THE DOG FROM OUTER SPACE
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE?

A conversation is when people talk and listen to one another to exchange ideas, thoughts, or feelings. Everyone participates in the conversation by listening thoughtfully, making comments, or asking questions about the topic.

In this story, a group of kids has a conversation about something funny that happened to one of them. During the conversation, the kids help make the conversation continue, and also do things that break the conversation.

As you listen to the story, pay attention to examples of “conversation makers” and “conversation breakers.”

It was a dreary day, and the rain from last night still dripped off the leaves of the great oak tree.

“I am SO bored,” grumbled Kenny, as he stared out the window of the tree house at the dark clouds.

Kayla and Jeremy nodded their heads. “We've been here all afternoon, and there’s just nothing left to do.”
Suddenly, Kayla had an idea.

“Sometimes, my brother and I play a game called ‘Conversation Can.’ One person starts a conversation, and then you see how long everyone can keep talking. Every time you say something, you throw a coin into the Conversation Can. The longer you talk, the more you fill up the can!”

The kids agreed that this sounded like fun.
They found a pencil holder to use for a can, and some marbles instead of coins.

“Okay,” explained Kayla. “Let’s use blue marbles when you want to say something new about what we’re talking about, and red marbles when you have a question.”
Kenny asked if he could begin. He dropped a blue marble into the can and said, “I want to tell you about the time I thought that my dog, Sammy, was actually from outer space...”

His friends both laughed. Jeremy put a blue marble into the can and said, “This sounds like it’s going to be a good story.”

As they continued the conversation, the kids tossed more marbles into the can...
“One morning I couldn’t find Sammy anywhere,” said Kenny. “I looked all over the house—upstairs, downstairs, everywhere!”

“Were you worried?” asked Jeremy.

Kenny thought for a moment. “Well, at first I was kind of mad because I was supposed to take Sammy for a walk before school, and it was getting late. But then I was worried that he had gotten lost.”
RUFF!

RUFF!
“I finally heard Sammy barking and found him looking out the kitchen window. He was barking and barking at the sky.”

“I’ve heard Sammy bark,” remembered Kayla. “He’s really loud.”

“He was,” agreed Kenny. “I thought he was going to wake up the whole neighborhood.”
“Hmm,” wondered Kayla. “Was Sammy barking at a bird or an airplane?”

“I couldn’t see anything in the sky,” said Kenny. “Not even a cloud. It was really weird, like he was barking at something that I couldn’t see.”

The kids asked Kenny what he did next.
“Well, I went to get Sammy’s leash,” answered Kenny. “But when I came back into the kitchen, Sammy was up on the table sniffing my bowl of Krispy Krunchies.”

“Have either of you tried the new Fruity Krunchies cereal?” asked Jeremy.

“Uh-oh,” said Kayla. “That broke the conversation. Can you think of something to say about Kenny’s story, so we don’t have to dump the marbles out and start over?”
“Whoops!” said Jeremy. “I’ll try again. Um...does Sammy usually like cereal?”

“No, he just eats dog food,” Kenny replied. “But the really strange thing was that he was on top of the table. He’s much too short to jump that high.”
Then Kenny told his friends about all the times he had seen Sammy jump up onto things that were much shorter than the table. There were a lot of things. Kenny kept putting marbles in the can and talking, and putting marbles in the can and talking...

When Kenny stopped to take a breath, Jeremy finally asked, “Hey, can I have a turn to ask a question?”

“Oh, sorry!” said Kenny. “I didn’t mean to do all of the talking! That doesn’t make a very good conversation, does it?”
“That’s okay,” said Jeremy. “I just wanted to ask if anyone else was in the kitchen with you.”

Kenny told them that no one else was there. Then he whispered, “It was almost as if Sammy used a secret power to get onto the table.”
Jeremy noticed Kayla looking out the window. “Hey, Kayla, did you hear that?” he asked, nudging her with his elbow.

“What?” mumbled Kayla, turning back around. Then her eyes grew wide. “Uh-oh! I was thinking about my next question, and now I don’t know what you just said.”

So Kenny repeated that he thought Sammy might have a secret power.
“Wow!” Kayla exclaimed. “It sure sounds like Sammy might be an alien dog. What happened next?”

“I’m glad you asked,” laughed Kenny. “Because there’s more to my story.”
RUFF!

RUFF!
“I finally got down on the ground next to Sammy, and from there I could look through the window and see the moon up in the sky,” said Kenny. “I don’t think Sammy had ever seen the moon during the day, and that’s why he was barking.”

“What if he was barking because the moon was his real home?” asked Jeremy. “He still might be from outer space.”
“Well,” continued Kenny. “Just then my mom came into the kitchen and set the newspaper on the table. Sammy loves trying to get the newspaper so he can chew on it.”

Then Kenny explained how Sammy had jumped onto a stool, then into an open drawer, and then onto the table to grab the newspaper.

“So he didn’t have a secret alien power,” laughed Jeremy. “He’s just really clever.”
The kids suddenly realized that they had been talking for so long that it was time to go home for dinner.

As they waved goodbye to one another, Jeremy grinned. “I've already got something to talk about for the next time we play ‘Conversation Can.’ It’s about the day I thought my cat could speak.”

Jordan and Annie laughed. “It sounds like we’re going to need a lot of marbles!”