



BUSINESS SKILLS

LESSON 1: NETWORKING

MAKING SMALL TALK

AIM OF THE LESSON: TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE SMALL TALK



Version without a key.



READ THE INTRODUCTION TEXT:

Does going to networking mixers where you hardly know anyone make you nervous? **Squeamish** even? Relax. You're not the only one. Making business contacts isn't always easy.

The prospect of having to **mingle with** strangers can be a **daunting** task, but not something you can't learn with a little practice. Plus, it's a useful skill especially for networking purposes. Everyone has their own style when **striking up** a conversation.

Source:

[How to Use Small Talk to Network with Other People | eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/how_4808684_small-talk-network-other-people.html#ixzz16OVJV0MU)
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EXERCISE – VOCABULARY EXERCISE

■ Complete the sentences with the words from the text:

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| strike up | daunting | mingle with | squeamish |
|-----------|----------|-------------|-----------|

1. It can be difficult to _____ a conversation with a complete stranger.
2. You've been talking to Roger all evening - you really ought to be _____ with the other guests.
3. She's really _____ and can't stand the sight of blood.
4. Don't leave me alone with the _____ task of cleaning up the whole house!



NOW THINK and ANSWER:

- Is it important to know how to make a new business contact?
- Is the knowledge of how to make small talk useful while making new business contacts?

- Why is it important to make business contacts?
- Do you know any helpful tips for making new acquaintances in business and in private life?



EXERCISE 1 – SMALL TALK – USEFUL PHRASES

■ WHAT IS A SMALL TALK?

SMALL TALK is a conversation about things which are not important, often between people who do not know each other well.

- Is the sentences below true for you or not:

I don't enjoy parties where I have to make small talk with complete strangers.

- Can you name any other reasons why a small talk can be difficult?



What topics for a small talk do you know? Name as many ideas as you can?

- How would you start a small talk about...:

➔ the weather / a journey / common friends / travelling

- GIVE AS MANY EXAMPLES AS YOU CAN?



EXERCISE 2 – SMALL TALK – USEFUL PHRASES

- MATCH THE SMALL TALK QUESTIONS WITH THE TOPICS!

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| THE WEATHER | WHAT DO YOU DO? |
| YOUR COUNTRY | WHAT DOES YOUR COMPANY DO? |
| JOB | HAVE YOU KNOWN MY FRIEND LONG? HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN ...? |
| PLACE OF WORK | ARE THERE ANY NICE TOURIST ATTRACTIONS HERE? |
| COMPANY | DO YOU TRAVEL A LOT? DO YOU OFTEN GO ON BUSINESS TRIPS? |
| JOURNEY | DO YOU KNOW ... ? / HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS? |
| COMMON FRIENDS | WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE IN ... / WHAT WAS THE WEATHER LIKE WHEN YOU LEFT? |
| TRAVELLING | DO YOU LIKE THE HOTEL? HOW DO YOU LIKE THE HOTEL? IS THE HOTEL RESTAURANT GOOD? |
| WEEKENDS | HAVE YOU HEARD ...? |
| HOTEL | WHAT DO YOU DO AT WEEKENDS? |
| NEIGHBORHOOD | I LIKE YOUR BAG! |
| SOMEONE ELSE'S POSSESSIONS | HOW WAS YOUR FLIGHT? DID YOU HAVE A NICE JOURNEY? |
| EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS IN THE TOWN | DO YOU KNOW THE NEIGHBORHOOD? IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD NICE? |
| THE NEWS | WHERE DO YOU COME FROM? |
| GOSSIP | WHERE DO YOU WORK? |



EXERCISE - 3 – SMALL TALK – USEFUL PHRASES

- Work in pairs. Take turns and ask the questions from previous exercise to each other.
- Try to continue the conversations.



EXERCISE - 4 – SMALL TALK – USEFUL PHRASES

■ COMPLETE THE CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR OWN IDEAS.

1.

- Nice weather, isn't it?
-
- Are you doing anything after the conference?
-
- Do you fancy a ?
- Yes, why not.

2.

- What do you do?
- And you?
-
- Oh, interesting. Do you travel a lot?
-
- And where are your headquarters located?
- And yours?
-
- Do you like the place?

-

3.

- So, how do you know David?

- Oh,

- Really, that's interesting!

- Yeah. And you, how long have you known him?

-



EXERCISE - 4 – SMALL TALK – USEFUL PHRASES - SPEAKING:

■ IMAGINE THE SITUATIONS AND START THE SMALL TALKS:

1. You're meeting a foreign business visitor in your company at the airport. Start a small talk conversation with him / her.
2. You are at a conference. During a coffee break you are meeting a colleague from your overseas office. Start a small talk.
3. You are on a plane. You are sitting to an elderly lady who is reading your favorite book. Start a small talk.
4. You are on a train coming back from your holidays. You are sitting next to a business man who you think you might know from somewhere. Start a conversation and try to find out if you know each other.
5. You are at your friend's party. Your friend has just introduced you to his / her colleague and has mingled back with other friends. Start a conversation with your friend's colleague.



SMALL TALK USEFUL PHRASES - GLOSSARY

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Talking about the weather | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 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 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 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? |
| Welcoming a visitor or a tourist | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Did you have a good journey?➤ How was your flight?➤ Did you have any problems finding us?➤ Are you here on business?➤ What do you think of our city?➤ Is this your first visit to ... ?➤ What was the weather like in ... ? |