

## Socializing

### Vocabulary

#### A Basic socializing

##### *Function*

Welcoming

##### *Language*

Welcome to ...

We're pleased to welcome you (all) to ...

It's a pleasure to welcome you (all) to ...

Greeting people

How do you do? (formal)

How are you/you doing? (informal)

(So/Very) Nice/Good to meet you.

It's a pleasure (to meet you).

First greeting / neutral

How do you do?

I'm very pleased / delighted to meet you. / It's very nice to meet you.

First greeting / informal

How do you do?

Nice to have you with us. Pleased to meet you.

Greeting people you have met several times before / neutral

It's very nice to see you again. / I'm very pleased to meet you again.

Greeting people you have met several times before / informal

Good / nice to see you / Great to see you. Pleased to meet you again.

Introductions

My name's ... I'm (position/job)

I'd like to introduce myself...

Let me introduce myself...

We haven't met yet. I'm ...

I'd like to introduce you to ...

Have you met...?

Identifying yourself

Hello, I'm...

Hello, my name is...

Hello, let me introduce myself...

I'm...

I'm from...

I work for...

I'm in charge of...

I'm responsible for...

I've got an appointment with...

Small talk	<p>How was your flight/trip?</p> <p>How's the hotel?</p> <p>Did you have any problems/trouble finding us?</p> <p>How's the weather in ...?</p> <p>What do you think of our weather?</p> <p>Could I take your coat/umbrella?</p> <p>Would you care for something to drink?</p> <p>How do you take your coffee/tea ?</p>
Getting to know each other	<p>How long have you been working for...?</p> <p>How did you get into this line of business?</p> <p>How do you like living in ... ?</p> <p>What's your home town?</p> <p>What do you do in your spare time?</p>
Typical everyday contacts	<p>How are you today?</p> <p>How are things?</p> <p>It's (going) fine, thanks.</p> <p>Nice to see you again.</p> <p>I was wondering if...</p> <p>Would you mind if...</p> <p>Could I ask a favour of you?/Could you do me a favour?</p>
Making arrangements	<p>We'd like to invite you to ...</p> <p>Could we arrange a meeting/dinner for... ?</p> <p>Would you be interested in ... ?</p> <p>Would you like to attend/come to ...?</p> <p>What/How about..?</p> <p>Would ... suit you/be convenient?</p> <p>Shall we say (about) 7.00pm?</p> <p>That sounds fine/great.</p> <p>Let me just confirm that...</p> <p>I look forward to seeing you then.</p>
Having drinks	<p>I'd like to get the next round of drinks.</p> <p>Could I propose a toast to ...?</p> <p>Here's to...</p> <p>Cheers!</p> <p>The drinks are on me.</p> <p>I'm treating you.</p>
Saying goodbye / neutral	<p>I'll look forward to seeing you when you're next in London/ next time you're here.</p> <p>I'll see you in a couple of months / on Monday.</p> <p>I'll see you later.</p> <p>I hope you enjoy the rest of your trip.</p> <p>I hope you have a good flight back.</p> <p>I hope the meeting goes well.</p>

Saying goodbye / informal	Bye. See you later. Bye. See you soon.
Phrases indicating you want to end the conversation	I really must be going. They are calling my flight. I really must be leaving. It's rather late and I've got an early morning meeting. I really should be getting back to my hotel. It's getting very late and I've got an early morning flight.
Ending conversations with people you don't know	I have enjoyed meeting you. Good bye. It's been nice meeting you. I have enjoyed talking to you. It's been interesting talking to you.

### **Small Talk**

In most English-speaking countries, it is normal and necessary to make "small talk" in certain situations. Small talk is a casual form of conversation that "breaks the ice" or fills an awkward silence between people. Even though you may feel shy using your second language, it is sometimes considered rude to say nothing. Just as there are certain times when small talk is appropriate, there are also certain topics that people often discuss during these moments. In an English-speaking environment it is often better to make a few mistakes than to say nothing at all!

#### **Small Talk: Who, What, Where, When, Why?**

*WHO makes small talk?*

People with many different relationships use small talk. The most common type of people to use small talk are those who do not know each other at all. Though we often teach children not to talk to strangers, adults are expected to say at least a few words in certain situations (see where). It is also common for people who are only acquaintances, often called a "friend of a friend", to use small talk. Other people who have short casual conversations are office employees who may not be good friends but work in the same department. Customer service representatives, waitresses, hairdressers and receptionists often make small talk with customers. If you happen to be outside when the mailman comes to your door you might make small talk with him too.

**WHAT** do people make small talk about?

There are certain "safe" topics that people usually make small talk about. The weather is probably the number one thing that people who do not know each other well discuss. Sometimes even friends and family members discuss the weather when they meet or start a conversation. Another topic that is generally safe is current events. As long as you are not discussing a controversial issue, such as a recent law concerning equal rights, it is usually safe to discuss the news. Sports news is a very common topic, especially if a local team or player is in a tournament or play-off or doing extremely well or badly. Entertainment news, such as a celebrity who is in town, is another good topic. If there is something that you and the other speaker has in common, that may also be acceptable to talk about. For example, if

the bus is extremely full and there are no seats available you might talk about reasons why. Similarly, people in an office might casually discuss the new paint or furniture. There are also some subjects that are not considered acceptable when making small talk. Discussing personal information such as salaries or a recent divorce is not done between people who do not know each other well. Compliments on clothing or hair are acceptable; however, you should never say something (good or bad) about a person's body. Negative comments about another person not involved in the conversation are also not acceptable: when you do not know a person well you cannot be sure who their friends are. You do not talk about private issues either, because you do not know if you can trust the other person with your secrets or personal information. Also, it is not safe to discuss subjects that society deems controversial such as religion or politics. Lastly, it is not wise to continue talking about an issue that the other person does not seem comfortable with or interested in.

WHERE do people make small talk?

People make small talk just about anywhere, but there are certain places where it is very common. Most often, small talk occurs in places where people are waiting for something. For example, you might chat with another person who is waiting for the bus to arrive, or to the person beside you waiting to get on an aeroplane. People also make small talk in a doctor's or dentist's waiting room, or in queues at the grocery store. At the office, people make small talk in elevators or lunchrooms and even in restrooms, especially if there is a line-up. Some social events (such as a party) require small talk among guests who do not know each other very well. For example, you might talk to someone you do not know at the punch bowl, or at the poolside. It is called "mingling" when people walk around in a social setting and talk to a variety of people.

WHEN do people make small talk?

The most common time for small talk to occur is the first time you see or meet someone on a given day. For example, if you see a co-worker in the lounge you might say hello and discuss the sports or weather. However, the next time you see each other you might just smile and say nothing. If there is very little noise, that might be an indication that it is the right time to initiate a casual conversation. You should only spark up a conversation after someone smiles and acknowledges you. Do not interrupt two people in order to discuss something unimportant such as the weather. If someone is reading a book or writing a letter at the bus stop it is not appropriate to initiate a conversation either. Another good time to make small talk is during a break in a meeting or presentation when there is nothing important going on. Finally, it is important to recognize the cue when the other person wants the conversation to stop.

WHY do people make small talk?

There are a few different reasons why people use small talk. The first, and most obvious, is to break an uncomfortable silence. Another reason, however, is simply to fill time. That is why it is so common to make small talk when you are waiting for something. Some people make small talk in order to be polite. You may not feel like chatting with anyone at a party, but it is rude to just sit in a corner by yourself. After someone introduces you to another person, you do not know anything about them, so in order to show a polite interest in getting to know them better, you have to start with some small talk.

## Small Talk: Conversation Starters

Talking about the weather

- Beautiful day, isn't it?
- Can you believe all of this rain we've been having?
- It looks like it's going to snow.
- It sure would be nice to be in Hawaii right about now.
- I hear they're calling for thunderstorms all weekend.
- We couldn't ask for a nicer day, could we?
- How about this weather?
- Did you order this sunshine?

Talking about current events

- Did you catch the news today?
- Did you hear about that fire on Fourth St?
- What do you think about this transit strike?
- I read in the paper today that the Sears Mall is closing.
- I heard on the radio today that they are finally going to start building the new bridge.
- How about those Reds? Do you think they're going to win tonight?

At the office

- Looking forward to the weekend?
- Have you worked here long?
- I can't believe how busy/quiet we are today, can you?
- Has it been a long week?
- You look like you could use a cup of coffee.
- What do you think of the new computers?

At a social event

- So, how do you know Justin?
- Have you tried the cabbage rolls that Sandy made?
- Are you enjoying yourself?
- It looks like you could use another drink.
- Pretty nice place, huh?
- I love your dress. Can I ask where you got it?

Out for a walk

- How old's your baby?
- What's your puppy's name?
- The tulips are sure beautiful at this time of year, aren't they.
- How do you like the new park?
- Nice day to be outside, isn't it?

Waiting somewhere

- I didn't think it would be so busy today.
- You look like you've got your hands full (with children or goods).
- The bus must be running late today.
- It looks like we are going to be here a while, huh?
- I'll have to remember not to come here on Mondays.
- How long have you been waiting?

## Small Talk: Question Types

Closed (yes/no)

Did you see that film on television?  
Do you live near here?  
Have you been here long?

Open

What about the country?  
Where do you spend your holidays?

Reflections

So, you think..?  
I suppose you are ..?

Statement (expressed to  
encourage a reaction)

I don't like working late.  
Starting later in the morning suits me.

Reactions

Yes, I agree.  
Really?  
That's interesting.  
Me too.