

# “It isn’t that hard!”

Basic English Conversation -- Fall 2022-2023

## 後期 1 – Being a reporter

When reporters interview someone, they usually have a prepared list of questions about a particular topic. They ask questions beginning with **who, what, where, when, why, how many, how often**, and **how**. They also ask **yes/no questions**. And of course, depending on the flow of the interview, they need to be ready to *adjust* their questions, and to ask *follow-up* questions.

Imagine you are a reporter writing for your school newspaper. You decide to interview some of your classmates about how they have fun. Here is a list of questions you might ask.

1. **What** do you like to do for fun?
2. **Do** you like to sing karaoke? (play sports, play tennis, go driving, hang out with friends, go out with friends, watch TV, read books, cook, watch YouTube, listen to music, shop, etc)
3. **How often** do you go shopping? (play tennis, read a book, go out with friends, etc) (once a week, twice a week, almost every day)
4. **Where** do you shop? (go out with friends, go driving, etc)
5. **When** do you play tennis? (go out with friends, cook, etc)
6. **Who** do you go shopping with? (play tennis, go driving, etc)
7. **What else** do you like to do for fun?

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## 後期 2 – Can you stand on your hands?

### Conversation 1

Minami and David are talking.

David: Can most Japanese people speak English?

Minami: Well, many Japanese people can speak English a little. And some can speak English pretty well. And a few can speak very well. How about people in America? Can people in America speak foreign languages?

David: In some places, almost no one can speak a foreign language. In some places, like southern California, many people can speak English and Spanish.

Minami: Can Americans study foreign languages in junior high school and high school?

David: I think they can in most high schools. But maybe not in most junior high schools. I’m not sure.

Minami: What languages can they study?

David: In my high school, we could study Spanish, German, or French. And Latin!

Minami: Latin? Really? We can’t study Latin in high school in Japan. Can American high school students study Japanese?

David: They couldn’t in my high school. Maybe only a few high schools have Japanese classes.

Minami: How about in universities? Can Americans study Japanese in universities?

David: I’m not sure. Maybe they can’t in many universities, but I know they can in some.

Minami: After Americans study French in high school, can they really speak French?

David: That’s a hard question to answer. Maybe many students can hardly speak French at all. Maybe some can speak French a little. Maybe some can speak reasonably well. Maybe a few can speak well.

### Conversation 2

Minami and David are watching some students ride skateboards.

David: Minami, can you ride a skateboard?

Minami: No, I can’t.

David: Have you ever tried?

Minami: No, I haven’t.

David: Then how do you know you can’t? You never know until you try.

Minami: Can you ride one?

David: Yes, I can.

Minami: Wow, that’s great! What else can you do?

David: I can walk on my hands. Can you?

Minami: No, I c—. Oops. I don’t know if I can. I’ve never tried to walk on my hands.

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### Key words

**everyone / all people / almost everyone / almost all people / most people / many people/ some people / a few people / almost no people / almost no one / almost nobody / no one / nobody**

She can speak English **very well**.

She can speak English **pretty well**.

She **cannot** speak English **very well**.

She can speak English **only a little**.

She **can’t** speak English **at all**.

### Activity 1

Ask your classmates the questions below.

1. Can Japanese people speak English?
2. Can you walk on your hands?
3. Do Japanese people like bread?
4. Can you play a musical instrument?
5. Do Japanese people like to travel?
6. Can Japanese people afford to go to university?
7. Do Japanese people like Trump?
8. Do Japanese men cook?
9. Do Japanese people enjoy reading?
10. Do Japanese students play video games?
11. Can you ride a skateboard?
12. Can you speak English?
13. Do Japanese university students study hard?

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### Activity 2

Use the chart below to ask your classmates “can” questions. Before you begin, think of three original questions.

	very well	pretty well	ok	not very well	not at all	never tried
Speak English (can)						
play a musical instrument (can)						
cook (can)						
communicate with your parents (can)						
enjoy your part-time job (do)						
do math (can)						
dance (can)						
Original 1:						
Original 2:						
Original 3:						

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## 後期 3 – Can you give me some advice?

### Conversation 1

Minami and Jennifer are talking.

Minami: Can you give me some advice?

Jennifer: About what?

Minami: About my weight.

Jennifer: Your weight? You look great!

Minami: I’ve gained three kilos in the last month.

Jennifer: Well, I think you look great, but if you want to lose a little weight . . . Are you exercising?

Minami: No, not at all.

Jennifer: Exercising is a good idea. You don’t have to exercise really hard. You can go for a walk, or you can ride a bicycle. And you should eat lots of vegetables. And you shouldn’t eat too much bread or rice. And you shouldn’t eat sweets.

Minami: But I love sweets!

Jennifer: I see. I’m guessing that’s the problem. If you love sweets, well, you don’t have to stop eating sweets completely, but you have to cut down on sweets. Maybe you should only have sweets once a week.

Minami: Once a week?

Jennifer: You want to lose weight, don’t you?

Minami: Thank you for your advice.

### Common expressions for giving advice

You don’t have to stop eating sweets completely.

You have to cut down on sweets.

You can stop eating sweets.

You should stop eating sweets.

You shouldn’t eat late at night.

You might think about exercising more.

You might try exercising more.

Exercising more might be a good idea.

Don’t eat late at night.

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### Conversation 2

Taiga, Ryuta, and Haruto are talking. Taiga has almost no experience talking with girls.

Taiga: Can you guys give me some advice?

Ryuta: About what?

Taiga: About . . . about Reina.

Haruto: Reina Hashimoto! You like Reina Hashimoto?!

Taiga: Don’t talk so loud!

Ryuta: Have you ever talked with her?

Taiga: No.

Ryuta: Does she even know who you are?

Taiga: I don’t think so. Should I buy her flowers? Or some other present?

Ryuta/Haruto: **NO!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Taiga: What should I do?

Ryuta: First, you have to learn to smile. Then you should change your hairstyle.

Haruto: And you should be more careful about your clothes.

Ryuta: Then you should wait until you see her in a group of people, and you should try to join that group. That’s the first step. Then just try to have some casual conversation with the group—so she’ll see you’re a nice guy.

Taiga: And then I should buy her a present and tell her I love her?

Ryuta/Haruto: **NO!!**

### Activity 1

With a partner, practice the two short conversations below.

#### Short conversation 1

A: Can you give me some advice?

B: Sure.

A: I want to lose weight.

B: Are you exercising? Exercising is a good idea. And you shouldn’t eat late at night.

A: Do I have to stop eating sweets?

B: You don’t have to stop eating sweets, but you should eat less.

A: Thank you. That’s good advice.

#### Short conversation 2

A: Can you give me some advice?

B: Sure.

A: I can’t stop falling asleep in class.

B: What time do you go to bed?

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A: One or two in the morning.

B: That’s too late! You have to go to bed much earlier. You should sleep at least seven hours every night. Do you prepare well for class?

A: Not usually.

B: You have to prepare for class. If you don’t prepare, class won’t be interesting.

A: Sometimes I can’t fall asleep.

B: You shouldn’t use social media before bed. And you can try reading a book. Reading might make you sleepy.

A: Thank you for the advice.

### Brainstorming activity

1. What topics do university students often need to ask for advice about. Brainstorm three topics.
2. If someone asked you for advice on one of the topics, what questions might you ask. Make a list of questions.
3. Brainstorm ideas for advice for each topic.

Advice topics	Questions to ask someone who needs advice	Examples of advice

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## 後期 4 – Asking for favors / Asking for permission

### Conversation 1

In a restaurant, Mr. Big sits down at a table next to Haruto.

#### Ex. 1

Mr. Big: Hey, do you mind if I smoke?

Haruto: I’m sorry, but please don’t.

#### Ex. 2

Mr. Big: Hey, do you mind if I smoke?

Haruto: No, go ahead.

#### Ex. 3

Mr. Big: Hey, is it okay if I smoke?

Haruto: Sure, go ahead.

#### Ex. 4

Mr. Big: Hey, is it okay if I smoke?

Haruto: I’m sorry, but I prefer you didn’t.

### Conversation 2

David wants to ask Jennifer for a favor.

#### Ex. 1

David: Can I ask you a favor? (Can you do me a favor?)

Jennifer: What is it?

David: Can you lend me one hundred yen? (Can I borrow one hundred yen?)

Jennifer: Sure. Here you are.

#### Ex. 2

David: Could I ask you a favor? (Could you do me a favor?)

Jennifer: What is it?

David: Could you lend me ten thousand yen? (Could I borrow ten thousand yen?)

Jennifer: Ten thousand yen! What do you need ten thousand yen for?

David: My computer is broken. I need to repair it.

Jennifer: Oh, no. Sure, I can lend you some money.



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### Activity

Think about the situations below and imagine short conversations you might have with a friend or parent. Write down the question you might ask to start the conversation.

1. It’s hot. You want to open a window.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

2. It’s hot. You want your friend to open a window.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

3. You want to play tennis on Saturday, but you don’t have a tennis racket. Your friend has one.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Your Spanish class is difficult for you. You want to ask your friend for help.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

5. You want to play tennis on Saturday, but you don’t have a tennis racket. Your friend has one.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

6. You’re walking to a museum, but you are not sure which way to go. You want to ask someone to tell you which way to go.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

7. You’re doing a survey for your sociology class. You want to ask your friend to answer some questions about using social media.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Your friend makes excellent chocolate chip cookies. You want to learn how to make them.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

9. You don’t have confidence writing English sentences. You want your American friend to check what you wrote.

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 後期 5 – Preferences

**Which do you like better, a or b?**  
**Which do you like best, a, b, or c?**  
**Which do you prefer, a or b?**  
**Which is your favorite season?**  
**Which is your least favorite season?**  
**What is your favorite sport?**  
**a is more interesting than b.**  
**a is less interesting than b.**  
**a is faster than b.**  
**a isn’t as fast as b.**  
**a is the fastest. (faster than b, c, d ...)**  
**a is the most interesting.**  
**(more interesting than b, c, d ...)**

### Conversation 1

Misaki: Hi, Jim, can I ask you some questions about your preferences?

Jim: Sure.

Misaki: Which do you like better, football or baseball?

Jim: Do you mean American football or soccer?

Misaki: American football. Which do you like better, American football or baseball?

Jim: When I was young, I preferred football, but now I prefer baseball.

Misaki: Why do you prefer baseball?

Jim: Baseball is less violent than football. And baseball has less injuries than football. Some people think baseball is boring. They think football is more exciting. But I like a game with a slow pace.

Misaki: Which do you prefer, football or basketball?

Jim: I like football better.

Misaki: I think basketball players have more skill than football players, so basketball is more fun to watch.

Misaki: But basketball is fast-paced, isn't it?

Jim: Yes, that's why I like baseball better than basketball or football. Because it's slow-paced. Of the three sports, I like baseball the best.

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### Conversation 2

- Jack: Holly, what’s your favorite vegetable?  
Holly: I love *all* vegetables.  
Jack: Which do you like better, corn or spinach?  
Holly: I like both, but I prefer spinach.  
Jack: Which do you prefer, spinach or tomatoes?  
Holly: I like both, but I like tomatoes better.  
Jack: Which do you prefer, tomatoes or carrots?  
Holly: I love both, but I prefer carrots.  
Jack: Which do you prefer, carrots or sweet potatoes?  
Holly: Sweet potatoes!!! Of course, I love sweet potatoes the best. Yes, sweet potatoes are definitely my favorite vegetable.

### Activity 1

Ask your classmate, which they prefer—and why.

baseball	soccer	carrots	potatoes	coffee	green tea
spring	fall	Shizuoka	Tokyo	a big city	the countryside
chicken	pork	staying home	going out	watching TV	watching YouTube

### Activity 2

Make a list of five more pairs that you can ask your classmates about.

1. A) \_\_\_\_\_ B) \_\_\_\_\_
2. A) \_\_\_\_\_ B) \_\_\_\_\_
3. A) \_\_\_\_\_ B) \_\_\_\_\_
4. A) \_\_\_\_\_ B) \_\_\_\_\_
5. A) \_\_\_\_\_ B) \_\_\_\_\_

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### Activity 3

In your opinion, what are the good points of each season? Fill in the chart, then ask your classmates questions like, “Which do you prefer, summer or winter?” and “What is your favorite season?” Your classmates should explain *why* they like or dislike a season.

	Good points	Bad points
summer		
fall		
spring		
summer		

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## 後期 6 – What time do you usually get up?

### Daily activities

getting up, eating breakfast, leaving home, getting to school (or work), eating lunch, leaving school, getting home, eating dinner, taking a bath, going to bed

### Conversation

Jack: Holly, what time do you usually get up?

Holly: I usually get up at 5:30.

Jack: Wow, that’s early! What time do you usually eat breakfast?

Holly: I usually eat breakfast at 5:35.

Jack: And what time do you usually leave home?

Holly: About 6:00.

Jack: And what time do you usually get to school?

Holly: About 6:30.

Jack: What time do you usually eat lunch?

Holly: I usually eat lunch at 11:45.

Jack: And what time do you leave school?

Holly: About 3:00.

Jack: And you get home around 3:30?

Holly: No, I don’t. I have a part-time job. I start my part-time job at 4:00.

Jack: How many hours do you usually work?

Holly: Three hours.

Jack: So you usually finish your part-time job at 7:00?

Holly: That’s right. And I usually go shopping on the way home. I usually get home at 8:00.

Then I eat dinner around 8:30. I take a bath around 10:00, and I go to bed around midnight.

Jack: Wow, that’s a busy day!

Holly: Yes, it is.

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## 後期 7 – Topic Discussion: Sleeping

### POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Are you a day person or a night person? (Are you an early bird or a night owl?)
2. What time do you usually go to bed? (on weekdays, on weekends, on Sunday, etc.)
3. What time do you usually wake up?
4. How many hours do you sleep every night?
5. Do you get enough sleep?
6. Do you always sleep well?
7. Is it easy for you to fall asleep?
8. Do you sleep in a bed or a futon?
9. How often do you dream?
10. What do you dream about?
11. Can you fall asleep easily on a train or bus?
12. Do you sometimes sleep in class?
13. How often do you sleep in class?
14. Should teachers wake up students who are sleeping?

### CONVERSATION:

David: Minami, are you a night owl?

Minami: No, I’m not. I’m an early bird. I usually go to bed around 10 and usually wake up around 5:30.

David: Wow, that’s really early. I could never get up so early. Is it easy for you to fall asleep?

Minami: Yes, it is. I usually take a bath around 9:00. Then I listen to some quiet music and read. I turn off my light at 10. I fall asleep very quickly.

David: It’s hard for me to fall asleep. Very hard. I usually go to bed around 2 a.m.

Minami: 2 a.m.?! What do you do so late at night?

David: Mainly I watch YouTube and play games.

Minami: Ah! That’s why it’s hard for you to feel sleepy. Can you wake up in time to come to school?

David: It’s very hard for me to wake up early, but somehow I get to school on time. But sometimes I sleep in class. Do you ever sleep in class?

Minami: Never!

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## 後期 8 – Having things in common

### Conversation

- Ted: Do you think you and Mary are going to get married?  
Bob: I’m not sure. We love each other, but sometimes I think we don’t have enough in common.  
Ted: Do you both like sweets?  
Bob: Is that important?  
Ted: I think so.  
Bob: I like sweets very much, and she does, too.  
Ted: Do you both want children?  
Bob: Yes, but I only want one. She wants five.  
Ted: Hmmh. Are you both vegetarians?  
Bob: Vegetarians? She is, but I’m not.  
Ted: Have you both graduated from university?  
Bob: Is *that* important?  
Ted: Sure.  
Bob: She’s graduated from university, but I haven’t.
- Ted: Have you both traveled abroad?  
Bob: She has, but I haven’t.  
Ted: Were you both born in a city?  
Bob: Is *that* important, too?  
Ted: Sure, it is.  
Bob: She was born in a city, but I wasn’t.  
Ted: Do you both like to go out?  
Bob: I don’t like to go out, and she doesn’t, either.  
Ted: Do you both want a big, expensive house?  
Bob: I don’t want one, but she does.  
Ted: Hmmh. Can you both play a musical instrument?  
Bob: I can’t, but she can. She can play the piano, the guitar, and the flute. So, what do you think?  
Ted: I think you shouldn’t make any quick decisions.

### Key grammar

- I like ice cream, but she doesn’t.  
I am a night person, but he isn’t.  
I’m not a night person, but he is.  
He can play tennis, but I can’t.  
He studied hard in university, but I didn’t.  
He was a good student in high school, but I wasn’t.  
I can cook, but he can’t.  
He wants to go hiking a lot, but I don’t.  
My parents were strict, but his weren’t.  
He’s traveled abroad, but I haven’t.  
I like ice cream, and he does, too.  
I don’t like ice cream, and he doesn’t, either.  
I don’t like ice cream, and neither does he.

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### Activity 1

Imagine that one of your friends (maybe a boy or maybe a girl), is 23 years old, and looking for a potential marriage partner. Fill in the chart with his/her information. Then try to get information from your classmates about their friends. You can have conversations as below:

A: My friend Yoko wants at least two children. Does your friend Kai want to have at least two children?

B: No, he doesn't. He only wants one. . . . Kai exercises regularly. How about Yoko?

A: Yoko exercises regularly, too.

Can you find a good match for your friend?

Ask about the items in the chart:

	<b>Your friend</b>					
<b>NAME →</b>						
1 likes to drink wine						
2 is a night person						
3 can cook well						
4 likes to clean house						
5 wants at least two children						
6 is a vegetarian						
7 has traveled abroad						
8 wants a big, expensive house						
9 likes to stay home						
10 likes to listen to rock music						
11 likes to go hiking						
12 exercises regularly						
13 likes to eat sweets						
14 likes to discuss politics						
15 wants to live in a big city						
16 likes to eat sweets						

### Activity 2

In a group, report to everyone about your friend, and how she is similar and different from the people you learned about. For example, “My friend Yoko likes to drink wine, but Shintaro’s friend Kai doesn’t. Yoko is a night person, but Kai isn’t. Yoko can’t cook well, and neither can Kai. Yoko likes to clean house, and Kai does, too.” Finally ask your group members if they think Kai and Yoko are a good match.



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## 後期 9 – Topic Discussion using “would” and “could” 假定法過去

### 假定法

Ex. 1 If it rains tomorrow, we will cancel the baseball game.

(假定法, a REAL situation)

Ex. 2 If I could have a superpower, I would like to be able to fly.

(假定法過去, an UNREAL situation)

### Questions:

1. If you won 1,000,000 yen in a lottery, what would you do with the money?
2. If you could meet anyone, living or dead, who would you want to meet?
3. If you found 10,000 yen in the street, what would you do?
4. If you had to live on a deserted island by yourself, what three things would you want to bring with you?
5. If you could be born again, would you want to be a boy or girl?
6. If you couldn't live in Japan, what country would you want to live in?
7. If you weren't a human being, what animal would you want to be?
8. If you could be a great athlete, a great musician, a great businessman, a great scientist, or a great parent, which would you choose?
9. If you could choose any superpower, which one would you choose?

### Talking about regret.

1. If I could be a high school student again, I would join a different club. I would join a music club.
2. If I had studied harder, I could have passed the test.
3. If I hadn't lied to my friend, I wouldn't have lost our friendship.
4. If I hadn't played soccer in high school, I wouldn't have hurt my knee.

**Let's talk about things we regret. Think of at least three things you regret. Use 假定法過去 to talk about them.**

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### **How much do we have in common?**

**We have almost everything in common.**

**We have a lot in common.**

**We don’t have much in common.**

**We have nothing in common.**

**Think about your own answers to the questions below.**

- 1. What is your favorite color?**
- 2. What is your favorite season?**
- 3. What is your favorite sport?**
- 4. Are you a day person or a night person?**
- 5. Do you like watching sports on tv?**
- 6. If you could travel to America, Germany, Indonesia, or Kenya, where would you go?**
- 7. Tonight, would you rather stay home and cook and relax or go out and sing karaoke?**