1201205 – English for Information Technology 1
Week 4 - English conversation

Members: 1. _____

Troubleshooting a computer problem

Dialogue 1

A: I'm having problems with my computer.
B: What's wrong with it?
A: For some reason it won't turn on.
B: Have you checked the connections on your computer?
A: What connections?
B: There are cords that connect your computer to a power outlet.
A: Will the cords keep it from turning on?
B: It won't turn on if the cords aren't connected.
A: I didn't think of that.
B: Try it and see if it works.
A: I think that I will, thanks.
B: It should work, but let me know if it doesn't.

Vocabularies:

Words	Meaning
checked	_____
connections	_____
cords	_____
works	_____
won't	_____
let me know	_____

Dialogue 2

A: My computer isn't working.
B: Tell me what the problem is.
A: I'm trying to turn it on, but it won't work.
B: Try checking the connections.
A: Which ones are you referring to?
B: The cords that you see behind your CPU that plug into an outlet.
A: Is that why it won't turn on?
B: If they're not connected right, that will keep it from turning on.
A: I did not know that.
B: You should check the connections.
A: I'm going to do that.
B: Tell me if it's still not working.

Vocabularies:

Words	Meaning
Which ones	_____
referring	_____
CPU	_____
plug	_____
outlet	_____

Dialogue 3

A: Something's wrong with my computer.
B: What's the problem?
A: My computer won't turn on.
B: Did you see if all the connections are right?
A: I'm not sure I understand what you mean.
B: The connections between your CPU and your outlet.
A: Is that what's stopping my computer from turning on?
B: If your plugs aren't connected all the way, the computer won't turn on.
A: I had no idea.
B: Why don't you try it and see what happens?
A: I'll try it right now.
B: Let me know if that doesn't work.

Vocabularies:

Words	Meaning
Something's wrong	_____
turn on	_____
stopping	_____
I had no idea	_____

Source:
https://www.eslfast.com/robot/topics/dailylife/dailylife08.htm

Every conversation I have about buying a laptop goes like this

Because I'm the editor in charge of laptop coverage for PCWorld, I'm frequently asked for advice by friends, family, and coworkers looking to get a new laptop. That's not really surprising, and it's not even unwelcome. What surprises me is just how similar the conversations are to one another. From home to business users, casual shoppers to dialed-in tech professionals. Basically, every conversation I have about buying a laptop goes something like this.

Buyer: Hey Jason, you got a minute? I want to get a new laptop and I want to pick your brain.

Me: Sure thing. How old is your current laptop?

Buyer: Oh I don't know... maybe 2 years?

Me: Well what model is it?

Buyer: (*lists some 4-year old mid-range model*)

Me: Yeah it's probably time for an upgrade. What are your needs?

Buyer: Something lightweight and easy to carry around.

Me: Well you could get (*lists a couple of cheap netbooks*).

Buyer: Yeah I was looking at those, but I do a lot of stuff with photos/video/flash/whatever and they say those netbooks aren't powerful enough.

Me: Oh, you didn't say that when I asked about your needs. You need a more powerful ultraportable. There's (*really cool $1,200 ultraportable with good processor and plenty of RAM and hard drive space*)...

Buyer: That's too much money. I was looking to spend like $500 or $600.

Me: Well you didn't say that when I asked what your needs are. That's pretty tight, you can't spend more like $700?

Buyer: Well I don't really have an exact price, I just don't want to spend a lot of money. What about (*$600 laptop they saw on some special deal online*)?

Me: (*Grumbles something about how a $2,000 PC used to be considered "cheap"*) That's not a bad deal...it's got plenty of RAM and a decent processor. But it's about 5 and a half pounds. You said light and easy to carry... you want something closer to 4 pounds, or even less. You're going to have to make *some* compromises. There's this (*$700 ultraportable without an optical drive*), but it has sort of a low-resolution screen. The screen upgrade option costs $100 more.

Buyer: It's so *ugly*.

Me: Okay, so your needs are: lightweight and easy to carry, $700 or less, sexy, and powerful enough for the photos/video/flash/whatever. Do you need an optical drive?

Buyer: A what?

Me: A DVD drive. Do you frequently install software from disc, or mostly just download it? Do you watch DVD movies?

Buyer: Oh I want to be able to do that for sure!

Me: The computers with optical drives tend to be thicker and heavier than ones without. Really, when was the last time you watched video off a disc on your PC? Do you *really* need the optical drive? Could you make do with an external USB optical drive if some rare emergency comes up that you need to install something off a disc?

Buyer: I guess so.

Me: What about games? Do you play any games?

Buyer: Not really.

Me: Not even (*lists a bunch of common popular mainstream games*)? You don't want the ability to play those?

Buyer: Well I don't want a machine that *can't* play those.

Me: Okay so you want a sub-$700 laptop that is around 4 pounds or less, looks great, has a good screen, really long battery life, has a decent enough graphics chip to play some basic 3D games, has enough CPU power and RAM to do all that other stuff you said...

Buyer: And I want it to last. I don't want to buy another laptop in just two years!

Me: Okay...and enough power for tomorrow's apps as well. I think I talked you out of the need for an optical drive, but I'm going to assume you want a keyboard that's nice to type on and a good touchpad.

Buyer: Sure, of course.

Me: Let's see what we can find!

What follows is inevitably a search of our own reviews, other site's reviews, Amazon, Newegg, vendor websites, and more. Everything has a glaring flaw. This one doesn't have enough RAM or CPU power, and upgrading those makes the system too expensive. That one has enough power and a great keyboard and touchpad, but is far too big and heavy. This other one has everything they want, but the battery doesn't even last 4 hours. The prospective buyer and I both agree that there are way too many models with confusing names and model numbers, many of which aren't really very different from one another.

After half an hour of searching and discussing options, we find that there are no systems that meet the criteria everyone, and I mean *everyone*, seems to be looking for: $700 or less (usually they want lower

prices), around 4 pounds or less, attractive, good keyboard and touch pad, and powerful enough to do "everything" they want to do, including running tomorrow's apps well enough that they won't want to go through this process again real soon. And they still, for some reason that makes me bang my head against my desk, think they want an optical drive even though they can't come up with an example of why they'd need one.

That's when the question inevitably comes: "Well, is there anything coming out soon I should wait for?" Of *course* there is. There's always something better, just around the corner. That's why you haven't upgraded your laptop for four years. I tell them about those upcoming AMD "[Brazos](#)" chips that should end up in systems similar to today's netbooks, but offer more CPU and graphics power. I tell them about Intel's upcoming CPUs (code-named [Sandy Bridge](#)), which will offer better battery life and far better graphics and video performance than the typical Core i3 or [Core i5](#) based laptop of today, but probably won't be in the really tiny netbook-sized systems.

Buyer: When are those coming out?

Me: Early 2011. Like first quarter, probably. But I don't know exact models and how much they'll cost.

Buyer: Should I wait for those? I wanted something before the holidays...

Me: I think those chips are pretty cool, and worth it, but it doesn't mean the laptops will have a good screen, or keyboard, or touchpad... and something better is always right around the corner. At some point you have to put a stake in the ground a just buy whatever is closest to what you want.

How do these buying advice sessions end up? Again, it surprises me how often the situation repeats itself. Half the time, I see them with a system we looked at early in our search, a system they had considered too expensive. They'll say, in a long-winded and over-justifying way, "I decided it's worth paying more to get something I really like." The other half of the time, I see them toting around a new system that doesn't meet their criteria; it's bigger and heavier than they wanted and the battery doesn't last as long as they hoped for. "It was on sale at [Best Buy](#) for only $499!" they'll tell me. I'll spend the next several weeks listening to complaints about it.

Every time I go through this process, it reaffirms three major opinions of mine about the current laptop market:

1. The average person buying a laptop is on a budget, but it's often not quite as tight they say it is. Everyone would rather pay less, but they want *quality*.

2. People are confused by the dizzying array of models and the terrible product naming in the laptop market. This confusion causes some buyers to become paralyzed, putting off that laptop purchase to some indeterminate time in the future.

3. Laptop manufacturers make too many compromises in quality and performance to get to artificially low price points that many buyers don't really need to meet, no matter what they insist on at first. It's making people unhappy with the cheap laptop they bought last year.

Vocabularies:
Words   **Meaning**

_____   _____

_____   _____

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Source:
http://www.pcworld.com/article/212154/every_conversation_about_buying_laptops.html

Conversation Questions
Computers

- Are you computer literate?
- Are you connected to the Internet?
- Do you access the Internet with your computer?
- Can you access the Internet from your home?
- What is your favorite "news" site?
- What Internet sites do you visit regularly?
- Can your mother and father use a computer?
- Do you have a computer?
- Do you have a computer at work and at home?
- Do you have a laptop or a desktop computer? Do you have both?
- Do you use your computer when you do homework for school?
- Have you ever studied English using your computer?
- How many times have you upgraded your computer?
- How powerful is your computer?
- What company made your computer?
- What kind of computer do you have?
- What size is your computer screen?
    - What do you think is the best size to have?
- Where do you use your computer?
- Where in your room is your computer?
- Why did you buy your computer?
- Do you have a digital camera?
- Do you send photos by email?
- What kind of pictures do you take with your digital camera?
- Do you have a scanner?
- What kind of scanner do you have?
- Do you have a web page?
- What's the URL?
- When did you start it?
- How much time did it take to make?
- How much time do you spend keeping it updated?
- Do you know any computer programming languages?
- How many computer programming languages do you know?
- Which languages do you know?
- Which language do you use the most often?
- Do you read computer magazines?
- Which computer magazines do you read?
- Do you use a computer?
- Are you good at using a computer?
- Are you still using your first computer?

- Did you learn to use a computer in high school?
- Do you know how to type well?
- How often do you use a computer?
- What are some of your favorite computer games?
- What do you use a computer for?
- What operating system do you use?
- What software do you use the most often?
- When did you first start using a computer?
- Who taught you to use a computer?
- Do you use chat rooms? If so, what chat rooms do you use and who do you talk to?
- Do you use e mail?
- Do you use e mail every day?
- Do you write e mail in English?
- Have you ever sent an e mail to your teacher?
- How many e-mails do you get a day?
- How many e mails do you send a day?
- How many times a day do you access your e mail?
- What's your e mail address?
- How many e mail addresses do you have?
- Do you have a Facebook account?
- How often do you access it?
- How often do you update it.
- How many friends do you have?
- How many hours a day do you spend looking at it?
- Do you want a more powerful computer? If so, what computer do you want?
- Does your family have a computer?
- How fast can you type?
- Have you ever taken a course at school where you used a computer?
- Have you tried Mac-OS, Windows and Linux?
- How do you study English with your computer?
- How does email work?
- How many people in your family can use a computer?
- How much did your first computer cost? How much did you last computer cost?
- How much does it cost by buy a computer?
- What's the least expensive computer?
- What's the most expensive computer?
- How much does your Internet service provider cost?
- Which ISP do you use?
- If you could buy a new computer, what would you like to buy?
- If you had lots of money, what kind of computer system would you like to buy?
- What is the difference between software and hardware?
- Which do you like better, a laptop computer or a desktop computer?
- What is your favorite website?

- Do you ever visit English websites?
- Do you think our lives have been improved by computer technology?
- Think of a few examples of how computers have an educational or an entertainment value.
- Could you do without them?
- What is multimedia?
- What are the components and the element of multimedia?
- When did you first get a computer?
- What kind of computer was it?
- About how much did it cost?
- Do you still have it?
- Do you still use it?
- Do you remember the first time you used a computer or the Internet?
- What did you think about it?
- How long have there been personal computers in your country?
- When did the average person start using a computer?
- Can your parents operate a computer?
- How do they use their computer?
- Do you chat with your parents?
- What kind of computer do they use?
- Do they enjoy using their computer?
- Can your children use a computer?
- Do you think a computer can bring us happiness?
- Do you have a computer?
- Do you know any computer languages like C or C++?
- What is configuration of your PC?
- How often do you perform a backup?
- What kind of backup method do you use?
- What kind of backup media do you use?
- What are some good things about having a computer?
- What are some bad things about having a computer?
- Does having a computer make life more complicated or less complicated?
- What computer games have you played?
  Which are your favorites?
- Which do you think are not so interesting?
- Do you use chat rooms and instant messaging?
- Which ones do you use?
- Why do you use them?
- What are some things to think about when using them?
- Why can these be dangerous for you and your kids?
- What do you do when your computer doesn't work properly?
- Do you have more than one computer?
- Can you do everything you need to do when your computer is broken?
- Do you have a webpage?

- Did you make your own webpage?
- What is on this webpage?
- Why do you think people have webpages?
- What would you like to add to your webpage?
- Do you know what a blog is?
- Do you have one? Why/ why not?
- Why do people have blogs?
- What do you think about file sharing?
- On the Internet, you can say whatever you want. Is that true?
- Is it a good or a bad thing? Why?
- What is artificial intelligence?

Source:
http://iteslj.org/questions/computers.html