

Discussion questions about small talk

conversation questions/ cultural training/ small talk

Work in pairs. Ask one question to your partner, using the follow-up question(s) if you want to extend the conversation. Then take turns asking your partner that same last question, then a new question from the list. Don't look at the questions when it is your turn to answer.

1. How important is small talk in business in your country? (How about humour?)
2. How much small talk does a business meeting usually start with? (What topics do you usually talk about? Is there a clear transition between small talk and the start of the meeting?)
3. What topics are best avoided during small talk? (What makes you say that?)
4. What do you think about sport, shopping and fashion as topics of small talk in a business setting?
5. If you socialise with colleagues, clients, suppliers, etc after work, is it okay to keep on talking about work? (What topics are more common?)
6. How would you start a conversation with someone sitting or standing next to you at a conference? (How could you keep the conversation going?)
7. What things do you think a foreign guest is likely to want to know about your city and country? (What things are they already likely to know?)
8. How does small talk vary from country to country? (Which countries are most similar to and most different from your own?)

Discuss cultural differences as a class.

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