

How to Make Friends in English

Start small, find common ground, invite lightly, follow up — the friend-making ladder

EPISODE 26 • LEVEL B1-B2

Episode summary

- Nobody is born with a hundred friends, and nobody stays lonely because of bad luck. Friends are made — and they are made with sentences. Adults lose the school playground, so they wait for friendship to happen. Waiting is the slowest way to stay lonely.
- Friendship is math, not magic: same place, same people, enough times. The friend-making ladder has four moves. Move one: start small — one true sentence about what you both can see. Is this seat taken. Short is strong.
- Move two: find common ground with the answer-plus-question rule. Never just answer — answer, and return a question. In two minutes you will almost always find one shared thing. Name it out loud: No way, I love that too.
- Move three: make a low-pressure invitation with a real day. Would you like to grab coffee on Friday. We are playing football on Saturday, would you like to join us. Vague plans die. Specific plans live. Busy is not no — busy is not now.
- Move four: follow up within a week. The first conversation does not make the friend — the second contact does. Then keep the rhythm: contact every two weeks, remember one small thing, and be the inviter sometimes. Friends are made, not found. One hello at a time.

What's inside this PDF

18 key words • the friend-making ladder • invitation frames • Say It Better upgrades • 3 practice exercises

Key Vocabulary

18 words from this episode — learn them, then use them this week

1. stranger

a person you do not know yet.

> Do not be afraid to talk to a stranger.

2. acquaintance

someone you know a little, not well.

> He is an acquaintance from my class.

3. hang out

to spend relaxed time together.

> We hang out at the park on Sundays.

4. invite

to ask someone to come with you.

> She invited me to her birthday dinner.

5. plans

things you decided to do.

> Do you have any plans for the weekend.

6. catch up

to share news after time apart.

> Let us get coffee and catch up soon.

7. introduce

to tell two people each other's names.

> Let me introduce you to Daniel.

8. common ground

one thing you both share.

> Find one common ground in two minutes.

9. invitation

the ask to join you.

> Make the invitation low pressure.

10. follow up

to contact again after meeting.

> Follow up within a week.

11. rhythm

a regular pattern.

> Keep a two-week contact rhythm.

12. third place

your weekly place by choice.

> Pick a third place: a class or a club.

13. rejection

a no to the plan, not to you.

> Rejection is data, not a verdict.

14. confident

sure and calm.

> Short openers sound confident.

15. pressure

a heavy feeling of must.

> Low pressure invitations get more yeses.

16. specific

exact, with a real day and time.

> Specific plans live. Vague plans die.

17. remember

to keep someone in mind.

> Remember one small thing about them.

18. friendship

the bond between friends.

> Friendship starts at hello number two.

The Friend-Making Ladder

four moves, one hello at a time

Move one: start small

“One true sentence about the shared situation: Is this seat taken. Are you waiting for the same class.”

Move two: common ground

“Answer plus a question, every time. Find one shared thing and name it out loud.”

Move three: invite lightly

“Would you like to... Are you free for... Always a real day, never sometime.”

Move four: follow up

“One warm message within a week. The second contact makes the friend.”

The rule

“Friends are made, not found. One hello at a time. Ten hellos, one friend.”

Say It Better — 10 upgrades

☐ “Give me your phone number.”

☐ “Could I have your number. I will text you about Saturday.”

☐ “Are you my friend now.”

☐ “We should hang out sometime.”

☐ “Do you want to come with me.”

☐ “Would you like to join us for coffee on Friday.”

☐ “What is your name.”

☐ “I do not think we have met. I am Maya.”

☐ “Call me sometime.”

☐ “Here is my number. Text me when you are free this week.”

☐ “Bye.”

☐ “It was really nice talking to you. See you on Saturday.”

☐ “You have no friends either.”

☐ “Do you come to this class often.”

☐ “We should do this again sometime.”

☐ “I am free on Thursday evening. Same time next week.”

Practice Time

3 exercises — do them today, not “someday”

Exercise 1 — Fill in the blank

Word bank: stranger • acquaintance • hang out • invite • plans

1. Every friend was once a _____.
2. He is not a close friend, just an _____ from work.
3. We _____ at the park on Sundays.
4. She _____ me to her birthday dinner.
5. Do you have any _____ for the weekend.

Exercise 2 — Say it like a local

Upgrade each shy-English line (answers below):

1. “Give me your phone number.” > Make it a soft ask:
2. “Call me sometime.” > Trade sometime for a real step:
3. “What is your name.” > Warm it up:

Exercise 3 — The four-move ladder

Say the full ladder out loud: “Start small. Find common ground. Invite lightly. Follow up.” Then build your own invitation: pick a real person, a real activity, a real day. Say it three times — slow, faster, eyes closed.

- Coffee: I am grabbing coffee on Friday. Would you like to join me.
- Sport: We are playing football on Saturday. Are you free to join us.
- Study: We are studying at the library on Sunday. Would you like to come.

Answer key

Ex 1: 1 stranger • 2 acquaintance • 3 hang out • 4 invited • 5 plans

Ex 2: 1 “Could I have your number.” 2 “Here is my number. Text me when you are free this week.”
3 “I do not think we have met. I am Maya.”