

English is a rich language, which means there is often more than one way to say exactly the same thing. Native speakers often enjoy using idioms, phrasal verbs, and slang – a kind of **picture language** – rather than literal dictionary words, because it feels more natural to them. When speech includes a lot of this kind of non-literal English, as in the dialogues below, it can be really confusing for the English student, who might feel as if they're not listening to English at all, but...

A DIFFERENT LANGUAGE

1 Dialogue 1 – Quiz

a) Read the dialogue with your partner quickly to get the gist. Student A is **Leanna** and Student B is **Billie**.
Note that the dialogues in this lesson are not exaggerated – native speakers (especially young people) really do speak like this!
 b) Read it together more slowly. Each student reads their lines and tells or guesses the **literal translation** of each idiomatic phrase in **red type**. The other student checks the meaning on their handout (see PP.3-4) and gives 10 points for each correct answer. The student with the most points is the winner!

Two teenage girls are chatting on the bus...

- L: ¹ Why the long face? ² What's up?
 B: Brandon's ³ **chucked me**.
 L: What?
 B: Yeah. We had ⁴ **a bust-up** last night – at Kim's party – and he's been ⁵ **giving me the cold shoulder** ever since.
 L: Ah! You must be ⁶ **gutted**.
 B: I'll ⁷ **get over it**, I suppose.
 L: What was it about?
 B: Well, you know, at first I thought he was ⁸ **playing hard to get**. Then when we started ⁹ **going out** he was still ¹⁰ **putting it about** with some girl from the school play, which was really ¹¹ **winding me up**.
 L: Yeah. I remember.
 B: So, yesterday afternoon I was shopping in town when I saw Brandon walking hand in hand with ¹² **a right minger** who works in the fish and chip shop – who's actually ¹³ **got a bun in the oven** anyway by *another* ¹⁴ **complete lowlife**!
 L: Ah, babe. ¹⁵ **I'm lost for words**. Well, ¹⁶ **it's not the end of the world**, is it?
¹⁷ **Plenty more fish in the sea, and all that**. I reckon you're better off ¹⁸ **well rid**.
 B: I'd love to ¹⁹ **teach him a lesson** though.
 L: ²⁰ **Don't stoop to his level**. You know – just ²¹ **pick up the pieces** and ²² **move on with your life**. ²³ **Be the better person**.
 B: D'you ever get the feeling that ²⁴ **life sucks**? I really trusted him, you know. How could he just ²⁵ **stab me in the back** like that? And he's so ²⁶ **two-faced**! I thought we were ²⁷ **soul mates** – together forever! I know I ²⁸ **took him for granted** sometimes, but...
 L: I guess you just ²⁹ **don't know what you've got till it's gone**.



"She's got a bun in the oven" – not connected with buns... or ovens

c) Read the dialogue again, but this time replace the idiomatic phrases with the literal ones. Do you notice any difference? Which way is easier to understand? Which way is more interesting?

2 True, False, or Unknown?

Work in pairs and mark each statement T, F, or U:

1. Billie has split up with her boyfriend.
2. Leanna encourages Billie to get back with Brandon.
3. Leanna went to Kim's party last night.
4. Billie's not bothered about the break-up.
5. Brandon was unfaithful to Billie with a girl who works in a fast food place.
6. Billie is not bitter about what's happened.
7. Billie and Leanna are best friends.
8. Billie thought that the relationship had a future.

3 Non-Literal English – Clichés

A cliché is a standard phrase (often an idiom) that we use to express a feeling when we can't think of the words on our own – or when we are too lazy to think of our own phrase.

Clichés are, by definition, unoriginal and over-used. We often reach for a cliché when we need to react to some important news, e.g. a life-changing event or decision. For example, in Dialogue 1, above, the following phrases are clichés:

"just pick up the pieces and move on with your life"
"I guess you just don't know what you've got till it's gone"

Leanna uses clichés to give advice; perhaps because she has heard them before (e.g. on a TV talk show or soap opera) and believes that they sound like the right thing to say.

- a) Find two more clichéd phrases in Dialogue 1 and two more in Dialogue 2 on the opposite page
- b) Can you think of any more clichés that the girls could use in this situation?

4 Pronunciation – Final t Sound (Tracks 2.1a & 2.1b)

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. not nice | 5. don't know |
| 2. what was | 6. got with |
| 3. can't believe | 7. that life |
| 4. get the | 8. what they |

- a) Find the phrases above in the dialogues and circle them
 b) Repeat the phrases a few times with your partner
 c) Listen to Track 2.1a, then Track 2.1b. The phrases are said in two different ways. What is the difference? Which way sounds more like natural English? Which way would you normally say them?
 d) Listen again to the second way (Track 2.1b) and repeat the phrases
 e) Find more examples in the dialogue of similar phrases, where a t sound at the end of a syllable meets a consonant sound at the beginning of the next, and practise saying them in the manner that you heard in Track 2.1b



Some frustrated students speak out:

"It sounds like they're discussing relationship problems, so why do I hear nouns like bell, fish, trousers, oven, and so on? Why can't they say what they mean?"

[Answer: because English is not a direct language!]"

"When I hear the word fish I picture it and imagine it with its literal meaning; I get confused because I haven't yet learned that 'plenty more fish in the sea' is an idiom – a phrase with a fixed meaning. I need to learn more idioms!"

5 Dialogue 2 – Quiz

Follow the same instructions as for Dialogue 1. Student A is **Leanna** and Student B is **Terri**. Next, work together to create a short dialogue using 10 of the new idiomatic phrases from this lesson, and perform it to the rest of the class.

- L: Have you heard ¹ the latest about Billie?
 T: What?
 L: She's had a massive ² argy-bargy with Brandon! He's ³ gone off with ⁴ some scrubber from the ⁵ chippie.
 T: ⁶ You're joking! Well, he's ⁷ led her a merry dance, hasn't he? The ⁸ low-down, rotten scum. Talk about being ⁹ done over! She was ¹⁰ so totally into him, wasn't she?
 L: I know, but anyway – ¹¹ I reckon she was punching above her weight a bit, don't you think? And anyway, Brandon was ¹² playing the field with a bunch of ¹³ old flames, the whole time he and Billie were ¹⁴ an item. His mates were ¹⁵ blabbing their mouths off that he was having ¹⁶ a bit on the side when he first ¹⁷ got with Billie.
 T: Oh, you can't believe a word of what they say. I'd ¹⁸ take it with a pinch of salt, if I were you. They're ¹⁹ all mouth and trousers. How's Billie? ²⁰ Keeping her chin up?
 L: Pretty ²¹ down in the dumps, really. I think she's just ²² sick and tired of ²³ hooking up with ²⁴ jerks. It's not nice being ²⁵ cheated on, is it? I mean – her previous ²⁶ bf was ²⁷ a total loser too, wasn't he?
 T: I know, but anyway... Ah, ²⁸ bless her. You know, we need to get her ²⁹ all dolled up. Tell her to ³⁰ get her glad rags on and ³¹ her dancing shoes as well, and we'll take her out for ³² a night on the town. She can ³³ paint the town red and just ³⁴ let her hair down. Some ³⁵ sick music'll be ³⁶ just the trick to ³⁷ mend her broken heart.
 L: Yeah. Great idea! Let's ³⁸ give her a bell and ³⁹ see how she's fixed for tonight.

Discuss with your partner and then with the whole class: how can we learn MORE non-literal English?



7 Sentence Blocks

Work in pairs. Make the six sentence blocks:

BRANDON WAS PLAYING THE FIELD WITH A BUNCH OF OLD FLAMES, THE WHOLE TIME HE AND BILLIE WERE AN ITEM.

when, who (x2), what (x2), how long

6 Discussion Words – NEA Translation

- a) Say the words from Dialogue 2 (below) out loud. Where is the strong stress? What is the strong vowel sound? Are there any Schwa sounds or short i sounds? Are there any silent letters?

massive dance mates mouths

give fixed trousers tonight

- b) Match them with their NEA translations:

t Nait Mauthz Fikst Giv Trau zz Meits Ma siv Darns

- c) Translate 10 more **content words** from the dialogues into the NEA and then repeat exercise a) above

1 Dialogue 1 – Quiz

----- ✂ -----
Student A checks as **Student B** tells or guesses Billie's literal translations:

- ³ ended our relationship
- ⁴ an argument
- ⁵ ignoring me
- ⁷ recover
- ⁸ deliberately making it hard for me to get close to him
- ⁹ having a romantic relationship
- ¹⁰ in a close relationship
- ¹¹ annoying me
- ¹² a really ugly girl
- ¹³ pregnant
- ¹⁴ horrible guy
- ¹⁹ do something nasty to him so that he regrets hurting me
- ²⁴ life is horrible
- ²⁵ betray me
- ²⁶ deceitful
- ²⁷ two people who matched perfectly
- ²⁸ didn't appreciate him fully

----- ✂ -----
Student B checks as **Student A** tells or guesses Leanna's literal translations:

- ¹ Why do you look so sad?
- ² What's wrong?
- ⁶ really upset.
- ¹⁵ I don't know what to say
- ¹⁶ it's not that serious
- ¹⁷ There are lots of other potential partners around
- ¹⁸ without him
- ²⁰ Don't behave as badly as he has
- ²¹ recover gradually
- ²² forget the past and focus on a more positive future
- ²³ Act like a more morally superior person than him
- ²⁹ don't value what you have until you have lost it

----- ✂ -----

5 Dialogue 2 – Quiz

----- ✂ -----
Student A checks as **Student B** tells or guesses Terri's literal translations:

- ⁶ Is that really true?
- ⁷ treated her very badly
- ⁸ very bad person
- ⁹ betrayed
- ¹⁰ very keen on him
- ¹⁸ treat it as if it were not true
- ¹⁹ always boasting about relationships
- ²⁰ staying positive
- ²⁸ I wish her well
- ²⁹ dressed up smartly
- ³⁰ put on her best party clothes
- ³¹ shoes which are suitable for dancing
- ³² a night at some pubs and clubs in town
- ³³ have a good time with friends, visiting pubs and nightclubs
- ³⁴ relax
- ³⁵ very good
- ³⁶ the best way
- ³⁷ help her to recover after being hurt emotionally

----- ✂ -----
Student B checks as **Student A** tells or guesses Leanna's literal translations:

- ¹ the latest news
 - ² fight
 - ³ started to date
 - ⁴ an unpleasant woman
 - ⁵ fish and chip shop
 - ¹¹ I think that she had a lower social status than him
 - ¹² having romantic relationships
 - ¹³ former partners
 - ¹⁴ together in an exclusive relationship
 - ¹⁵ boasting
 - ¹⁶ a secret relationship
 - ¹⁷ started to date
 - ²¹ unhappy
 - ²² very tired of
 - ²³ starting relationships
 - ²⁴ idiots
 - ²⁵ deceived by your partner, who is having a relationship with somebody else at the same time as you
 - ²⁶ boyfriend
 - ²⁷ an unpleasant person
 - ³⁸ call her
 - ³⁹ see whether she's available
- ✂ -----

200 One-Syllable Words that End with "t"

Practise making **glottal stops** with this handy list of one-syllable words that end with *t* :

| | | | | |
|---------|--------|--------|----------|------------------|
| ant | dote | mart | sat | wrote |
| art | fat | mat | seat | wrought |
| at | fate | mate | set | yacht |
| bait | feat | Matt | short | yet |
| Bart | feet | meat | shot | zit |
| bat | fight | meet | sight | |
| beat | fit | met | sit | |
| beet | fleet | might | skate | <u>My words:</u> |
| belt | float | mitt | soot | _____ |
| bet | foot | moat | sot | |
| bit | fought | mutt | sought | _____ |
| bite | gate | Nate | splat | |
| bleat | get | neat | spout | |
| blot | git | net | sprout | _____ |
| boat | gnat | newt | start | |
| bolt | goat | night | stat | _____ |
| boot | got | nit | state | |
| bought | greet | not | stoat | _____ |
| brat | grit | note | straight | |
| Brit | grot | nought | tart | _____ |
| brought | gut | nut | tat | |
| built | hart | oat | Tate | _____ |
| but | hat | ought | taught | |
| butt | hate | part | thought | _____ |
| cart | heart | pat | throat | |
| cat | heat | peat | tight | _____ |
| caught | height | pert | tit | |
| cert | hit | pet | toot | _____ |
| chart | hot | Pete | tot | |
| chat | hurt | pit | tote | _____ |
| cheat | hut | plate | treat | |
| chute | it | pleat | tut | _____ |
| clot | jet | port | vat | |
| coat | jot | pot | vet | _____ |
| coot | jut | put | vote | |
| cot | jute | quit | wait | _____ |
| crate | Kate | quite | wart | |
| curt | kit | quote | weight | _____ |
| cut | kite | rat | wet | |
| cute | late | rate | what | _____ |
| dart | let | rent | wheat | |
| date | light | right | white | _____ |
| debt | lit | root | wilt | |
| dirt | loot | rot | wit | _____ |
| dot | lot | rut | writ | |

Practise glottal stops by repeating these four fun phrases – then make up some of your own!

- Kate wrote a short note.
- The goat with the neat coat met a stoat whose feet got hot a lot.
- Bart bought some light wheat.
- Pete's pet cat knew a neat newt.

Title

“A Different Language”. The aim of this lesson is to explore how English can sound like a different language when native speakers use a lot of non-literal expressions. In the dialogues from this lesson, SS can learn (or revise) **68 different idiomatic expressions** on the topic of relationships. SS should focus on the idiomatic language in the dialogues, and how idioms include words which have no connection with their normal literal meaning, for example, in the idiom “he’s been giving me the cold shoulder”, the meaning (“he’s been ignoring me”) is unconnected with the words “cold” and “shoulder”. But if SS don’t know the idiom, the use of these unrelated words can make them picture only the literal meaning of each word. Of course, the answer is for SS to first of all be aware that we use idioms and non-literal language in English, and secondly to learn idioms in a regular, systematic way, like they would learn any vocabulary. On page 2 of the lesson there are some “student complaints”: “...so why do I hear nouns like bell, fish, trousers, oven, and so on?” Here is a full list of nouns (in order) which are used in a non-literal way in the dialogues:

Dialogue 1: shoulder, bun, oven, world, fish, sea, lesson, level, pieces, back, soul, mates

Dialogue 2: scrubber, dance, scum, weight, flames, item, mouths, bit, side, pinch, salt, mouth, trousers, chin, dumps, jerks, rags, dancing, shoes, hair, trick, heart, bell

Pictures

Extensions: SS describe the pictures and how they are related to the lesson. SS look for other relevant pictures on the internet.

1 Dialogue 1 – Quiz

c) SS’ answers will vary and a short class discussion could develop. Hopefully SS will realise that there is a big difference when we use idiomatic phrases instead of literal ones. While using literal phrases may be easier for SS to understand – because they have already learned them in class – using idiomatic phrases makes the dialogue more interesting – and also closer to how an actual conversation between two native speakers would be.

Extensions: a) You could make this exercise more difficult by not giving the SS the handouts with the answers on. Instead they have to use dictionaries (e.g. a dictionary of idioms) or the internet to find the literal meanings, and then write their own literal version of the dialogue. b) After completing the exercise, SS could work in pairs or small groups and develop a short role play based on what they imagine was happening before the dialogue began, or what happened afterwards, or spend time looking for more idioms and slang expressions on the topic of love and relationships.

2 True, False, or Unknown?

Where possible, encourage SS to tell you a sentence from the dialogue to back up their answer, rather than giving just a letter:

1. T “Brandon’s chuckled me.”
2. F “...it’s not the end of the world, is it?”
3. U We don’t know because this information is not given in the dialogue.
4. F “Why the long face? What’s up?”
5. T “...I saw Brandon walking hand in hand with a right minger who works in the fish and chip shop.”
6. F “I’d love to teach him a lesson though.”
7. U We don’t know because this information is not given in the dialogue. Perhaps not, considering how Leanna speaks to Terri about Billie in Dialogue 2.
8. T “I thought we were soul mates – together forever!”

Extensions: SS could make up further statements where the answer is true, false, or unknown, and test their partners. SS could use some of the sentences (not the negative ones) as starting sentences for building sentence blocks, e.g. “Billie has split up with her boyfriend. / WHO has split up...” etc.

3 Non-Literal English – Clichés

a) Since Leanna and Billie include a lot of well-known standard phrases (idioms) in their dialogues, it is fair to say that much of their speech is clichéd. However, the following phrases stand out as being particularly clichéd:

Dialogue 1:

"I'm lost for words."

"It's not the end of the world, is it?"

"Plenty more fish in the sea, and all that."

"Don't stoop to his level."

Dialogue 2:

"He's led her a merry dance, hasn't he?"

"I'd take it with a pinch of salt, if I were you."

"Tell her to get her glad rags on and her dancing shoes as well..."

"She can paint the town red and just let her hair down."

b) SS' answers will vary. For example, other clichés (idioms that apply very generally to a situation) that could be used include:

Billie says:

"I need time *to get over him...*" (to recover from being hurt)

"I felt we were *made for each other...*" (a perfect couple)

"*It's hit me like a ton of bricks...*" (it has been a big shock)

"It's completely *out of the blue...*" (unexpected)

Leanna says:

"*You're better off without him...*" (your life will be better without him)

"*Just put it down to experience...*" (see it as something that has given you more experience of life)

"Try to *put it behind you...*" (forget the past and focus on a more positive future)

Extensions: SS could look for more examples of clichéd language in online videos, e.g. on YouTube, or on DVDs, in songs, and so on. SS could then try to rewrite lines which contain clichés using their own original phrases instead.

4 Pronunciation – Final t Sound (Tracks 2.1a & 2.1b)

You can download the recordings for the lesson here:

Track 2.1a <http://purlandtraining.com/tali2-track2.1a.mp3>

Track 2.1b <http://purlandtraining.com/tali2-track2.1b.mp3>

c) SS should be able to hear that the phrases in the second recording (Track 2.1b) sound more natural than those in the first (Track 2.1a). The reason for this is that in Track 2.1b the speaker uses elision to remove the t sound at the end of the first syllable, and adds a glottal stop before the next sound, whereas in Track 2.1a the speaker pronounces the t sound. This sounds awkward next to the following consonant sound, because it is a cc (consonant to consonant) sound connection, rather than the more usual and more natural-sounding vc (vowel to consonant) sound connection. You can see how the glottal stops (marked with _) have replaced the final t sound in the NEA phonetic spelling of the phrases below:

Normal Spelling:

NEA Translation:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. not nice | No_ Nais |
| 2. what was | Wo_ wz |
| 3. can't believe | Karn_ b Leev |
| 4. get the | Ge_ th |
| 5. don't know | Deun_ Neu |
| 6. got with | Go_ with |
| 7. that life | th_ Laif |
| 8. what they | wo_ thei |

This could be a good opportunity to revise (or study for the first time) how the glottal stop is used in English. You can find more information on this topic in *Talk a Lot Foundation Course*, which is a free download from

purlandtraining.com. Read *Lesson 2 – Spelling and Sounds* in particular, and allow SS time to practise forming the glottal stop. On page 19 of this lesson there is a list of 200 one-syllable words that end with a *t* sound, which can provide plenty of practice of making glottal stops. It is included in this pack on page 5. There are also plenty of videos online which demonstrate how to make the glottal stop. Note: syllable linking and connected speech in general is covered in detail in *Unit 4 of Talk a Lot Foundation Course*. If SS ask why they have to study this, it could be worth pointing out to them that the final *t* sound – and consequently the elision and glottal stop combination – is very common in spoken English – **there are 65 final *t* sounds in these two short dialogues!** – so it is really important to study it if they want to achieve a more natural-sounding spoken English.

e) There are many more similar phrases in the dialogues, for example:

Normal Spelling: NEA Translation:

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| wasn't she? | Wo zn_ shi? |
| don't you | Deun_ y |
| thought we | Ttor_ wi |

SS should avoid phrases where the first syllable ends with a consonant cluster, rather than a single *t* sound. There are several phrases, for example, where the first syllable ends with *st*. If this happens, elision may or may not occur but a glottal stop is unnecessary. Instead, we use FCL (final consonant linking) and the consonant cluster *st* moves forward to the beginning of the next syllable, for example:

elision does not occur and there is no glottal stop:

| | |
|------------|-----------|
| just don't | ju Steunt |
| just stab | ju Stab |

elision occurs, but there is no glottal stop:

| | |
|------------|----------|
| just sick | ju Sik |
| just chill | ju Schil |
| just the | ju sth |

There are also a few phrases where a final *t* sound meets another consonant sound and the *t* sound is kept, but the sound at the beginning of the next syllable disappears (using elision), for example:

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| thought he | Ttor ti |
| hasn't he? | Ha zn_ tee? |

Extensions: a) SS could record themselves practising the phrases, or new phrases that they have found from the dialogues – or any examples of cc sound connections where a final *t* sound meets another consonant sound. SS listen back to each other's recordings and offer feedback. Of course, the teacher should also offer feedback to each student. If possible SS should record themselves saying the phrases on video so that they can watch how they physically make the sounds, e.g. what position the mouth and tongue are in. b) SS could extend the phrases into full sentences and practise saying them, paying particular attention to the cc sound connection, e.g. after practising “not nice, not nice,” etc. SS should practise the phrase in its wider context: “It's not nice being cheated on.” etc.

5 Dialogue 2 – Quiz

SS should follow the same instructions as for Dialogue 1. They can use some or all of the same extensions as well – or think up their own.

Discussion question: “**How can we learn MORE non-literal English?**”

SS should think of their own list of ways in which they can learn more non-literal English, but here are a few suggestions to get the discussion started:

In general, SS should try to immerse themselves in the English language as much as possible. The following tips will help them to learn more non-literal English in context:

- buy a dictionary of English idioms and resolve to learn 10 new idioms per week in a systematic way. Do the

same for phrasal verbs, and even for slang too

- read English language websites, e.g. newspapers, gossip sites, information sites, etc.
- make friends with an English native speaker and chat on Skype or email each other
- watch English-language films with English subtitles on YouTube
- read the comments that people leave on YouTube, or similar sites, and look up any new idioms, phrasal verbs, and slang
- watch DVDs and films on TV with English subtitles
- exchange messages with English native speaker friends on Facebook
- attend free English lessons online at websites such as WizIQ.com
- pay for lessons with an English native speaker, e.g. on Skype, and focus on non-literal English
- use Twitter in English and read what people are tweeting on a particular topic
- spend time in the UK – either for a short holiday or for a longer stay
- learn English or work in the UK or an English-speaking country

6 Discussion Words – NEA (New English Alphabet) Translation

a) SS should check any new words or phrases in their dictionaries. Here are the discussion words with stressed syllables underlined and **strong vowel sounds** indicated.

| | | | | | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|--------|------|-------|----------|---------|
| a | ar | ei | au | i | i | au | ai |
| massive | dance | mates | mouths | give | fixed | trousers | tonight |

There are Schwa sounds in the following words: trousers, tonight

There are short i sounds in the following words: massive, give, fixed

There are silent letters (letters which are not pronounced) in every word: massive, dance, mates, give, fixed, trousers, tonight

b) Normal Spelling: NEA Translation:

| | |
|----------|---------|
| massive | Ma siv |
| dance | Darns |
| mates | Meits |
| mouths | Mauthz |
| give | Giv |
| fixed | Fikst |
| trousers | Trau zz |
| tonight | t Nait |

c) Here are some more examples of content words (nouns, main verbs, adjectives, etc.) from the dialogues translated into the NEA:

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Normal Spelling: | NEA Translation: |
| face | Feis |
| shopping | Sho ping |
| pieces | Pee sz |
| believe | b Leev |
| broken | Breu kn |

Extensions: a) SS could look at the NEA in more detail, if they are not already familiar with it (see *Talk a Lot Foundation Course Page 16* for the full chart and *Lesson 2 Page 6* for more information) and practise using it to write simple one- or two-syllable words, for example their first name or their friends' names. SS could discuss the differences between the NEA and other phonetic alphabets, and consider whether their dictionary has phonetic spellings of the words it contains and how this could help them to understand the differences between spelling and sounds in English. If SS are familiar with the NEA, you could have a team writing race activity, where two teams compete to see which can write a given word (e.g. a word from this lesson) on the board using the NEA. Or SS have to write a word on the board and their team has to shout out the normal English spelling, and so on. b) You could

also use this activity as an opportunity to discuss the Schwa sound, or the short *i* sound (which is sometimes called “the second Schwa sound” because it is a very short sound which is consequently found in many unstressed syllables), or stress and strong vowel sounds, or silent letters – whichever of these topics your SS are currently least confident in. c) SS could think of more discussion words on the topic of relationships and repeat any of the activities above; then use the words and phrases to practise with any Discussion Words practice activities, i.e. from *Talk a Lot Elementary Books 1-3* or *Talk a Lot Intermediate Book 1*. Or SS could use the Big Word Game or Talk a Lot Bingo from *Talk a Lot Elementary Handbook*.

7 Sentence Blocks

Note: parts of the text *in italics* will vary. SS should use their own ideas:

Brandon was playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item.
(past continuous)

When was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames? / The whole time he and Billie were an item. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Yes, he was. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, *towards the end of his relationship with Billie*? / No, he wasn't. Brandon wasn't playing the field with a bunch of old flames, *towards the end of his relationship with Billie*. / So...

Who was playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Brandon was. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Yes, he was. / Was *Billie's ex-boyfriend* playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / No, he wasn't. *Billie's ex-boyfriend* wasn't playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item. / So...

Who was Brandon playing the field with, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / A bunch of old flames. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Yes, he was. / Was Brandon playing the field with *my cousin's sister*, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / No, he wasn't. Brandon wasn't playing the field with *your cousin's sister*, the whole time he and Billie were an item. / So...

What was Brandon doing with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Playing the field. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Yes, he was. / Was Brandon *playing chess* with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / No, he wasn't. Brandon wasn't *playing chess* with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item. / So...

What was Brandon doing, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Playing the field with a bunch of old flames. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Yes, he was. / Was Brandon *being completely faithful to Billie*, the whole time they were an item? / No, he wasn't. Brandon wasn't *being completely faithful to Billie*, the whole time they were an item. / So...

How long was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames? / The whole time he and Billie were an item. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames, the whole time he and Billie were an item? / Yes, he was. / Was Brandon playing the field with a bunch of old flames *for two weeks*? / No, he wasn't. Brandon wasn't playing the field with a bunch of old flames *for two weeks*. / So...

Extensions: Use other sentences from the dialogues (or sentences written by SS on the same topic) and practise building sentence blocks using a variety of question words and verb forms. SS can work individually, in pairs, in small groups, or as a whole class. See *Talk a Lot Elementary Handbook* for further ideas.

About Talk a Lot Intermediate Book 2

The aim of any Talk a Lot course is for students to practise and improve their speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills. Along the way the student will learn plenty of new vocabulary – including non-literal English expressions, such as idioms, phrasal verbs, and slang – and also practise reading, writing, and grammar skills, e.g. verb forms, word order, parts of a sentence, and so on.

This two-page spread provides an organised sequence of learning activities for students at intermediate level (CEF B2). We believe that there is easily enough material here for a 90-minute lesson. Of course, how long the material lasts will depend on a variety of factors, such as the level of your students, and how familiar they are with

Talk a Lot techniques. If you used any or all of the extension activities, you could make the material last much longer.

Although many of the activities in this book can be used without having previously studied with Talk a Lot material, e.g. the reading comprehension tests, this is the second Talk a Lot Intermediate course book and the author has assumed that students will have some prior knowledge of Talk a Lot methodology, e.g. knowing how to make sentence blocks, and how to find the stressed syllables and sounds in a word or phrase; or how to read the New English Alphabet. If you or your students feel a bit lost with some of this material, you may practise the techniques with any of the previous Talk a Lot course books:

Talk a Lot Elementary Books 1-3

Talk a Lot Elementary Handbook

Talk a Lot Foundation Course

Talk a Lot Intermediate Book 1

All of these books – and much more – may be downloaded for free from <http://purlandtraining.com>

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