

Advanced Conversations in English

Medical Conversations

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Course Description

The Advanced Conversations in English courses are the most advanced materials in our English conversation course series. They were created for higher-level English language learners, from high school students to professionals, who are interested in business and medical topics and want to work with more complex texts, speech patterns, and cultural nuances. These courses can be used in the classroom or during independent study. We encourage learners wishing to take the Advanced Conversations courses to have a working proficiency in English and have some relevant experience with business topics and concepts.

Learners will be exposed to and asked to interact with business language in the form of reports, presentations, negotiations, telephone conversations, emails, blogs, websites, and more within three main topics: Medical, Finance, and Sales & Marketing.

Skills practiced in the courses include:

- Intensive listening
- Speaking
- Textual/situational analysis
- Writing/spelling
- Idiomatic language comprehension
- Tone, style and knowledge of communication methods

Course focus

These courses are centered around conversations that challenge learners to understand concepts and recognize contexts for domain-specific words. Conversations in a business setting contain many important language strategies needed for fluency: Identifying yourself, making small talk, stating initial positions, making clarifications, discussing concessions, giving the history or results of a situation, brainstorming solutions, and more.

These courses are not meant to serve as a comprehensive how-to guide in the domain, but rather to deliver written and spoken material in business situations and allow learners to gain familiarity with new terms in context. Learners are required to use their logic and language skills to complete the lessons.

Course Length

Advanced Conversations in English contains 16 hours of study (16 topical units) broken up into medical, finance, and sales and marketing categories.

Unit and Lesson Structure

Each unit in the Advanced Conversations Courses is centered around a topic and contains three lessons related to that topic.

BROWSE

CATEGORIES
 < ...
 < FINANCE CONVERSATIONS
 < AUTO INSURANCE

LESSON

Auto Insurance - Introduction: Auto Insurance Quote

LESSON

Auto Insurance - Conversation: Auto Insurance Coverage

LESSON

Auto Insurance - What Would You Say: Car Accident

For example, in the Finance course, the Auto Insurance unit contains three lessons.

- Lesson 1 sets the context of the situation and introduces the unit topic. Lesson 1 activities involve reading and analyzing a text, image, or recording and drawing conclusions.

View the image on the left, then respond to the prompts on the right

QUESTIONS

Which of the following liability coverages requires a deductible?

- property damage liability
- personal injury protection
- comprehensive
- limitation on lawsuit

Which best describes the term "premium"?

In the Auto Insurance unit, learners are presented with an auto insurance quote that details a new client's insurance coverage.

- Lesson 2 involves a conversation about the unit topic. Lesson 2 activities include fill in the blank and dictation activities that require learners to interact with challenging lexical items and structures found in the conversation as well as a comprehension activity to test understanding.

English • Conversation Practice 0 % Complete REFERENCE SHORTCUTS (CTRL + H)

Insurance Representative
Good afternoon! Thank you for calling Premier Insurance Services. My name is Eric. How may I help you today?

Joanna
Hello! I recently went on your website and requested an online quote for a car insurance policy.

Record the line

READ ENTIRE CONVERSATION RECORD CONTINUE >

In the Auto Insurance unit, learners are presented with a conversation where an insured client discusses her coverage with an insurance representative.

English • Fill in the Blank 0 % Complete REFERENCE SHORTCUTS (CTRL + H)

Insurance Representative:
Sure, I would be happy to help you with that. Which liability coverages did you need clarification on?

Joanna:
Well, I would like to go through all of them if that is possible. The first one is bodily injury liability. What is it and how much coverage do you suggest?

Insurance Representative:
Bodily injury liability pays the medical bills of people who are in an

grasp
Comprehensive
file
enough
minimum
coverages

CHECK

- Lesson 3 requires the student to analyze the meaning and intent of part of a conversation and provide appropriate, logical, and grammatically-correct responses.

English • What Would You Say?

0 % Complete

REFERENCE

MENU

SHORTCUTS (CTRL + H)

Sam was recently in a multi-car accident that totaled her car as well as two other cars that were involved. She filed a claim with her insurance company and is now on the phone with an insurance representative.

Hello, my name is Sam and I was recently in a car accident. I filed a claim with United Insurance Services and just received a letter requiring additional information from me. My claim number is 856978.

Hi, Sam. I'll be happy to help you. I just need to ask you a few questions first about your so-called accident. Did you get messed up, at all?

Thank you, Sam. I have your claim in front of me, and we just need to quantify some details before cutting you a check. Were you injured at all?

Thank you for the information. I'll be happy to assist you with that. Yes, we just had a few questions to clarify your insurance claim. Were you injured in this accident? Did you receive any medical treatment?

In the Auto Insurance unit, learners choose logical responses in a conversation between an insurance representative and an insured client who was recently involved in a car accident.

Broken Ankle - Part 1

Unit Objectives

Introduction:

Listen to a 911 call concerning a woman who fell in a grocery store and answer comprehension questions.

Conversation:

Jessica slipped in a grocery store and hurt her leg. She can't put weight on her leg without experiencing severe pain and was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. She was given a wheelchair when she arrived and is now being seen by the nurse to evaluate her symptoms.

What Would You Say?

Choose what you would say in a conversation between a nurse and a man who may be a hypochondriac.

Introduction: 911 Call

Operator	911, what is your emergency?
Jake Sloan	This is Jake Sloan. I'm the manager on duty at Grocery Rite on Main Street.
Operator	Yes sir. How can we help you?
Jake Sloan	One of my customers has fallen and she can't stand on her own. I think she may have broken her leg.
Operator	Alright sir. Is she having any shortness of breath or other signs of distress?
Jake Sloan	Uh... well, she seems to be breathing okay and she was talking fine.
Operator	Did she hit her head?
Jake Sloan	I'm not sure.
Operator	Is she bleeding?
Jake Sloan	I didn't see any blood. I left her with one of my clerks so I could call you.
Operator	Okay. That's good. Can you please confirm your address?
Jake Sloan	Yes. 34 Main Street.
Operator	Thank you, an ambulance is on the way. Please wait with the customer and stay on the line until the ambulance arrives.
Jake Sloan	I will. Thank you.

Who is Jake Sloan?	the 911 operator	
	the person who fell in the store	
	the store manager	x
	the ambulance driver	
Which “sign of distress” does the 911 operator ask Jake to check for?	eye movement	
	breathing issues	x
	blood pressure	
	chronic disease	
Which of the following can also be considered a “sign of distress”?	inability to walk or talk	
	bleeding	
	shouting or moaning in pain	
	dizziness or faintness	
	all of the above	x
What does the 911 operator ask Jake to do?	Stay on the phone and wait for the ambulance.	x
	Help the hurt customer stand up.	
	Hang up and wait with the customer.	
	Provide CPR to the customer.	

Conversation: Taking Vitals with a Nurse

Nurse	Jessica? Hi, my name is Sandy. I’m the triage nurse and I’m going to ask you a few questions. Can you tell me why you’re here today?
Jessica	Yes, I slipped on the wet floor in the produce section of the grocery store and hurt my leg.
Nurse	I’m sorry to hear that. Can you stand? Are you able to put your full weight on it?
Jessica	No, I can’t even stand up.
Nurse	Okay. Can you tell me your date of birth?
Jessica	January 23rd, 1983.
Nurse	Okay. Let me check your vital signs and then I’ll have the doctor on call take a look.
Nurse	We’ll do everything we can to help you.
Jessica	Thank you. I’d really like some painkillers if that’s possible.
Nurse	As soon as the doctor takes a look, we’ll see what he suggests for your pain.
Nurse	Can you rate your current pain on a scale from 1 to 10? Ten is the worst pain you’ve ever experienced, and one is hardly any pain at all.
Jessica	Probably around a 7.
Nurse	Did you hit your head when you fell? Does anything else hurt?
Jessica	No. I think I just twisted my leg or something when I fell. My head never hit the ground.

Nurse	That's good. Now, I'm going to move you onto this scale; it's designed to properly weigh patients who need a wheelchair.
Nurse	The doctor will need to know your weight in order to prescribe medication.
Nurse	Thank you, that should be it. Let's move you to a waiting room.
Nurse	Doctor Smith will be in as soon as possible.
Jessica	Thank you.

Where was Jessica in the grocery store when she fell?	in the dairy aisle	
	waiting in line at the deli	
	at the bakery counter	
	by the fruits and vegetables	x
Based on this interaction, what are some of a triage nurse's typical responsibilities?	taking vital signs and asking preliminary questions	x
	prescribing medication and administering painkillers	
	calling an ambulance and responding to emergencies	
Based on the pain scale, how severe is Jessica's pain?	hardly any pain at all	
	tolerable pain	
	severe pain	x
	the worst pain she's ever experienced	
What's another way Nurse Sandy could have sympathized with Jessica about her injury in line 3?	"If you could walk a mile in my shoes..."	
	"That's too bad."	x
	"I'm sorry for your loss."	
	"It could be worse."	
What's another way Jessica could have described what happened to her leg in line 14?	I bumped my leg.	
	I gouged my leg.	
	I bent my leg the wrong way.	x
	I hit my leg on the floor.	

What Would You Say: Pain Scale with a Hypochondriac

David has come to the ER complaining of a dull pain in his arm. He seems very worried, even though the pain is mild. The triage nurse has taken his vital signs and is trying to get a better understanding of his symptoms.

David, when did you start experiencing this discomfort?

I am inexperienced with the symptoms of this discomfort, which is why I am here now.		The nurse's question used the word "experiencing" to mean "feeling". This response used the word "inexperienced" to mean "unfamiliar with".
It's been going on for about three months. I've seen a bunch of other doctors about it, but they kept telling me that nothing was wrong.	x	
I've had pain for a while, but none of my other doctors said nothing was wrong.		This response contains two negative words that are supposed to express a negative: "none (of my doctors said) nothing". In English, two negative words become a positive, as in "some/all of my doctors said something/everything was wrong".
I woke up at 7 a.m., then stayed in bed for a few hours. It was dull, so I came here.		David should tell the nurse how long he has felt pain in his arm. He should also mention if he has already seen a doctor about it and what the results were.

David's arm pain is not severe and he explains to the nurse that the pain is subsiding.

On a scale from 1 to 10, how bad is the pain in your arm? One is basically no pain and 10 is the worst pain you can imagine.

The worst pain I can imagine is ten times worse than this, at least!		This is an indirect way to say that that his pain is not very severe. David should tell the nurse a number from 1-10 to describe the level of his pain.
Now that the pain has subsidized, I'd give it a 4.		"Subsidized" means "supported financially" or "funded". It would best be replaced with "subsided", meaning "became less intense or severe".
When I got here, it was like a 5, but now it's closer to a 3.	x	
I got here at 10, but now it's closer to 3.		The way this is phrased, it sounds like David is talking about time: "I got here at 10 (o'clock), but now it's closer to 3 (o'clock)".

David explains to the nurse that his symptoms subside as soon as he is under a doctor's supervision.

So, the pain has subsided a little. Has it been fluctuating?

I don't know. I thought it was steadily increasing, which is why I came in. I think just being here, knowing I'll get help, makes a difference.	x	
No. The last time I saw the doctor, he gave me something to stop fluctuating, and it hasn't returned.		"Fluctuation" (frequently rising and falling in amount) can't happen to a person. Instead, it should be used to describe nouns like pain, pressure, or volume.
The pain isn't fluctuating, but it keeps going from bad to worse. That's when I thought I should see somebody.		Here, David contradicts himself: "Fluctuating" already means "going from bad to worse".

David is asked to elaborate on why being in the ER has decreased his pain, even before he's seen a doctor.

You mentioned you've had this pain before. Has it always gotten better when you come in?

I guess so. Mentally, I'm less stressed out about it because I know the doctors will, at the very least, check and confirm it's not serious.	x	
Every doctor or nurse I see about this pain has always been very nice. This is why we have insurance.		This response is a "non sequitur", which means it does not connect to the nurse's question in a clear or logical way.
Well, I'm pretty sure that every doctor who confirms my condition has worked in the ER. So, to answer your question, yes.		The scenario description says that David feels better in the emergency room. Because of this, it seems like David isn't actually sick, he just likes the attention he gets in the ER.

The nurse wants to get more information about how David is feeling before giving her notes to the doctor.

I looked up my symptoms on Cyberchondria.com and it says I could be having a heart attack.

We're more concerned about the pain in your arm, right now. A heart attack can wait.		Heart attacks take priority over almost all other conditions in the ER. David's arm pain could be a symptom of a heart attack, but the nurse should ask David more questions to find out for sure.
What other symptoms are you experiencing?	x	
That's interesting. Have you ever gone to Médecins Sans Frontières.com?		The nurse should not suggest a website for a medical diagnosis.

David describes some additional symptoms to the nurse before she gives her notes to the ER doctor. Remember, nurses in the ER cannot give official diagnoses.

I feel cold and sweaty and my heart is racing. Cyberchondria.com says that these can mean I have a very serious condition.

The doctor will want to run some tests, but I'm pretty sure he's going to tell you that you're just mentally ill.

Though David is showing signs of being a hypochondriac (anxiety about having a severe illness), the nurse should wait for a doctor to say what his diagnosis is (identification of the illness).

I understand. Cyberchondria.com is a very reliable diagnostic tool. Our doctors swear by it.

Online articles should not be used in place of a doctor's or professional's advice. They should be used for informational purposes only.

Once you've been seen by a doctor and we've run some tests, we'll have more information about what's going on with you.

x

You could have type 2 diabetes. That's been going around.

Type 2 diabetes is a type of chronic illness that can only be diagnosed by a doctor after some blood tests. "To go around", when referring to an illness, means "to be given from one person to another".

Broken Ankle – Part 2

Unit Objectives

Introduction:

Read through an article called “Is My Ankle Broken?” and answer questions related to its contents.

Conversation:

Jessica fell in the grocery store on a slippery spot in the produce aisle and was taken to the hospital in an ambulance. The nurse helped prepare her to see the doctor.

What Would You Say?

Choose what you would say in a conversation between a doctor and the mother of a child who has hurt his arm.

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"Is My Ankle Broken?"



Types of Fractures

If your ankle is swollen and painful after a fall or sports injury, it may be broken. **There are several types of breaks (also known as fractures).**


- In case of an **"open fracture"** or **"displaced"** fracture the injury has caused two (or more) pieces of bone to slip so they are no longer aligned. In some cases, this causes the skin to break open as well.
- In case of a **"non-displaced"** fracture, the sections of the bone are still aligned. These types of breaks are more difficult to diagnose and more challenging to see on an x-ray.

Symptoms

No matter the type of break, there are some symptoms which are common to all of them:



Pain: With an ankle break, you'll experience pain with walking and standing. It may be so debilitating that you're unable to walk or stand without help.



Bruising: Even if the broken bones haven't pierced the skin, a break causes trauma inside the body. This often shows up as bruising on the skin's surface around the break.



Swelling: The area around your broken ankle may be tender to the touch. It may also look or feel swollen or bumpy.



Snapping Sound: At the moment of the injury, you may have heard a snapping sound in your ankle.



Numbness: Depending on the severity of the break, bones may be pressing against nerves that carry signals from your feet, toes or leg to your brain. If that happens, you can experience numbness in the area of your injury or above/below it.

What to Do

If you've suffered an injury to your ankle and are experiencing any of these symptoms, you should call a doctor. If you can't stand or walk, consider going to an urgent care or emergency room facility.

What to Expect from the Doctor

The doctor will examine your ankle and ask you to put pressure on it in various ways. The doctor may also ask for x-rays to confirm whether there is a break. Depending on the results of the x-ray, your doctor may apply a cast or hard plastic walking boot, give you crutches or a wheelchair, suggest surgery, or a combination of these options.

Choose the best description of an “open” or “displaced” fracture:	a bone break where the two sides of the bone line up	
	a ligament tear where the ligament becomes partially or completely detached	
	a bone break where the two sides of the broken bone do not line up	x
	a bone break where hairline cracks occur due to repeated stress over time	
Which of the following injuries could be classified as a “non-displaced fracture”?	a shattering-type break	
	an incomplete or aligned break	x
	a dislocation	
	an open ankle fracture	
Which of the following symptoms may indicate that a nerve has been injured due to a fracture?	bruising or redness in the area of the break	
	a snapping sound from the injured nerve	
	additional hairline fractures in the surrounding bones	
	numbness in the area above or below the break	x
Based on this article, what’s the best definition of “debilitating pain”?	acute pain that resolves within 4-12 weeks	
	excruciating pain that prevents normal, daily function	x
	chronic pain that lasts more than three months	
	moderate pain restricted to the injured area	
What is the purpose of this article?	to make a formal medical diagnosis based on a patient’s symptoms	
	to get the reader familiar with the anatomy of the ankle	
	to give the reader information on how to set a broken ankle	
	to help the reader understand what their medical symptoms could mean	x

Conversation: Discussing an Ankle Injury with a Doctor

Doctor	Hi Jessica. I'm Doctor Smith. How are you doing?
Jessica	Hi Doctor. Other than my leg hurting when I try to stand, I'm doing okay.
Doctor	So, you slipped on a wet floor at the store and that's how you injured your leg?
Jessica	Yes. I was reaching for the spinach and slid. One leg went out from under me and down I went! My left leg ended up underneath me and I couldn't get back up without help.
Doctor	Did you lose consciousness after you fell?
Jessica	No, no, I remember everything. I didn't hit my head or anything like that, thankfully.
Doctor	Could you describe the pain? Is it throbbing, dull, piercing?
Jessica	When I'm sitting, it's a dull ache. When I try to stand, I get a sharp stabbing pain.
Doctor	And is that in your ankle, calf, thigh or knee?
Jessica	Ankle and calf mostly. The sharp stabbing pain when I stand also shoots up my leg into my thigh.
Doctor	Alright. I'm going to examine your leg now. Please let me know if anything hurts or causes the pain to get worse.
Jessica	Ouch! Right there. That's where it hurts the most.
Doctor	Okay. It looks like the worst pain is just above your left ankle. Now, press your foot against my hand as if you were pushing on a gas pedal. Does that hurt?
Jessica	Yes. A lot.
Doctor	Now, push upwards against my hand with your foot. Does that hurt?
Jessica	Ouch! Yes, that hurts too.
Doctor	Please put out your other leg. I'd like to compare the two to check for swelling.
Doctor	It does look swollen. Let's send you for an x-ray. It may just be a sprain, but an x-ray will show if there's other damage.
Doctor	After I've reviewed the x-ray, I'll come back and we can talk about what to do to help you feel better.

What is the sequence of events in this passage?	The doctor checks the patient's range of motion, performs a pain test, and compares her two legs for swelling.	
	The doctor takes the patient's vital signs, checks for swelling, then determines her pain levels.	
	The doctor examines the patient's leg, tests her range of motion, and checks for swelling.	x
Where is Jessica's pain the worst?	in her lower leg	x
	in her knee	
	in her right leg	
	in her upper extremity	
What is another way to ask the question in line 5?	Did you pass out after you fell?	x
	Did you lose your conscience after you fell?	
	Did you lose a lot of blood after you fell?	
	Did you lose feeling in your leg after you fell?	
How does Jessica describe the pain in her leg when she's sitting?	throbbing	
	dull	x
	piercing	
	stabbing	
How does the doctor test Jessica's range of motion on her injured ankle?	He asks her to stand up.	
	He presses hard on her leg.	
	He asks her to press her foot against his hand.	x
	He asks her to bend and straighten her knee.	
Why did the doctor decide to send Jessica for an x-ray?	She had swelling in both legs.	
	She felt sharp pain.	
	He wanted to compare her two ankles.	
	He wanted to confirm the extent of her injury.	x

What Would You Say: Discussing an Arm Injury with a Doctor

Jean Quimby takes her three-year-old son, Billy, to urgent care after a fall at the pool.		
Can you tell me what happened?		
As soon as we got to the pool, Billy took off like a rabbit. I knew he was going to be falling, and sure enough, he did.		There is a tense error in this statement: "...he was going to be falling". It should be "he was going to fall".
It happened so quickly! We were at the pool and Billy just ran off and I couldn't catch him. Before I knew it, he had slipped on the concrete.	x	
Well, I took my three-year-old son, Billy, to the pool, and Billy took off running in a slippery area, I then came to urgent care. And he fell.		Jean should respond to the doctor's question in the order in which events happened. First, Billy started running. Then, he fell. Finally, they went to urgent care.
Jean brought her son in to the doctor after she noticed something was wrong.		
He looks a little scraped up, but that's pretty normal. Have you noticed anything unusual about his behavior since the fall?		
No, he's been fine since the fall, except he's had a slight head cold for a few days.		The doctor wants to know if Billy has any other symptoms from the fall. Usually, a cold or the flu is not caused by falling.
Yes, he cried, but I think he was mad at me for misbehaving. Once I calmed him down, everything was normal until we were leaving and he couldn't put his shirt on without crying out.		"He was mad at me for misbehaving" means that the child was mad at the mother because she misbehaved.
He stopped crying after I held him for a while and we even went swimming. But afterwards, when I was getting him dressed, he wouldn't let me put his arm in his shirt sleeve.	x	
The doctor asks about the position Billy fell in. Many forearm and wrist injuries are caused when the wrist is hyperextended, like the way a waiter carries a large tray.		
When he fell, did you notice if his arms were straight out or if he fell onto his hands?		
I think he fell onto his hands, like he tried to catch himself.	x	
I noticed that his feet were behind him, and his nose was out of joint.		Having one's "nose out of joint" is an English idiom that means someone was upset or irritated.
His arms were all askew and willy-nilly. I feared the worst.		"Askew" looks like the word "askew", which means "at an angle" or "slanted".

The doctor checks Billy's arm for signs of swelling and poor circulation.

How serious is it, doctor?

My main concern is that his neither his wrist nor his elbow flexes. I think Billy may require some additional circulation.		"Circulation" refers to blood flow. "Additional circulation" is not a medical procedure.
Luckily, it isn't dour. Given the severity of the hypertension, his range of motion seems to be normal. The main concern is his discomfort.		"Dour" means "unfriendly". "Hypertension" does not refer to an arm injury; it refers to high blood pressure.
His forearm does look a little swollen and it feels warm to the touch. That means that his circulation in the area is just fine. Based on his symptoms, Billy may have had a sprain or a fracture.	x	

After examining Billy's arm, the doctor recommends getting a closer look at Billy's bones to see if there's a fracture.

Do you think it's a break?

I think we're looking at a fracture, or maybe something's broken. He needs x-rays before we proceed any further.		A "fracture" already means that the bone is broken. A doctor wouldn't say, "I think we're looking at a fracture, or maybe something's broken."
I don't feel any breaks in the wrist, but he's clearly in pain. Let's get some x-rays to find out a bit more, then we'll discuss treatment.	x	
It could be a break. We won't know after he has an x-ray, and then we can send him home with painkillers.		To be correct, this should be "It could be a break. We won't know until after he has (had) an x-ray."

Broken Ankle – Part 3

Unit Objectives

Introduction:

Read through a health article called “Types and Causes of Ankle Fractures” and answer comprehension questions related to its contents.

Conversation:

Jessica fell and hurt her leg and was brought to the clinic in an ambulance. She has been seen by both the nurse and the doctor. The doctor has suggested an x-ray to determine the extent of her injuries.

What Would You Say?

Choose what you would say in a conversation between an x-ray technician and the mother of a child who has hurt his arm.

Introduction: Types and Causes of Ankle Fractures

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X-RAY OF A BROKEN ANKLE.
Break is shown in area outlined in yellow. The outline of a cast is also visible. The x-ray is being taken to ensure that the bones are aligned after casting.

Image courtesy of flickr user RichardBH.

Types and Causes of Ankle Fractures

Ankle Anatomy

Human ankles consist of three bones: the tibia, fibula, and the talus. By taking x-rays at various angles, radiologists, who are trained to read x-ray pictures, and other medical professionals can see which of these bones are broken and then determine a course of treatment.

Fracture Causes

Depending on the cause of the injury, the nubs on the end of the tibia (medial malleolus) and fibula (lateral malleolus) can also break. While other fractures can occur from tripping or falling, injury to the medial or lateral malleolus is specifically caused by rolling the ankle. Doctors will recommend a series of x-rays (radiographs) to provide evidence of fracture. An MRI may be recommended if bone chipping or severe ligament injury is suspected.

Medical Treatment

Treatments can include everything from setting the bone and placing it in a cast to surgery where pins are inserted to hold the bones together, depending on the severity of the break and the number of bones broken.

How many bones are in the human ankle?	3	X
	7	
	2	
	4	
Which of these is NOT an ankle bone:	fibula	
	tibia	
	medial malleolus	X
	talus	
What type of injury can cause the nubs on the tibia and fibula to break?	slipping	
	rolling	X
	tripping	
	falling	

Which of these is listed as a treatment option for a broken ankle?	x-ray	
	walking it off	
	amputation	
	cast	x
What is another word for “x-ray”?	radiograph	x
	sonograph	
	MRI	
	CAT scan	

Conversation: X-ray of an Ankle

X-ray Tech	Hi, Jessica. I’m Frank. It looks like Doctor Smith ordered a set of x-rays for you.
Jessica	Yes. I guess he thinks it might be broken.
X-ray Tech	Let me confirm a few things and we’ll get started.
X-ray Tech	First, what’s your date of birth?
Jessica	January 23rd, 1983.
X-ray Tech	Ok. And are you pregnant or is there a chance that you may be pregnant?
Jessica	No.
X-ray Tech	Ok. And which ankle is it?
Jessica	My left.
X-ray Tech	Please make sure there are no metal objects in your pockets.
X-ray Tech	Are you able to walk over to the table? If not, I’ll wheel you over.
Jessica	If you’d wheel me, that would be great. It’s quite painful to put weight on it.
X-ray Tech	No problem.
X-ray Tech	I’m going to position your ankle on the x-ray film.
X-ray Tech	I’ll also need you to wear this lead protective blanket to keep the x-rays from taking pictures of other areas.
X-ray Tech	I’m sorry if it hurts, but please try to hold the position until I come back and move it.
Jessica	Okay. I’m ready.
X-ray Tech	Did you know the ankle is one of the most commonly broken bones?
Jessica	I had no idea. It’s too bad a weight-bearing joint is so fragile!
X-ray Tech	Right! In some cases, the fracture may not interfere with daily activities, but often people are off their feet for weeks or months.
Jessica	Yikes! I hope I’m not out of commission for that long. I’ve got a hectic work schedule.
X-ray Tech	I hear ya! I hope it all goes well for you. You’re all set with the x-rays. I’ll take you back to the exam room.
X-ray Tech	As soon as the x-rays have been read, Doctor Smith will be back to see you.
Jessica	Great. Thank you.

What is Frank's role at the hospital?	ultrasound technician	
	radiographic technician	x
	doctor on call	
	triage nurse	
What's another way Jessica could phrase line 12?	It hurts to wait.	
	It hurts when I put on weight.	
	It hurts to stand up on it.	x
	It hurts if someone puts something heavy on top of it.	
When Jessica says, "I had no idea. It's too bad a weight-bearing joint is so fragile!" in line 19, what does she mean?	She has delicate ankles.	
	She's surprised that the ankle supports her body weight.	
	Ankles are easily injured.	x
	She wishes ankles were thicker.	
How does Jessica mean the expression "out of commission" in line 21?	unable to work or do daily activities	x
	out of order	
	out of time and having a lot to do at work	
	away from home for a long time	
Which of the following did Jessica not have to do before getting her x-ray taken?	hold her position until the technician is ready	
	wear a lead protective blanket	
	make sure there are no metal objects in her pockets	
	take a pregnancy test	x

What Would You Say: X-ray of an Arm

Three-year-old Billy Quimby fell down at the pool and is favoring his left arm. His doctor ordered some x-rays to determine if it's broken. Billy and his mom, Jean, arrive at the hospital's radiology department to get his imaging done.

I'd like to stay with my son during the x-ray.

I think that would be OK. I'll talk to the radiologist about getting an x-ray concurrently.		"Concurrently" means "at the same time". Only the patient who is scheduled for an x-ray will get one.
That's fine, we usually allow to sit with parents in this chair. Keep in mind that that all directions I give to Billy will apply to you as well.		The verb "to allow" is a causative verb which means "to let [someone] [do something]". In the second sentence, the "someone" is not specified.
No problem, you can remain with Billy during the procedure. Come on in and take a seat. You'll both want to wear these lead vests.	x	
You are more than welcome, since I'm sure it would help calm Billy. Please don't move as I strap you both securely to the table.		Most likely, Jean would be able to hold Billy on her lap while he puts his arm on the x-ray table. An x-ray tech would not "strap them securely to the table".

The lead vests and the dark x-ray room have made Billy very nervous. He whispers to his mom from his seat and Jean poses Billy's question to the tech.

Billy wants me to ask you if the x-ray will hurt.

Don't worry, Billy. You'll just feel a slight pinch at the site of the x-ray.		X-rays are like photographs and patients cannot feel them.
Please assure him that everything will be fine, so long as he holds his breath and doesn't move or scream.		Patients should breathe normally and stay still during x-rays.
X-rays are harmless, Billy. Radiation is nothing to worry about.		Radiation, especially in the small doses used during x-rays, does not cause physical pain. In high doses, radiation can be "something to worry about" as it can cause sickness.
Don't worry, Billy, you can't feel an x-ray.	x	

Billy is still nervous and has his mom ask another question. The x-ray technician offers his best explanation to soothe him.

Billy wants to know what that big machine hanging from the ceiling is.

That thing up there is the x-ray machine. It's like a really big camera and it's going to take pictures of your bones.

x

It's just a device that produces electromagnetic waves of energy with very short wavelengths, allowing us to see the internal composition of materials that are opaque to light.

This is a correct description of an x-ray machine, but it is too complicated to say to a three-year-old.

Goodness, Billy has a lot of questions that you don't seem to know the answer to. Tell him it's a camera.

This is a rude response; the technician should assume responsibility for explaining his equipment.

The technician takes a set of images of Billy's arm and notices that they're blurry. He comes over to secure Billy's arm. Jean explains why to Billy.

Billy, I'm going to put this special bandage on your arm that will keep your arm in one place, ok? Mrs. Quimby, this is just an ace bandage that will keep him from moving around too much for the next set.

Billy, you can't move around or Mommy will have to pay a lot more.

Hospitals don't usually charge per x-ray. The reason Billy shouldn't move around is so that the x-ray comes back clear and easy to read.

Honey, you'll have to sit very still while we take pictures.

x

Billy, you need to keep your arm in one place so that your pictures come out hazy.

"Hazy" is another word for "blurry". X-ray technicians do not want to take blurry x-rays.

Sweetie, don't worry, the bandage will keep you secure.

An "ace bandage" is a long, stretchy piece of cloth that is often used to immobilize injured joints. "Secure" means "safe from injury".

After several more x-rays, the tech has finished all the pictures the doctor requested. Jean is curious about the results and asks for the x-ray tech's opinion.

I know you're not the doctor, but... did you see anything?

I'm sorry, Mrs. Quimby, but I never even look at them. The radiologist will deliver them to your doctor's inbox when he got around to it.

The dependent clause, "when he got around to it", should be in the present simple tense, "when he gets around to it." Also, x-ray techs look at the images they take in order to make sure they are clear and readable.

I'm sorry, I really can't comment. I'll email the x-rays to your doctor and you can discuss the results with him.

x

Yes, Mrs. Quimby, the x-ray did its job. I saw Billy's entire clavicle.

The response, "I saw Billy's entire clavicle" very literally replies to Mrs. Quimby's question, "Did you see anything?" However, a "clavicle" is not located in the ankle, it's located between the shoulder and the chest and is commonly called a "collarbone".

Broken Ankle – Part 4

Unit Objectives

Introduction:

Read through a passage about Jessica's treatment options and how her injury may affect her job and answer questions related to the passage.

Conversation:

Jessica's doctor has reviewed the x-rays and determined that Jessica will need surgery for her injured ankle. He's going to explain this to Jessica as well as discuss pain medications and the likely consequences of her condition and treatment.

What Would You Say?

Choose what you would say in a conversation between Jessica and her friend, Michelle, as they discuss Jessica's injury.

Introduction: Treatment Options



While Jessica is waiting for the doctor to share the results of her x-ray, she starts researching treatment options and how they might impact her life. Although she can easily work with a cast and crutches, she won't be able to concentrate or drive if she's on heavy pain medication.

If the doctor suggests surgery, Jessica will be out of work for a long time and she can't afford the time off. Not only will it hurt her income, even if she's able to collect short-term disability, it will also severely impact her professional goals. Reviews are coming up and she worries any time away from the office will make her look bad.

While surfing the web, she stumbles upon a forum where various people discuss similar accidents. Some mention they received compensation for their medical expenses and lost wages. In fact, she even finds a thread from another person who was injured at the same store! The other person didn't break his ankle, but the company paid for his lost wages. She finds another post about a man who fractured his ulna, one of his two forearm bones, and sued the company for multiple thousands of dollars. Another woman fractured four of the eight bones in her wrist and she wound up getting \$300,000 in damages!

Jessica starts to wonder if she could sue the grocery store.

According to this passage, which treatment option would have the most effect on Jessica's professional life?	crutches	
	heavy pain medication	
	lower leg cast	
	surgery	x
According to this passage, what information did Jessica find online?	alternative treatment options for her condition	
	experiences from others in similar situations	x
	how to apply for short term disability and boost her earnings at work	
	contact information of others who fell down at the same grocery store	
What are Jessica's biggest concerns right now?	pain medication and withdrawal	
	poor reviews at work due to her broken ankle	
	missed work and lost wages	x
	damage to her ankle and ability to walk in the future	
How did the people in the forum get money for their medical expenses and lost income?	They filed for disability with their employer.	
	They took legal action and had lawyers ask for money from the place where they were injured.	x
	They wrote letters and emails to the grocery store stating their case.	
	They had arm injuries, not leg injuries, so the company automatically paid them.	
How could suing the grocery store help Jessica?	She wouldn't have to get surgery.	
	The grocery store could get legal authorization to prevent future accidents.	
	The grocery store could get payback from Jessica for her accident.	
	She could receive money from the grocery store for missed work and hospital expenses.	x

Conversation: Broken Ankle Diagnosis

Doctor	Hi Jessica. I reviewed your x-rays and, unfortunately, it appears you have a bimalleolar fracture. That means that the ends of both your tibia and fibula have been broken.
Jessica	Oh no! How long will I be in a cast?
Doctor	I'm afraid it's more serious than that. This particular fracture has made your ankle unstable and it will not heal properly without surgical intervention.
Doctor	The bones will need to be pinned in place with metal plates while they knit back together.
Jessica	Oh...
Doctor	Now, I don't want you to panic. Some of the best ankle surgeons in the state work right here at this hospital.
Doctor	We can't do any surgery before your swelling goes down, so I'm going to put you in a splint for today and prescribe you some acetaminophen to keep your pain and swelling down.
Doctor	I want you to take two pills twice a day with food. The directions will be on the label when you pick it up from the pharmacy.
Doctor	I'll write you a referral for an orthopedic surgeon. Dr. Gray is excellent and she has treated many foot and ankle injuries that I've referred to her over the years. She will take you through the steps to prepare you for your surgery.
Doctor	In the meantime, you'll need to stay home or work with your leg elevated until the swelling subsides.
Jessica	I'm going to miss so much work! Is there any way you could write me a note I could give to my boss?
Doctor	Sure, I can do that.
Jessica	I'm so overwhelmed.
Doctor	This is a lot to take in. Do you have any questions?
Jessica	Well, the floor was wet and there was no warning sign posted. And this all sounds like it's going to be expensive...
Jessica	Doctor, do you think I can sue the grocery store?
Doctor	Well, that's a question for a lawyer, but I'll be sure that your medical records are fully updated and available if you decide to pursue that course of action.

Why does Jessica ask the doctor for a note?	to get his recommendation for a lawyer	
	because she's too overwhelmed to remember the instructions for taking her medicine	
	to give to her work to explain why she will be missing work in the future	x
	to give to the pharmacist to verify the prescribed dose of medicine	
How will "acetaminophen" help Jessica?	It will keep her ankle stabilized until surgery.	
	It will decrease her pain and swelling until surgery.	x
	It will improve the strength of her bones over time.	
	It will increase her mobility and circulation until surgery.	
How often should Jessica take the prescribed medication?	once in the morning and once in the evening	x
	with every meal	
	as often as the pharmacist recommends	
	as needed for her pain	
	in the morning, on an empty stomach	
How should Jessica care for her broken ankle before she meets with Dr. Gray?	She should go to work as usual.	
	She should have the bones in her foot pinned.	
	She should keep her foot raised off the floor.	x
	She should talk to a lawyer.	
In line 9, what does "orthopedic" refer to?	internal organs	
	a type of medication	
	bones or muscles	x
	a type of surgery	
What is Dr. Smith referring to when he talks about a "course of action" in line 17?	calling a lawyer on Jessica's behalf	
	helping Jessica get back to work	
	seeing if there are grounds for a legal case against the grocery store	x
	assisting Jessica with her expensive medical bills	

What Would You Say: Broken Ankle Next Steps

Jessica wants some sympathy from her friend Michelle about her recent accident and her upcoming surgery. Michelle tries to be empathetic.

All I was trying to do was get spinach and now I need to have surgery on my ankle, what the heck?

My aunt broke her leg once and was out of work for three weeks.	x	
I'm sorry to hear that. Why don't you cry on someone else's shoulder?		This response is rude. "To cry on someone's shoulder" means "to tell someone why you are upset". When Michelle asks Jessica to cry on "someone else's shoulder", she is saying she doesn't want to talk about the accident.
Don't worry, everything is going to be OK. I can run out tonight and go grocery shopping for you.		"Empathetic" means "showing an ability to understand someone else's feelings". This response shows that Jessica's friend believes that grocery shopping is more upsetting than her ankle surgery.

Michelle asks Jessica a little more about her injury. Jessica is distressed.

Is it serious? What do you have to have done? Like pins and stuff?

They've got to put pins in because apparently the little bones are messed up. It's really annoying and I'm going to have to miss a ton of work. I have no idea how I'm going to pay for this.	x	
This is seriously the worst thing that's happened to me. I'm going to have to stay overnight in the hospital and never be able to put my weight on that ankle.		This response is off-topic. Jessica was asked to provide details about her surgery.
I have a fractured tabula. Unless the doctor straightens it with pins, I may never go to spin class again.		"Tabula" looks like the word "tibia" (ankle bone) but it is actually the Latin word for "table". "Spin class" is a type of exercise involving bicycles.

The store was negligent about telling customers about the wet floor. Jessica thinks that the store should be held accountable.

Don't you think the grocery store should pay for your medical bills? They should have had a warning that the floor was wet!

I thought about that. I didn't see any sign near the refrigerator when I was there. I'm thinking about suing them.

x

I think there should have been a wet floor sign to warn me, and I think maybe the grocery store should pay for this.

Here, Jessica is simply repeating what Michelle said, indicating that she wasn't listening.

I can't stop thinking that the farm worker who picks that spinach probably doesn't have insurance, either. Life is so unfair.

This response makes it seem like Jessica wants the grocery store to pay for the spinach picker's insurance.

I looked where I was going and there was the wet floor sign, right in the middle of the puddle. I should sue.

If Jessica saw the wet floor sign, then the grocery store was not negligent.

Michelle encourages Jessica to sue the grocery store.

They clearly messed up. Have you started looking for lawyers?

I'm always looking for lawyers and doctors; my last serious boyfriend was a chiropractor.

In this response, "looking for lawyers" has a romantic sense to it. Jessica does not want to date a lawyer, she wants to hire one to help her.

I guess if I'm going to file a lawsuit, then I should hire an attorney with a degree in ankle fractures. But the meds I'm taking are so strong it's difficult to concentrate.

Lawyers get their degree in law, not in medical issues. However, lawyers can specialize in areas such as personal injury law (torts), which would cover Jessica's slip-and-fall case.

I have a couple of lawyers in mind. I need to see if any of them specialize in retail litigation.

This response is close to being valid, but "ligation" means "closing up a blood vessel or other duct with a clip". The correct word to use is "litigation" (the process of taking legal action).

I definitely want to. The doctor gave me a bunch of paperwork to back me up on this. But I'm so doped up on these pain meds that I'm not thinking clearly enough to look for one.

x

Michelle offers to find someone to help Jessica with her broken ankle.

Let's review what happened. I can help you look for a lawyer if you want.

Sounds like a plan! First, I was looking for frozen spinach, but they didn't have any so I called the manager. Next thing you know, I'm here looking to lawyer up.

This response indicates that Jessica wants a lawyer to help make sure the store sells frozen spinach.

You rock! Ok, so I had to take an ambulance from the store, and wait in the ER for forty-five minutes before I was seen.

x

Ironically, because I need a cold compress for my swollen ankle, what I want more than a lawyer right now is the package of frozen peas that was in the case next to the spinach.

Though a cold compress is a great way to reduce swelling, Jessica should respond to Michelle's prompt "Let's review what happened." starting with how she got to the ER.

Michelle prompts Jessica for more details. Jessica recounts what happened to her at the doctor's.

So, what happened when the doctor saw you?

He gave me some drugs for places where infections are common. I also had to tell the x-ray technician if I was pregnant, which is totally an invasion of privacy.

Jessica's issue was a break/fracture, not an infection. The x-ray technician did ask Jessica if she was pregnant, but that is a standard question to reduce harm to an unborn baby.

I had to get an x-ray and take some crazy pain meds. And then there's the surgery deal and missing work. And don't forget, I've been in pain this entire time.

x

He made sure that the clinic collected my billing address, as well as information like my preferred pharmacy and where I got my surgery.

Jessica should focus on information such as how she was diagnosed, what her prescription was, and what her treatment is.

He prescribed some acetaminophen, and that's when I found out that I had a broken ankle. Then, he sent me for an x-ray to check for fractures.

The order that Jessica told this story is incorrect. First, she got an x-ray, then the doctor diagnosed her broken ankle. Finally, she was prescribed some painkillers.