

17 At the Devereux's



It's Sunday evening. Wilbur and Charlene Meeks have just arrived at Max and Helena Devereux's house for dinner. Max Devereux is Wilbur's boss.



1.41 Conversation A

Helena: Why, hello. You must be Mr. and Mrs. Meeks. Please come in. *My husband's told me so much about you.*

Charlene: Nothing bad, I hope.

Helena: Ah ... no, of course not. *Let me take your coats.*

Charlene: Thank you, Mrs. Devereux.

Helena: Please, call me Helena.

Charlene: Thank you, Helena. My name's Charlene ... and this is Wilbur.

1.42 Conversation B

Helena: How long have you been living in Seattle?

Charlene: *Only three weeks.* We love it here.

Wilbur: Yes. *I used to work in the London office,* then I was in Boston.

Helena: Oh, by the way, Max is in the kitchen. He's cooking dinner tonight. He always cooks a special roast beef dinner when we have guests.

Wilbur: Oh, good. We just love beef. Don't we, Charlene?

Charlene: Um ... Yes, yes, we do.

1.43 Conversation C

Max: Fine. Dinner's ready. *Would you like to sit over there, Charlene?*

Charlene: Thank you.

Max: *Perhaps you'd like to sit right here,* Wilbur.

Wilbur: Thank you so much, sir ... I mean, Mr. Devereux ... I mean Max.

Max: Great. *Help yourselves to salad.* I'll get the plates ...

1.44 Conversation D

Max: There we go. Could you pass this plate down to Charlene, Wilbur?

Wilbur: Sure. Mmm. Smells good.

Max: Oh, and *could you pass me the salt and pepper?*

Wilbur: There you go, sir ... Max.

Max: Good. Well, *to your very good health! Cheers! Enjoy your meal!*

1 In groups of four, have similar conversations. Try to replace the key phrases, in blue and green, with the words and expressions below.

Conversation A

I've heard a lot about you.
Max has spoken of you often.
Can I take your coats?
May I take your coats?

Conversation B

Not very long.
Since February.
For a couple of months.
I used to work in New York.
I used to live in New England.

Conversation C

Wilbur, you sit over there.
Charlene, perhaps you could sit next to me.
Please help yourselves to salad / bread / salad dressing.

Conversation D

Could you pass the bread / wine / salad / ketchup?
Here's to you! / To your health! / Bon appetit! / Enjoy!

2 In groups of four, role-play a dinner party.

- Choose roles. Who are you? Host? Guest? Boss? Employee? Partner of one of these?
- Greet each other.
- Take coats.
- Get everyone to sit in the right places.
- Now move them around, politely, in English!
- Imagine you are serving the food.
- Ask for condiments (e.g. salt, pepper, oil, vinegar, ketchup, soy sauce).