

Adult ESL Travel Conversation Practice

Practice the travel conversations that help people ask, clarify, and confirm: find a platform, follow directions, check a hotel reservation, or explain a change of plan. These 24 original role-play cards use fictional routes and schedules so learners can focus on English rather than current travel information.

Host guide / A4 / Adult English learners in pairs or groups of three; teacher or facilitator optional / 25–45 minutes, depending on the number of cards and role swaps

Read the guide privately first if this activity has hidden answers. Print single-sided at Actual size / 100%. Cut only sheets marked CARDS. Keep answer keys with the host.

What you need

- Printed or screen-displayed role-play cards.
- Optional blank city map, fictional transit timetable, or hotel booking note.
- Paper and pens for writing a route or repeating key details.

How to run it

1. Choose two to four cards and assign the traveler and staff, host, or travel-companion roles. Let learners pass on a scenario they do not want to perform.
2. Give partners different information. One person should have a goal; the other should hold a route, schedule, booking, or fictional policy note.
3. Pre-teach a few phrases for asking directions, requesting repetition, and confirming details. Model one short exchange without reading a full script.
4. Give learners one minute to plan key words and check unfamiliar place names.
5. Run the role-play for three to five minutes. The traveler should finish by repeating the route, time, or agreed next step.
6. Swap roles or change one detail, such as the destination or departure time, and repeat.
7. Review whether the information was understood. Ask learners which phrase helped them repair a misunderstanding.

Useful language for travel situations

Practice these expressions before the role-play, then leave them visible as a support menu. The goal is to help learners ask for information and confirm what they heard, especially when a place name or number is unfamiliar.

- Directions: "Could you tell me how to get to ____?" "Is it near ____?" "Should I turn left or right at ____?"
- Transit: "Does this train stop at ____?" "Which platform does the fictional timetable show?" "Could you repeat the stop name?"
- Hotel: "I have a reservation under ____." "Could you check the dates on this booking note?" "What time should I leave the room in this fictional scenario?"
- Repair: "Sorry, I didn't catch the last part." "Let me repeat that back." "Do you mean the blue line or the green line?"
- Planning: "We have time for one more stop." "Would you rather visit ____ or ____?" "Let's agree on a meeting place."

Make fictional maps and schedules clear

A travel role-play works best when its information is visible and consistent. If you add a map, use a small invented place with a few landmarks, such as a station, library, museum, and square. If you add a timetable, label it “practice schedule” and keep every time the same on the role card and answer key.

For a beginner group, provide the route as a sequence of three steps and ask the traveler to repeat it. For a more open task, give the information holder two possible routes and one constraint, then have the traveler ask questions before choosing. These are teaching adaptations, not official CEFR placements.

- Simplify: underline the destination and use one route option.
- Extend: add a missed connection, a changed meeting point, or a request to explain the route a second way.
- For a real journey, check current operator information separately; never use an invented practice schedule.

Facilitator note

Travel rules, schedules, fares, and hotel terms can change by place and provider. Keep all in-card details explicitly fictional, and do not ask learners to share passport, immigration, booking, or personal safety information. If learners adapt a prompt for an actual trip, they should verify current details with the relevant provider or authority.

- Offer a low-pressure observer role for anyone who prefers not to perform.
- Give feedback on clarity and confirmation questions rather than on accent or speed.

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N_ESL_TRAVEL-001 / directions

Traveler A wants to reach the Harbor Museum from Central Station. Staff B has a fictional route note: take the blue line two stops to Dock Square, exit north, and walk past the library. Ask for directions and repeat the route in order.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-002 / transit information

Traveler A is unsure which platform serves Pine Street. Staff B has a practice board showing the green line at Platform 2 and the blue line at Platform 4. Ask for the correct platform and confirm the line color.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-003 / bus route

Traveler A wants to know whether the next fictional bus stops near the art museum. Driver B has a route card listing Market Square, River Park, and Art Museum. Ask about the stop and repeat the landmark where you will get off.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-004 / missed connection

Traveler A missed a fictional train departure by one minute. Information desk B has a practice timetable with another train later and a transfer option. Explain what happened, ask about both choices, and select one.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-005 / clarification

Traveler A hears an unclear announcement about a platform change. Staff B repeats the invented change: the train to Lakeview now leaves from Platform 5. Ask the speaker to repeat the destination and confirm the new platform.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-006 / hotel checkin

Traveler A arrives at a hotel with a fictional booking under the name Morgan Lee for two nights. Receptionist B has a list with one similar name and different dates. Spell the name, state the dates, and ask the receptionist to check.

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N_ESL_TRAVEL-007 / hotel service

Traveler A sees a room type on a fictional confirmation that differs from the room listed at check-in. Receptionist B checks a practice record. Explain the mismatch and ask what options are available in this scenario.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-008 / hotel service

Traveler A wants to ask for a later checkout in a fictional hotel. Receptionist B has a practice note with two possible times, one available and one unavailable. Ask about the options and repeat the agreed time.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-009 / directions

Traveler A needs directions from the hotel to the ferry terminal. Receptionist B has a map note: walk to Cedar Square, take the eastbound tram three stops, then follow signs to Pier 2. Ask for the route and summarize it.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-010 / visitor information

Traveler A is at a visitor-information desk and has one free afternoon. Staff B has three fictional options: a museum, a riverside walk, and a public garden. Ask about travel time and choose one activity.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-011 / meeting point

Traveler A cannot find the meeting point for a walking tour. Tour host B has a practice note: meet beside the clock at Union Square, not at the station entrance. Ask for a landmark and confirm the time.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-012 / telephone booking

Traveler A is calling a hotel to change a fictional arrival time from 4:00 to 6:00. Staff B has the booking note and asks for the guest name. State the new time and ask the other person to repeat it.

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N_ESL_TRAVEL-013 / hotel checkout

Traveler A is checking out and sees an unfamiliar line on a fictional practice bill. Receptionist B can explain that the line is a made-up room-service charge. Ask what it refers to and confirm the corrected practice total.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-014 / lost item

Traveler A left a scarf in a fictional hotel lobby. Staff B works at the front desk and has a found-items note with two descriptions. Describe the scarf and answer questions that help identify it.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-015 / itinerary planning

Traveler A and companion B have two hours before a fictional train. One wants a quiet café; the other wants to see a nearby gallery. Compare the two options using a made-up map and agree on a meeting time.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-016 / directions

Traveler A needs to ask a driver to stop near a particular fictional landmark, Green Market. Driver B is unsure which Green Market is meant. Spell the name, describe the cross street on the practice map, and confirm the stop.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-017 / transit information

Traveler A is unsure whether to take the orange or purple line to North Hall. Staff B has a practice route card: orange requires one transfer; purple is direct but leaves later. Ask about the trade-off and choose.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-018 / meeting point

Traveler A's companion has walked ahead and the group needs a new meeting point. Companion B suggests the fountain outside the fictional city library. Ask for a clear landmark and repeat the meeting time.

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N_ESL_TRAVEL-019 / directions

Traveler A is at a train station and needs to find an elevator shown on a fictional station map. Staff B has a route note: use the west entrance, follow the signs to the lower hall, then turn right. Ask for the route and repeat it.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-020 / visitor information

Traveler A wants to ask whether a fictional museum is open on the group's planned day. Visitor-center staff B has a practice schedule showing Monday closed and Tuesday open from 10 to 4. Ask for the day and hours, then confirm.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-021 / lost item

Traveler A has a practice luggage tag and needs to report a missing suitcase at a fictional hotel desk. Staff B asks for color, size, and one identifying feature. Describe the bag and write down the next step.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-022 / telephone clarification

Traveler A is on the phone with a host and cannot understand the building entrance instructions. Host B explains: enter at the courtyard gate, take the stairs to level two, and ring apartment 8. Ask for repetition and summarize.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-023 / itinerary planning

Traveler A and companion B need to revise a fictional day plan because rain has started. Their practice cards list an indoor museum and an outdoor garden. Discuss opening times from the cards and choose a new order.

N_ESL_TRAVEL-024 / directions

Traveler A asks a transit employee for a step-free route shown on a fictional map. Staff B has two routes: one includes stairs and one uses an elevator and takes longer. Ask for the second route and confirm each turn.

Hosting questions

Are the routes and schedules real?

No. They are invented for speaking practice. Do not use them to plan an actual journey.

Can beginners use these travel cards?

Yes. Start with one route, provide the phrase bank, and let learners repeat the directions back. More confident speakers can compare two options.

Do these cards explain visa, immigration, or transport rules?

No. They are English practice activities, not official travel guidance. Verify real requirements with the responsible provider or authority.

Can the activity work with three learners?

Yes. One learner can take the traveler role, one can provide information, and one can observe or act as a travel companion, then rotate.

Should students memorize the sample phrases?

No. The phrases are scaffolds. Encourage learners to use them as needed and add their own questions.

References

British Council TeachingEnglish adult-oriented role-play uses role cards for asking for and giving directions, a simple map, question preparation, repetition, and role swaps; all travel scenarios here are original.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-adults/activities/pre-intermediate-a2/new-student-role-play>

British Council TeachingEnglish role-play guidance covers preparing topic language, modeling, pair work, swapping roles, and monitoring; referenced for facilitation structure only.

<https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/classroom/activities/role-play-2>

Original AI-assisted resource with AI editorial review. Independent human playtesting and physical printing have not been completed. Answer, listen, or pass.