



Conversation Starters

Cut out these conversation starters and place them in a container to make your own conversation jar!

Cut Line ✂

What's something you couldn't do when you were younger that you can do now?

If you had superpowers, what would they be and how would you use them to help people?

What's one fun thing you hope to do in the next year?

Who is your favorite character from a book, movie, or TV show?

If you could be an animal, what would you want to be? Why?

If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you want to live? Why?

If you could have a character from a book or movie as a best friend, who would it be? Why?

What are three things that you're good at doing that took a lot of hard work and practice?

What is the greatest song ever written and why?

Do you have a favorite piece of clothing? What makes it special?

What is your favorite season? What do you like about it?

If you were a season, which season would you be and why?

Tell the story about how you got your name.

What does it mean to be brave?

What do you love most about summer?

What is your favorite type of weather?

Who is the funniest person you know?

Do you think it's possible to change? How have you changed over the years?

"After being in Harry Potter, I believe a bit more in magic than I did before," said the actor who played Ron Weasley. Do you believe in magic? Explain your answer.

Do you think it's possible to change the world? Why or why not?

What do you think are the ideal characteristics for a life partner or spouse?

How does someone act when they are "in love"? (You can use a real person or a book/movie character as an example).

Steven Spielberg said, "All of us every single year, we're a different person. I don't think we're the same person all our lives." Do you agree?



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Who is/was your favorite teacher? Why?

If you were principal of your school, would you change anything? What?

Would you rather go to your school, or Hogwarts. Why?

Albert Camus said, "In the depth of winter, I learned that there was in me an invincible summer." What do you think he meant?

Are you a "summer" person? If not, what season do you think best represents you?

What is your favorite summer food to eat?

What was your favorite thing you did this summer? Why was it your favorite?

Why do we celebrate the 4th of July?
What is your favorite part of the holiday?

What do you think about rules? Do you think they're important? What are some rules you have in your home or at school?

Do you think you have too much freedom, or not enough?

Do you feel free to be yourself?

If you could change one thing about your family or about school, what would it be?

In Green Eggs and Ham, Sam-I-am refuses to try green eggs and ham. Then he does and he likes them. Has this ever happened to you?

Do you have a favorite movie, book or song that deals with change? Why is this your favorite?

Maya Angelou once said, "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." What do you think she meant by this? Have you ever had to do this?

Margaret Mead said, "Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For, indeed, that's all who ever have." Can you give an example of this from your lifetime?

"As soon as you get over caring what people think, you can have a nice time," said Lara Flynn Boyle. Do you care what other people think? In what ways?

Name three springtime activities that make you happy.

What will you miss most about winter?

One of the Beatles' most famous songs is "All You Need is Love." Do you think that's true? What other necessities might you throw in there?

Do you have a favorite love story? Is it from a book, movie or real life? Talk about it.



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Who or what exemplifies the meaning of “love” to you?

Do you find it easy to say I love you? Are there times when it’s harder than others?

What personality traits did you get from each of your parents?

“I’m content to stand on tradition. I’m even more content to wipe my feet on it,” said author Aaron Allston. Have you ever felt that way?

When is it especially important to say ‘thank you?’ Do you notice when people thank you, or forget to thank you?

What is your favorite thing to do? Why? How would you feel if you couldn’t do it anymore?

Talk about two things for which you felt thankful or grateful for today.

Who is your favorite storybook character? What do you imagine he or she feels thankful for?

Javier Bardem said, “I think we are living in selfish times...we live in the so-called ‘first world,’ and we may be first in a lot of things like technology, but we are behind in empathy.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

“Don’t judge a man until you have walked a mile in his shoes.” What does that phrase mean?

Choose your favorite book or movie character and explain how they feel. How does he or she show empathy?

What is your favorite thing to do outside?

Talk about a time when your adaptability or open-mindedness helped you in a situation.

In general, do you think we as a society are more or less tolerant toward one another than we used to be? Why or why not?

What does ‘open-minded’ mean? Do you know someone who is open-minded?

“A person’s a person no matter how small...” writes Dr. Seuss in Horton Hears a Who. What do you think he means by that?

How do you think the way we demonstrate loyalty changes as we get older?

When athletes change teams or people change jobs and go to work for a competitor, is that disloyal? Why or why not?

At this point in life, do you believe life is or isn’t fair?



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How do you feel right now? What made you feel this way?

We use lots of words that aren't in the dictionary. What's your favorite made up or slang word?

What is the greatest song ever written?

What is the best compliment you've ever received?

What is the one thing you couldn't live without?

What are the "7 wonders of the world"? Do you agree with them? What would YOU say were the 7 wonders of the world?

How would you describe yourself to someone who has never met you?

Where in the world do you feel the most comfortable?

What is your favorite childhood memory?

Do you have a favorite pair of shoes? What makes it so special?

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Did anyone read anything today that was surprising, upsetting or interesting?

Can you think of a time when you were responsible for doing something and didn't do it? What happened? How did the other people involved feel and how did you feel?

What was your favorite new story from this year?

What school subject do you think helps you the most in everyday life?

What's the most fun summer trip you've ever taken?

Lots of people picnic on public beaches and in public parks. Why do we have public spaces?

What's something you love to do and haven't done in a while because you were too busy?

Have you ever missed a chance to do the right thing because you were rushing? What was it?

Give an example of a time you saw a friend, family member or stranger being treated unfairly. What did you do?

Think of a time life didn't work out how you expected. How did you respond? Would you respond differently now?

What are 3 things that you're good at doing that took a lot of hard work and practice?



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What are some things you count on other people to do for you? What would happen if they stopped doing those things?

What was the most surprising thing that happened to you this year?

What was your favorite thing that you learned this year (either in school or outside of it)?

What subject are you taking that you wish you could do more of?

During what part of your day do you feel most anxious and rushed? How could we change that?

Where do you feel most relaxed?

What is your favorite piece of art?

What is your favorite snack food?

What is your favorite way to travel? (Bike, car, on foot, plane, train, etc)

How do you define fairness?

Do you think your name suits you?

What personality trait has gotten you into the most trouble?

If I asked your teacher what subject is your best, what would they say?

Tell a funny joke.

What is the most beautiful place you've ever seen?

If you could pack your own lunch every day, what would you pack?

If you did the grocery shopping, what would you buy?

If you could grow a mustache, would you do it? What would it look like?

How old do kids need to be before you think it's ok to have a Facebook account? Why?

What is your favorite animal?

How do you feel about bugs?

Would you rather be very tall or very short?

What is your favorite game to play with the family?

Do you think it's more fun to be a parent or a child?

What special talent(s) do you have?

What does your teacher do really well?



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What is your favorite food? Your least favorite?

What is your favorite season? What do you like about it?

How do you feel about sharing? Do you like to share? Why or why not?

How do dad or mom show fairness at home? Or how does your teacher show fairness at school?

In the book "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day", Alexander has a bad day. Have you ever had a bad day? Did it get better?

What is one thing you enjoy being responsible for?

What are 3 things you have to do every day, whether you like it or not?

What has been your favorite part of school this year?

What is your favorite part of the school day?

When you are really upset, what helps calm you down?

What is your favorite place in the world to sit quietly?

What is the craziest thing you've ever eaten?

What do you do to recharge after a long day? Do you get to do this every day? Why or why not?

Tell a story about something that happened today and a story that you made up about something that happened. We'll try to guess which is which.

What is one thing that happened today that made you feel: happy, silly, friendly, smart? (Perhaps try a different adjective each day.)

Which school subject do you think will be most helpful to you in the future?

What is the hardest thing about being your age?
What is the best thing about being # years old?

Would you rather be good looking, smart, or athletic?

Would you rather be rich or famous?

What is your favorite form of exercise?

What do you do when you are afraid?

What is your favorite type of weather?

What's your favorite thing to do outside?

A coach was fired after a video of him berating the players goes public. Can you think of someone you admired who acted unfairly? What did they do? How did this change your opinion of them?



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If you had superpowers, what would they be?

What is one thing you need an adult to help with right now, but would like to try to do by yourself?

What's something you couldn't do when you were younger that you can do now?

If you could be an animal, what would you want to be? Why?

In what way do you want to be like your mom or dad when you're an adult?

Name 5 people you love most in the world and why.

What makes you laugh?

What is your favorite food? Your least favorite?

Who did you play with today?

What is your favorite season? What do you like about it?

If you were a season, which season would you be and why?

What do you like to do on Rainy days?

What would you do if you made the rules at home?

What is your favorite type of weather?

What is your favorite book?

What can you do to feel better if someone is mean to you?

What makes you want to do good things?

What's the best Halloween costume you can think of?

What is your favorite thing to do? Why? How would you feel if you couldn't do it anymore?

What are some things you could say to help someone who was sad?

What is your favorite thing to do outside?

Did you do anything today to help someone?

Invent a superhero who protects something you care about. Tell us about it!

"When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie..."
What other foods does the moon look like?



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When you do something nice for someone else, how does it make you feel?

What is one thing you couldn't live without?

If you had a pet dragon, what would you name it?
What would you do together?

If you could give one present to the world, what would it be?

What did you do today that you are proud of doing?

If snow or rain could fall in any flavor, what flavor would you choose?

Name 3 things that make you happy.

Tell us about a time when you tried something new.

If you could have a zoo animal as a pet, which animal would you pick?

Do you think it's more fun to be a parent or a child?

What is your favorite season? What do you like about it?

If you were a season, which season would you be and why?

When you are really upset, what helps calm you down?

In Green Eggs and Ham, Sam-I-am refuses to try green eggs and ham. Then he does and he likes them. Has this ever happened to you?

Do you have a favorite pair of shoes? What makes it so special?

How do you feel right now? What made you feel this way?

What was your favorite thing that you learned this year?

What is your favorite way to travel? (Bike, car, on foot, plane, train, etc)

What is your favorite game to play with your family?

Would you rather be very tall or very short?

How do you feel about bugs?

What is your favorite animal?

If you did the grocery shopping, what would you buy?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Interview Your Family!

- 1 Talk about a time you stood up for someone else. What happened? How did you feel?
- 2 What is a trait of someone in your family that you admire and hope to have inherited?
- 3 If you could invite any historical figure, living or dead, to dinner, who would you choose? What would you serve? What would you want to ask them?
- 4 Tell a story of a time you learned something unexpected from someone else.
- 5 When people talk about you 100 years from now, what do you hope they will say about you?



RECIPE FOR CONVERSATION

TALK ABOUT: FAMILY HISTORY



Tell me your favorite story about our family. Why do you like that story in particular?

Do you know any stories about your grandparents when they were kids? How about your great-grandparents? Tell us the story!

If you had to describe our family using only three words, what words would you choose?

What is a quality of someone in our family that you admire, and hope to share?

What family tradition do you hope to carry on for future generations?



RECIPE FOR CONVERSATION

TALK ABOUT: MANAGING STRESS



How do you know when you're stressed? How does it make you feel? Does it affect your outlook?

Are there any people, places, or events that make you feel more or less stressed?

What are some activities that you like to do to help you relieve stress? How do they help?

Do you notice when friends or family members are feeling stressed? What do you notice?

Tell me about a time you have felt really stressed. How did you handle it? Is there anything you would do differently now?



RECIPE FOR CONVERSATION

TALK ABOUT: MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF-CARE



What's one thing you like to do when you feel stressed or overwhelmed?

What sound, sight, feeling, smell or taste makes you feel calm?

What are the signs that you're getting overwhelmed and need support? What signs do you notice in others?

What's one thing someone has done that has helped you with your mental health and well-being? What's one way you have tried to help others?

If you are ever struggling with your mental health, do you know how to reach out for support? What can you do?



DINNER GAMES

ROSE, THORN AND BUD

Go around the table and ask each person to share the **rose** (the best or most special part of their day), the **thorn** (the most difficult part of their day), and the **bud** (what they hope for or are looking forward to tomorrow).





DINNER GAMES

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Take turns asking “Would you rather....?” questions. You can make up your own, but here are a few of our favorites:

...own your own boat or plane?

...sweat melted cheese or always smell skunk?

...be able to fly or be invisible?

...speak every language in the world or play every instrument?

...live in the future or the past?





DINNER GAMES

WHICH ONE?

Whoever is asking the questions thinks of two people (e.g. Nana and Grammy; mom and dad) and asks the rest of the table questions to which only one of the two people is the right answer.

For example: Which one got married when she was 19? Which one met her husband in California? Which one has 7 brothers and sisters?



DINNER GAMES

THE HAT GAME

Have everyone write their answers to one or more of the following questions and place them in a hat. At dinnertime, the one person reads the answers aloud, and everyone tries to guess who gave which answers!

- What is a book that transformed your life?
- What children's book character did you most identify with as a child?
- What was your favorite toy as a child?
- What do you feel most grateful for?
- What do you love most about being a part of this (or your) family?
- What animal would you most like to be?



DINNER GAMES

TWO TRUTHS & A TALL TALE

Ask everyone at the table to say three things about themselves: two true things and one thing that's made up. The rest of the table will guess which is the tall tale. Sometimes this game is easier if everyone gets a chance to write down their three things before sharing.



TRUE
FALSE



DINNER GAMES

GUESS THE EMOTION

Have one person leave the table for a minute. Once she leaves, the rest of the family decides on an emotion. When the missing family member returns to the table, the rest of the family eats and acts with that feeling in mind. For example, if the emotion is “worry,” someone might say “I have so much homework tonight I’m never going to get to sleep.”

You can make it a bit more challenging for older kids by allowing only body language and facial expression to convey emotion, or even just facial expression alone.





DINNER GAMES

20 THINGS I LOVE ABOUT...

Come up with a topic together – or put some ideas in jar and pull out one randomly. Examples could be a season or a person or place. Then go around the table and have everyone name something silly or serious they love about that season until you have twenty items. Make sure to write everything down so you can have fun looking at it a month, a year, or 20 years from now!



DINNER GAMES

THE SONG GAME



The first player chooses a word or a category (say, fruit). Each person at the table then has to come up with a song that uses that word in the lyrics and then sing it (at least a verse of it).

So, for example, using the word “love,” one person could sing part of “Crazy Love” or “Love is all you Need.” After everyone’s done, the next person chooses a new word (or category) and the hits keep on coming!