

Small talk – светская беседа

1. Переведите текст
2. Выполните упражнения 1, 2, 3, 4

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 What do you talk about with someone you don't know well?
- 2 What do you do when a conversation is going poorly?



Small Talk

By Hugh Trenchard

It happens to everyone. Somebody introduces you to a friend and then walks away. Now you're standing with somebody you don't know. What do you talk about?

The **weather** is always a possibility. But there isn't always much to say. To make a conversation **flow**, it's better to ask questions. Ask the other person what they do for a **living**, and what their job **involves**. **Discussing** your own former jobs is a good option, too.

Other safe **topics** include your home town and your education. But **avoid** asking people about their **religion**, age and **marital status** until you know them better.



Reading

2 Read this extract from a blog, then complete the table using information from the passage.

When talking to someone you don't know ...	
talk about ...	1 _____
ask about ...	2 _____ what their job involves
discuss ...	jobs you did in the past 3 _____ 4 _____
don't talk about ...	religion 5 _____ marital status

Vocabulary

3 Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank.

word BANK

avoid discuss flow involves living

- 1 What does Heidi do for a _____?
- 2 Graham's job _____ buying supplies.
- 3 _____ personal topics with strangers.
- 4 Helen's conversation with Rick didn't _____.
- 5 Fiona chose not to _____ religion with clients.

4 Match the words (1-5) with the definitions (A-E).

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 __ small talk | 4 __ religion |
| 2 __ weather | 5 __ marital status |
| 3 __ topic | |

- A a polite conversation about everyday things
 B a belief or worship of a god or gods
 C the temperature, rain, clouds and wind
 D the condition of either being married or single
 E a subject for conversation or study

5 Listen and read the blog extract. again. What is the best way to make a conversation flow?

Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between a businessman and a colleague. Check (✓) the topics that are suggested to talk about.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 <input type="checkbox"/> age | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> weather |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> work | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> marital status |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> religion | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> education |

7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

- Businessman:** Sarah, I have to take a phone call. Please make 1 _____ with Mr. Jensen until I'm free.
- Colleague:** But I don't know him! I have nothing to talk to him about.
- Businessman:** Just ask him what he does for a 2 _____.
- Colleague:** But I already know what his work 3 _____. After all, he's our consultant.
- Businessman:** Then why don't you 4 _____ the weather?
- Colleague:** It's not a very interesting 5 _____.
- Businessman:** Well, I'm sure you'll think of something. Just don't bring up his 6 _____.
- Colleague:** Good to know, thanks.

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below, based on the dialogue from Task 7. Then switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

- Can you make small talk with ...?*
Why don't you discuss ...?
Avoid talking about ...

Student A: You cannot meet with a client. Ask Student B to make small talk. Suggest:

- topics to discuss
- topics to avoid

Make up a name for your client and your employee.

Student B: Your boss wants you to make small talk with a client. Ask what to talk about.

Writing

9 Use the conversation from Task 8 and the blog extract to fill out the email.

Dear _____,

You said you are worried about making small talk in your new job. Here are some ideas.

Ask lots of questions because _____.

Ask questions about _____.

You could also discuss _____.

Avoid talking about _____.

At least until _____.

Hope this helps!

