

## **Listening Comprehension Questions**

These questions will help you to stay focused and to test your listening skills.

### **How to do this:**

Listen for the answer to the first question. Once you hear the answer, stop the audio and read so you know what to listen for.

The answers are not provided but instead, we show you where you can find the answers within the transcription :)

1. When did Greg start Online Language Academy? (Page 2)
2. In 2 days how many replies has Greg received from his ads for teachers? (Page 2)
3. Are Word documents a good idea for making a CV? (Page 3)
4. What type of business did Amy own? (Page 3)
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6. What is one reason that Amy asks people to leave a voicemail message? (Page 4)
7. Does Greg ask applicants to send a video or a voicemail message? (Page 4)
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## Transcription:

**Amy:** In this English conversation lesson, I am going to be talking all about interviews with my friend, Greg, who has a lot of experience with hiring people. He's going to share his advice to help you get an interview, how to do well in an interview, and some tips to help you to stay relaxed and be less nervous.

Greg has a British accent, so you'll be able to hear my accent and his accent together. If you need some help understanding the conversation, make sure you come to our website, [RealEnglishConversations.com](http://RealEnglishConversations.com), to download the transcription to hear every word we are saying and to do some speaking and listening practice activities after.

**Curtis:** This is the Real English Conversations podcast.

**Amy:** Where you'll find the lessons and advice you'll need to be able to confidently use your English in the real world.

**Amy:** Hi, everyone. This is Amy from Real English Conversations. And today I have a very special interview for you with one of my friends, Greg, from Online Language Academy. Why don't you say hello, Greg?

**Greg:** Hi, everybody. Hi, Amy. How are you doing?

**Amy:** I'm pretty good, thanks. And in this episode we're going to be talking about job interviews, because I think Greg is a real expert in this area and has a lot of useful information that he can share with us. Why don't you tell us what you do at Online Language Academy, Greg.

**Greg:** Yeah, well, Online Language Academy is a business that I started in 2010. We teach students conversation classes, English conversation classes via Skype. And, yeah, I mean, a lot of the students have the goal to speak English with more fluency and more confidence. To get better job prospects or to pass exams. And we've prepared many students for interviews, actually. So, we've got experience with that. But also I have interviewed a lot of teachers over the past few years and have had some very good and very bad experiences doing all those interviews too.

**Amy:** Oh, it sounds like you probably have a lot of stories and advice that you're going to be able to share with us in --

**Greg:** Absolutely.

**Amy:** -- in this conversation today. So, I think the first thing that we should maybe talk about are the steps before people even get an opportunity to have an interview that might be affecting the reason why they get called to come in for an interview or not. So, what are—out of your experience, are there any things that happen in particular or things that you see that really help you to decide whether you want to interview someone or not?

**Greg:** Yeah. I mean, I think—what you've got to really understand is when you apply for a job, you are one of possibly a hundred applicants or maybe two hundred applicants. I mean, I've put job adverts out for qualified teachers and I've—in two days—got two hundred replies. So, you've really, really got to stand out from the rest of the applicants.

You've got to stand out from the crowd and – and be immediately get the readers attention.

And I get so many applications that are just—nothing special. You know, they're just a simple Word document. And they're expecting me to, you know, to really find that impressive. Now, you've got to be unique. You've got really, really be unique. You've no idea how many simple Word document CVs I get which are just with a list of their, you know, a list of their work experience or qualifications just written on a simple Word document. And that's really, really not enough.

**Amy:** No, you really want to define yourself, I think, at the beginning. Try to take the time and customize that very first line, even the objective, of the résumé can be really helpful, right?

**Greg:** Absolutely. And make it personalized as well. Make sure that you're applying for the specific job that you're applying for. You know, when I get people saying I'm really – really interested in working for Online Language Academy. It seems a prestigious company and I would really want to be part of that team. Then that's great. But then you get other applications that don't have any text whatsoever. They just attach their CV to an email and send it blank.

**Amy:** Exactly. It's just like a copy and paste kind of answer, where they're just, oh, here, I'm sending out a hundred applications and they're all going to say the same thing. I'm not going to take the time to personalize it to the company I'm applying to.

**Greg:** Absolutely. And I'll tell you, if you've got to read through one hundred applications, it's very, very easy just to press delete. And if they're not personalized and if they, you know, if they come addressed to like twenty different email addresses in the same email—and you can see all the email addresses that they're writing to—then they just get deleted. I don't even open the CV of people like that.

**Amy:** Yeah. So, basically, the number one thing that makes you immediately eliminate someone before you've even spoken to them or replied to their email is lack of personalization when they're applying for the job.

**Greg:** Yeah. Absolutely. It would go directly into the deleted items of my inbox. Because you have to – you have to be—you have to delete a lot. I mean, you can't spend a whole day reading through a hundred CVs. You've got to make quick decisions to whittle them down, to get them down to a manageable number. And if you're not unique, then you're not going to get the attention of the person who is reading them.

**Amy:** Yeah, no. I can definitely see that. I know for myself, when I did some hiring for something different, not for English teaching, but with my previous business, where I ran a delivery company, we had one thing that I found to be very, very effective for screening people to see if they would be a good candidate for the job. And I created an ad and in that ad I asked them to email me their résumé. And I notice that you call it a CV, but you also speak British English, so.

**Greg:** That's right.

**Amy:** I was going to call it a CV, and then I thought, 'Hey, wait a minute. That's not what I call it.' So I asked them to send me an email copy of their résumé. And the second

step is that they call and they leave a voicemail message with specific detail that I have asked them to leave in the actual advertisement that I did for them to apply. And I can tell you that just listening to someone's voice tells you a lot about a person. You can really hear their motivation, if they're just applying because they have to apply for a job versus someone who is genuinely interested. And you also have the opportunity to see if they can follow instructions right from the beginning. Because if they can't give you all of the details that you asked for, what are they going to be like when you're trying train them?

**Greg:** Exactly. In fact, you know what? I very recently started demanding that the applicants send a video introduction of themselves. My time now is extremely limited, more than before, and it's just a great way to give a first impression of the person. Because, you know, if you organize an interview, that's—automatically, that's an hour of my time and you can often make a decision within the first five minutes.

And if you just give a—if you ask them to send a quick video introduction, it does—well, it gives you a good first impression. It proves to me that they are a native English speaker, which is a key thing for our teachers. I say specifically that the teachers must be English—native English teachers. But we still get a lot of applications from people whose mother tongue is not English. So, it proves that.

And most importantly, it shows me that they're serious. You know, that they're willing to take that time and make the effort to make a quick recording. And even if – even if your employer doesn't demand this, I would still recommend just sending a link to a short video. Because it – it will make you—that is one thing that you can do if you want to stand out and if you want to be unique. And that is a—it's not a great effort. It's a, you know, two minute video. And it just gives a great first impression of you.

**Amy:** Yeah. I can agree to that. Because I actually—I use a website where I hire freelancers to do small jobs. Maybe it would be different things from creating transcriptions for the podcasts that we produce to some different work that's done on the website. And when I'm looking for candidates, I've noticed that a few of them have included a video and that has either has been to their advantage or against them in some cases. But, you know, if you really—I mean, you make yourself presentable, do a short video, introduce yourself, and really try to show your personality. Employers aren't looking for someone that doesn't have a personality. We actually want to know who we're working with and what you're like. And if you can make that shine in your video, I think it will really help you to go a long way.

**Greg:** Yeah. Don't read a text, don't read a script of what they want to know. Be yourself, be natural, look to the camera and just, yeah. Show them your personality. Because they want to see who they are potentially going to be working with and that's a great way to give a first impression of who you are as well as what you can do.

**Amy:** So, let's pretend that you do find someone. They pass the screening stage where you're going through all of these applications and you do decide to give them an hour of your time to do the interview. For example, how much of a role does it play that they have that personality during the interview? Does that make or break a candidate for you or how do you feel about that?

**Greg:** Well, all my interviews are on Skype. The teachers who work for us, they're all around the world. So, the—it's an opportunity for me to see how they would be in their classes. You know, they're going to have this situation time and again, when they meet new students. It's a first impression. It's how good of a conversationalist are they. Are they friendly people. Are they people students are going to connect with. And that's first kind of test. I mean, are they able to connect with me, and if they are, then I would assume that they are going to be able to connect with the students too. So, it's very important the way they come across in the interview.

**Amy:** Um-hum. I think that—when I think back to when I was young and had low confidence, I hadn't had a lot of experience with really getting out in the job world, I was so nervous. I was a nervous wreck in interviews. And I wasn't able to show my personality and I think that was – was really, really hard. So, trying to work through the nerves and be yourself. I know it's easier said than done, but definitely important.

**Greg:** You know, a bit of nerves is not the worst thing in the world. I actually—I've given interviews to people who are very nervous to people who are a little bit nervous and to people who are not nervous at all. And a little bit of nerves actually shows me that they really care about the job, you know. It gives quite a nice impression. I remember saying to one applicant once, how you doing today? And she said, I'm really nervous. And I thought, okay. Hey, you know what? That just means that she really, really cares about this job. It's not necessarily a terrible thing. And it's my job to help loosen her up, to make her feel a bit more comfortable so that I can actually see her real personality during the interview.

**Amy:** Yeah, yeah. Exactly. And that's something that I did as well. I really had an approach when I interview people in person where I would talk to them as if they were my friend. And, you know, it just relaxes them, they can think easier. They're not worried about things. But, you know, you're right. If someone comes in and they're a little bit nervous, it definitely shows that they care about the job. Are there a few other things that really make someone stand out to you in a job interview?

**Greg:** Yeah. And I'm going to talk about the three parts, really. Before, during and after the interview. You know, before the interview, I expect communication between the applicant and myself to be professional and prompt. You know, again, it's – it's giving you an idea of what they're going to be like to work with. So, if you're emailing them and then you get a reply maybe two days later, I don't want to work with people like that. So, immediately it's going to give me a bit of a bad impression of them. And, again, professional. I don't want text language on the emails. I want formal English and just professional English.

You know, so that's just before hand. During the interview, you wouldn't believe how some people just don't know how to act in an interview, really. I mean, remember that all my interviews are on Skype. I have given interviews to people who have been on their bed.

**Amy:** Oh, no.

**Greg:** Yeah. People who have been with their cat, like stroking their cat during the interview. People who, you know, they haven't plugged their laptop in so after five minutes they have to get up because their laptop battery is dying. And you just think how unprepared are you if—come on. Would you take your cat to a normal interview? It's ridiculous. So, just I expect them to be in a professional setting like they would be in, you know, in a normal interview.

**Amy:** Yeah. Or maybe setting up their laptop at least in their office or at their kitchen table as if you were coming to their house. I mean, I'm sure if the background is a mess and there's stuff everywhere with bad lighting, that doesn't help either.

**Greg:** No, it doesn't help. And if there's people walking around behind them, you know, you would think that they would say, 'Hey, I've got a really important interview, so please stay out of the room for the next hour.' You know, it's not hard to do if you are genuinely interested in the job.

**Amy:** Exactly.

**Greg:** So, I expect them to take it seriously and be professional. And there's one winning thing for me really which is after the interview. And it's a step that so many people forget. And this is just a simple thank you email after the interview. Just a simple email, thank you for your time, you know, if you need any further information, please just get in touch. I appreciate the opportunity. Just a simple email thanking the person. And it says so much about you, about the applicant. It shows that you're good mannered, it shows—yeah. It really gives a great impression.

**Amy:** Okay. So, I know for me as a person that is doing an interview, I always have a few questions that I really like to ask people because I think that they're kind of difficult to answer or they show you a different characteristic about a person, whether it's how they handle a situation or it gives you more information than what this harmless question seems to have. Do you have any questions like that that you like to ask people?

**Greg:** Yes. I do. And the first and the last question, actually. The first question I always ask is what do you know about me and what do you know about Online Language Academy?

**Amy:** That's a good one.

**Greg:** And, you know, this just tells me immediately, is the person interested. Have they done their research and do they know what job they're applying for? And if the answer is no to that, then they're going to feel very bad about themselves immediately.

**Amy:** But not taking two seconds to read your website or even check out what the business is about, like, come on. Step number one.

**Greg:** They deserve to feel bad about them. I mean, it's the basic thing that you would expect. And most people have a good answer to that, but I have had a couple of terrible experiences. Probably the worst interview I've ever given was before I started with this question. Actually, it was before I did this, but I went through the whole interview and right at the very end of the interview, the girl said to me, what's your name? And I said, my word. I'm Greg. And she said, all right. And what's the name of the website? And I said, oh, my word. Seriously, you don't even know the website? You don't even know my

name? So, you know, do your research on who you're interview is with. Do your research about the company you're applying for. The best interviews I've given, the applicants have had a really strong answer to this, they've been in all the sections of the website, they've been in our social media, they've been on the YouTube channel, on the blog. And they know exactly what they're applying for and it gives a great first impression.

**Amy:** That's awesome. And what was the second question that you usually like to ask?

**Greg:** Yes. So, the second question is the last question, and it's a simple question. The question is – do you have any questions? And I think a lot of people, when they hear this, they just understand do you have any questions. But really, it's an opportunity for the applicant to give me more information about themselves, to show me that as well as everything that we've already discussed, they're able to offer whatever, something else to the table. You know, it's an opportunity for them to say, yeah, hey, I just want to say that apart from everything that we've talked about, I'm also able to do this, that, and the other. And, you know, would it be possible for me to bring this to the job if you hired me. And the best answer I've ever got for this is a very recent interview I gave. I said, have you got any questions? And she said to me, yes, she said, what type of applicant are you hoping to hire? And I said, oh, wow. So, I'm hoping to hire not just a great teacher, but somebody who's also a great worker, very reliable, someone who always goes the extra mile, puts the students' needs first. And, you know, goes the extra mile, just extra effort to be a professional and a really, really helpful teacher and a good worker. And she said, 'Wow, that's me. That's it, you've just described my best qualities. I think I'm perfect for this job based on what you've just said and great.'

**Amy:** That's really, really good advice. I really like that question. Both your question and her question back.

**Greg:** Yeah. I loved it. I absolutely loved it.

**Curtis:** And this is the English Conversation Tip.

**Amy:** Okay. So, for the English Conversation tip, Greg is going to give us some of his advice to anyone who is preparing for a job interview where English isn't your first language. This can be a little bit of a challenging situation. You might, you know, you're going in, you're not be able to communicate with the same confidence you can with your native language. What would you give as advice to a person like this?

**Greg:** Yeah. I think confidence is the key problem here. It's, you know, you're going to be nervous going to an interview, but going to an interview in English, you're going to be even more nervous really. So, one—I've got three things, three tips, I'm going to give you on how to overcome this. The first is to imagine the scenario in your head. Okay? Imagine it in your mind over and over again. So, that when the moment does come, you've already been there, you've already – you've already acted out that moment in your mind a million times. So, you're going to be more comfortable when that moment comes. And when you're imagining this, answer the first question. The first question is always going to be how are you? Tell me a little bit about yourself. You know, if you can just answer that again and again and again in your head, then when the moment comes, you're going to be confident. And once you've got that first little introduction of yourself done, once that's done, then you can, you know, you're going to relax anyway. The more you

get into the interview, you're going to relax. It's natural. But that first moment, that's the worst moment. So, make sure you've lived it a million times in your head before the actual interview.

**Amy:** Yeah, that's good advice. After a couple of minutes you usually, I mean, not even a couple of minutes, just a few seconds, you can really calm down in that time. So, just have the initial part that you know how it's probably going to go with a basic greeting, practised and rehearsed in your head.

**Greg:** Yeah.

**Amy:** I mean, still listen to what the person says, don't just repeat your rehearsed answer. It might not go that way.

**Greg:** Yeah. Don't memorize it word for word, but know more or less the structure of what you want to say.

The second thing is practice – practice the interview. You can do this with two types of people. You can do it with a native teacher. I said previously, we help many students prepare their interviews in English. And your teacher can help you with your pronunciation, they can help you with nice expressions, you know, winning expressions that are great to use in an interview. But I also recommend practising in front of someone you're really, really uncomfortable doing it in front of. I used to practice interviews with my dad. I used to practice oral exams at university, I studied French and Spanish at university. And we had oral exams. So I always used to practice those with a housemate. And it was really, really, really awkward. It was horrible. Absolutely horrible. I hated it. But once you've done that with someone who you really hate doing it in front of, you've kind of broken that barrier of fear and embarrassment.

So, once you've done that, when then you do it to somebody that you don't really know in the interview, it's going to be easier than it was doing it to, you know, your friend or family member.

**Amy:** No, that's a really good piece of advice. I like that one for really any sort of situation. If you have to do a presentation in front of a classroom in English or anything, public speaking assignment. It's do something that already pushes your limit of discomfort and get used to that feeling, because after you've done it once, it's really not that bad after.

**Greg:** Exactly. And the third piece of advice is re-read your CV. This is another piece of advice that I got and I think many people get but they don't actually do. But read your CV. Re-read it. Make sure before the interview that you know exactly what is on your CV. And make sure that you're able to talk about it and expand on it in English. Because that's, you know, those topics of conversation are going to come up in the interview. The interviewer will probably have a copy of your CV there and will probably ask you a question on it.

So, just be able to go through your, you know, be able to talk about every past work experience that you've mentioned on your CV, that you're able to expand on your education, on any other – any other activity or skill that you've put on your CV. Make sure you can do that. And, again, practicing probably with an English teacher is the best way to practice that aspect.

# Real English Conversations

**Amy:** I definitely agree with being able to expand on everything that you have on your résumé or your CV is very, very important. And try to ahead of time, if you can really try to think about how that experience connects to the job you're applying for.

**Greg:** Yes.

**Amy:** That is so important. So, practice thinking about that connection because when you're in an interview and you're on the spot and you have to answer that question, it can be really, really hard to think about that connection.

**Greg:** Exactly. That's great – that's great advice. I – I always say when we practice in the questions with my students, I always say, make sure you finish the answer on a positive note, on, you know, how this can help in your—in the job you're applying for. Use an example and relate that example to the current job, the job you're going to get.

**Amy:** That sounds really good. So, Greg, as he has said, offers these conversation, Skype practice lessons. He can help you to prepare for different tests, job interviews, or just your general conversation skills. I would definitely recommend that you head over to Greg's website at [OnlineLanguageAcademy.com](http://OnlineLanguageAcademy.com). And you have some sort of trial classes, don't you, Greg?

**Greg:** That's right. We offer everybody a 15 minute trial class. I mean, it's a great opportunity just to meet one of the teachers before you make any commitment to buy any classes. You can, you know, test your level, see if the classes are right for you, test the connection also, of your computer, before you start paying for classes. So, yeah, it's a 15 minute class and you can – you can get that from the website, [OnlineLanguageAcademy.com](http://OnlineLanguageAcademy.com). You can book your trial class from there.

**Amy:** That sounds really good. And I'm sure from your website, they can follow you on all of your social media platforms. You guys have some really awesome YouTube lessons.

**Greg:** The links are there on the website. Well, I personally do three videos every week to help students with their English fluency. So, come and subscribe.

**Amy:** So, if you guys want to get a copy of this conversation and get the transcription completely for free, you can come to our website within the first seven days. Just look for the free English Conversations area on our website and look for this episode where you can download the transcription. I'm going to make sure that I include all the links that we talked about here, because there's about 10 different links<sup>1</sup>. So that you can easily check out Greg's website, get to his YouTube channel, follow him on Facebook. And get access to the speaking exercises and the listening practice activities that we have related to this topic.

## Lesson Notes

There's about 10 different links<sup>1</sup> – This was a spoken error. The correct form should be 'There are about 10 different links'

## Speaking Practice

Now that you practiced answering the questions while listening to the conversation, you can practice giving the answers by speaking out loud. (The questions are at the beginning of this document)

While you trying to answer the questions (by speaking), you may need to look up words you don't know yet or you have forgotten. This is very important to help you learn the vocabulary you are missing while you are speaking or you do not know very well.

If you have to look up a word, be sure to write it down. There is an area for you to write down words you need to know or have learned. Later, we are going to give you activities to practice using this new vocabulary to help you remember it faster.

## Practice Activities

Try to answer the questions by speaking from the listening comprehension section? Try to use a full sentence when you answer, not just one word like 'yes' or 'no'.

### For example

Question #1: Where did Amy and Curtis move?

Answer: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Your spoken answer in a full sentence: Curtis and Amy moved to Puerto Vallarta Mexico

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### **Let's Talk about this Conversation**

Give as much detail as you can when trying to answer the following questions. Try to speak for 3 to 5 minutes for each answer. Don't forget to write down new words you realize you need to know in order to explain these parts of the conversation.

Practice your answer to these questions several times until you feel confident using the vocabulary and you can explain it more fluently.

1. Describe what Online Language Academy is (Greg's business) and why he is experienced with hiring people.
2. What are some of the reasons you need to stand out when you apply for a job?
3. What was the most interesting tip you heard to be different when applying for a job and why was it interesting?
4. Explain why Greg asks applicants to send a video when they apply for a job.
5. During an online interview, what can you do to be prepared so that you have no distractions or interruptions during the interview?
6. Explain why it is important to know about the company before the interview.
7. When you are asked, "Do you have any questions?" What should you ask and why?

### **The Big Summary**

Now that you have practiced explaining each part of the conversation, try to do a summary that explains the whole conversation.

Try to speak as if you are telling a friend about a cool conversation you heard. Try to sound interesting while you talk about it.

The first time you might feel like you are explaining the story in a boring way... you need to practice explaining it several times to get better at telling stories and explaining things better.

Each time you practice explaining it, you will feel more confident using the new vocabulary and you will be speaking with more fluency.



## Vocabulary Practice

This is an exercise to help you practice using the new vocabulary you have learned. A great way to make sure you understand the words well enough to use them.

1. Use the first 5 words from your list of words you found from this conversation (or the activities).
2. While speaking, start telling a short story where the first sentence of the story uses the first word on your list.
3. After you use the first word, you need to think of a way to use the second word in the story...
4. The story does not have to be real and it does not have to make a lot of sense. The objective is to practice using the new words you have learned in context

### **Example words:**

- carnival
- pack into (phrasal verb)
- lap
- get down (phrasal verb)
- vibrant

### **Example story:**

I was really excited to go to carnival this year. My friends and I decided to pack everyone into Bob's truck. There was no extra space in the car so we had to put our stuff on our laps. When we arrived to the city, we could not wait to get down to the party area. We knew it would be vibrant and full of festivities.