

## Thinking With My Friends and Family

### Video: Improving Conversation

The local AMVETS has nominated Colby for an award. According to the organization's representative, there will be a nice banquet and some social time before the award presentation. Colby is very honored by the nomination, but he is nervous to speak face-to-face with people he doesn't know very well. In an effort to help, Colby's teacher has advised him to practice using a few public speaking strategies during informal conversations with his family at home.

Now it's your turn. With a family member or friend:

1. Practice having a conversation at the supper table or in the car as you drive to the store.
  - Concentrate on using the five "W" questions (Who, What, Where, When, Why) as you talk. These are questions that allow the other person in the conversation to speak more openly or fully on the subject.
  - Avoid asking questions that allow the other person to only answer yes or no. This will slow the conversation and make it more difficult to talk to one another.
2. Watch others as they have conversations. If adults are visiting your house, notice how they focus on each other and share the speaking time. After observing these other people, talk with your family members or friends about what you noticed.
3. Think about ways that you have conversations that are not face-to-face, such as social networking, texting, or speaking on your cell phone. Write a list of the types of questions you use during these communication times. How are these similar or different from face-to-face conversations?
4. Consider the use of electronic communication and video conferencing. How is this different or similar to being in the same place and talking with someone? What ideas do you need to be aware of when speaking to someone else over a computer? What ideas can you take from this type of communication and use during a face-to-face conversation?