ESL LAB

Valentine's Day Speaking Pack

Seven low-prep speaking activities for February lessons with adults. Print one page, and the class is ready: compliments, a class survey, a day out on a budget, song bingo, stories, role-plays and a debate.

LEVEL	STUDENTS	GROUPING	TIME
A1 to C1	Adults and older teens	Pairs and groups	10 to 30 minutes each

What's inside, in the order of the blog post

1	**Compliment chain**	24 compliment cards and five ways to say thank you	**Page 2**
2	**Find a classmate who...**	Twelve lines to turn into questions, with follow-ups	**Page 3**
3	**A February 14 out for €50**	A menu of twelve plans with prices, and a planner	**Page 4**
4	**Love song bingo**	Two bingo cards for any love song, and talk questions	**Page 5**
5	**How did they meet?**	Sixteen story cards in four columns	**Page 6**
6	**February 14 role-plays**	Six A and B role cards	**Page 7**
7	**Valentine's Day debate**	Eight statements, a debate plan and a score sheet	**Page 8**

Pages 2, 6, 7 and 8 are cards: print one per pair or group and cut on the dashed lines. Pages 3, 4 and 5 are one per student.

Fine for every class

No activity asks students about their own love life. The stories are about invented people, the plans can be for friends or family, and the debate is about the day, not about anyone in the room. Single students, colleagues and mixed ages can all join in.

GIVING AN OPINION

I think ... because ...
In my country, ...
It depends on ...

SUGGESTING

How about ...ing?
Why don't we ...?
Let's ...

DISAGREEING POLITELY

I see your point, but ...
I'm not sure about that.
That's true, however ...

ACTIVITY 1

Compliment chain

Cut out the cards and put them face down. Take a card, finish the sentence for the student next to you and say it. Your partner thanks you with a phrase from the box, then takes the next card for the next student. Compliment what people do, say and bring, not how they look.

SAY THANK YOU

- Thank you, that's really kind.
- Thanks! That made my day.
- That means a lot. Thank you.
- Thanks, I'm glad you think so.
- Really? Thank you! You're great at ... too.

WHAT YOU DO You're really good at ...	WHAT YOU SAY You ask great questions about ...	WHAT YOU BRING This class is more fun because you ...
WHAT YOU DO You always ... before anyone else.	WHAT YOU SAY Your idea about ... was really smart.	WHAT YOU BRING You bring great energy when ...
WHAT YOU DO You make ... look easy.	WHAT YOU SAY You always make me laugh when ...	WHAT YOU BRING You have great taste in ...
WHAT YOU DO Thanks for always ...	WHAT YOU SAY I love the way you explain ...	WHAT YOU BRING You'd be a great teacher of ...
WHAT YOU DO You're the best person to ask about ...	WHAT YOU SAY You tell the best stories about ...	WHAT YOU BRING You're a great partner because ...
WHAT YOU DO You're so patient when ...	WHAT YOU SAY Your English sounds really natural when you ...	WHAT YOU BRING You always notice when ...
WHAT YOU DO I learned ... from you.	WHAT YOU SAY I still remember what you said about ...	WHAT YOU BRING Your ... always makes my day.
WHAT YOU DO I'd love to have you on my team because ...	WHAT YOU SAY You always say something kind when ...	WHAT YOU BRING I'm always happy to see you because ...

ACTIVITY 2

Find a classmate who...

Turn each line into a question and ask your classmates: *has bought* becomes *Have you bought ...?* When a classmate says yes, write their name and ask one more question: *When? Why? What was it?* Write the answer in a few words. Working alone? Answer every question about yourself.

	FIND A CLASSMATE WHO...	NAME	ONE MORE QUESTION: THE ANSWER
1	Find a classmate who **has bought chocolate this week**.		
2	Find a classmate who **prefers salty snacks to sweets**.		
3	Find a classmate who **knows all the words to a love song**.		
4	Find a classmate who **has sent a card by post this year**.		
5	Find a classmate who **has a friend they've known for 20 years**.		
6	Find a classmate who **thinks February 14 is just a normal day**.		
7	Find a classmate who **can cook a three-course dinner**.		
8	Find a classmate who **has been to a wedding in the last two years**.		
9	Find a classmate who **has given flowers to a friend or a relative**.		
10	Find a classmate who **would rather get a book than chocolates**.		
11	Find a classmate who **can say "I love you" in three languages**.		
12	Find a classmate who **keeps old cards or letters at home**.		

Tell the class

Two people in our class **have** sent a card by post this year. **Nobody** can say "I love you" in three languages.

Ana **has** a friend she has known for 20 years. They met at school.

ACTIVITY 3

A February 14 out for €50

You have €50 for a day out on February 14 for two people. First choose who the day is for. Then pick from the menu with your partner and agree on a plan. You can't go over €50. Working alone? Plan the day and write three sentences about why it's perfect.

THE DAY IS FOR ◯ two friends ◯ two colleagues ◯ you and a relative ◯ a couple ◯ you, on your own

Breakfast at a café MORNING **€12 per person**	Walk and coffee in the park ANY TIME **€4 per person**	Museum, with a guided tour AFTERNOON **€8 per person**
Board game café, 2 hours AFTERNOON **€6 per person**	Ice skating, skates included AFTERNOON **€10 per person**	Bowling, one game EVENING **€7 per person**
Pasta cooking class EVENING **€25 per person**	Picnic food from the market ANY TIME **€15 for two**	Cinema EVENING **€9 per person**
Pizza dinner EVENING **€14 per person**	Karaoke room, 2 hours EVENING **€30 per room**	Escape room EVENING **€60 per group**

Our plan

WHEN	WHAT WE DO	COST
Morning		
Afternoon		
Evening		
Total		**€**

Agree on a plan

How about going ice skating? Why don't we have a picnic? Let's skip the escape room. That's too expensive. If we take the picnic, we'll have €20 left. OK, deal!

ACTIVITY 4

Love song bingo

Listen to a love song your teacher plays, or one you choose on your phone. Cross out each word when you hear it. A full line across, down or corner to corner wins: shout **Bingo!** Cut the page in half so Student A and Student B have different cards. Play two or three songs.

CARD A

love	heart	baby	forever
night	dance	eyes	dream
hold	cry	need	never
feel	home	together	stay

CARD B

love	heart	tonight	always
kiss	fire	light	crazy
alone	mine	girl	boy
eyes	dream	run	hands

After each song

THE SONG SOUNDS happy · sad · hopeful · lonely · angry · romantic · nostalgic · excited

1. How does the singer feel? Which words tell you?
2. Who is the singer talking to? What happened between them?
3. Would you dance to it, cry to it or skip it? Why?
4. Where would you play this song: a wedding, a party, a long drive?
5. Which love song from your country should the class hear next?

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ACTIVITY 5

How did they meet?

Cut out the cards and make four piles. Take one card from each pile. Together, tell the story of how two people met: best friends, business partners or a couple, you decide. Give them names. Each student adds one sentence at a time. Working alone? Write the story in eight sentences.

WHERE	SOMETHING	A PROBLEM	THE ENDING
WHERE 1 on a night bus	SOMETHING 1 a lost phone	A PROBLEM 1 the train was canceled	THE ENDING 1 they started a business together
WHERE 2 at a cooking class	SOMETHING 2 the wrong coffee order	A PROBLEM 2 the lights went out	THE ENDING 2 they're still best friends 20 years later
WHERE 3 in a supermarket queue	SOMETHING 3 a dog on a very long leash	A PROBLEM 3 it started to rain very hard	THE ENDING 3 they got married five years later
WHERE 4 at a friend's wedding	SOMETHING 4 the last umbrella in the shop	A PROBLEM 4 they both wanted the last table	THE ENDING 4 they never saw each other again

Set the scene, then tell what happened

Past continuous for the background: *Mia **was waiting** for the night bus. It **was raining**.*

Past simple for what happened: *A dog on a very long leash **ran** around her legs, and she **fell** over. Its owner, Leo, **helped** her up.*

Story words: *at first, suddenly, then, after that, in the end*

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ACTIVITY 6

February 14 role-plays

Cut out the cards. Fold each card down the middle so Student A and Student B read only their own half. Take one minute to plan, then act it out for three minutes. Use the phrases at the bottom of the card. Swap roles, or take a new card.

1 · The full restaurant

STUDENT A

Call a restaurant and book a table for four friends on February 14, at 8 pm. You really want this restaurant.

STUDENT B

You work at the restaurant. You are full from 7 to 10 pm. Offer 5:30 pm, a table at the bar or February 15.

I'd like to book a table for … · I'm afraid we're full. · Could you do … instead?

2 · The sweater that doesn't fit

STUDENT A

A friend gave you a sweater for February 14. It's two sizes too big and you have no receipt. You want your money back.

STUDENT B

You work in the shop. Without a receipt, you can't give money back, but you can change the size or give a gift card.

I'd like to return this. · Do you have the receipt? · What I can do is …

3 · No, thank you

STUDENT A

Invite your colleague to the team's karaoke night on February 14. You think it will be great fun.

STUDENT B

You don't want to go. Say no kindly, give a reason and suggest something else.

It sounds fun, but … · Thanks for asking, but … · How about … instead?

4 · Hearts all over the office

STUDENT A

You want to decorate the office with hearts and give everyone a chocolate on February 14.

STUDENT B

You think hearts at work are too much. Agree with your colleague on one small thing you can both live with.

Why don't we …? · I see your point, but … · OK, let's meet halfway.

5 · The flower shop

STUDENT A

You want a bunch of red roses for your grandmother. The price is three times what it was last week.

STUDENT B

You work in the flower shop. Explain why roses cost more this week and suggest two other flowers.

How much are …? · That's a lot more than … · These are just as nice and …

6 · The forgotten birthday

STUDENT A

Your best friend's birthday is on February 14, and every year it gets lost in Valentine's Day. Ask your friend's roommate to help you plan a surprise.

STUDENT B

You are the roommate. You want to help, but you have ideas of your own and a small budget.

What if we …? · They'd love … · That won't work because …

ACTIVITY 7

Valentine's Day debate

Take a statement card. One team agrees, the other disagrees, whatever they really think. Teams get five minutes to plan, then follow the four steps. The rest of the class scores each team from 1 to 3. Working alone? Choose a statement and write a paragraph for each side.

STATEMENT 1
Valentine's Day should be a public holiday.

STATEMENT 2
Valentine's Day should be for friends, not only couples.

STATEMENT 3
Companies should not celebrate Valentine's Day at work.

STATEMENT 4
Schools should not let children send Valentine's cards in class.

STATEMENT 5
Gifts are a waste of money. Give your time instead.

STATEMENT 6
Valentine's Day is bad for the planet.

STATEMENT 7
Valentine's Day is more fun when you're single.

STATEMENT 8
Couples who have been together for years can skip Valentine's Day.

1 · OPEN	2 · GIVE REASONS	3 · ANSWER BACK	4 · CLOSE
We believe that …	Companies should …	You said …, but …	To sum up, …
Our team thinks …	because …	That's true, however …	That's why we think …
because …	It could …	What about …?	
	People might …		

SCORE FROM 1 TO 3	TEAM FOR	TEAM AGAINST
The best reason		
The best example		
The best answer back		
Total		