

## UNIT 13 HANG IN THERE

**UNIT OVERVIEW:** In this unit students will talk about their strengths and weaknesses.

**Conversation Starters: *Learning a Language***

Friends talk about the difficulties they have learning foreign languages.

**Building Fluency**

Expressing ability; verb phrases — common abilities

**Conversation Model**

You can do it! — Change voice tone

**Let's Talk About It: *What are you frustrated with?***

Discuss your frustrations and offer encouragement.

**Conversation Idioms:**

hang in there	you can do it	is a piece of cake
am hopeless at	singing in tune	be on time
get my homework done	get what they're saying	best of luck
do your best	keep in touch with friends	is as easy as pie
don't get it	I can hardly put it down	look up a lot of words
am completely lost	feel down	am frustrated with...
get through the first paragraph	make no progress at all	I'll give it a go
I'll do my best	am always late	set an alarm
am going crazy	am stupid	tell me about it

Additional Links for this unit: Lupe from Mexico give Kara from the U.S. advice on learning Spanish.

<http://www.elllo.org/english/0801/T835-Kara-Mexico.htm>

### STEP 1 BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

Tell students to close their textbooks and to brainstorm as many languages as they can. Write these on the board. If they didn't think of "German," elicit this language, and tell them that Amy is currently studying German. Tell them to listen to the **Amy and Erik introduction** and to answer these questions:

a) *Does Amy like studying German?* Yes / No (Yes)

b) *Does Amy feel like her German is improving?* Yes / No (No)

Ask your students what their answer is to these questions. Next, in percentages, ask your students to think about:

a) *How often do you feel that learning English is fun?*

b) *How often do you feel down about learning English?*

Encourage them to talk about the times that they feel like this.

**Script [Track 67]**

Amy: Hi, everyone. This is Amy and Erik, again, with Unit 13, "Hang In There."

Erik: Learning a language can be fun, but sometimes we can feel down about it.

Amy: Yeah, tell me about it. I'm taking German classes at the moment, which I really enjoy, but I feel like I'm making no progress at all.

Erik: Well, in that case, I think this unit is perfect for you. Some of our friends are talking about their language studies. Let's listen.

### STEP 2 CONVERSATION STARTERS: LEARNING A LANGUAGE

*Students will listen to people talk about the difficulties they have learning foreign languages.*

#### 1. First Listening

Play the audio. Have students listen for the language the speaker is learning and the problem he or she is having with that language. Pause the audio after each track to give students time to write down their answers. Allow students time to compare their answers in pairs before discussing as a class.

## 2. Second Listening

Play the audio. Have students listen for the phrases that express encouragement. Give students a chance to help each other fill in any words they didn't catch before checking as a class. Be sure to go over the meaning of the phrases.

### Answer Key

First Listening:

1. Scott – Japanese, Chinese characters / pronunciation
2. Blaire – Spanish, listening
3. Daniel – French, reading / vocabulary

Second Listening:

1. Keep at it.
2. Don't give up.
3. You can do it.

### BONUS

Have students discuss the questions in pairs. Be sure to clarify that "them" in Question #2 is referring to Scott, Blaire and Daniel.

### BONUS ACTIVITY

- Put students in pairs and randomly assign them the roles of the people in the audio extracts (Scott & Eri, Blaire & Carlos, Daniel & Caroline). Using the key language from the answers in the listening exercises, have students reenact the conversations as a role play.
- Then, have students create a group with pairs who had different roles (groups of six consisting of the six character names above) and have each pair perform their role play for the group.

### Script [Tracks 68-70]

1. **Scott:** Hey, can you help me with this?

**Eri:** Sure. What's up?

**Scott:** Could you tell me how to pronounce this character?

**Eri:** This one? Sure. It's pronounced "ki-ku."

**Scott:** Ahhhh, why don't I know that?

**Eri:** Learning Japanese isn't easy. Just keep at it. You'll learn more characters before you know it.

2. **Blaire:** Ahh! I've been listening to this Spanish conversation all morning long and I still can't understand what they're saying. I'm going crazy! I must be stupid or something. I just don't get it.

**Carlos:** Well, OK, slow down. Maybe I can help you. What part don't you understand?

**Blaire:** None of it! *Nada!* I just can't understand a thing they're saying.

**Carlos:** Sure. Sure. I know it's frustrating. But don't give up. Let's listen to it together and I'll help you figure it out.

**Blaire:** Thanks, Carlos.

**Carlos:** Sure, what are friends for?

3. **Daniel:** Have you started reading that new book in French class?

**Caroline:** *Mon Ami?* Yeah, it's really interesting. I can hardly put it down.

**Daniel:** Oh, man. I can't even get through the first paragraph.

**Caroline:** Yeah. It is a little difficult. I have to look up a lot of words.

**Daniel:** Well, I'm completely lost. I don't know what I'm going to do.

**Caroline:** You can do it. Use your dictionary.

**Daniel:** I guess. I'll give it a try. Maybe we can talk about it before the next class.

**Caroline:** Sure. No problem. Let's meet at "Espresso Roma" tomorrow, say, maybe 9:30?

## STEP 3 BUILDING FLUENCY: EXPRESSING ABILITY

*Students will practice expressing their abilities and will learn several verb phrases for describing common abilities.*

### 1. Expressions

- Have students decide which expressions are similar in meaning. Have students go over their answers in pairs and then confirm as a class. You may want to go over the **How the Grammar Works** box as a class before moving on to the next activity.
- Next, in pairs have students quiz each other on the phrases. Elicit a handful of things that your students think they are good or bad at (for example, tennis or another sport, cooking, singing, etc.) and write them on the board.

Partner A closes the book. Partner B opens the book and says one of the expressions + one of the items from the board (“I am hopeless at *tennis*.”). Partner A must rephrase the statement (“I am not good at tennis.”). Have students alternate roles.

**Answer Key**

Can't do it = 2, 3, 5

Can do it = 1, 4, 6

**2. Vocabulary**

In pairs have students match the phrases with the best pictures. Allow them to go over the answers in pairs before confirming as a class.

**Answer Key**

1 – d, 2 – f, 3 – e, 4 – b, 5 – h, 6 – c, 7 – a, 8 – g

**VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING**

Singing in tune – to sing the notes at the correct pitch

Getting my homework done – finishing my homework

**HOW THE GRAMMAR WORKS**

After going through what structure we use with each expression, have your students also think about the relative strength and weakness of each phrase. Tell your students to order both the “can’t do” and “can do” phrases from strongest to neutral, and discuss their answers as a class.

**strongest**

I’m hopeless at it – It’s really difficult for me – I’m not very good at it.

It’s a piece of cake – I’m pretty good at it – I don’t really have a problem with it.

**neutral**

**3. Let’s Practice**

Have students discuss their abilities in pairs. Be sure to go over the example dialogue as a class before students begin practicing. Encourage them to add details and to ask their partners follow-up questions.

**STEP 4 CONVERSATION MODEL: YOU CAN DO IT!**

*Students will look at changing voice tone.*

**Optional Warm-up:**

Write the following questions on the board.

1) *What is the woman having trouble with?* 2) *What does her friend suggest?* 3) *What does she think of the idea?*

Books closed. Direct the students to the questions on the board. Next, have the students listen to the audio and try to answer the questions above. After listening as needed, students compare answers in pairs and then as a class.

**1. Situation**

- Have your students check the conversation for unknown words, and explain any difficult phrases.

**HOW THE PRONUNCIATION WORKS: CHANGE VOICE TONE**

Explain the unit pronunciation point to your students which examines voice tone. Using a high voice tone with positive words and a low or flat voice tone when talking about negative ideas probably seems obvious. However, it is something that students often forget because they tend to focus all of their attention on pronunciation and intonation. However, it can actually be dangerous not to use “appropriate” voice tone; indeed, saying a positive word in a flat voice can make you sound sarcastic, which is something you want to avoid if you actually mean to be sincere. Voice tone helps us to express our true feelings and moods, so if we truly mean what we are saying we should use the appropriate matching voice tone.

- Next, play the conversation model [Track 71] and encourage your students to listen out for the changes in voice tone.
- As a class do a choral practice of this conversation, focusing particularly on the pronunciation point. Say each line or chunk, and have your students repeat.

## EXTRA PRONUNCIATION POINTS: CUT AND BLEND SOUNDS

But no matter how hard I try I can't remember – Bu(t) no ma(d)er how *har dai* try I can(t) remember

Why don't you try using flash cards – Why *don chu*: try using flash cards

Just takes a little effort – Jus(t) *takesa* little effort

## 2. Substitution

Have students work individually to connect the words and phrases in the columns to make a coherent conversation. Then, have students compare answers in pairs.

### Answer Key

Listening in English – can't get what they're saying – watching English movies

Cooking – always burn the food – using a good recipe book

Being on time – am always late – setting an alarm on your cell phone

Singing – can't sing in tune – going to karaoke

## 3. Practice

- Have students use the **substitution** words to practice the conversation. Remind them to take particular care with their voice tone. Have early finishers create their own conversations.
- Choose a pair to demonstrate the conversation. Comment on their use of voice tone and offer pronunciation and intonation advice as necessary.

## STEP 5 LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: WHAT ARE YOU FRUSTRATED WITH?

*Students will discuss their personal frustrations and offer encouragement.*

### 1. Get Ready

In pairs, have students decide if the phrases are used when giving or receiving advice. Go over the answers as a class.

### Answer Key

1 – G, 2 – R, 3 – R, 4 – G, 5 – G, 6 – G, 7 – R, 8 – G

### 2. Let's Talk

Check for any unknown vocabulary in the Activities column and allow time for students to fill in their own ideas. You may want to model or elicit some examples as a class. Then, have students complete the survey.

### 3. Follow Up

Students discuss their abilities in pairs or groups of three and have them write the answers. Provide a sample conversation to facilitate speaking. See sample below:

A: *What do you have trouble with in your personal life?*

B: *I am hopeless at saving money.*

A: *Really? Why is that?*

B: *Well, as soon as I get it, I spend it.*

A: *Really? You should make a budget. I am really good at saving money...*

### BONUS: Speaking Activity

If time permits, have students try the bonus speaking questions. This could be done as either a pair/group/class discussion or an extemporaneous speaking exercise.

### BONUS ACTIVITY

The **Express Yourself** activity in **Review Unit 2** would be a nice follow up project for this unit.

## STEP 6 LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Assign the language awareness activity on page 93 for homework. If necessary, do the first one or two questions together as a class. Leave 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the next class to go through the answers.

**Answer Key**

1. Can you help me with this? / Could you tell me how to pronounce this character?
2. What's up?
3. Just keep at it.
4. before you know it
5. all morning long
6. I just don't get it.
7. figure it out
8. What are friends for?
9. I can hardly put it down.
10. completely
11. a dictionary
12. I'm completely lost.

**STEP 7 AMY'S ENGLISH TIP**

Students love learning idioms. Here are some idioms for describing things that are "very easy" and "very difficult." If you like, have your students write a short paragraph about something that is very easy or very difficult, using these idioms.

**STEP 8 UNIT TEST**

Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Start by playing the audio for the Listening section (download Track 13 from <http://www.elttestcenter.com>). Decide whether you give them one or two listenings. Then, allow the students about 5-10 minutes to complete the rest of the test. Correct the test in class, and record the score.

**AUDIO SCRIPT**

When I was in high school I enjoyed studying math. But it was never my strong suit. I didn't have much of a problem with simple problems. But I was absolutely hopeless at those advanced, problem-solving questions... which was really frustrating for me. So, every Wednesday afternoon for nearly two years I stayed behind after school and did extra practice with my math teacher, Mrs. Kozz. I never managed to get an A on the exam, but I tried my best and didn't give up... and that's the main thing.

**ANSWER KEY****Part A.**

1. c
2. b

**Part B.**

3. with
4. at grammar
5. a piece of cake
6. playing the guitar

**Part C.**

7. on
8. get
9. in
10. save