

eslactive

Inner Circle Outer Circle

Tags: [advanced](#), [beginner](#), [grammar](#), [icebreaker](#), [intermediate](#), [kids](#), [vocabulary](#)

The Inner Circle Outer Circle ESL conversation setup is an active, fast-paced technique for short, one-on-one interactions.

 8+  15-45 mins  Chairs

Setup

You will need a chair for each student. If you have more than about sixteen students, you may want to split the class into multiple groups.

In each group, arrange half of the chairs in a circle facing outwards. Arrange the other half around that circle, facing inwards, so that each chair faces one other. The students all sit down on a chair.

Depending on your target language, you may need some different (around ten) topics ready for the students to discuss. If you have a projector and Internet connection, why not use our [Conversation Topic Generator](#).

Conversation

1. Present the students with a conversation topic. The students have to discuss that topic with the one other student they are facing.
2. They are not allowed to stop until an allotted time is up. The right amount of time will depend on the topics, but a good guide is one minute for beginner, two minutes for intermediate and three minutes for advanced levels.
3. At the end of the time the students in the outer circle have to move one chair to their left, so that each student has a new conversation partner. Depending on the target language, you may present a new conversation topic at this time. Repeat the process as many times as desired.

Target Language

The Inner Circle Outer Circle ESL conversation technique can facilitate a number of different conversation types. The conversation topic could be the same each time. For example with new classes, you could use it as an [icebreaker](#), with students introducing themselves to each other.

Another option is to combine the technique with [Pop Topics](#), and introduce a new topic with each change. For a warmer or time-filler, try personal experiences, plans and preferences. Or you could use a related set of questions, linked by a common vocabulary or grammar. Our online [Conversation Topic Generator](#) provides sets of ready-made prompts grouped by topic, along with a built-in timer.

The length of this activity will depend on how many students you have. With large groups, it could form the basis of an entire conversation class.