

SECTION ONE



BEGINNER LEVEL

LESSON ONE

THE YELLOW CONVERSATION

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"Smiley eyes create happy hearts!"

THE YELLOW CONVERSATION

(An overview)

GOAL: The child will demonstrate the ability to have a Yellow Conversation with the Conversation Coach four out of five times without the use of the Conversation Stones. In order to successfully achieve a Yellow Conversation, the child will make Meaningful Eye Contact with the Conversation Coach and will acknowledge the communication attempt with either a verbal (i.e. Hi, Bye) or nonverbal (i.e. smile, wave) response.

MATERIALS:

- Conversation Stones
- Black felt marker
- Ball

The Yellow Conversation is simply our hellos and our goodbyes. It is the easiest and fastest kind of communication exchange that we will likely have with another individual. For example, you are rushing through the grocery store with a time crunch on your hands, and you see a friend. You say a quick hello as you grab a cart and head down the aisles. On the way out of the store, you catch your friend's eye and say a quick goodbye. In so doing, you would have just experienced the Yellow Conversation.

This type of conversation is unique, not only because it is so fast and easy to do, but because it can be done with or without words. In fact, there are times when words would neither be effective (i.e. in the middle of a boisterous football game) or appropriate (i.e. in the middle of a symphony). In these situations, you might smile and give a quick wave to indicate a greeting or a farewell.

It is likely that we will have many of these types of conversations in a day. Though they may seem insignificant because of the skill level required, they are critical in relation to how we are viewed by other people. For example, consider the following situation:

You see a couple of old friends from high school. You make eye contact with them. It is apparent that they recognize you, so you smile and wave. Instead of reciprocating, they avoid eye contact and walk in the opposite direction. It is likely that your opinion about your old friends will change. Had they chosen to smile, wave or stop for a quick chat, you may have found a reason to rekindle the relationship. Either way, your mindset about them would have been positive.

The Yellow Conversation is powerful in its ability to shape how we view others and how they view us!

NOTE:

SPECIAL NEEDS: Many children with special needs should be able to achieve the Yellow Conversation since the verbal demands are limited. The Conversation Coach will set goals that are appropriate to the child's level of functioning. For example, for some children, the primary goal may be to simply acknowledge the presence of another individual through eye contact. For others, oral language or augmentative communication devices may be used to communicate greetings and farewells.

MEANINGFUL EYE CONTACT: Meaningful Eye Contact will be an essential part of this first lesson. The Conversation Coach may use pausing, exaggerated body language or signing in order to draw the child's attention to himself/herself in order to attain MEC. Children who are unable to grasp the concept of making MEC may not be considered appropriate candidates for the CMC program.

“Color My Conversation is intended for children with sufficient referencing skills to engage in conversations. Children typically start early conversations around 2-3 years of age. By this time, they have developed the ability to look at people for a long time, follow simple social cues (i.e. point and gaze following), and begin reading more sophisticated non-verbal cues. If children have not yet developed these skills, they should participate in a program which develops natural social referencing skills as a pre-requisite to Color My Conversation.”



LESSON ONE

THE YELLOW CONVERSATION

INTRODUCTION

Signs to consider in this lesson: hello, goodbye, yellow.

Okay, kids, today we are going to be learning about conversations. Wow! That's a BIG word! Let's say that word 5 times (i.e. Con-ver-sa-tions...). **What does the word "conversation" mean to you?** (Children respond.) **To me, a conversation is simply when we talk with another person. We are going to be learning about lots of different types of conversations, and the first one that we are going to talk about is what I call the Yellow Conversation!** (Place the yellow Hello and Goodbye Conversation Stones on the floor in front of you. Have the children sit on chairs or on the floor in the shape of a semi circle. Leave yourself enough room to be able to move along the stones.)

BASIC TRAINING

When we want to start a conversation with someone, we say Hello. What other words might we say? (Glean ideas from the children as you write the word "Hello" in bold lettering in the center of the first yellow stone, and then draw lines to create four quadrants.)

Those are great ideas! Sometimes, I will say hello this way! (Write some of the children's examples in the quadrants and/or add your own. Suggestions might include the following: Hey, Hi, Good morning.)

This is our "Hello" Conversation Stone, and I am going to put it right here. (Show the stone to the children and then place it on the floor in front of you.)

If we have our hellos, we also have our goodbyes. So when you end a conversation, how do you say goodbye to people? (Glean ideas from the children as you write the word "Goodbye" in bold lettering in the center of the second yellow stone, and then draw lines to create four quadrants.)

Great suggestions! Sometimes, I will say goodbye this way. (Write some of the children's examples in the quadrants and/or add your own. Suggestions might include the following: See you, Bye for now, Good night, Catch ya later.)

This is our "Goodbye" stone, and I'm going to place it right over here. (Show the second stone, and then place it a safe distance from you so that you can easily take one good-sized step onto it from your first stone.)

Now this is what a "Hello-Goodbye" conversation, OR what I call a Yellow Conversation, looks like. (Stand on the Hello stone, and pick up your soft ball. Make MEC with one of the children who may have stronger language skills. Once MEC is attained, toss the ball to the child as you say one of the options selected from the Hello stone.)

Hi, Courtney! (Leave your hands out in the position to receive the ball as you look expectantly and attempt to make MEC with the child. As the child says hello and tosses the ball back to you, provide nonverbal reinforcement of their response with a smile and a head nod. Then step onto the Goodbye stone, and toss the ball back to the same child as you say one of the options selected from it.)

See ya later! (Leave your hands out in the position to receive the ball as you look expectantly and attempt to make MEC with the child. As the child says goodbye and tosses the ball back to you, provide nonverbal reinforcement of this behavior with a smile and other nonverbal cues such as a "thumbs up" or "high five.")

PRACTICE RUN AND ROLE-PLAYS

That is as simple as it gets with the Yellow Conversation. Now, it's your turn. (Repeat this exercise with your other children in the group. Once each child has had a turn with the Conversation Coach, allow the children to practice with their peers either as the conversation initiator or conversation responder.)

So what does a Yellow Conversation look like when you're speaking to a group of people? Let me show you! (Leave the room, and shut the door. Then knock. It is highly likely that the children may chuckle at this point. Open the door, and then greet the group.)

Hey everybody! (Children respond.)

See you after class! (After you have said your farewell, leave the room, and shut the door. Wait for a second, and then come back into the room.)

It's just that simple.

Now, I am going to do the Yellow Conversation again, but this time I'm NOT going to use any words. Watch me. (Leave the room, and shut the door. Then knock. Open the door, and then smile and wave. Wait for the children to reciprocate. Now check your watch, look up at the kids, and wave goodbye as you leave the room. Wait for a short moment in the hallway, and then re-enter the room.)

We just had a Yellow Conversation, and I didn't even say a word, did I? I let my body do the talking. That's what we call Body Language. What's it called? (Have the children practice this new vocabulary item.)

Did you know that our bodies could talk? Watch me. (Do some nonverbal gestures, and have the children guess them. Examples may include emotions such as excitement, frustration, and sadness, or they may be more detailed messages such as "Stop right there!" or "Go away!")

What have we learned so far about the Yellow Conversation? We've learned that it is the hello (sign hello) and goodbye (sign goodbye) part of a conversation. We've learned that we can do it without words. We can use our... (sweep your hand down in front of your body, and wait for the children to respond). Right! We can use our Body Language.

Now, I have a question for you. Is the Yellow Conversation really that important? (Children respond.)

You know it may be the smallest conversation, BUT it happens to be one of the most important ones that we can have. People might decide if you are nice OR not just by depending on how you do this conversation. Let me show you. (Role-play: Instruct one of the children to smile at you as you walk by. Take a book, and pretend to look at it as you walk past the child. When he/she smiles, look at the child with little interest, and then go back to reading your book. Then ask the child some questions.)

Did you like that conversation? Why? Why Not? What did I do that bothered you? (Child responds to questions. Role-play the scenario again, and ask the child how it feels when you use body language that encourages a successful Yellow Conversation. Practice a variety of role-plays using unsuccessful or successful Yellow Conversations (i.e. being too goofy, being shy, being grumpy.) Discuss how our choice of words or actions may affect how others feel towards us or how we may feel towards others.

You may want to do some additional discussion about where and when Yellow Conversations could be used (i.e. school hallway, library, mall, on the street). Tell the kids some of the reasons why you love Yellow Conversations. Some examples may include the following: because they are quick and easy to use when you're in a rush, because they acknowledge another person's presence which may make him/her feel valued, and because you can have a Yellow Conversation without speaking (i.e. wave, wink, mouth words silently.)

HELPFUL HINTS...

1. Words can be written, OR pictures can be drawn on the yellow Conversation Stones.
 - a. FOR READERS: You may write the actual words and phrases into the quadrants on the Conversation Stones.
 - b. FOR NONREADERS: You may draw a picture of a stick person who is facing frontwards and waving for the hello stone and a stick person who is walking away while waving for the goodbye stone.
2. Signing is optional but encouraged. You may use it as much or as little as needed to provide visual support for the children as they are learning the new vocabulary which may include the following words: yellow, hello, goodbye.
3. When stepping on the stones, glance down at them to demonstrate that you are getting information from them. By this role model, your children will then see that they can do the same thing.
4. When engaging in a conversation with the children, remember to make Meaningful Eye Contact with them.
5. Try to select some greetings that are socially appropriate for the children and their peers. For example, younger children may like the farewell “See you later, alligator” while older children may prefer “Ciao!” or “Peace Out.” If the examples are acceptable and preferable ways for communicating with peers, then they are acceptable for the *CMC* program.
6. If a child does not know what to do with the ball when you throw it to them, use your body language rather than words to direct them. For example, motion for the child to throw the ball back to you. If they do so, but fail to greet you, look confused, and repeat the step. If the child still doesn’t know how to reciprocate the greeting, do the verbal exchange with another child to provide a model. Once a successful model has been demonstrated, repeat the conversation with the original child.
7. Know your target audience. This statement is true throughout the use of the *CMC* program! Take the time to make some good observations about the children, because this will affect how you plan your lessons, how you set your goals and how you interact with the individual students. For example,
 - a. CONSIDER THEIR PERSONALITIES:
 - Are they engaged and outgoing conversationalists? Great! Then use these children for your role-models when initiating a new lesson or introducing a new activity.
 - Are they shy or more reserved? If so, then give them time to sit and be observers. The shy children may need time to grow in confidence. The more reserved children may not be shy but might prefer having a little time to acclimatize to new situations.
 - Are they socially disengaged? If so, then you will want to be more expressive and animated, because if you are not a “person of interest,” you won’t exist.
 - b. CONSIDER THEIR LEARNING STYLES:
 - Are they motivated by new ideas? Great! These children will love your curiosity and motivation when learning new activities.
 - Are they motivated by the worksheet activities? Great! These children will love the seat assignments.
 - Are they motivated by social interactions with their peers? Great! These children will love Think-Pair-Share and other small group activities.
 - Are they motivated by working independently? Great! These children will love the independent projects and home assignments.

c. CONSIDER WHAT MOTIVATES THEM:

- Are there children who prefer tangible rewards? Great! Then make sure to provide tangible reinforcements such as stickers or treats in a goody box.
- Are there children who prefer verbal praise? Great! They will likely love the concept of Three Praises + One To Think About. Look in the Terminology section to learn more about this strategy.
- Are there children who love undivided attention? Great! Be intentional about taking time with these individuals during independent work activities.
- Are there children who love doing things for others? Great! Possibly, these will be the children you choose to be “the helpers” for your children with special needs.

WRAP UP AND HOMEWORK CHALLENGE

Great job today, kids! We’ve learned a lot about the Yellow Conversation. Let’s review. What are Yellow Conversations? Where can we have a Yellow Conversation? Do we need to use words when we have them? What is it called when we use our body to talk? Why is the Yellow Conversation so important? (Children respond to the questions provided.) *Great thinking, everyone. For the next lesson, we are going to learn about a different conversation. It’s called the Short Conversation.*

I have two homework challenges for you. When you leave this room today, I want you to have at least one Yellow Conversation with one of your classmates. When you go home tonight, tell your Mom and Dad what we learned today about the Yellow Conversation. Maybe they can tell you some of their favorite ways to say Hello and Goodbye.

KEEP IT FUN

1. **Wall Display:** You will be creating a wall display between Lesson One and Lesson Seven. You will find the pictures for the display in your kit. Punch out the Color My Conversation logo and the two yellow stones. Start your display by putting up the logo as a header, and then mount the two yellow stones below it.
2. **Collage:** Go for an adventure walk with the children. As you walk around the school, take pictures of places where Yellow Conversations might occur. Print the pictures, and put them on a small poster entitled, “The Yellow Conversation Collage.” The collage can be mounted beside your wall display.
3. **Sing:** Teach the children The Yellow Conversation Song and the Hello Song. It is strongly recommended that the songs in the CMC program be attempted regardless of the age of the child, because there is teaching information embedded within the lyrics. For older children, the lyrics would be spoken not sung. For children with significant cognitive or communicative challenges, the song might not be used for educational purposes but can still be sung for listening pleasure.
4. **Worksheets:** **THE YELLOW CONVERSATION AND ME** can be done in class or used as a homework assignment. The **HOW TO PRACTICE YELLOW CONVERSATIONS AT HOME** sheet can be sent home for additional practice.
5. **Walk the Conversation Path:** Have the children continue practicing their greetings and farewells as they walk along the Conversation Path.
6. **Portfolio:** Create a Personal Conversation Portfolio to contain the children’s worksheets, artwork, etc. You may also want to consider a section for them to journal their personal reflections about their conversations in the context of the lessons or from their day-to-day life experiences.

7. **Think - Pair - Share:** Let the children cut out their own Hello and Goodbye stones with yellow construction paper. They can think about and write down their favorite greetings and farewells. In a paired activity, have the children share what scripts they selected. They can then report to the class what scripts they chose. Once this activity is done, the children can take their cut out conversation stones home to create their own wall display, or they can make a small version of it in their Portfolio.

8. **Conversation Recipes and Scripts:** A great way to hone our ability to read people and situations is through observations. A convenient way to do this is to simply look at pictures of people having conversations. In Conversation Recipes and Scripts, the children look at pictures and share in discussions with their peers and/or the Conversation Coach as they assess what is happening in the pictures. Conversation Recipes and Scripts is a fantastic “brain gymnastics” activity to do as a daily warm-up for your conversation lessons! There are many options of images available online. You can also use magazine images, family photographs or line drawings.

a. If you choose to use this strategy, keep the child’s level of ability or “need to know” in mind. Select images that will be consistent with the child’s ability to interpret or read them. For some children, you may select pictures where the greeting and farewells are easy to recognize. The facial expressions are obvious, and the words to describe the emotions are simple vocabulary (i.e. happy, sad, excited).

For the more skilled conversationalists, you may select greetings that show mixed emotions (i.e. happy and yet sad) and situations that may be more difficult to read (i.e. how people from different cultures greet each other). Added to this, you may consider looking for images of world leaders or other recognizable individuals in society who are greeting others. These activities can expand the student’s vocabulary and/or world knowledge.

b. Select questions that are at the child’s level of understanding. Some basic questions might include the following:

- What are these people doing?
- Where are they? How can you tell?
- What time of day is it? How can you tell?
- Do you think these people know each other? How can you tell?
- What do you think they might be thinking? How can you tell?
- How do you think they might be feeling? How can you tell?
- How would you feel in this situation?
- What things might you say?

NOTE:

The Conversation Recipe and Scripts activity has the added benefit of working on many skills such as: Making/explaining inferences, stating/explaining the cause of a problem, stating/explaining the solution for the problem, making/explaining predictions, imagining oneself in the same situation, imagining the conversational script that might be transpiring between the people in the picture, imagining the feelings that these individuals might be experiencing. This strategy can be used throughout the use of the CMC program, as it will provide multiple opportunities for the children to make observations about social interactions with others.

9. **Video Modeling:** You can use video modeling (i.e. self) in a structured setting as the children are walking the Conversation Path. You may also choose to do video modeling (i.e. self and others) of greetings and farewells in a more natural environment. Video modeling is a strategy that would be of benefit for children with autism. The goal will be to create a good example of the targeted conversation.

10. **Role-Plays:** Throughout the use of the Color My Conversation program, the Conversation Coach has the opportunity to introduce role-plays into the lessons so as to increase understanding of the concepts being trained. The role-plays should follow a similar formula. For example:

a. **Pre-select the Demonstration Role-Play**

Choose role-plays that are appropriate to the age of the children and their level of “need to know.”

b. **Implement the Demonstration Role-Play**

- The role-play should be done by the adults and should demonstrate what “not to do” in a conversation.
- Try to practice the role-play before doing it in front of the children so that it can be executed smoothly.
- When you introduce it to the children say, “*Watch this conversation, and tell me what is wrong with it when we’re done.*”

c. **Discuss the Demonstration Role-Play**

Once the role-play is finished, ask follow-up questions, and then redo the role-play to see how it could look:

- *What did Person A do wrong in that conversation?*
- *What would Person B think about Person A?*
- *How would you feel if that happened to you?*
- *What could Person A have done differently?*
- *How would that have made Person B feel?*

Role-Play (Examples)

The following is a list of some role-plays that could be considered for the Yellow Conversation Lesson. These are only examples. They can be modified as best seen fit for the child’s age and/or the learning environment:

- a) All age groups: CHILD is walking past another student in the school hallway. He smiles. The other child gives a silly facial expression in return. CHILD looks confused. For older children, the other student might give a sarcastic facial expression in return. In this case, the CHILD looks disappointed.
- b) All age groups: CHILD is on the playground at recess and sees a couple of other children playing in a small group. CHILD smiles and waves at them. They look at him, turn away and keep playing. For older children, this example could involve “talking” rather than “playing.” In both cases, the CHILD looks disappointed.
- c) All age groups: TEACHER is greeting the students as they come into the classroom in the morning. TEACHER looks at the child and says, “Good morning!” The child runs past the teacher and ignores her. For older children, the student walks past silently with a bored expression. In both cases, TEACHER looks bewildered.
- d) All age groups: PARENT is making breakfast in the morning. Child comes in sleepily and sits down at the table. PARENT says, “Good morning.” Child says nothing and is mesmerized by the television. For older children, the example could involve either rolling eyes or mesmerized by the cell phone. In both cases, PARENT looks bewildered.
- e) All age groups: CHILD is taking the dog for a walk and passes another person. CHILD smiles at the other person. The other person looks down at their cell phone and ignores him. CHILD looks bewildered.

DISCUSSION

1. What one key word would sum up Lesson One? The word would be CONNECT.

In Lesson One, you want to develop a connection with the children. You want them to see you as a person of interest; someone with whom they would want to have a conversation. One of the ways you will form this connection is through eye contact. For some children, eye contact will not be an issue; however, for others, it may become one of your main goals. One of the primary ways to attain eye contact with the children will be through the use of the ball. For example, it can be used to draw a child's attention up towards the Conversation Coaches face. Once this is accomplished, you (the coach) will move the ball out of the child's view (i.e. put it behind your head) and move your face into the child's frame of reference. At that point, the coach will attempt to attain eye contact with the child.

In Lesson One, you want the children to "connect" with the concept of turn taking. For some children, this will not be an issue; however, for others, it may become one of your main goals. One of the primary ways to work on turn taking will be through the use of the ball. It acts as a visual reminder to show that "whoever is holding the ball" should be the one who is speaking.

In Lesson One, you want the children to "connect" with the Conversation Path, because it will be incorporated into many of the lessons. Learning about conversations and walking along the Conversation Path should be an enjoyable experience that the children want to do with you and/or their peers. If you become someone who is curious about conversations, it is likely that your enthusiasm for learning about them will be contagious!

Lastly, in Lesson One, you want the children to "connect" with the conversation scripts (i.e. words and phrases) that are written on the stones. These examples are being provided so that the children can become familiar with the common conversational exchanges that they can have with others.

2. How long should I spend on this lesson?

For some children, Lesson One may be a breeze! In this case, the Conversation Coach may choose to go over it briefly and then move on to the next lesson. For other children, Lesson One might be difficult for a variety of reasons (i.e. eye contact, turn taking, initiating/responding to greetings). In this case, a child may work on it for a longer period of time either on its own or in conjunction with subsequent lessons.

3. What key areas might be focused on in Lesson One? As the Conversation Coach, you may choose to focus on many areas at the same time, depending on the needs of the individual child. For example:

- a. Improving eye contact.
- b. Improving turn taking strategies.
- c. Increasing awareness for the concepts surrounding the topic of conversations. This will be done through group discussions (i.e. What are conversations? Why do we have them? Why is it important to learn about them?).
- d. Increasing awareness for the concepts surrounding the topic of greetings and farewells. This will be done through group discussions (i.e. What are greetings and farewells? Why do we use them? What happens when we forget to use them?).
- e. Increasing the ability to use a single greeting (i.e. Hi!) or farewell (i.e. Bye). This goal might be selected for the child who has limited language. For other children, your goal might focus on increasing the ability to use a variety of greetings (i.e. Hi! Hello! Good morning!) and a variety of farewells (i.e. Bye for now, See ya later, Goodbye). For the more skilled conversationalist, the goal might focus on improving

the ability to recognize and use appropriate greetings and farewells based on the conversation partner's relationship with the child. For example, the Conversation Coach may teach the child when it is appropriate to use generic (i.e. Hi!) versus more stylized (i.e. Wazzup!) greetings depending on the age and relationship one has with the conversation partner.

4. Why are the words Hello and Goodbye used for the greetings and farewells?

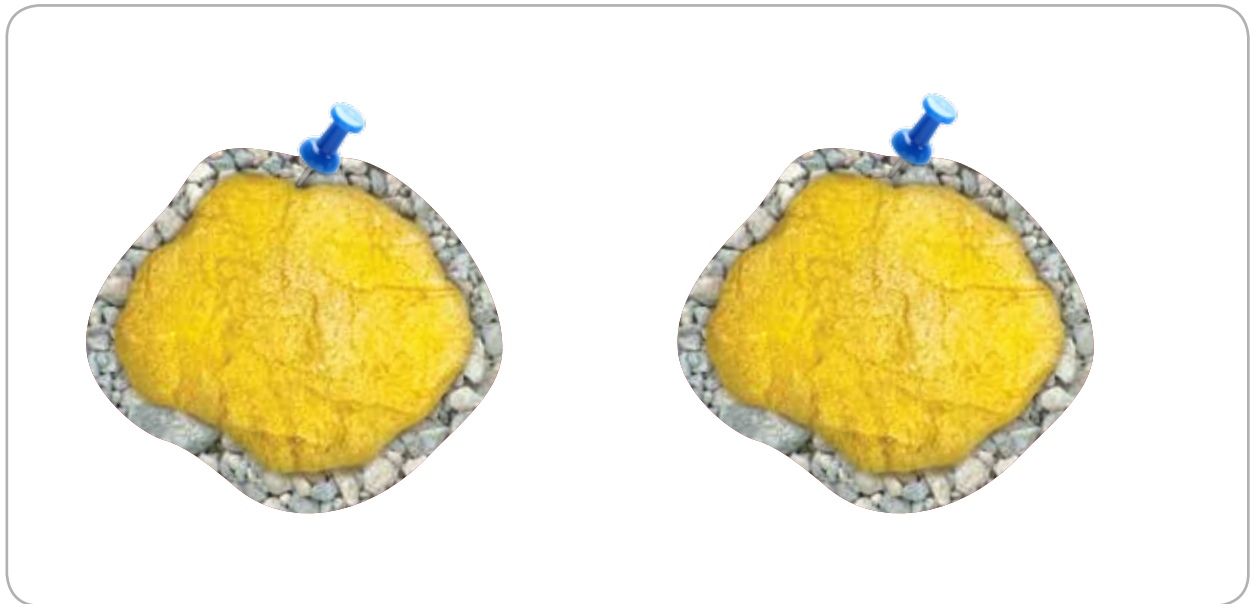
They are basic greetings. In the *CMC* program, you want to use terminology that is simple and easy to learn.



LESSON ONE

TEACHING TOOLS

YELLOW CONVERSATION



Illustrations of CMC Color Coded Conversation Path

THE YELLOW CONVERSATION



THE YELLOW CONVERSATION AND ME

ANSWER KEY

Yellow Conversations are very QUICK! They just have a **HELLO** and an **GOODBYE**. The best thing about a Yellow Conversation is that we can have them with or without words. We can use our hands (i.e. wave) or our faces (i.e. smile, wink) to do the talking for us. This is called using our **BODY LANGUAGE**!

Places where I may have a Yellow Conversation:	
EXAMPLES: GROCERY STORE	HOCKEY GAME
MOVIE THEATRE	LIBRARY

Greetings are something that I do at the beginning of a conversation. My favorite way to greet people is to say:	
HI	HEY
HELLO	GOOD DAY

Farewells are something that I do at the end of a conversation. My favorite way to say farewell to someone is to say:	
GOOD BYE	SEE YOU LATER
CIAO	SO LONG

THIS IS WHAT A YELLOW CONVERSATION LOOKS LIKE TO ME!

On the back of this worksheet, draw a picture of what you think of when you imagine a Yellow Conversation!