

AN ENGAGING ENGLISH TEXTBOOK TO IMPROVE SPEAKING SKILLS!

Compelling Conversations

Questions & Quotations for Advanced Vietnamese English Language Learners—Volume 1

WRITTEN, COMPILED, AND EDITED BY
Eric H. Roth and Toni Aberson



Sample Chapter 7 from Chimayo Press
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English Language Learners – Volume 1

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CHAPTER 7

BEING YOURSELF

SHARING PERSPECTIVES

From consulting charts and reading palms to taking personality tests and reading self-help books, people love to describe themselves.

1. Which three adjectives would you use to describe your personality?
2. Are you shy or outgoing? When are you most outgoing?
3. Are you daring or cautious? In what ways?
4. Are you usually patient or impatient? Can you give an example?
5. Are you quiet or talkative? When are you most talkative? Least?
6. Would you call yourself a leader or a follower? Why?
7. Are you generous or selfish? Are you too selfish or overly generous?
8. In what ways are you rigid? In what ways are you flexible?
9. In what ways are you traditional? In what ways are you modern?
10. If pessimistic is 1 and optimistic is 10, what would your number be on the scale? Why did you decide on that number?
11. On a scale of 1-10, how assertive are you?
12. Is your personality more like your mother or your father? In what ways?
13. Which color would you use to describe your personality?
14. Which animal would you use to describe yourself? Tiger? Mouse? Why?
15. Do you believe in astrology? Which sign are you in the zodiac? Does the pattern of this sign match your personality?
16. Which animal year are you according to Chinese astrology? Does this fit?
17. Have you ever taken a personality test from a magazine or online? Was it helpful? Was it fun? Was it accurate?
18. Which season of the year best describes your personality? In what ways?

EXPANDING VOCABULARY

accurate	character	flexible	generous	nurture
patient	optimist	pessimist	rigid	talkative

accurate *adjective*: correct, getting the facts right.

- Scientists, engineers, and doctors must be accurate.

“Character is much easier kept than recovered.”

—Thomas Paine (1737-1809), American revolutionary

character *noun*: one's personality and values; moral sense; a figure in fiction or theater.

- Kelly showed her character at work.
- Oliver Twist is one of my favorite characters in English literature.

flexible *adjective*: loose, bending; willing to change.

- Pham is flexible and can work either Friday or Saturday.

generous: *adjective*: giving, sharing with others.

- A good sister is generous with her time and helps her family.

nurture *verb*: to take care of another; to care for or help someone in need.

- Parents nurture their children and guide them in their lives.

patient *adjective*: able to wait calmly, not in a hurry;

noun: a person receiving medical treatment.

- A patient man can calmly wait for a late bus.
- The doctor prescribed medicine for her patient.

optimist *noun*: someone who see the positive side and believes things will get better.

- She saw the glass as “half-full,” which made her an optimist.

pessimist *noun*: one who has a negative view, and thinks things will get worse.

- He saw the glass as “half-empty,” which made him a pessimist.

rigid *adjective*: unwilling to change; inflexible.

- Thomas is so rigid that he will not even listen to other people.

talkative *adjective*: verbal; engages in constant or non-stop conversation.

- Tran becomes talkative when he relaxes with his friends.

ASKING QUESTIONS

A. Select five vocabulary words in this chapter, and write a question for each word. Remember to start your question with a question word (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, Is, Do, etc). You also want to end each question with a question mark (?). Underline each vocabulary word.

Example: Are you feeling optimistic today?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

B. Take turns asking and answering questions with your partner or group members.

REMEMBER...

- Respect yourself
- Be yourself
- Create your future

PARAPHRASING PROVERBS

A. Read the following proverbs, and discuss them with your partner. What do they mean? Circle your favorites. Explain your choices.

- Character is destiny.—Greek
- The leopard can not change its spots.—Vietnamese
- Trust yourself.—American
- The more noble, the more humble.—Chinese
- A light heart lives long.—English
- See yourself as others see you.
- A pretty being is better than being pretty.—English

B. Can you add two more?

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THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES...

1. Do you think our personalities are set when we are born?
2. Can we change our personalities? How?
3. How has your personality changed in the last ten years?
4. Which three words would you use to describe your best friend's personality?
5. How are your personalities similar? How are your personalities different?
6. Why do you think opposites are sometimes attracted to each other?
7. Some cultures define personality in terms of the elements. Would you say you are primarily air, water, fire, or earth? Explain your choice.
8. Which three qualities do you think of as yin (feminine)?
9. Which three qualities do you think of as yang (masculine)?
10. Can you name one yin quality and one yang quality which describe you?
11. How might being raised in poverty influence someone's personality?
12. Would being born in extreme wealth change your personality? How?
13. If you had been born in another country, do you think your personality would be different? How?
14. Can you think of somebody with a good personality and bad character?
15. What is the difference between one's personality and one's character?
16. Are you primarily an extrovert or an introvert? Why do you say that?
17. Do you think nature (biology) or nurture (our circumstances) are more important in shaping our personalities? Why do you say that?
18. What are your best qualities?



DISCUSSING QUOTATIONS

Take turns reading these quotations out loud, and discuss them with your partner. Do you agree with the quotation? Disagree? Why? Mark your answer.

1. "Know thyself."
—Socrates (470-399 B.C.E.), Greek philosopher
 Agree Disagree Why?
2. "The man of character bears the accidents of life with dignity and grace, making the best of circumstances."
—Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), Greek philosopher/ethicist
 Agree Disagree Why?
3. "This above all: To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."
—William Shakespeare (1564-1616), English playwright
 Agree Disagree Why?
4. "Character is much easier kept than recovered."
—Thomas Paine (1737–1809), American writer
 Agree Disagree Why?
5. "It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious."
—Oscar Wilde (1856–1900), Irish author/playwright
 Agree Disagree Why?
6. "Some people with great virtues are disagreeable, while others with great vice are delightful."
—Francois de la Rochefoucauld (1613—1680), French philosopher
 Agree Disagree Why?
7. "Man's main task in life is to give birth to himself, to become what he potentially is. The most important product of his effort is his own personality."
—Erich Fromm (1900–1980), German-American psychologist
 Agree Disagree Why?
8. "Generous people are rarely mentally ill people."
—Karl Menninger (1893–1990), American psychiatrist
 Agree Disagree Why?
9. "The easiest kind of relationship for me is with ten thousand people. The hardest is with one."
—Joan Baez (1941 -), American singer
 Agree Disagree Why?
10. "Dwell in possibility."
—Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), American poet
 Agree Disagree Why?

ON YOUR OWN

What do you like about yourself? Write a postcard to a friend describing your strongest traits.

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About this Book and the Series

Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations for Advanced Vietnamese English Language Learners is based on our original and highly successful English as a Second Language (ESL) textbook, *Compelling Conversations*. The difference is this unique textbook was created for Vietnamese English Language Learners. Like the original, this English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook includes thematic chapters to create quality conversations with conversation starters, interview questions, classic quotations, paraphrasing exercises, and traditional proverbs to create hours of English conversation and class discussions.

This culturally sensitive text encourages students to speak about their experiences, their families, and their lives in Vietnam. With dozens of practical speaking exercises, *Compelling Conversations* helps advanced Vietnamese English Language Learners develop greater fluency, develop and express their opinions, give reasons to support their opinions, build critical thinking skills, prepare for standardized tests with speaking sections (TOEFL, IELTS), and create authentic conversations.

Fluency also requires practice. *Compelling Conversations* encourages students to learn by doing and continually practice speaking English. As a result, students gain greater confidence, fluency, and vocabulary. They also create better conversations in English—in and beyond their English classes.

Originally designed for community college students (ages 18-87!), the textbook has been adopted

by American adult schools, international high schools, English language schools and intensive English language programs, university ESL programs, and conversation clubs. Recommended by *English Teaching Professional* magazine, the original, *Compelling Conversations: Questions & Quotations on Timeless Topics* is used by English Language Learners in over 40 countries.

Compelling Conversations: Questions and Quotations for Advanced Vietnamese English Language Learners includes:

- 15 thematic chapters.
- Over 75 communicative activities.
- Partner, group, and class discussion activities to develop fluency.
- 15 targeted vocabulary lists to expand working vocabulary in social, professional, and academic contexts.
- 15 paraphrasing exercises.
- Over 125 global proverbs to build intercultural understanding.
- 15 question writing exercises.
- 150 classic quotations to display eloquent language and develop critical thinking skills.
- 27 black-and-white photographs.
- Versatile material than can be adapted to multi-level listening and speaking classes.
- Critical thinking activities that develop vital academic skills for mainstream college courses.
- Discussion activities to build fluency and classroom speaking skills.
- 18 reproducible out-of-classroom and online assignments for homework.
- An alphabetized academic word list.
- Bibliography.
- 108 pages.

This communicative, oral skills EFL/ESL textbook has been primarily designed for international high schools, community college/university English language programs, and adult education programs. The book combines focused communicative activities and the natural language approach.

We are Chimayo Press, an independent educational publishing company based in Los Angeles since 2005. We're committed to publishing educational and specialty books that create compelling conversations, deepen relationships, and celebrate the human spirit. *Compelling Conversations: Questions & Quotations for Advanced Vietnamese English Language Learners* is the second title in our Compelling Conversations series.

Chimayo Press plans to release additional specialized editions of *Compelling Conversations* for Japan, Korea, Israel, Mexico, and Business Professionals. We will also publish *Lively ESL Lessons: American Idioms and More* in 2011.

We're interested in your feedback and suggestions. Visit us at www.CompellingConversations.com. To discuss special orders, please call +1(310)390-0131 or email eric@compellingconversations.com.

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EFL EXPERTS PRAISE THE VIETNAM VERSION :

"Compelling Conversations is a great book to get my students to talk beyond the usual topics they find in ESL textbooks in Vietnam. The topics encourage students to think, discuss, and exchange ideas and their own personal interpretations of idioms, quotes and proverbs. If you want to have your students talking and conversing, this book is a must-have!"

Leah Montano, ELD Program Coordinator
APU International School
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

"I have taught ESL conversation classes for all levels in the United States and Vietnam, and Compelling Conversations is one of my favorite resources. As a collection of interesting and thoughtful conversation starters, it never fails to help me engage students in meaningful conversational interaction."

Nathan Crandall, Lecturer
USC Language Academy

"Compelling Conversations is an unexpected treasure. I have been teaching ESL in Vietnam for a few years, and this is the first textbook that is not Euro-centric. The perfect mix of east meets west, it provides lively, thought provoking topics with vocabulary and proverbs that my Vietnamese students can relate to and connect with."

Emily Borden, English teacher/tutor
Hanoi, Vietnam

"Compelling Conversations is the first book I turn to when teaching an advanced level ESL class. It has become integral to my lesson planning as a way to foster meaningful conversations and improve my student's vocabulary. The proverbs and quotes included with each lesson let every student think critically and I've heard some amazing insights coming from all types of students."

David Robinson, English Teacher
Los Angeles High School

REVIEWS FOR THE ORIGINAL BOOK:

"Compelling Conversations is a recommended resource for teachers who want to make their conversation classes more learner-centered. It should be especially appealing to those who wish to escape the confines of the Presentation-Practice-Production approach and do without a formal grammatical or functional syllabus. It reflects both authors' considerable professional experience, and would be a notable addition to any English teacher's bookshelf."

Hall Houston
English Teaching Professional magazine

"This outstanding resource allows teachers to confidently walk into an advanced ESL classroom with self-contained, engaging conversation lessons... I wish I had this book in my old adult/university classes. A great book for adult education teachers, university instructors, and private tutors!"

Eric Busch, Founder of ESLHQ.com



"Compelling Conversations topics are timely, meaningful, and presented in such a way as to stimulate immediate class participation."

MARC YABLONKA, Author & ESL Teacher, LAUSD Adult Education



ERIC H. ROTH teaches international students the pleasures of writing and speaking English at the University of Southern California. For the last 20 years, he has taught English, academic writing, and speech to high school, adult, community college and university students. Roth has co-taught university writing courses in France and Spain, trained ESL and EFL teachers in communicative methods, and given many CATESOL presentations. He has also directed the APU International High School summer program in Vietnam.

TONI ABERSON taught English to adult, university, and high school students for 35 years. She also supervised high school English teachers for 15 years, and believes that a lively classroom is the optimal learning environment. In 2011, Aberson authored another book for ESL students. *Lively ESL Lessons: American Idioms and More* focuses on real life expressions and situations.

Compelling Conversations is perfect for conversation clubs, private tutors, and conversation courses!

Visit us at www.CompellingConversations.com.

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