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- 1 What do you know about talking to 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 ...	1 <u>weather</u>
talk about ...	
ask about ...	2 <u>what they do for a living</u> what their job involves
discuss ...	jobs you did in the past 3 <u>former jobs</u>
don't talk about ...	4 <u>education</u> religion 5 <u>age</u> marital status

Vocabulary

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

WORD BANK

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

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

- A small talk
- B weather
- C topic
- D a polite conversation about everyday life
- E a belief or worship of a god or gods

1 Listen and read the blog again. What is the best way to start a conversation flow?

Listening

Listen to a conversation between a businessman and a colleague about the topics that are suggested.

- 1 age
- 2 work
- 3 religion
- 4
- 5
- 6

Listen again and complete the notes.

Businessman: Sarah, I have a call. Please talk to Mr. Jones with Mr. Jones. But I don't want to talk to him. Just ask him to call me.
 Colleague: But I air ...
 Businessman: 2 ...
 Colleague: 3 ...
 Businessman: Then we can discuss it.
 Colleague: It's n ...
 Businessman: Wel ...
 Colleague: 6 ...
 Businessman: G ...

- 1 small talk
2 weather
3 topic

- 4 religion
5 marital status

- 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 age 4 weather
2 work 5 marital status
3 religion 6 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.

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 Louis

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

Ask lots of questions because gets the flow

Ask questions about education, weath

You could also discuss home town

Avoid talking about religion

At least until there's flow on the conversation

Hope this helps!

Angie's Advice

by: Angie Andrews

Dear Chatty Colleague,

Everyone has a colleague that can talk too much. These "little chats" can **take up** a lot of **time**. It is always hard to end the conversation without being **rude**, but there are some things you can do to improve the situation. Here are some polite **phrases** to help you in the future.

- Anyway, I'd better **run**.
- I should **get back** to work now.
- I'm **afraid** I'm very busy at the moment. Can we talk later?
- Unfortunately, I don't **have the time**.

All these phrases signal the end of a conversation, so hopefully your talkative co-worker will let you return to work. Remember to always keep a polite **tone**, so you don't cause **hurt feelings**. Good luck!

Get ready!

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

- 1 When might you have to end a conversation before someone has finished talking?
- 2 What are some phrases people can use to end a conversation politely?

10

Reading

2 Listen and read this excerpt from an advice column. Then, choose the correct answers. How many ways does it give to end a conversation?

- 1 What is the main idea of the advice column?
 A how to politely exit a conversation
 B the proper time for certain conversations
 C ways to improve conversations with co-workers
 D types of conversations not to have at work
- 2 According to the passage, what action will prevent a co-worker from feeling bad?
 A returning to work
 B talking to someone later
 C speaking in the correct tone
 D ending a conversation quickly
- 3 According to the passage, which is NOT true?
 A Small talk at work can cost a lot of time.
 B Ending a conversation can cause hurt feelings.
 C Most offices have a person who talks a lot.
 D It is rude to end a conversation with a co-worker.

Vocabulary

3 Write a word that is similar in meaning to the underlined part.

- 1 The salesman was impolite and unfriendly.
rude
- 2 John needs to return to work.
come back
- 3 Patrick should leave now or he will be late.
be late / run
- 4 Knowing a few foreign groups of words is useful when traveling.
phrases
- 5 Too much conversation at work uses a lot of time.
takes up

Word Bank

busy top
unfortunate

- 1 unfriendly
- 2 Ms. Baker
- 3 The office is late.
- 4 The office people
- 5 Mr. Fox
- 6 Use the conversation

Listening

5 Listen to the colleague as true or false.

- 1 T
- 2 F
- 3 T

6 Listen to the conversation.

Colleague

Colleague

Colleague

Colleague

Colleague

Colleague

Colleague

Colleague

busy tone hurt someone's feelings
unfortunately afraid have a lot of time

- 1 unfortunately Jim will not be attending the meeting.
- 2 Ms. Baker isn't polite and is going to hurt someone's feelings
- 3 The businessmen _____ because their plane is late. have a lot of time
- 4 The office is busy since there are many people working.
- 5 Mr. Fox is afraid that he'll be late.
- 6 Use the right tone of voice in work conversations.

Listening

- 5 Listen to a conversation between two colleagues. Mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).

- 1 F The man recently took a trip.
- 2 F The woman tries to end the conversation.
- 3 F The speakers plan to talk the next day.

- 6 Listen again and complete the conversation.

Colleague 1: Hey John! How are you? How was your 1 vacation?

Colleague 2: Oh, hi Susan. It was wonderful. Aruba is 2 amazing

Colleague 1: Wow! I want to go to the Caribbean. Was the weather nice?

Colleague 2: Yes, the weather was fantastic. And the people are very 3 friendly

Colleague 1: Great. Tell me more. Was it 4 expensive?

Colleague 2: Well, I'm afraid I'm really busy at the moment. Can we talk 5 at lunch?

Colleague 1: Sure, no 6 problem.

Colleague 2: Okay. See you then.

Based on the dialogue from task 6, use your own names. Then switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

How was your ...?

I'm afraid ...

Can we talk later?

Student A: You work with Student B. Talk to him or her about:

- a vacation
- weather
- expenses

Make up a destination for your vacation.

Student B: Answers Student A's questions and politely end the conversation.

Writing

- 8 Use the conversation from Task 7 and the excerpt to complete the email.

Hi Luis,

Sorry to hear so many people are bothering you at work. If I were you, I'd just end the conversation early. After you interrupt them,

just say you need to go. Or you could ask if you could leave because of personal needs.

That's my advice. Hope it helps!



journey.
Best regards,
Lena Jenner

Get ready!

- 1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.
- 1 What kind of errors occur when ordering numbers?
 - 2 Why are numbers so important when giving directions?

Reading

- 2 Read the letter, then mark the following statements as true (T) or false (F).
- 1 T Mr. Canham is taking the train to the office.
 - 2 F Mr. Canham is going to visit Ms. Jenner.
 - 3 T The office is located on Seventh Street.

Vocabulary

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

Word BANK

30th Avenue first 21st of July three blocks second building floor

- 1 The program begins on the 21st of July
- 2 The bank is only three blocks away from here.
- 3 first, take a left when exiting the building.
- 4 Walk up to 30th Avenue and take a right turn.
- 5 The opera house is the second building floor on your left.
- 6 You can purchase tickets on the first floor.

4 Place a check (✓) next to the response that correctly answers the question.

- 1 Does Ms. Canham need directions to the bank?
A No, she goes there every day.
B Yes, she lives two blocks away.
- 2 How long was the journey?
A It's located on the fourth floor.
B It was over two hundred miles.
- 3 Do we have to enter through the main entrance?
A No, it's on the 22rd of May.
B Yes, it's the only way in or out.

Esther Esmeralda Piedra Toro

Esther Smeald Piedra Arce

5 Listen and read the letter again. What should Mr. Canham do if he has a problem?
he should give Lena
Jenny's address call if he has a problem

Listening

6 Listen to a conversation between a receptionist and a client. Choose the correct answers.

- 1 What is the main purpose of the call?
 - A to confirm an appointment
 - B to request instructions
 - C to correct a mistake
 - D to change a meeting time
- 2 Which building is Mr. Dalton's office in?
 - A the fourth
 - B the second
 - C the twenty-first
 - D the first

7 Listen again and complete the conversation.

Client: Hillson and Sons. Mr. Canham ^{1 speaking} How can I help you?

Receptionist: Hi, Mr. Canham. 2 His Lena from Mr. Dalton's office.

Client: Oh, hi Lena. How are you?

Receptionist: I'm well, thanks. I'm 3 actually calling about your visit on July 4 next.

Client: Yes, I received your 5 instructions yesterday.

Receptionist: Oh, good. Well, I'm afraid there's a 6 mistake. Our building is actually the fourth building on the left, not the second.

Client: Okay. Let me make a note of that. Anything else?

Receptionist: No. That's everything.

Speaking

8 With a partner, act out the roles below, based on the dialogue from Task 6. Then switch roles.

USE LANGUAGE SUCH AS:

How can I help you?
I'm calling about ...
Let me make a note of that.

Student A: You want to give directions to your office for an appointment. Talk to Student B about

- the date
- directions

Make up a date for your meeting.

Student B: You are a client of Student A's business. Get directions.

Writing

9 Use the conversation from Task 7 and the letter to complete the directions.

Date of meeting: 7th November

Directions to the office: First, take the "South exit" out of the train station and walk up to Broadway 30th Avenue. Take the third right onto seventh street. Continue straight on down seventh street. Our building is the fourth building on the left.

Office floor #: 14