

ESL360 Munch & Mingle

Tuesday, September 29, 2026 (10 a.m. - 12 p.m.)

10400 Legacy Dr - Frisco, TX 75034

Unit 1 Language Focus: Natural, Conversational English

DESCRIPTION: Become a character from a book or movie and spend the morning meeting other characters, talking, listening, reacting, asking questions, and following the conversation wherever it goes.

CHOOSE YOUR CHARACTER

Read a book or watch a movie in English that has a strong, interesting character you would enjoy becoming for the day. Your source can be:

- a children's or picture book
- a chapter book or novel
- a memoir, biography, or autobiography
- a movie

The level of the book is not the point. Choose something interesting to you and get to know one character well enough to speak as that person.

COME AS YOUR CHARACTER

At Munch & Mingle, you are not giving a report about your character. You are the character.

SPEAK IN FIRST PERSON:

☒ Lara Jean has two sisters.
☒ I have two sisters.

☒ Britt Marie likes to clean with baking soda.
☒ I like to clean with baking soda.

Dress like your character. Keep it simple or have fun with it—the choice is yours.

Optional food: Bring a small finger food or appetizer to share. If you'd like, connect it somehow to your character, book, or movie. The connection can be creative! Don't make this complicated.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN?

You'll circulate around the room and have several short conversations with different characters. Every few minutes, you'll move on and meet someone new. There is no speech to give and no conversation to memorize.

DON'T WORRY: The goal isn't to prove that you used every skill from Unit 1. The goal is to have a natural conversation and use the skills when there's a reason to use them.

PREPARE YOUR CHARACTER

Prepare your character—not a memorized conversation.

You don't know what the other characters will say or ask you. That's what makes this real conversation practice! Think about some things about your character you can use naturally.

Who are you? *(name, age if relevant, where you live, family or relationships)*

What are you like? *(personality, strengths, quirks, habits)*

What do you enjoy? *(interests, hobbies, favorite things, things you avoid)*

Who matters to you? *(family, friends, coworkers, important relationships)*

What are you proud of? *(something you've done, learned, survived, created, or achieved)*

What's happening in your life right now? *(a current situation, goal, change, problem, or plan)*

What happened recently? *(something you did, saw, learned, enjoyed, or experienced)*

What challenge are you dealing with? *(a problem, conflict, decision, or worry)*

What do you have opinions about? *(something you care about, agree/disagree with)*

What makes you feel something strongly? *(something exciting, frustrating,, boring, surprising, etc.)*

GRAMMAR IN CONVERSATION

SIMPLE PRESENT

Use it for your character's usual life, habits, likes, relationships, and things that are generally true.

"I live with my father and two sisters." "I love baking."

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

Use it for things happening now, around now, or temporarily.

"I'm trying to figure out what I want." "My sister is living in Scotland right now."

QUESTIONS

Use accurate question word order—but don't plan every question ahead of time. Listen first. Ask about what the other person actually says.

"What do you do for fun?" "What are you working on right now?"

YOUR UNIT 1 CONVERSATION TOOLKIT

You already know these skills. Munch & Mingle is your chance to put them together.

1. DEAD ENDS & DOOR OPENERS

Give people something to work with.

- Introduce yourself beyond basic biographical facts. Share a specific detail that helps the other person get a fuller sense of who you are.
- Avoid answers that close the door: “Yes.” “No.” “Fine.” Add a detail that gives the other person somewhere to go.
- Respond naturally when the other person opens a door.

2. TELL ME MORE

Be interested & interesting—listen & give something interesting to respond to.

- Listen for details instead of planning your next question.
- React: “Really?” “Wow, that sounds exhausting.” “That’s fascinating.”
- Comment: “That sounds like a difficult decision.” “I can see why you’re excited.”
- Ask: “What happened next?” “How did you decide?” “What do you enjoy most about it?”
- Connect when it fits: “That reminds me of...” “I’ve had a similar experience...” Then step aside and return the conversation to the other person.

3. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE / I SHOULD LET YOU GO

Match the person and the moment.

- Adjust your greeting, tone, wording, and level of formality to fit the person, relationship, setting, and purpose.
- Notice when a conversation is naturally ending.
- Close warmly: “It was nice talking with you.” “I should let you go, but I’m glad we got to talk.”

4. AGREE TO DISAGREE / FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

Protect the relationship—even when the conversation gets harder.

- Respond with care when someone shares difficult news.
- Disagree without attacking the person: “I see it a little differently.” “I understand your point, however...”
- Decline or set a boundary politely: “I’d love to, but I can’t.” “I’m afraid that won’t work for me.”
- Adjust how direct you are to the person and situation.

REMEMBER: A natural conversation doesn’t follow a checklist. You do not need to force a disagreement, difficult-news moment, boundary, or any other skill into a conversation. Listen to the person in front of you and use the language that fits the moment.

CONVERSATION PLANNER

A guide, not a script.

1. MEET

How might your character introduce herself/himself and open a conversational door?

Hi, I'm _____

One interesting detail I could share _____

2. LISTEN & RESPOND

You cannot plan what the other characters say, but you can prepare a few responses.

REACT _____

COMMENT _____

ASK _____

CONNECT _____

3. FOLLOW THE CONVERSATION

Something the other person says may lead somewhere you didn't plan. Good! Build on it.

A few follow-up questions I can use when they fit _____

4. HANDLE THE UNEXPECTED

Prepare these in case if the conversation takes you there.

If we disagree _____

If someone tells me something difficult _____

If I need to politely say no or set a boundary _____

5. CLOSE

A natural, warm way I could end a conversation _____
