Asking follow-up questions

Warmer – introductory discussion

Discuss the questions.

1. How often do you speak to native speakers of English?
2. Where are they from?
3. What do you find easy or difficult about speaking to native speakers?
4. Is the English that people speak in the UK different from what you studied at school? In what way(s)?

Activity 1 – continuing the conversation

Complete the conversations.

1. A: I’m going to Germany next week.
   B: Really? ..........................................................?

   B: Oh, yeah? ..........................................................?

3. A: Our sports club organises lots of social events.
   B: That’s nice. ..........................................................?

   B: Sounds interesting. ..........................................................?

5. A: Maria ended up in Scotland.
   B: Eh? ..........................................................?

6. A: What’s your domestic situation?
   B: Er, ..........................................................?
### Activity 2 – follow-up questions

**Match the meanings on the right (a–f) to the questions on the left (1–6).**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do you mean (exactly)?</td>
<td>a. What do you have to do?</td>
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<td>2. What does that involve?</td>
<td>b. Can you describe it to me?</td>
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<td>3. How come?</td>
<td>c. Can you give me some examples?</td>
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<td>5. What's it like?</td>
<td>e. Why or how did that happen? I don't understand.</td>
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<td>6. What sort of thing?</td>
<td>f. Could you explain that more clearly?</td>
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1 ______ 2 ______ 3 ______ 4 ______ 5 ______ 6 ______

### Activity 3 – intonation

Read the conversations out loud. Use rising intonation in the follow-up questions.

1. **A:** I'm going to Germany next week.
   **B:** Really? What for?

2. **A:** I bought a new outfit for the wedding yesterday.
   **B:** Oh, yeah? What's it like?

3. **A:** Our sports club organises lots of social events.
   **B:** That's nice. What sort of thing?

4. **A:** My sister's got a new job working for a charity.
   **B:** Sounds interesting. What does that involve?

5. **A:** Maria ended up in Scotland.
   **B:** Eh? How come?

6. **A:** What's your domestic situation?
   **B:** Er, how do you mean?
Activity 4 – controlled practice

Take turns to read a statement and ask a follow-up question. Remember to use rising intonation in the follow-up question.

I’ve just got a job in a nightclub.  
I do lots of sport in my free time.  
I’m staying in a lovely place in London.

I went to Oxford last weekend.  
I don’t like people I can’t trust.  
My brother was really angry with me yesterday.

Activity 5 – fluency practice

Choose two topics from the list below and have a conversation. Try to use follow-up questions.

- Something you’ve bought recently
- Somewhere you’re planning to go
- A job you’ve had / would like to have
- Somewhere you’ve visited recently
- A place you really like
- Something dangerous you’ve done / would like to do
- A hobby or sport you enjoy doing
Asking follow-up questions

Teaching notes

Age: teenagers/adults
Level: intermediate/upper-intermediate (B2)
Time: approximately 60 minutes

Objectives:
- to consider how spoken English in the UK is different from formal English
- to present and practise follow-up questions
- to encourage students to develop and extend conversations.

Materials/preparation: one copy of the handouts per student.
- Cut the statements in activity 4 into cards.
- You could also cut out the questions in activity 2 to make it more kinaesthetic, and/or use the interactive version (available on www.teachit.elt.com – quick search 21814).

Warmer – introductory questions

Students who are not studying in the UK could think about films for question 3.

Activity 1 – continuing the conversation

Encourage students to peer-correct and to improve on their questions.

Activity 2 – follow-up questions

You could feed back on answers using the interactive version (www.teachit.elt.com – quick search 21814).

Answers: 1f; 2a; 3e; 4d; 5b; 6c.

Refer students back to activity 1. Ask them to complete the conversations again, using the follow-up questions from activity 2. **Answers:** see handout for activity 3.

Model the question *What’s it like?* with rising intonation. Ask students:
- whether the voice rises or falls
- if the speaker sounds interested (yes)
- if the speaker wants the conversation to continue (yes).

Drill the question then put students in pairs to practise the other questions.

Activity 3 – intonation

Students work in pairs and read the completed dialogues, using correct intonation.

Activity 4 – controlled practice

Students use the cards to make mini-dialogues, for example:

- **A:** I’ve got a lovely house.
- **B:** Really? What’s it like?
- **A:** It’s really big …

Activity 5 – fluency practice

Monitor and make a note of errors or particularly interesting conversations to bring up in feedback.