

SPEAKING SKILL Asking for and Giving Clarification

When participating in a conversation, you often need to ask for or give clarification. Here are some expressions you can use:

Asking for Clarification

I'm sorry, did you say ... ?
Excuse me, I have a question.
Could you please explain that?
Do you mean that ... ?
I'm afraid I don't understand.

Giving Clarification

No, I said that ...
Let me explain.
Yes, I mean that ...
To put it another way, ...
In other words, ...

A 1.21 Read and listen to the conversation. Write the missing phrases you hear.

Emily: During the lecture, you said that the cowboy tradition in Mexico began in the 1600s. _____ the situation there today?

Professor Diaz: Certainly. Some cowboys in Mexico are workers who live with the cattle and take care of them. The ranches there can be very large, and cattle need to be moved from place to place, so there are still cowboys working in Mexico today.

Liam: You talked about two kinds of cowboys in Mexico. _____ them again?

Professor Diaz: Sure. The most famous cowboys in Mexico are the *charros*. They ride their horses in contests called *charreradas*. The other kind of cowboys are the *vaqueros*—the ones who work with cattle every day.

Liam: _____ What kind of work do *charros* do, exactly?

Professor Diaz: I'll _____. For *charros*, riding horses and roping cattle is mostly a sport, or a hobby. *Charros* have many of the same skills as any cowboy, and they perform those skills for an audience in the *charrerada* events. But for the *vaqueros*, this is their job. It's how they make a living.

Liam: OK. So, Manuel Rodríguez ... the cowboy in the book ... is a *vaquero*, not a *charro*, right? 

Professor Diaz: Exactly!

Emily: Just to clarify, _____ *charros* aren't real cowboys?

Professor Diaz: No, _____ *charros* are a part of the cowboy tradition, but many of them don't do it as actual work.