

## A business conference by Andrew Garth

**Age:** Adults  
**Level:** Elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate  
**Time:** 40 minutes  
**Objective:** to practise using language needed for first-time interactions at networking events  
**Key skills:** speaking  
**Materials:** One role card per student, cut out and folded

**Note:** A class size of seven or more students is necessary.

### Procedure

#### 1. (5 mins)

Tell the students that today's class is not actually a class; it is a conference. Ask the class if they have ever been to a conference – if so, ask these follow-up questions:

- Where?
- What was the theme?
- How long did it last?

Inform the students that you've 'forgotten' the details (location, purpose and length) of today's conference and the students will have to create these details. Elicit some silly suggestions (for example, Antarctica) for these details and come to a decision as a class.

#### 2. (5 mins)

Ask the students what questions they might ask other attendees when meeting for the first time. Write these questions on the board. Make sure the following questions are included and written on the board if the students do not suggest them:

- 'Who do you work for?'
- 'Where are you from originally?'
- 'What is your position?'
- 'What industry do you work in?'
- 'Where did you go to school?'
- 'What languages can you speak?'
- Optional – 'How old are you?'

**(Note:** Either include or omit this question, depending on the cultural backgrounds of your students. In Far Eastern cultures, it is not considered

rude to ask a person's age because it is understood that doing so allows you to establish your relative social position and to show proper respect.)

#### 3. (5 mins)

Elicit some answers to the questions using the details of students in the class and also famous business people (for example, Bill Gates is in the IT industry; Tim Cook is the CEO of Apple).

#### 4. Optional additional activities (5 minutes)

##### Elementary – practising ways to continue and encourage conversation

Ask the students how they can continue and encourage conversation. Provide a few examples:

- 'Really?'
- 'I see.'
- 'What about you?' etc.

Gather the students' suggestions on the board.

Put the students in pairs to practise asking each other the conference questions (from step 2), making sure they also practise continuing and encouraging the conversation.

##### Pre-intermediate – practising ways of starting and ending conversations

Elicit ways one could **start** a conversation with a stranger at a conference. Gather these suggestions on the board. Include the following suggestions:

- 'I'm ... I don't think we've met.'
- 'That is a very nice jacket / shirt / handbag etc.'
- 'Have we met before? I'm ...'
- 'I really enjoyed the last presentation / activity / dinner etc.'
- 'What do you think of the conference so far?'

Elicit ways one could **end** a conversation at a conference.

Gather these suggestions on the board. Include the following suggestions:

- 'It was really nice to meet you.'
- 'Excuse me. I have to go and say hello to someone.'

## A business conference by Andrew Garth

- 'I'm starving. Have you tried any food from the buffet?'
- 'I hope to see you around.'
- 'Would you be interested in meeting later for a drink?'

You may also want to provide a few comical ways to end a conversation, for example pretending you have a phone call or that you've lost your keys and must go and find them immediately.

Put the students in pairs and ask them practise starting a conversation at a conference, asking a few conference questions (see step 2) and, then, ending the conversation.

### Intermediate – practising using tag questions for confirmation

Tell the students that, today, they will be looking at how to check if information is correct. Provide an example by asking one student:

- 'You haven't won the lottery, have you?'

Explain how this construction checks the validity of a thought you have. If necessary, spend time reviewing how the tag must be positive if the initial phrase is negative and vice versa. Elicit from the students ways they could rephrase the conference questions on the board (from step 2) to include tag questions. Some examples may include:

- 'You're not the CEO, are you?'
- 'You work in the fashion industry, don't you?'

Put the students in pairs and have them practise this grammar point about their real lives and jobs using the conference questions on the board (from step 2).

#### 5. (2–3 minutes)

Give each student a role card. Inform them that they now have a new identity for today's conference and that the information about that identity is on the CV. Give them a few minutes to read through their CV and ask any questions.

#### 6. (2–3 minutes)

Tell the students to unfold their role card to reveal a note from their company's human resources manager. Tell the students that he or she is a bit strange and has very specific ideas about the people he or she wants to employ. Tell the students that they should read

through the list of qualities the people must have. (If the students ask why one person from the list on each role card has a line through it, just say that the HR manager changed his or her mind.)

#### 7. (10 minutes)

Tell the students that the conference has begun and that they need to meet the other attendees. Make sure that they know they also have another goal – they need to find the people on the HR manager's note. Tell them they should write the person's name over where it says 'somebody'. Remind the students that they should use whatever language they practised in class (encouraging conversation for elementary students, starting and ending conversations for pre-intermediates and tag questions for intermediates). Encourage the students to stand up and mingle. If necessary, provide a prize for the student who finds all the requested people.

**(Note:** If there are only seven students, you will have to assume the remaining role. If there are more than eight students, the teacher can double (or triple) up the roles. If necessary, inform the students there are some 'twins' in the class.)

#### 8. (5 minutes)

After a majority of the students have found all of the people requested in the note from the HR manager, ask the students to sit down. Tell the students that we have to check to make sure everyone has the correct information – otherwise, the HR manager may be angry! Tell the students that, if they have a name for a number on the list, you'd like them to call out that name when you say the number. For example, you say 'One!' and the students should call out whomever they wrote down for number one on the list. Assuming the students completed the task correctly, they should all call out the same name: 'Pedro Lopez'. **(Note:** the answer for each number is the same for all the role cards.)

#### Key:

1. Pedro Lopez;
2. John Smith;
3. Jin Hui Kim;
4. Kumar Patel;
5. Alice Martin;
6. Angela Müller;
7. Jackie Yen;
8. Ahmed Abadi

Inform the students that the conference is now coming to a close and thank all the attendees for coming.

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This is your new identity for today. You are Pedro. This is your CV.

	<p><b>Pedro Lopez</b> Nationality: Spain   Age: 27 Banking Industry</p>
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### Education

Bachelor's  
Madrid University ~ Finance

### Work experience

Bank of New York  
Investment Manager 2014 ~ Present

Madrid Mutual Funds  
Investment Manager 2012 ~ 2012

### Language ability

Spanish ~ Native  
English ~ Fluent  
French ~ Advanced

References available upon request

This is your new identity for today. You are John. This is your CV.

	<p><b>John Smith</b> Nationality: USA   Age: 34 IT Industry</p>
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### Education

Master's  
Springfield University ~ Computer engineering

Bachelor's  
Springfield University ~ Computer engineering

### Work experience

Eagle Soft  
Software Developer 2012 ~ Present

Software Solutions  
Software Developer 2004 ~ 2012

### Language ability

Spanish ~ Native  
English ~ Fluent  
French ~ Advanced

References available upon request

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Pedro. I hope you enjoy your conference. I am looking for some new employees with specific qualities. Please try to find the following people:

- ~~1. Somebody who used to live in Japan.~~
2. Somebody who is 34 years old.
3. Somebody who is from Korea.
4. Somebody who studied at Delhi University.
5. Somebody who is a designer.
6. Somebody who can speak German and Korean.
7. Somebody who is in the electronics industry.
8. Somebody who works for Kingdom Cigarettes.

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey John. I hope you enjoy your conference. I am looking for some new employees with specific qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who works for the Bank of New York.
- ~~2. Somebody who used to play professional football.~~
3. Somebody who is 28 years old.
4. Somebody who is from India.
5. Somebody who studied at Paris University.
6. Somebody who is an accountant.
7. Somebody who can speak Chinese and Hindi.
8. Somebody who is in the tobacco industry.

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This is your new identity for today. You are Jin. This is your CV.

	<b>Jin Hui Kim</b> Nationality: Korea   Age: 28 Airline Industry
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### Education

Bachelor's  
Seoul University ~ Tourism

### Work experience

Asian Airlines  
Flight Attendant 2013 ~ Present

Korean Airlines  
Accounts Manager 2011 ~ 2013

### Language ability

Korean ~ Native  
English ~ Fluent  
Japanese ~ Advanced

References available upon request

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Jin Hui. I hope you enjoy your conference. I

am looking for some new employees with specific qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who is in the banking industry.
2. Somebody who works for Eagle Soft.
3. ~~Somebody who used to be a model.~~
4. Somebody who is 57 years old.
5. Somebody who is from France.
6. Somebody who studied at Berlin University.
7. Somebody who is an electrical engineer.
8. Somebody who can speak Italian and Arabic.

This is your new identity for today. You are Kumar. This is your CV.

	<b>Kumar Patel</b> Nationality: India   Age: 57 Automotive Industry
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### Education

Doctorate  
Delhi University ~ Economics

Master's  
Delhi University ~ Economics

Bachelor's  
Delhi University ~ Economics

### Work experience

India Auto  
Sales Agent 2001 ~ Present

Delhi Motors  
Sales Agent 1995 ~ 2001

### Language ability

Hindi ~ Native  
English ~ Fluent  
Arabic ~ Advanced

References available upon request

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Kumar. I hope you enjoy your conference. I

am looking for some new employees with specific qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who can speak Spanish and French.
2. Somebody who is in the IT industry
3. Somebody who works for Asian Airlines.
4. ~~Somebody who used to be a farmer.~~
5. Somebody who is 45 years old.
6. Somebody who is from Germany.
7. Somebody who studied at Beijing University.
8. Somebody who is a marketing manager.

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This is your new identity for today. You are Alice. This is your CV.

	<b>Alice Martin</b> Nationality: France   Age: 45 Fashion Industry
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### Education

Bachelor's  
Paris University ~ Design

### Work experience

Blueberry Clothes  
Designer 2002 ~ Present

Jean Bernard Clothes  
Designer 1998 ~ 2002

### Language ability

French ~ Native  
English ~ Fluent  
Chinese ~ Advanced

References available upon request

This is your new identity for today. You are Angela. This is your CV.

	<b>Angela Müller</b> Nationality: German   Age: 47 Telecommunication Industry
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### Education

Master's  
Berlin University ~ Accounting

Bachelor's  
Berlin University ~ Accounting

### Work experience

Berlin Wireless  
Accountant 2006 ~ Present

Core Communications  
Accountant 2000 ~ 2004

### Language ability

German ~ Native  
English ~ Fluent  
Korean ~ Advanced

References available upon request

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Alice. I hope you enjoy your conference. I am

looking for some new employees with specific

qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who is an investment manager.
2. Somebody who can speak Spanish and German.
3. Somebody who is in the airline industry.
4. Somebody who works for India Auto.
5. ~~Somebody who used to live in Brazil.~~
6. Somebody who is 47 years old.
7. Somebody who is from China.
8. Somebody who studied at Riyadh University.

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Angela. I hope you enjoy your conference. I


am looking for some new employees with specific

qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who works for the Bank of New York.
2. Somebody who is a software developer.
3. Somebody who can speak Korean and Japanese.
4. Somebody who is in the automotive industry.
5. Somebody who works for Blueberry Clothes.
6. ~~Somebody who used to study at Harvard.~~
7. Somebody who is 51 years old.
8. Somebody who is from Saudi Arabia.

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This is your new identity for today. You are Jackie. This is your CV.

	<b>Jackie Yen</b> Nationality: China   Age: 51 Electronics Industry
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### Education

- Doctorate  
Beijing University ~ Electrical Engineering
- Master's  
Beijing University ~ Electrical Engineering
- Bachelor's  
Beijing University ~ Electrical Engineering

### Work experience

- Beijing Electronics  
Electrical Engineer 2007 ~ Present
- Delhi Motors  
Electrical Engineer 1997 ~ 2007

### Language ability

- Chinese ~ Native
- English ~ Fluent
- Hinidi ~ Advanced

References available upon request

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Jackie. I hope you enjoy your conference. I am looking for some new employees with specific qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who is from Spain.
2. Somebody who studied at Springfield University.
3. Somebody who is a flight attendant.
4. Somebody who can speak Hindi and Arabic.
5. Somebody who is in the fashion industry.
6. Somebody who works for Berlin Wireless.
7. ~~Somebody~~ who used to play chess.
8. Somebody who is 35 years old.

This is your new identity for today. You are Ahmed. This is your CV.

	<b>Ahmed Abadi</b> Nationality: Saudi Arabia   Age: 35 Tobacco Industry
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### Education

- Master's  
Riyadh University ~ Statistics
- Bachelor's  
Riyadh University ~ Statistics

### Work experience

- Kingdom Cigarettes  
Marketing Manager 2012 ~ Present
- Camel Cigarettes  
Marketing Manager 2008 ~ 2012

### Language ability

- Arabic ~ Native
- English ~ Fluent
- Italian ~ Advanced

References available upon request

FOLD

You've just found a note from your company's human resources manager in your bag. Please read the note to learn about your goal during the conference.

Hey Ahmed. I hope you enjoy your conference. I am looking for some new employees with specific qualities. Please try to find the following people:

1. Somebody who is 27 years old.
2. Somebody who is from the USA.
3. Somebody who studied at Seoul University.
4. Somebody who is a sales agent.
5. Somebody who can speak French and English.
6. Somebody who is in the telecommunication industry.
7. Somebody who works for Beijing Electronics.
8. ~~Somebody~~ who used to be friends with the president.