

Tips For Small Talk in English

Skills:

- Can participate in short conversations in routine contexts on topics of interest.
- Can express how they feel in simple terms, and express thanks.

Adults

Group



1 Read the dialogues. Where can they happen and between whom? Complete each box with one of the options.

Options: **coworkers, new friends, neighbors, front yard, office, market**

Person 1

Person 2

Sarah: Hi, Mark. **How was your weekend?**Mark: Hey, Sarah. It was great. **What about you?**

Sarah: I just relaxed at home. Sometimes it's nice not to have any plans, you know?

Mark: **Definitely.** So, how's the new project going for you?

Sarah: The project is challenging but interesting. I'm learning a lot.

Mark: That's great. Good luck with it.

Sarah: Thanks!

Mark: **Have a good day,** Sarah.Sarah: **You too,** Mark. **See you later.**

Person 1

Person 2

Amy: Hi there!

Mr. Brown: Hello Amy, how are you?

Amy: I am good, thanks! **The weather's so** lovely this week, isn't it?

Mr. Brown: Perfect for a barbecue.

Amy: We were planning to have one this weekend too. **What about you** and Mrs. Brown?

Mr. Brown: We're going away for the weekend.

Amy: Where are you going?

Mr. Brown: To the lake house. We love spending time by the water.

Amy: Well, **have a great** vacation, Mr. Brown!Mr. Brown: Thank you, Amy. You **have a great** weekend too!

Person 1

Person 2

Emily: Hi, Mary!

Mary: Hello! **How are you today?**

Emily: I'm good. I came to get veggies for dinner tonight.

Mary: What are you cooking?

Emily: Veggie soup. And you?

Mary: Mashed potatoes for my husband. Got some carrots too.

Emily: Try the fresh ones from this local farm. They're tasty.

Mary: Thanks! Did you hear about tomorrow's weather?

Emily: Rain in the afternoon.

Mary: Oh no, we wanted a barbecue.

Emily: Maybe it will stop by then.

Mary: **Hope so.** Have a nice evening, Emily.Emily: **You too,** Mary. Bye!

2

Discuss in pairs:

1. What topics do these people discuss? Brainstorm some other common topics people discuss during small talk. Be ready to share them with the rest of the group later.
2. What topics are not good for small talk?
3. Have you ever had small talk in English? If so, with whom?
4. Do you like having small talk with people? Why/Why not?

3

Complete these conversations with the words provided:

- Have a great (2)
- hope so
- You know
- See you
- See you later
- What about you
- what about you
- The weather's so
- you too (2)
- have a good day
- Definitely
- how are you today
- how was your weekend

- Hey Lily, _____(1)?

It was great! I went hiking with my family.
_____(2)?

_____(3), I really love your new haircut.

Thank you so much! I'm glad you like it.

Honey, _____(4) at work!

Thanks, _____(5)! _____(6).

_____(7) nice today, isn't it?

_____(8), I hope it stays like this all week.

Hi, _____(9)?

I'm doing well, thank you. How about you?
- _____(10) weekend, Sarah!

Thank you, _____(11)!
_____(12) on Monday.

Hey David, _____(13)?
Are you coming to the party?

I'm not sure yet. I'll tell you tomorrow.

I hope you feel better soon, Lily.

Thank you, Sarah. I _____(14)
too.

_____(15) trip, Tom!

Thanks, you too! Take care.

4

In pairs, come up with a list of questions for small talk (at least 10 questions).

5

Mingling activity: ask your groupmates the questions you prepared and answer their questions.

1. Your teacher will set a timer for 10 minutes.
2. Your goal is to change partners at least 4 times during this time.
3. Begin by moving around the classroom and finding a partner for this activity.
4. Once paired up, take turns asking each other the questions you prepared.
5. When you hear the word "switch," find a new partner and continue the activity with them.
6. Repeat this process until the timer runs out or until you have interacted with multiple classmates.

Correct answers

1

Created in the “Dialogue based on topic” tool.

1. Sarah and Mark: **coworkers** chatting **in the office**.
2. Amy and Mr. Brown: **neighbors** talking in **the front yard**.
3. Emily and Mary: **new friends** having a chat at **the market**.

2

Made in the “Discussion Questions” tool.

3

Created in the “Communicative situations” + “Fill in the Gap” tools.

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. how was your weekend | 9. how are you today |
| 2. What about you | 10. Have a great |
| 3. You know | 11. you too |
| 4. have a good day | 12. See you |
| 5. you too | 13. what about you |
| 6. See you later | 14. hope so |
| 7. The weather's so | 15. Have a great |
| 8. Definitely | |

5

The idea was generated in the “Lead-in activities” tool.

Teacher tip:

- Set a timer for a designated amount of time (e.g., 10 minutes).
- Instruct students to move around the classroom and find a partner to start the activity with.
- Once paired up, students take turns asking each other the questions they prepared. Encourage them to engage in natural conversation by elaborating on their answers and asking follow-up questions.
- After a couple of minutes, signal for students to switch partners and continue the activity with someone else in the class.
- Repeat the process until the timer runs out or until students have had the opportunity to interact with multiple classmates.