

# Small Talk

## World of Work

**Kick Off:** Read the two definitions and decide which one is correct.

Option A: "Small talk" refers to informal, easygoing conversations about non-controversial topics which do not require an in-depth discussion. It is used to create a social connection, and in business, to build rapport and make a positive impression.

Option B: "Small talk" is about long, intense discussions on complex, controversial issues. Its purpose is to persuade others or solve big problems. It often involves shouting and arguments, and it requires detailed knowledge of the topic.

**Speaking I:** Discuss the questions as a group.

1. Have you ever attended a networking event?
2. Do you often have online meetings with people you don't know?
3. What are your favourite topics to talk about with people you have just met?
4. Do you think that "small talk" is an art which can be mastered?



**Speaking II:** Which six of the following are appropriate small talk topics?

the weather	illegal activities	music	food and drink	hobbies	personal gossip
weight and appearance	politics	current events	religion	films and series	finances

Extra: Can you think of one good question to ask someone else for each of the appropriate topics?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

**Expressions:** Read the following paragraph and take notes.

In the previous exercise, we identified appropriate small talk topics. However, if it is your very first time talking to the other person, it might be difficult to start the conversation in the first place. So, what is the best way to start up a conversation? There's one simple question which can help you...

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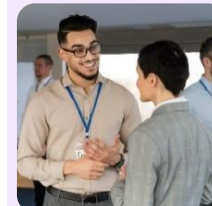
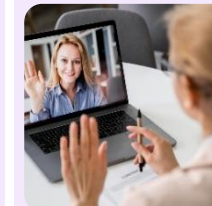
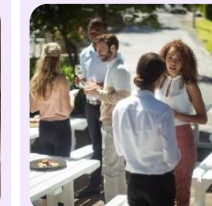
“What do I have in common with the other person?”

Finding common ground is an easy and natural way to start a conversation. Below, you will see sentences which are grouped by categories (in the box above). Match the sentences with the categories:

Both are in the <u>same location</u> .	Both <u>travelled</u> .	Both are in an <u>online meeting</u> .	Both work at the <u>same company</u> .
<p>_____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I really like this building. It's so modern. Have you been here before?</li> <li>This room has a great view, doesn't it?</li> <li>What do you think of the building? I think it's great.</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you see and hear me okay? Great, I can see and hear you fine, too!</li> <li>I love your virtual background. Where is it?</li> <li>I really like your name. Can you tell me how to pronounce it?</li> </ul>		
<p>_____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How did you get here today?</li> <li>Have you found it easy to make your way around the city?</li> <li>How was your trip here? Did you enjoy the flight?</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I don't believe we've met before. Do you also work at [company name]?</li> <li>I believe we work for the same company. Which department do you work in?</li> <li>You don't happen to be [name], do you?</li> </ul>		

### Role Play: Follow the instructions to put your new skills to use.

- Split your group into smaller groups of two or three people.
- Roll a die to determine the location of the small talk:

					
1: modern meeting room	2: pub or restaurant	3: hotel lobby (in another city)	4: networking event	5: online conference	6: outdoor event

- Have a 60-second conversation with a another student, imagining that you just met them.
- Give feedback on your conversation. Was it natural? Was it appropriate?
- Mix up the groups and repeat.