

20 No-Prep ESL Speaking Activities (Printable)

Twenty speaking activities that need nothing but the people already in the room — no printouts, no cards to cut out, no props. Each one lists a CEFR range and a realistic time so you can pick one on the walk from the staffroom to the classroom.

1. Chain Story

A1–B1 · 3–5 min. One student starts a story with one sentence; each student adds one more sentence, building on what came before. No planning allowed — the fun is in the swerve.

2. Would You Rather Battle

A2–B2 · 3–5 min. Pose a forced-choice dilemma ("live without music or without coffee?"). Students pick a side, form two groups, and argue their case to the other side.

3. Alibi

B1–B2 · 8–10 min. Pair two students as "suspects" who were supposedly together yesterday evening. Send them out to agree a story, then question them separately in front of the class — listen for details that don't match.

4. Hot Seat

A1–B1 · 3–4 min. One student sits at the front; the class fires quick personal questions for 60–90 seconds. Works as a warm-up or a between-activities palate cleanser.

5. This or That Corners

A1–A2 · 3 min. Call out a pair ("cats or dogs," "beach or mountains") and have students physically walk to a corner of the room for their choice, then explain why to whoever's standing next to them.

6. Broken Telephone

A1–A2 · 4–5 min. Whisper a short sentence to the first student in a line; it passes student to student in a whisper. Compare the final version to the original out loud — the gap is the whole point.

7. Just a Minute

B2–C1 · 5–8 min. One student talks on a given topic for 60 seconds without long hesitation, repetition, or straying off-topic. Classmates can challenge if they think a rule was broken — a real challenge earns them the floor.

8. Category Sprint

A2–B1 · 3–4 min. Call a category ("fruits," "jobs," "irregular past tense verbs") and go round the room — anyone who hesitates or repeats a previous answer is out. Keep the pace fast.

9. Agree/Disagree Line

B1–C1 · 6–8 min. Read a debatable statement. Students physically line up along an imaginary line from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," then a few from each end explain their position to the room.

10. Interview Swap

A2–B1 · 6–8 min. Pairs interview each other for two minutes on a given theme (weekend, family, dream job), then each student introduces their partner to a new group using what they learned.

11. Complaint & Response Chain

B1–B2 · 5 min. In pairs, one student makes an escalating polite complaint (about a fictional hotel, restaurant, product); the other practises de-escalating, apologising, and offering solutions. Swap roles halfway.

12. Guess My Job

A1–A2 · 3–4 min. One student mimes or describes daily tasks (without naming the job) while the class guesses. Works equally well as mime-only for lower levels or description-only for higher ones.

13. Would I Lie to You?

A2–B1 · 4–5 min. A student tells a short personal story that may or may not be true. The class asks follow-up questions and votes on whether it's true — the follow-up questions do most of the language work.

14. Story Relay with a Twist

B1–B2 · 5–6 min. Build a group story one sentence at a time, but the teacher calls out a random word every 30 seconds that the next sentence must include. Keeps the story genuinely unpredictable rather than politely on-topic.

15. The Yes/No Ban

B1–B2 · 3–4 min. One student answers rapid-fire questions from the group for 60 seconds without ever saying "yes" or "no" — they have to rephrase every answer. Swap the banned words for a harder round.

16. Emotion Roleplay

A2–B1 · 4–5 min. Whisper an emotion to a student (frustrated, thrilled, nervous). They act out a short everyday scene — ordering coffee, asking for directions — entirely in that emotional register while the class guesses the emotion.

17. Rank It

B1–C1 · 5–7 min. Give a small group five items (superpowers, historical figures, inventions) to rank from most to least important, with a two-minute time limit to reach consensus and be ready to defend the final order.

18. One-Word Story

A2–B1 · 3–4 min. Build a story around the circle one single word at a time. No sentence planning is possible — the constraint is the entire game, and it moves fast enough that hesitation stands out immediately.

19. Impromptu Pitch

B1–B2 · 4–5 min. Hand a student (verbally) a random everyday object — a stapler, an umbrella, a sock — and give them 30 seconds to prepare a 30-second sales pitch for it to the class.

20. Two-Minute Debate Swap

B2–C1 · 6–8 min. Two students debate opposite sides of a light topic for one minute each, then swap sides and argue the position they were just arguing against for another minute — tests real argument flexibility, not just a rehearsed stance.