

Real Estate Dialogue Lab

Realistic real-estate-workplace dialogues, role-play cards, and debrief prompts for advanced ESL learners

Audience: instructors, real estate English coaches, brokerage trainers, property management teams, transaction teams, and peer practice cohorts

Focus: high-level professional English for real estate workplaces, including agency, representation agreements, buyer and seller consultations, pricing, property descriptions, fair housing, offers, contingencies, inspections, appraisals, financing, disclosures, title, escrow, closings, leasing, commercial basics, and realistic transaction dialogue.

Designed for advanced ESL learners who work as agents, brokers, assistants, transaction coordinators, property managers, leasing staff, commercial real estate staff, relocation specialists, mortgage-adjacent staff, title-adjacent staff, or real-estate business partners.

Teaching stance: real estate English is trust, precision, and risk control under time pressure. Learners need language that is persuasive but not misleading, helpful but not discriminatory, confident but not legally careless. This curriculum teaches professional communication and judgment, not state-specific legal advice.

How to Run the Dialogue Lab

1. Use groups of three: real estate professional, client or stakeholder, observer.
2. Read the model dialogue once. Then replay it with a different property type, market condition, jurisdictional rule, contract term, or stakeholder pressure.
3. The observer listens for role clarity, fair-housing-safe language, document awareness, objective evidence, risk explanation, and next-step control.
4. After each role-play, replay the hardest 30 seconds with a more precise real estate sentence.

Facilitator guardrail

Do not let learners give confident legal or lending advice. Ask them to separate real estate process language from legal, tax, lending, inspection, title, escrow, and brokerage-policy decisions.

1. Buyer Consultation: Agreement Before Touring

Setting

A buyer wants to see a house immediately but has not discussed representation or compensation.

Speaker	Line
Buyer	Can you show me the house this afternoon? I do not want to sign anything yet.
Agent	I understand. Before I tour property with you as your agent, we need a written agreement that explains my services, the term, and how compensation works.
ESL learner	This agreement is not meant to pressure you. It defines who I represent, what I can do for you, and what compensation we agree to. We can keep the term narrow if you only want to evaluate this property.
Buyer	So I have to pay you?
ESL learner	Compensation is negotiable and may be paid in different ways depending on the offer and transaction. The important point is that we discuss it clearly before we start representation.

Language notes

- Explain agreement and compensation calmly before advice becomes transaction-specific.
- Use transparent language without implying compensation is fixed or required by law.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner clarify role, document, source, or decision owner?
- Did the learner avoid discriminatory, misleading, or overpromising language?
- Did the learner explain the tradeoff or risk in plain English?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step and document what should happen next?

2. Fair Housing Question: 'Is This a Good Neighborhood?'

Setting

A buyer asks for subjective neighborhood advice that could lead to steering.

Speaker	Line
Buyer	Is this a good neighborhood for families like us?
Agent	I can help you compare objective information, but I cannot steer you based on who lives here.
ESL learner	Let's define what 'good' means for you: commute time, budget, property condition, parks, school district boundaries, noise, transit, or walkability. I can point you to public resources so you can evaluate the area using your own priorities.
Buyer	But would you live here?
ESL learner	I should not substitute my personal preference for your decision. I can give you property facts and objective sources, and you can decide whether the area fits your needs.

Language notes

- Do not shame the client; redirect to objective criteria.
- Avoid statements that imply preference based on protected-class characteristics.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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3. Listing Presentation: Seller Wants an Unrealistic Price

Setting

A seller wants to list far above the CMA range because a neighbor got a high price last year.

Speaker	Line
Seller	My neighbor sold for more last year. I want to list at that number plus 10 percent.
Listing agent	The market has changed since then.
ESL learner	We can test a premium only if the evidence supports it. The closest recent comps show lower closed prices, longer DOM, and seller concessions. If we list too high, we may reduce urgency and help competing listings look more attractive.
Seller	I do not want to leave money on the table.
ESL learner	Neither do I. My recommendation is a price that creates serious buyer activity and gives us leverage. We can also agree now on a review point if showings or feedback are weak.

Language notes

- Pricing pushback should protect the relationship and the market logic.
- Use data, timing, and adjustment plan instead of arguing over ego.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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4. Multiple Offers: Stronger Terms vs Higher Price

Setting

A buyer wants to win in a competitive situation but does not understand the risk of waiving protections.

Speaker	Line
Buyer	Let's waive everything and offer over asking.
Agent	That may strengthen the offer, but it changes your risk.
ESL learner	We should compare price, appraisal gap, inspection rights, financing contingency, earnest money, closing date, and seller priorities. A stronger offer is not just a higher price. It is also certainty and clean terms.
Buyer	Can we waive inspection?
ESL learner	You can choose that strategy, but I want you to understand the risk. Another option is a shorter inspection period, informational inspection, or cap on repair requests, depending on local practice and your comfort level.

Language notes

- Protect the distinction between competitiveness and risk.
- Do not make waiver decisions sound routine or harmless.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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5. Inspection Negotiation: Repair Credit

Setting

An inspection found roof and electrical issues. The buyer is angry and wants the seller to fix everything.

Speaker	Line
Buyer	This house has problems. Ask them to fix every item.
Agent	We need to separate major issues from normal maintenance.
ESL learner	The strongest request will focus on safety, systems, and cost. Instead of sending a long emotional list, we can ask for a licensed electrician to address the panel issue and request a credit toward the roof repair, supported by the inspection report and estimate.
Buyer	What if they refuse?
ESL learner	Then we evaluate your contract options, your appetite for repairs, and whether a revised price or credit makes the risk acceptable.

Language notes

- Convert anger into specific, document-supported requests.
- Separate inspection facts from negotiation strategy.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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6. Low Appraisal: Contract Price Is Higher Than Appraised Value

Setting

The appraisal comes in below contract price and financing is affected.

Speaker	Line
Lender	The appraisal is twenty thousand below contract price.
Buyer	Does that mean the deal is dead?
ESL learner	Not automatically. We have several paths: challenge the appraisal if there are factual issues, renegotiate price, increase down payment, use an appraisal-gap clause if one exists, or cancel if the contract allows it.
Buyer	What should we do?
ESL learner	First, let's review the appraisal with the lender and compare it to our comps. Then we can choose a negotiation position based on your cash, contract rights, and risk tolerance.

Language notes

- Low appraisal language should be calm and options-based.
- Do not promise the appraisal can be changed.

Role-play variation

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7. Financing Delay: Underwriting Conditions

Setting

Closing is approaching but the lender still needs documentation.

Speaker	Line
Seller agent	Are your buyers clear to close? We need certainty.
Buyer agent	The file is still in underwriting.
ESL learner	The lender has issued conditional approval and is waiting on two documents from the buyer. We expect an update tomorrow afternoon. I do not want to overpromise, so I will send a written status update by 4 p.m. with any impact on closing.
Seller agent	Should we issue a notice?
ESL learner	I understand your concern. Please send any contract notice through the proper channel. Meanwhile, I will keep the timeline, owner, and dependency clear for everyone.

Language notes

- Use precise status language: condition, owner, deadline, impact.
- Avoid blaming lender or buyer while uncertainty remains.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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8. RESPA Risk: Referral Benefit

Setting

A settlement-service provider offers valuable benefits for referrals.

Speaker	Line
Vendor	If you send us your buyers, we can sponsor your client event and give you premium tickets.
Agent	That sounds generous, but we need to be careful.
ESL learner	I cannot accept anything of value in exchange for settlement-service referrals. If we discuss marketing or sponsorship, it must be reviewed by the broker and compliance, tied to real services, and not conditioned on referrals.
Vendor	Everyone does it.
ESL learner	Our policy is to protect clients and avoid referral-kickback risk. I can share your public information with clients if they ask for options, but I cannot trade referrals for benefits.

Language notes

- Referral pressure requires direct, documented refusal.
- Use broker and compliance review rather than improvising.

Role-play variation

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9. Seller Disclosure: Known Water Intrusion

Setting

A seller wants to avoid disclosing a past water problem because it was repaired.

Speaker	Line
Seller	Do we really need to mention the basement leak? It was fixed two years ago.
Agent	Known property issues can create disclosure duties.
ESL learner	I cannot tell you how to complete the legal disclosure form, but I can tell you not to hide known facts. Let's review the form instructions, gather repair records, and if you are unsure, ask your attorney before we publish or respond to buyers.
Seller	I am afraid buyers will panic.
ESL learner	Clear disclosure with documentation can reduce surprises later. A hidden issue can create a much larger trust and contract problem.

Language notes

- Do not complete legal disclosure decisions for the client.
- Encourage truth, documentation, and expert review.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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10. Lead-Based Paint Disclosure

Setting

A pre-1978 home is going under contract and documents are incomplete.

Speaker	Line
Transaction coordinator	The lead disclosure form is missing the buyer acknowledgment.
Agent	Can we just send it after signatures?
ESL learner	For pre-1978 housing, the lead disclosure process needs to be handled before the buyer is obligated under the contract. We need the required pamphlet, known information, available records, and signed acknowledgment in the file.
Agent	The seller does not know of any lead paint.
ESL learner	That may be the seller's disclosure position, but the required disclosure process still matters. Let's correct the file before moving forward.

Language notes

- Lead disclosure is a document and timing conversation, not only a knowledge conversation.
- Use process language and file discipline.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

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- Did the learner explain the tradeoff or risk in plain English?
- Did the learner give a concrete next step and document what should happen next?

11. Dual Agency or Same-Brokerage Conflict

Setting

A buyer wants to make an offer on a listing held by the same brokerage.

Speaker	Line
Buyer	Can you still represent me if your office has the listing?
Agent	It depends on state law, brokerage policy, and the agency structure.
ESL learner	We need to disclose the relationship clearly and explain whether this is dual agency, designated agency, or another permitted arrangement. You should understand what advice I can and cannot give before you decide whether to consent.
Buyer	Will you tell me what the seller will accept?
ESL learner	I cannot share confidential information from another client or side. My role and limits must be clear before we proceed.

Language notes

- Conflict language should be explicit, not casual.
- Confidentiality survives pressure from the other side.

Role-play variation

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- Did the learner give a concrete next step and document what should happen next?

12. Commercial Lease: NNN and TI Allowance

Setting

A small business owner is reviewing a commercial lease proposal.

Speaker	Line
Tenant	The rent looks affordable. It says NNN, CAM, and TI allowance. What does that mean?
Commercial agent	Those terms affect your real occupancy cost.
ESL learner	Base rent is only one part. NNN usually means you may pay taxes, insurance, and maintenance in addition to base rent. CAM covers common area maintenance. A TI allowance is landlord contribution toward tenant improvements, but the lease will define conditions and repayment risk.
Tenant	So can I sign the LOI?
ESL learner	An LOI can frame the deal, but you should review lease language with legal and financial advisors before committing. Let's compare total occupancy cost, term, options, buildout timeline, and exit risk.

Language notes

- Commercial terms need plain-English financial consequences.
- Refer legal and tax interpretation to qualified advisors.

Role-play variation

Observer checklist

- Did the learner clarify role, document, source, or decision owner?
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