

Activity Type

Writing and Speaking
Activity: writing, asking and answering questions, communicative practice (pair work)

Focus

Small talk

Aim

To practice writing, asking and answering questions on common small talk topics.

Preparation

Make one copy of the worksheet for each student.

Also, make one copy of the cards for each pair of students and cut as indicated.

Level

Pre-intermediate (A2)

Time

30 minutes

Introduction

In this small talk activity, students practice writing, asking and answering questions on common small talk topics.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the worksheet.

Read through the small talk information and example questions with the class.

Students then write small talk questions for ten topics using useful question prompts or their own ideas.

Afterwards, review the students' questions as a class.

Next, divide the students into pairs.

Give each pair a set of small talk topic cards.

Ask the students to shuffle the cards and place them face-down in a pile on the desk.

Explain that the students are now going to practice making small talk using the topic cards and the questions they wrote as a guide.

Students then take turns picking up a card and asking a small talk question based on the topic to their partner, who responds and then asks a question of their own.

The aim is to keep the conversation going for one minute.

After one minute, the other student picks up a card, and so on, until all the cards have been used.

Finally, students give feedback on which small talk topics were the easiest and hardest to talk about.

Small talk is a social skill. It is used to make conversation with people you have just met or don't know well. A good way to make small talk is to ask questions.

Here are three reasons why:

1. People enjoy talking about themselves.
2. It's easier for you. You can listen more than talk.
3. You might learn something new or interesting.



What do people talk about?	Safe topics like the weather, current location, hometown, public transport, languages, hobbies and interests, sports, food and drink, the weekend, travel, music, films, local events, the news, etc.
Where do people make small talk?	Anywhere - in an office, a lift, at a bus stop, at an airport, in a cafe, at a party, before a meeting, etc.
Why do people make small talk?	To be friendly, fill time or get to know someone.

Example small talk questions

Weather

- Isn't the weather nice today?
- It's a lovely day, isn't it?

Current location

- Have you been here before?
- What do you think of this place?

Write two small talk questions for each topic.

Useful question prompts: *Do you...? Are you...? Have you (ever)...? What's your...? What do you...? How often do you...? Where do/are you...?*

Hometown

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Public transport

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Languages

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Hobbies and interests

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The weekend

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Travel

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Food and Drink

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Local events

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Work or study

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Music

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The weather	Your current location
Your hometown	Public transport
Languages	Hobbies and interests
The news	Local events
Sports	Food and drink
Music	Films
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