

## Activity Type

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

## Focus

Small talk

## Aim

To learn and practice how to keep a small talk conversation going by asking questions.

## 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

25 minutes

## Introduction

In this small talk questions activity, students learn and practice how to keep a small talk conversation going by asking questions.

## Procedure

Give each student a copy of the worksheet.

Read through the information on small talk with the class.

Go through the example small talk questions and then have the students write questions of their own for the six small talk topics on the worksheet.

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 topics on the cards and the questions from the worksheet.

Students then take it in turns to pick up a card and start talking about the small talk topic on the card.

Their partner responds with a question and the two students try to keep the conversation going for one minute.

After one minute, the other student picks up a card and the students create small talk on the next topic and so on.

This continues until all the cards have been used.

Afterwards, have a class feedback session to find out which small talk topics were the easiest and hardest to talk about. Also, have the students share anything interesting they found out about their partner.

**Small talk is a social skill. It is used when you speak to people you have just met. A good technique for making small talk is to ask questions.**

There are three reasons for this:

1. People like talking about themselves.
2. It is easier for you to listen.
3. You may learn something interesting.



Small talk	
Who makes small talk?	People who do not know each other. People who know each other a little.
What do people talk about?	Safe topics: the weather, sports, food, work, travel, hobbies, films, current events, the news, etc.
Where do people make small talk?	Anywhere - an office, an elevator, a bus stop, an airport, a cafeteria, etc.
Why do people make small talk?	To be friendly. To fill time. To get to know someone.

Example small talk topics and questions:

**Weather**

- Isn't the weather nice today?
- Isn't this weather terrible?

**Sports**

- Did you see the football game?
- Do you play badminton?

**Write two small talk questions for each topic.**

**The weekend**

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**Music**

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**Work or study**

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**Hobbies and interests**

- What are your hobbies?
- What do you like to do in your free time?

**Food and drink**

- Have you tried that new Thai restaurant?
- What kind of food do you like?

**Holidays**

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**Films**

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**Hometown**

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Hobbies and interests

Work or study

Weather

Holidays

Hometown

Films

Food and drink

Sports

The weekend

Music