

# *Introduction*

These activities follow and build upon the strategic conversation skills of our intermediate-level book, *Conversation Strategies*. However, this text stands on its own and may easily be used for its own purpose: developing discussion skills. The activities in *Discussion Strategies* are designed to help high-intermediate to advanced level ESOL students develop the skills needed at high levels of communicative interaction.

From the early units on, students, in a step-by-step procedure, are given extensive practice in a variety of discussion strategies for leading and participating in a discussion. They are given focused practice with the following discussion techniques:

- using rejoinders
- asking follow-up questions
- seeking and giving clarification
- using comprehension checks
- answering with details
- soliciting more details from others
- interrupting others during a discussion
- recounting something they have heard
- volunteering an answer
- helping the leader of a discussion
- expressing an opinion
- referring to a source when giving an opinion
- leading a discussion themselves

Each unit builds on and recycles the strategies practiced in the previous ones, and for that reason, it is recommended that the class proceed through the book unit-by-unit in the given sequence. By the final units, students, while discussing sophisticated topics, are using all the strategies in large-group or whole-class situations.

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The general progression of interaction formats in the book is from participating with a partner in pair-work to leading large-group discussions. In the table of contents the interaction formats are indicated as pairs, triads, small groups, and large groups or whole class.

In many of the units, summaries of newspaper articles are used as the topics for practicing the strategies and for carrying out the discussion. These articles have been chosen for their high-interest content. No article requires in-depth background knowledge, and the topics can be discussed by students from any culture.

**To students and teachers:  
All the articles in this book  
are true stories.**

# A Note of the General Structure of the Book

All of the activities in this book are for discussion groups. The first twenty-eight units, those which introduce and provide controlled practice of the discussion strategies, are for groups of two to five students. Units twenty-nine through thirty-eight, starting on page 191, give the students an opportunity to use their new strategies in less structured discussions; they involve large groups or the whole class in open discussion of the articles provided.

For the first twenty-eight units, each student has information not to be shared with with other students except as part of the discussion activity. To help make this clear to the students, they are called Students A and B in pair activities, A, B, and C in triad activities, etc. And the book is divided into sections, the first for Student A, the next for Student B starting in page 67, and the third for Student C (and where appropriate Students D and E) starting on page 133. These sections can be found easily using the black tabs marked AAA, BBB, and CCC, as you can see on the facing page. For example, Unit 1 begins on page 1 for A, page 67 for B, and page 133 for C.

We don't want anyone to get lost, so let's be sure everyone is on the right page and then start off with Unit 1. Have fun.

