

# Chapter 1: Foundations

What do these pictures have in common?





## Conversations: Foundations

1. What IS a foundation?
2. In addition to buildings, what other things have foundations?
3. What are the purposes of a foundation?
4. What influences the type of foundation someone builds?
5. Before starting to construct a foundation, what must be done?
6. Do any of these steps apply to foundations other than for a building? How?



## Social Situations: Meeting People

In your new surroundings you will meet many people. What should you say when someone introduces you to a stranger? How can you avoid embarrassment?

1. Introductions
  - a. What have you noticed about the nature of introductions? Are they formal or informal? Give examples and practice both styles.
  - b. Who is mentioned first in the introduction? Is this consistent? Is it important?
  - c. How does this compare/contrast with introductions in your native language?
2. Small Talk
  - a. Most westerners (Americans, anyway) seem to spend a lot of time with “small talk:” subjects that do not seem important.  
What subjects have you noticed usually are part of this small talk?
  - b. Is this a common practice in your language?
  - c. Do you think it is useful or a waste of time? Why?
3. Subjects to avoid  
Train yourself to notice what subjects are taboo (not appropriate) for introductory conversations. List some below. Then try to avoid them—at least until you know someone fairly well.



## Pronunciation

1. Reductions: Contractions are an integral part of English speech. Whether or not you like them, you must learn to understand them; and if you want to sound like a native English speaker, incorporate contractions into your own speech. Here are a few basic contractions to master.

a. Simple present of verb to be

<u>Singular</u>		<u>Plural</u>	
I	I'm	we	we're
you	you're	you	you're
he	he's	they	they're
she	she's		
it	it's		

### Negative:

I am not	I'm not	I'm not	we are not	we're not	we aren't
you are not	you're not	you aren't	you are not	you're not	you aren't
he is not	he's not	he isn't	they are not	they're not	they aren't
she is not	she's not	she isn't			
it is not	it's not	it isn't			

Get with a partner and practice listening to and saying these basic contractions.

b. A name followed by is:

When a name is followed by the verb *is*, the *i* in *is* is dropped and the *z* sound is added to the name. Examples:

Brad's a hard worker.

Sue's a second grade teacher.

Kenji's a well known scholar.

Keeko's a cheerful person.

Read these sentences aloud, concentrating on the reduction. Then compose some Practice sentences of your own.

## 2. Pronunciation Problems

There are many sounds in the English language that are typically difficult for language learners to master. Listen as your teacher says each word, then repeat it. Find a partner and practice these lists. You may not conquer these troublesome sounds immediately, but if you work on them, you can improve your speaking skills.

**t/th**

ten	then
taught	thought
tan	than
tease	these
toes	those
tie	thigh
tin	thin

**p/f**

pat	fat
pad	fad
pill	fill
pony	phony
cap	calf
paint	faint
pig	fig



**Perception: Idioms, phrasals, culture clues**

1. Listen to the following dialogue and underline any idioms or phrases that are unfamiliar to you.

**Sam:** I have a problem and I really need your opinion.

**Brad:** Fire away! I have time to listen.

**Sam:** Well, as CEO of “Tons of Tools,” I’m very concerned about some of our employees. They have little interest in developing their “people skills,” especially with internationals. I’ve usually hit it off well with my overseas contacts, but the others seem totally ignorant of proper dealings with people from different cultures. I feel like I’m hitting my head against a brick wall!

**Brad:** Sam, keep in mind that people from small towns have limited contact with people of diverse cultural backgrounds. So this isn’t surprising. Maybe you could consider writing a handout, “The Nuts and Bolts of International Business Dealings,” or something like that.

**Sam:** I’ve been hammering away at attitude changes, but it hasn’t helped much. Maybe I need to be more direct—shake my employees to their foundations! Maybe I should propose a mandatory trip overseas or a mandatory course on cross-cultural communication. These people are SO ethnocentric!

**Brad:** Do you ever conduct in-service training? Perhaps that would be more practical than sending each person overseas. If you start with your own experiences and build on your success, maybe you can hammer home the importance of respect and awareness of cultural differences in business dealings.

**Sam:** In-service training! You hit the nail on the head! That’s a great idea! If we start there and build cultural awareness into our monthly team meetings, maybe we can hammer some sense into these guys.

**Brad:** If “Tons of Tools” plans to build bridges with overseas suppliers, you have to build up personal knowledge and awareness among your employees. Even though they might not travel themselves, seeing the big picture of the company’s future might make them more receptive.

Who knows when some big shot from China or elsewhere might walk through your doors? The employees need to become global thinkers instead of small-townners.

**Sam:** Thanks for your input. I think we’re onto something here!

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2. New expressions: What do you think these might mean? How can you use them in your own conversations?

a. fire away

b. hit it off

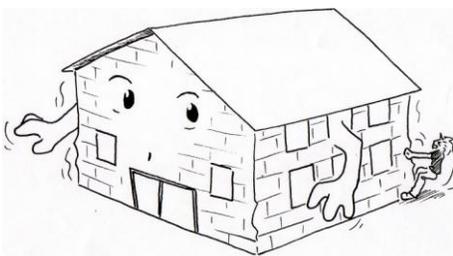
c. hitting my head against a brick wall



d. the nuts and bolts of...



e. hammer away at



f. shake something to its foundations

g. hammer home

h. hit the nail on the head

I hammer some sense into





### 3. Culture Clues: Individualism and equality

The history of the United States provides a basis for understanding some of the cultural patterns that are woven into the fabric of American lives. Many of the first European settlers were part of groups born of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. They firmly supported the concepts of individual responsibility to God, freedom of Conscience, and the equality of all humans, though they did not necessarily follow those teachings consistently.



Individualism and equality contrasted with the presence of a ruling class and a working class in most countries. Rugged individualism formed part of the young country's strength and enabled people to dare, to risk, and to attempt otherwise unheard of tasks. Robert Fulton's Erie Canal in New York State is an example.

Often today in America, the rights of individuals seem to be more important than family or parental input in decision-making. "I have a right," in its extreme, sometimes results in self-centeredness, egotism, and ethnocentrism.

1. If you've watched any TV or movie police stories, you've probably seen an officer "reading rights" to a suspect being arrested. The officer must read this Miranda warning:

"You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to speak to an attorney, and to have an attorney present during any questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be provided for you at government expense."

- a. Do you think this is fair? Why or why not?
- b. Have you ever had a confrontation with the law here? What happened?

2. In the US Declaration of Independence are these words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

- a. As you have observed life here, would you say that you've seen equality or inequality most often? In what situations?
- b. Look for cartoons about individualism or equality and share them in our next class.
- c. Create a skit showing how people treat each other equally—or unequally.



## Listening and Bible Knowledge

This section begins tips on listening effectively to English as well as an overview of the Bible, the book that has tremendously influenced western culture.

1. Listening: Non-native speakers often complain about the speed at which others speak. Here are some suggestions on overcoming this bump along your language road.
  - a. Politely tell the speaker that English is not your first language and ask the person to speak more slowly.
  - b. Try to focus on the content words, not the fillers. What are some fillers that you often hear?
2. Introduction to the Bible: Listen to the CD or to your teacher reading an article entitled “The Bible: Foundation for Christian Belief.” Focus on content words and main concepts rather than details. If it helps, take notes while listening. Obviously you won’t be able to do this in a social situation, but it may help train your ear to listen for the most important ideas in a conversation, a song, or a video.

### The Bible: Foundation for Christianity

“The familiar observation that the *Bible* is the best-selling book of all time obscures a more startling fact: The *Bible* is the best-selling book of the year, every year.” ([www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/12/18/061218fa\\_fact1](http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/12/18/061218fa_fact1)) Why is it that a book written centuries ago bears this distinction? Why do men, women, and children from every nation and walk of life read *this* book? Why is its message the foundation of Christian thought and practice?

The *Bible*, also called *The Holy Bible*, is a unique book. Someone has stated, “The Bible is not such a book as man would write if he could, or could write if he would.” It is a compilation of writings by more than 40 human writers, written in three languages on three continents over 1600 years. Despite these factors, its message is a unified presentation of God, creation, man, sin, history, deliverance, and future events. It explains God as creator, giver and preserver of life; one who is all powerful and all knowing; one whose eyes see everything. He is holy and perfect in every way.

The *Bible* also explains humans as created perfect; yet now he is selfish, sinful, and separated from God. It tells of God’s mercy and grace in providing a way to re-establish man’s relationship to God through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, God’s promised deliverer and savior.

The message of the *Bible* has transformed lives and transcended culture. It has changed men like John Newton from slave trader to writer of “Amazing Grace.” It has influenced Parliamentarian William Wilberforce to put his career in jeopardy to battle England’s slave trade. It has moved men like William Carey, Hudson Taylor, and Adoniram Judson from comfortable lives to lives of simplicity, danger, and sacrifice on faraway continents so that others could learn the Bible’s message and its transforming power.

History and science have affirmed the Bible’s accuracy and veracity. Numberless followers of its teaching have given their lives to preserve its very existence. Governments have banned it, burned it, jailed its followers, and even burned *them*. Yet the Bible has survived and thrived through the centuries. It has inspired poets, musicians, and artists whose works reflect its message.

Individuals have found within its pages wisdom for daily life, encouragement in times of distress, guidance for personal behavior. The Bible offers hope, peace, forgiveness, and a vital relationship with the Creator God. The Bible transcends cultures, time, gender, economic status. It remains the best seller because it truly transforms lives. Is it not worth reading?



**Discussion:** Think about the article’s content as you discuss these questions.

1. In what ways is the Bible a unique book?
2. How has it influenced lives? Name some people mentioned in the article.
3. In what ways has the Bible been attacked? Have these attacks succeeded?



## Assignment

Choose at least one of the following and be prepared to share in class.

1. Write questions you have about “The Bible: Foundation for Christianity.”
2. In your country, is the Bible commonly accepted as a holy book? Why or why not? Is there another book that strongly influences your culture?
3. Select one of the men mentioned in the article and research his life and contribution to society. Write a summary to share in class.

4. Watch the movie (DVD) "Amazing Grace" and note how the Bible influenced William Wilberforce's driving life passion.
5. Have *you* ever read the Bible?  
What are your reactions to it?  
Would you be interested in studying it in greater detail?
6. Look for a song about the Bible and bring a copy to class. If you are able, plan to sing it to or with the class.
7. Someone wrote, "Individualism can be seen as a gift or a curse, depending on the context in which it occurs." In your opinion, when can it be a curse, and when can it be a gift?
8. Write an essay comparing and contrasting individualism and equality in the USA with that in your home country.
9. Draw a cartoon or picture depicting the concepts of individuality and/or equality. Prepare to share it with the class.