\_\_\_.

He's *getting on a* \_\_\_\_\_ but he's still got a great voice.

you look *good for your* \_\_\_\_\_, what's the secret?

The 1930s were the \_\_\_\_\_ *age* of Jazz.

Disneyland was fantastic, we had the \_\_\_\_\_ *of our lives* there.

<i>up   bit   age   time   golden</i>
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## Grammar bit

If I could retire tomorrow, I would. I would spend my time travelling the world and learning about different cultures.

# 1 Age

<b>What's the best age to be?</b>	<b>In your country how old must you be to smoke, drink, drive and get married?</b>
<b>How old were you when you left home?</b>	<b>What advice would you give to someone half your age?</b>
<b>What do you think is the best age to have children?</b>	<b>What do you think is the best age for a political leader?</b>
<b>What's the retirement age in your country?</b>	<b>Have you ever lied about your age?</b>
<b>Would you like to live until you were 1000?</b>	<b>Do you think age difference is unimportant in a relationship?</b>

## 2 Annoyances

“People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.”

— Isaac Asimov

### Mixed up vocabulary

iierrtta - (v) to make someone annoyed

ptse - (n) someone or something annoying

incnnnoeveti - (adj) not simple or helpful

fresatdrut - (adj) how you feel when you have trouble doing something

fiuorsu - (adj) very, very angry

bda doom - (n) the feeling you have when you are not happy

clam wond - (v) what you might tell someone who is feeling angry or annoyed

### Idioms and collocations

The new traffic lights are a *pain in the* \_\_\_\_\_.

My supervisor is *driving me* \_\_\_\_\_ today.

This weatherman *gets on my* \_\_\_\_\_, he’s always so jolly.

My boss *hit the* \_\_\_\_\_ when she found out about the missing money.

it really \_\_\_\_\_ *me* when you eat with your mouth open.

*crazy   bugs   neck   nerves   roof*

### Grammar bit

I’m so frustrated by this English homework, English grammar is very frustrating, and the lesson was so boring, I’ve never been so bored in all my life.



## 2 Annoyances

<p><b>What annoys you about the English language?</b></p>	<p><b>Which celebrities annoy you?</b></p>
<p><b>What annoys you about the town where you live?</b></p>	<p><b>Do any of your friends or coworkers have annoying habits?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you think you have any annoying habits?</b></p>	<p><b>When you're getting annoyed do you bottle it up or let it out?</b></p>
<p><b>What really makes you mad?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you ever get annoyed with yourself?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you ever get annoyed with inanimate objects?</b></p>	<p><b>What annoying things do people younger (or older) than you do?</b></p>

# 3 Animals

*“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”*

— Mahatma Gandhi

## Mixed up vocabulary

**vte** - (n) a doctor who looks after animals

**cllaor** - (n) dogs often wear one of these around their necks

**hteneibra** - (v) some animals have a long sleep in the winter

**prru** - (v) cats do this when they're happy

**mlmama** - (n) animals that feed milk to their young (e.g. humans, cows, cats)

**reetlip** - (n) animals that have cold blood and lay eggs (e.g. snakes, lizards, turtles)

**bkar** - (v/n) the noise a dog makes

## Idioms and collocations

She crept out *as quiet as a* \_\_\_\_\_ but the baby woke and started crying.

John is the *black* \_\_\_\_\_ of the family, he's always in some kind of trouble.

This is a tough business. It's a *dog eat* \_\_\_\_\_ world.

I'm so hungry, I could *eat a* \_\_\_\_\_.

Who *let the* \_\_\_\_\_ *out of the bag* and told Ann about her surprise birthday party?

<i>sheep</i> <i>horse</i> <i>mouse</i> <i>dog</i> <i>cat</i>
--

## Grammar bit

Ostriches can run almost as fast as lions and they're kick is as powerful as a kangaroos.

However they're brains are only as big as a walnut.

# 3 Animals

<b>Do you like going to zoos?</b>	<b>Do you have any pets?</b>
<b>Have you ever been bitten or stung by an animal?</b>	<b>Are you afraid of any animals?</b>
<b>Have you ever thought about becoming vegetarian?</b>	<b>What animals live in the wild in your country?</b>
<b>Would you like to go hunting?</b>	<b>Are you a cat person or a dog person?</b>
<b>What animals have you seen in the wild?</b>	<b>Do you think any animals are pests?</b>

# 4 Art

*“Football is an art, like dancing is an art - but only when it's well done does it become an art..”*

— Arsene Wenger

## Mixed up vocabulary

**pinta** - (n) colourful liquid which is used to make pictures with

**daniwgr** - (n) a picture made with a pencil

**gayller** - (n) a place you go to see art

**poirtart** - (n) a painting or drawing of a person (usually only their head and shoulders)

**mapierstece** - (n) a great piece of art, the artist's best work

**csvana** - (n) the material a painting is painted on

**teicnhque** - (n) a special method which an artist may use

## Idioms and collocations

A \_\_\_\_\_ *is worth a thousand words.*

Maybe he's nice, don't *judge a* \_\_\_\_\_ *by it's cover.*

I'll give him one more chance but we have to *draw a* \_\_\_\_\_ *somewhere.*

It's my birthday so we're going out to *paint the* \_\_\_\_\_ *red.*

The boss didn't like it so I'm afraid it's *back to the drawing* \_\_\_\_\_.

*board   picture   town   book   line*

## Grammar bit

The Mona Lisa was painted by Leonardo da Vinci in the 16th century. It was stolen from the Louvre in 1911 and it was another two years before the painting was recovered by police.

## 4 Art

<b>What pictures do you have on your walls?</b>	<b>Have you seen any famous works of art?</b>
<b>Do you have any artistic talents?</b>	<b>Who's your favourite artist?</b>
<b>What kind of art do you like?</b>	<b>How often do you visit museums or art galleries?</b>
<b>Who are the most famous artists from your country?</b>	<b>What do you think of modern art?</b>
<b>Describe an interesting photograph you've seen?</b>	<b>Do you own any original pieces of art?</b>

# 5 Birthdays

*"You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old."*

— George Burns

## Mixed up vocabulary

**perstens** - (n) what you hope to receive lots of on your birthday

**ckea** - (n) people often eat a piece of this on their special day

**cdnlaes** - (n) there's one for every year and you have to blow them out

**gfti vuceohr** - (n) it's like money but you can only spend it in one shop

**prtay** - (n) your birthday is a good excuse to have one of these

**susrripe** - (n/adj) something unexpected and nice

**bloanol** - (n) there should be plenty of these around on a child's birthday

## Idioms and collocations

In the UK you *come of* \_\_\_\_\_ on your 18th birthday.

Martin was the \_\_\_\_\_ *of the party*, he didn't stop dancing all night.

I hope you *have a* \_\_\_\_\_ at your party tonight.

Come on Mick! It's a party, *let your* \_\_\_\_\_ *down* and have a drink and a dance.

The test was really easy, it was a *piece of* \_\_\_\_\_.

<i>hair</i> <i>cake</i> <i>age</i> <i>ball</i> <i>life</i>
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## Grammar bit

The party was so great, we had such a fun time. Tom was so drunk that he fell asleep on the sofa. I got such a lot of presents and later the police came because the music was so loud.

# 5 Birthdays

<p><b>Have you ever been part of a surprise birthday party?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you share your birthday with anyone famous?</b></p>
<p><b>How many people's birthdays do you know off by heart?</b></p>	<p><b>What star sign are you? Does your personality match your star sign?</b></p>
<p><b>What did you do for your last birthday?</b></p>	<p><b>How would you spend your perfect birthday?</b></p>
<p><b>Have you ever celebrated your birthday in another country?</b></p>	<p><b>Have you ever had a birthday party?</b></p>
<p><b>What birthday traditions are there in your country?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you know anyone who has their birthday on or near another big celebration day?</b></p>

# 6 Books

“We shouldn't teach great books; we should teach a love of reading.”

— B.F. Skinner

## Mixed up vocabulary

ctntnseo - (n) usually found at the front of a book, tells you what is in the book

ctrphea - (n) books are often divided up into parts

potl - (n) what happens in a book

pakcberpa - (n/adj) a book with a soft cover, not a hardback

ixden - (n) usually at the back of the book, this lists in details what is in the book

smki - (v) to read something quickly looking for information

nno-fniotic - (adj) a book which is about real life, not invented

## Idioms and collocations

I helped her move house at the weekend so I'm *in her good* \_\_\_\_\_.

The team completely *lost the* \_\_\_\_\_ after they let in the second goal.

Moving to New York was the start of *a new* \_\_\_\_\_ in my life.

I couldn't believe it either, but sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ *is stranger than fiction*.

*Reading between the* \_\_\_\_\_, I don't think he's enthusiastic about the idea.

*chapter books plot lines truth*

## Grammar bit

I think this book is very overrated, it's overlong and the characters are underdeveloped.

The main character is an underachiever with an overactive imagination who is

underperforming in a dead-end job.



# 6 Books

<p><b>What was the last book you read?</b></p>	<p><b>Have you ever read a book that you hated but finished it anyway?</b></p>
<p><b>Who is your favourite author?</b></p>	<p><b>What kind of books do you like to read?</b></p>
<p><b>Have you ever read a book that had a big effect on your life?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you have an eReader?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you sometimes reread your favourite books?</b></p>	<p><b>Can you judge a book by its cover?</b></p>
<p><b>Have you read a book that you thought was overrated?</b></p>	<p><b>How do you decide what books to read?</b></p>

# 7 Business

*“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”*

— Colin Powell

## Mixed up vocabulary

**mernakigt** - (n) making people aware of a company and its products or services

**mareagn** - (n) a person who is in charge of a team, project or department

**airvtdece** - (v) you need to do this if you want people to know about a product

**pfotri** - (n) the money you make after deducting your costs

**lso** - (n) if you don't make enough money, you probably made a...

**baker - enev** - (v) if you don't make money or lose money

**minegte** - (n) a get-together with colleagues to discuss business matters

## Idioms and collocations

I'm on holiday next week, but please *keep me in the* \_\_\_\_\_ while I'm away.

Joshua was late for the meeting again so he can *take the* \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm going to have to work all weekend in order to *meet the* \_\_\_\_\_.

If we release it this quarter, I'm certain we can *corner the* \_\_\_\_\_ in smart-wallets.

That was Tom on the phone, we've *got the green* \_\_\_\_\_ to start the Omega project.

<i>deadline</i> <i>light</i> <i>market</i> <i>loop</i> <i>minutes</i>
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## Grammar bit

If we lower the price by \$5, I think we can increase sales two fold.

- Yes, if we sell it for \$9.99, we will definitely increase sales but we won't make as much profit.

# 7 Business

<p><b>What's the biggest company in your country?</b></p>	<p><b>Have you ever worked for a big company?</b></p>
<p><b>Are there any companies you would like to work for?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you have a business card?</b></p>
<p><b>Are there any state owned businesses in your country?</b></p>	<p><b>Would you like to start your own company?</b></p>
<p><b>What kinds of businesses might have trouble surviving in the future?</b></p>	<p><b>Are there any companies you don't like but have to use?</b></p>
<p><b>Are there any companies you wouldn't like to work for?</b></p>	<p><b>Do many people own stocks and shares in your country?</b></p>

# 8 Cars

*“Have you ever noticed that anybody driving slower than you is an idiot, and anyone going faster than you is a maniac?”*

— George Carlin

## Mixed up vocabulary

**tffairc jma** - (n) a lot of cars on the road, all going nowhere

**berka** - (n/v) use this to stop the car

**reserve** - (n/v) use this gear to go backwards

**wincsedren** - (n) it's made of glass and the driver looks through it

**srepa trye** - (n) you should keep one of these in the boot in case you get a flat

**raod snig** - (n) these tell you where you're going and how fast you can drive

**egeinn** - (n) the bigger this is, the faster the car

## Idioms and collocations

This new log-in procedure is *driving me round the* \_\_\_\_\_.

Ok, it's time to *change* \_\_\_\_\_ and practise some of this new grammar.

After eight hours of talks, negotiations seemed to have come to a *dead* \_\_\_\_\_.

Sandra, you're *in the driving* \_\_\_\_\_ on this project.

*Fasten your* \_\_\_\_\_, things are about to get interesting.

<i>seatbelt</i> <i>end</i> <i>bend</i> <i>seat</i> <i>gear</i>
--

## Grammar bit

The bigger the engine, the faster the speed; the later you are, the more red traffic lights you will meet; the faster you drive, the more petrol you will use.

# 8 Cars

<p><b>Do you prefer to drive or to be a passenger?</b></p>	<p><b>Which classic car would you like to own?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you prefer sports cars or luxury cars?</b></p>	<p><b>What's the best car you've ever driven or had a ride in?</b></p>
<p><b>What do other car drivers do that makes you angry?</b></p>	<p><b>What's the most important factor when choosing a car?</b></p>
<p><b>How do you think cars will change in the next 20 years?</b></p>	<p><b>What was your first car?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you think there are too many cars on the road? What's the solution?</b></p>	<p><b>Did you pass your driving test first time?</b></p>

# 9 Clothes

“Expensive clothes are a waste of money.”

— Meryl Streep

## Mixed up vocabulary

suti - (n) smart business clothes, usually worn by men

udnrreawe - (n) clothes which aren't usually visible

w neodbrar - (n) a type of cupboard where you hang your clothes

thtgi - (adj) the opposite of loose, maybe you should get a bigger size

bygag - (adj) another word for loose, skate-boarders wear clothes like this

palin - (adj) not striped, not patterned, not bright, just a single colour

hlese - on the bottom of your shoe, they can make you seem taller

## Idioms and collocations

Oh, not another meeting, that new head of sales *bores the* \_\_\_\_\_ *off me*.

Wow, look at you! You're *dressed to* \_\_\_\_\_ tonight.

Basically, he *got the* \_\_\_\_\_ from his last job because he was too lazy.

That was *below the* \_\_\_\_\_, don't talk about my family like that.

Come on, there's still 250 to do, let's *roll up our* \_\_\_\_\_ and get on with it.

<i>kill</i> <i>belt</i> <i>sleeves</i> <i>boot</i> <i>pants</i>
---

## Grammar bit

Well this jacket is smarter than the last one, but the last one was cheaper and a better fit.

- I prefer the first one, it's the trendiest and the most comfortable.

# 9 Clothes

<p><b>Where do you like to shop for clothes?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you have a favourite item of clothing?</b></p>
<p><b>Where did you get the clothes you're wearing now?</b></p>	<p><b>Have you ever bought something quite expensive but only worn it once or twice?</b></p>
<p><b>What kind of clothes suit you?</b></p>	<p><b>Do you like to wear bright, colourful clothes?</b></p>
<p><b>Can you judge someone by the clothes that they wear?</b></p>	<p><b>Is there a dress code at your workplace?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you ever buy clothes online?</b></p>	<p><b>What is something that you would never wear?</b></p>

# 10 Controversial opinions

*“If an individual wants to be a leader and isn't controversial, that means he never stood for anything.”*

— Richard Nixon

## Mixed up vocabulary

**anmetrgu** - (n) an emotional discussion

**bna** - (v/n) to forbid something or make it illegal

**comipsrmoe** - (n/v) to come to an agreement where neither side wins or loses

**iuess** - (n) the subject which is being discussed

**abilosh** - (v) to officially get rid of something such as a tax or a law

**pinot of viwe** - (n) a person's perspective or opinion

**dabtee** - (v/n) a discussion where different opinions are expressed

## Idioms and collocations

you're *on my* \_\_\_\_\_, aren't you? You think the logo should be blue too?

I spoke to Ian, we've *agreed to* \_\_\_\_\_ on the overtime issue.

I had a *heated* \_\_\_\_\_ with my manager, I told him what he could do with his job.

She told me I would get her office *over her dead* \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm *sitting on the* \_\_\_\_\_ on this one, I can see both points of view.

*body side fence differ debate*

## Grammar bit

I think soft drugs should be legalised and as a result many prisoners could be released from jail.

- No, I don't agree. All drugs must be banned or else there would be chaos.



# 10 Controversial opinions

<b>Cigarettes should be banned</b>	<b>Cannabis should be legalised</b>
<b>The internet should be regulated to protect children</b>	<b>Nobody should be allowed to earn more than €1,000,000 a year</b>
<b>English Grammar is not important as long as people understand you</b>	<b>National Service should be introduced / abolished</b>
<b>Keeping animals in zoos is cruel</b>	<b>Children should learn about sex at school</b>
<b>Pirating movies or music isn't a big deal</b>	<b>Old or sick people should have the right to take their own lives</b>

# 11 Current affairs

*“People everywhere confuse what they read in newspapers with news.”*

— A. J. Liebling

## Mixed up vocabulary

**maedi** - (n) tv, radio, the press are all examples of this

**diatsesr** - (n) a terrible event

**entcoiel** - (n) when people vote for something e.g. a new political leader

**desotmtnioran** - (n) people marching in the street to show their feelings about an issue

**awdar sowh** - (n) an event where prizes are given, for example the Oscars

**tialrvi** - (adj) the opposite of important

**curto ceas** - (n) a process which decides if a person is innocent or guilty

## Idioms and collocations

Smith *hit the* \_\_\_\_\_ last month when he won the under 18s golf championship.

Miguel *added fuel to the* \_\_\_\_\_ by accusing his former boss of taking bribes.

The recession has hit us hard, we're all *in the same* \_\_\_\_\_ in facing these cutbacks.

Only *once in a blue* \_\_\_\_\_ do these two teams meet in a cup game.

Is Bitcoin *a flash in the* \_\_\_\_\_ or the future of money?

<i>boat headlines moon pan boat</i>
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## Grammar bit

Cameron said that he expected to see an upturn in the economy and hoped to have some good news to announce soon. He promised that he would do all that he could to improve the job situation.

# 11 Current affairs

<p><b>Do you think it's important to stay up to date with current affairs?</b></p>	<p><b>In your opinion, what are the best and worse newspapers?</b></p>
<p><b>How do you get your news?</b></p>	<p><b>What's the biggest story in the news at the moment?</b></p>
<p><b>Do you think there will still be newspapers in five years?</b></p>	<p><b>What annoys you about news reporting in your country?</b></p>
<p><b>Have you ever been in a newspaper story?</b></p>	<p><b>What would you like to see more of in the news?</b></p>
<p><b>What would you like to see less of in the news?</b></p>	<p><b>What headline do you dream about waking up and seeing?</b></p>

# 12 Eating out

*“When you go to a restaurant, the less you know about what happens in the kitchen, the more you enjoy your meal.”*

— Jeffrey Wright

## Mixed up vocabulary

**chkec** - (n) you ask for this at the end of a meal, in Britain they say *bill*

**mnia ceruos** - (n) this part of the meal follows the starter

**revoretain** - (n) you need to make one of these before visiting a popular restaurant

**wlel dneo** - (adj) one way of ordering your steak

**vatargeeni** - (n/adj) someone who doesn't eat meat

**cruelty** - (n) collective name for knives, forks, spoons, etc.

**nipnak** - (n) something you wipe your mouth with while you're eating

## Idioms and collocations

Put your money away, it's your birthday so dinner is *my* \_\_\_\_\_ .

I can't eat all the steak, please can you put it in a \_\_\_\_\_ *bag* for me

I shouldn't have ordered the large portion, my eyes were *bigger than my* \_\_\_\_\_ .

I can't eat a single thing more, I'm *completely* \_\_\_\_\_ .

I have a *sweet* \_\_\_\_\_ , I can't resist dessert.

<i>treat</i> <i>belly</i> <i>tooth</i> <i>doggie</i> <i>stuffed</i>
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## Grammar bit

If I had known the portions were so small, I would have eaten a bigger lunch.

- Yes, and if you hadn't ordered that third bottle of wine, my head wouldn't hurt so much today.

# 12 Eating out

<b>How often do you eat out?</b>	<b>How often do you get takeaway food?</b>
<b>What's your favourite restaurant?</b>	<b>How much do you usually tip?</b>
<b>Have you ever worked in a restaurant?</b>	<b>Do you prefer home cooked food or restaurant food?</b>
<b>What's your favourite dish?</b>	<b>Do you usually have a starter and a dessert?</b>
<b>Have you ever eaten in a very expensive restaurant?</b>	<b>When you eat in a restaurant do you try something new or something you know you like?</b>