

## Talking cats

**Level:** Upper Intermediate

**Aim:** Students create and act out a dialogue to practise conversational skills.

**Functional language:** This will depend on the chosen topic of conversation.

**Preparation:**

This activity centres around the following three YouTube video clips:

- Clip 1: [The two talking cats](#)
- Clip 2: [First translation](#)
- Clip 3: [Second translation](#)

In preparation for the activity, the teacher should set up a computer with online access and decide how the clip is to be displayed (on the computer screen, projected onto a whiteboard, etc).

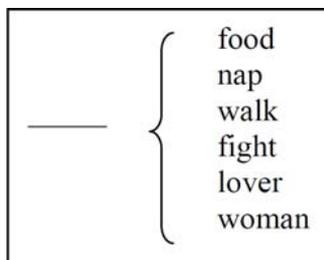
**Tip:** Activities that make use of online video can go wrong when connections are bad. In order to avoid problems, prepare for this activity by opening the YouTube clips beforehand and allowing them to download in full before playing them to your students. (You will know when a clip has downloaded when the red bar underneath the picture has progressed all the way to the right-hand side.)



You will also need to make a copy of the **Talking cats Worksheet** for each student.

**Procedure:**

1. Write the following on the board and ask if anyone can identify the missing collocate (Answer: cat). Ask your students if they can explain the resulting terms.



2. Find out if there are any cat lovers or animal lovers in the class. Ask if they ever talk to their pets. If they do, find out what sort of things they say and how their pets respond.

3. Show your students Clip 1 (the two talking cats).

4. Put your students into pairs and ask them to make a list of as many things as possible that the cats could be talking about. Conduct a feedback session with the whole class. Also see table below.

5. Give out copies of the Worksheet and ask your students to work in pairs to complete it. Offer your students assistance while they carry out the task.

6. Tell your students that they are going to perform their dialogues for the rest of the class. Give them a few minutes to practise and prepare.

7. Ask for a pair of volunteers to sit beside the computer screen and provide the cats' voices as you replay the video clip with the sound turned down. For each dialogue, check for errors and offer corrections afterwards.

**NB:** Do not let your students worry too much about synchronising their voices with the cats' silent meows. This will be very difficult and potentially distracting.

8. Once everyone has performed their dialogue, let your students compare their work with the dialogues in clips 2 and 3.

**NB:** The talking cats clip can be used to revise or strengthen the language that is met in a number of units from *Straightforward* Upper Intermediate. For example, following Unit 1C, your students' task could be to write a dialogue between the cats in which they gossip about their neighbours. Some other units which could be used:

- Talking about family and friends (Unit 1A)
- Talking about your neighbours (Unit 1C)
- Solving problems in a shared flat (Unit 3A)
- Talking about your favourite drinks (Unit 6C)
- Talking about TV (Unit 9B) [NB: The cats in the clip look like they might be watching TV]
- Talking about pets and animals (Unit 10A)
- Describing a favourite possession (Unit 11A)