

Tips for small talk:

1. **Initiate the conversation.** Have confidence and initiate the conversation. Doing so will give off an impression that you are confident and interested.
2. **Be aware of your body language:** 90% of communication is from non-verbal cues. Smile, have an open-stance, and speak in an appropriate tone to put others at ease.
3. **Ask a question or make a statement** about the current environment, situation, or weather. Do not start with a random statement or a question.
4. **Be interesting and branch-off.** Try to be informed about current events and have an interesting story to tell. Also, make sure to provide branch-off points:

Example: What did you do on the weekend?

Bad: Oh... nothing. (no details, no information, kills conversation)

Good: Oh... nothing, I just stayed home, ordered chicken and watched "Modern Family" on Netflix. (Branch-off topic: chicken, Netflix, Modern Family)

5. **Focus on the other person and listen carefully.** You should focus on asking questions and be interested in what the other person has to say.
6. **Discuss safe topics** such as movies, sports, and weather. You may get into more serious or specific topic as the conversation progresses. Also, try to let the other person lead you into the topic they are interested in.
7. **Choose your words carefully and be thoughtful.** You do not want to say something to offend the other person. Be careful what you say, because it's difficult to take back what you say.
8. **End the conversation politely or with a plan.** Have an exit strategy before beginning small talk. In case the other person is not interested or the two of you don't have much to discuss. Try to memorize few expressions, like "I have to get back to work, but it was nice talking to you." Or "I need to get back to my office, but I enjoyed talking to you."

Practice: Small talk with your partner

Common small talk topics:

Sports
Current environment
Current events
Hobbies/Interests
Weather
Job