

CHAPTER 5 · KEEPING IT FLOWING

QUESTIONS THAT *open people up*

The right question turns a reply into a conversation.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Interactive version: attenglish.com/talk/5

PHRASE BOX SAY IT

OPEN STARTERS

What do you enjoy about...?
How did you get into...?
What's it like...?

FOLLOW-UPS

What happened next?
How come?
What was that like?

SOFTER STARTERS

Can I ask...?
I've always wondered...
Tell me about...

OPEN OR CLOSED? SORT

Closed questions can be answered with yes, no or one word. Open questions invite more. Sort these. Tick one column for each.

	Closed	Open
Do you like your job?		
What do you enjoy about your job?		
Have you got any brothers or sisters?		
How did you two meet?		
Is the food good there?		
What's the best thing on the menu?		
Tell me about your trip.		
Did you have a nice weekend?		

UPGRADE YOUR QUESTIONS BUILD

Choose a topic and an open starter. The tool writes the question for you.

The topic

Put it together and write your line

BUILD A FOLLOW-UP CHAIN ORDER

Here is a short conversation, but it's in the wrong order. Put it back together. Notice how each question grows from the last answer. Number the lines 1 to 6.

No.	Line
	B: A very wonky bowl!
	A: What did you get up to at the weekend?
	B: I went to a pottery class, actually.
	A: Pottery? How come?
	A: That's a lovely present. What did you make?
	B: My sister bought me a voucher for my birthday.

THREE FOLLOW-UPS IN TWENTY SECONDS PLAY

You'll hear something someone said. Ask three follow-up questions out loud before the timer ends. Time yourself: 20 seconds each.

- ☐ "I've just come back from a week in Scotland."
- ☐ "I've started learning to cook Thai food."
- ☐ "We're moving house next month."
- ☐ "I ran my first 10K on Sunday."
- ☐ "My cat has just had kittens."

SAY IT ALOUD SAY IT

Practise your best question with a curious, friendly tone. Tick a box each time you say it aloud.

Line	Said it
What do you enjoy most about your new job?	☐ ☐ ☐
How come?	☐ ☐ ☐
What was that like?	☐ ☐ ☐
My own line:	☐ ☐ ☐

Focus: Wh- questions usually fall at the end in British English. Listen to the model.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON REFLECT

Which closed questions do you ask most often? Rewrite one.

Who will you ask a follow-up question this week?

What question do you love being asked?

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- ☐ Closed questions get one word. Open questions get a story.
- ☐ Start with What, How, or Tell me about.
- ☐ Follow-up questions build on their last answer.
- ☐ One good follow-up beats five new questions.
- ☐ “How come?” is a short, friendly way to ask why.