

Lesson #3

# *Social Situations*

Using the verb “to be”

*Lesson Plan by Catherine Schell*



## Social Situations using the verb “to be”

### WARM-UP:

Do you know the famous lines from Shakespeare?

To be, or not to be: that is the question:

Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them?

- *Hamlet*

How about the French philosopher René Descartes?

I think, therefore I am.

-*Méditations métaphysiques*

Or the Beatles?

I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together

- *I am the Walrus*

Watch the following video, called ESL English grammar lesson – to be:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XY3K0dQUSOE&p=44F0AE6E3F24F5B0&playnext=1&index=32>



## Social Situations using the verb “to be”

### “Chitchat” and “Serious Talk”

Read the following conversations between Steve and his friend Raphaël, and between Julie, her boss, Anne, and Professor Jenkins:

#### (On the university campus)

Steve Hey Raph, how are you?  
Raphaël Hi Steve! I'm good. What's up?  
Steve Not much. What are you up to?  
Raphaël My parents are here, they're visiting.  
Steve Oh, that's cool! Are you happy?  
Raphaël It's nice to have them here, for sure.  
How's life for you?  
Steve A friend and I are going to Indonesia next year. I'm applying for a visa. He's Indonesian. We're so excited! It's a study-abroad organized by the school. But there are a lot of things to prepare for the trip. I'm forgetful and I'm afraid of missing something.  
Raphaël Yes, be careful! One of my roommates is concerned. His passport is no longer valid. He's supposed to go to Mexico next week, but I think it's not going to work.  
Steve Good thinking. I need to check my passport.

#### (On the phone)

Anne Hello Julie, this is Anne. Are you busy tomorrow afternoon?  
Julie I am actually. Two people are sick and we're behind on the schedule.  
Anne Well, there are two people I want you to interview about school diversity and university expectations. One is a professor from NYU, and the other person is a lawyer from Washington, D.C.  
Julie Ok. When's the best time to meet them?  
Anne Professor Jenkins is in my office right now. Arrange the details on the phone with him.  
Prof. Jenkins Good morning, Miss Davenport. How are you?  
Julie Good morning, Professor Jenkins. I am fine, how are you?  
Prof. Jenkins Excellent, thank you.  
Julie Fantastic. I understand you are interested in giving us an interview. I am delighted to have you on our show. Unfortunately, I am not available until 3pm tomorrow.  
Prof. Jenkins That is fine. Where is your office?  
Julie My team and I are on the second floor, Room 226. I am looking forward to meeting you.  
Prof. Jenkins So am I. Have a great day.  
Julie Thank you, you too. Bye.



## Work on the Text

1. Is the first conversation formal or informal? How about the second conversation? Why?
2. List all the different forms and environments (the words surrounding) of the verb 'be'.



# LESSON

## BE: a useful verb

### To be: to have reality or life, to exist, mean, or equal

'Be' can be used with a noun, to show what the subject does or what/who it/he/she is.

**Examples:** Julie is a journalist.  
Steve and Raphaël are students.

'Be' can be used with an adjective, to describe how the subject is:

**Examples:** Steve is excited.  
Julie is stressed out.

Can be used with a verb with a -ing ending to show that the action of the verb is taking place when the sentence is pronounced/written or in the near future:

**Examples:** Professor Jenkins and Julie are talking on the phone.  
Steve is preparing his trip to Indonesia.

There are also many useful idiomatic expressions with 'be':

- to be   X   years old  
Steve is 24 years old.
- weather  
It's sunny / foggy / cloudy / hot / cold / chilly, etc.
- time  
Lunch is at 12pm / it's 2pm.

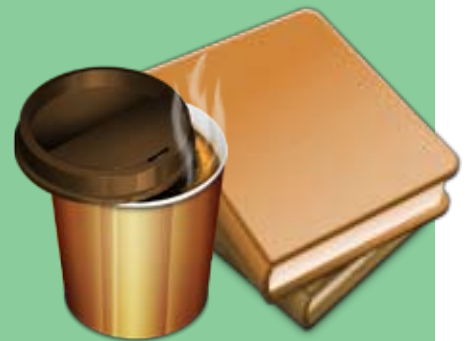
### Conjugation of 'be' at the present

#### Informal speech or correspondance

I'm  
You're  
He's / she's / it's  
We're  
You're  
They're

#### Formal speech or correspondance

I am  
You are  
He is / she is / it is  
We are  
You are  
They are



## Exercises

Conjugate the verb 'be'. For the last sentence, complete with a description of yourself:

1. You are students.
2. He is lazy.
3. My brother and I are very close.
4. I am \_\_\_\_\_

What is their job/activity?



He is dancing. / He's a dancer.



They are firemen.



He is golfing / He's a golfer.



He's playing music / He's a musician.



## Exercises (cont.)

### Scavenger Hunt

Find and present to the class a classmate who:

- 1) is interested in sports. Which ones?
- 2) are friends / relatives.
- 3) is wearing sandals / a hat.
- 4) are afraid of spiders / snakes

### Examples:

Student 1 to class: "This is \_\_\_\_\_. He/She is interested in sports."

Student 1 to Student 2: "Which sports?"

Student 2: "I am interested in ..."

Now, go and create your own scavenger list of ten questions!

### Role-play:

One student goes to the middle of the classroom. The teacher suggests a verb to 'act' to the student. Others have to guess what the student is doing using 'be + ING'.

Example: (student dances)      class: he is dancing.



## Wind-down

Wind-down

To Have and to Be (2002)      French documentary on teaching in primary school  
This might be useful to teachers in Francophone countries to compare and contrast teaching styles and content.

Listen to this video in order to practice your pronunciation and learn helpful hints for conversations on the phone:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAQeGJS06lM&feature=related>

Pictures: courtesy of <http://www.stockvault.net>  
Videos: courtesy of <http://youtube.com>

