



Small Talk and Communication:

1. Do you think you are a good communicator/talker?
2. What is small talk? What are appropriate topics?
3. How would you feel if a stranger started talking to you?
4. How can we build rapport with people?
5. What are some effective communication tips?

Small Talk...

...is light and informal conversation.

...is used to pass the time.

...is used to prevent awkward silence.

...is used to build rapport.

*We like people who are similar to us.

*We like people who we admire.

Small Talk/Communication Tips:

1. Ask open-ended questions.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Expect to learn/be entertained
4. Provide details/Share information: *Avoid conversation killers*

Example: How was your weekend?

Don't: *It was ok. Nothing special. I didn't do anything. I just stayed home.*

Do: *It was ok. I just ordered some **pizza** and watched "**ABC**" on **Netflix**. Then I took my **dog** for a walk near **my house**.*

Small talk topics:

- Your location
- Entertainment
- Food, restaurants, or cooking
- Their hobbies
- Their professional interests and responsibilities
- Sports
- The climate
- Travel
- Their local favorites

Avoid controversial or sensitive topics:

- Politics
- Religion
- Anything PG-13 and up
- Physical appearance
- Age

Key Language (Small Talk-Initiation):

Greeting:

- How are you?
- Hey, Mark, it's good to see you.
- Ken, nice/pleasure to meet you.
- Hi, I don't think we've met. My name is...
- Hi, you are from..., aren't you?

Compliment:

- That's a pretty nice tie you got on.
- You did a great job on that project.
- That was a really nice presentation you did earlier.
- Is that the new Galaxy Note? Looks really nice.

Find something in common/surrounding/situation:

- Pretty nice day, huh?
- Can you believe all this rain we're having?
- Looks like it's going to be fried rice for lunch.
- First time in New York?
- The food here is really good, isn't it?

Ask for help/a question:

- Excuse me, could you tell me...
- I'm sorry to bother you. I was wondering...
- Hi, could I ask you a quick question?
- Hello, I'm new here and I just wanted to ask...

Key Language (Maintaining/Carrying):

Rejoinders(surprised/positive/negative): It's all in the tone!

- Oh, wow!
- Really?!
- No way... are you serious?
- You're kidding, right?

(PAUSE)

- That's **great/amazing/terrible/too bad**.
- I'm **glad/sorry** to hear that.
- That's **insane/crazy/wild/nuts/unbelievable**. (tone dictates positive/negative)

Asking for more details/clarification: Get them talking!

- So you mean to tell me...
- So let me get this straight...
- So you are saying that...
- So what happened next?
- So what are you going to do?
- So what's next?
- So what do you think...
- Ok, you got to tell me more.
- What exactly do you mean by...?
- Can you elaborate on that?
- You have to fill me in on the details.

Changing topic:

- By the way...
- Anyways...
- Oh, I almost forgot...
- Before I forget...
- It's a little off topic but...
- On the brighter news...
- Guess what? (pause/wait)

Key Language (Small Talk-Ending):

Pleasantry

- It was really nice talking to you.
- It was great meeting you.
- I really enjoyed our conversation.

Excuse

- I have to get back to work.
- I need to get going.
- I need to make a call.
- I have something I gotta do.
- I'm kind of in a hurry.

Future meet up

- Let's grab lunch/dinner sometime.
- I'll talk to you later.
- I'll get up with you later.
- Hit me up later.
- Let's continue the conversation over dinner sometime.

Discussion Questions:

Work

1. If you weren't working here, what would you probably be doing right now?
2. How did you become a [job title]?
3. What surprised you the most about your current job?
4. What's the craziest thing a boss has ever asked you to do?
5. Would you rather work four 10-hour days or five eight-hour days?
6. If you were guaranteed to be successful, what job would you want?
7. What was your first job? Did you like it?
8. What's the best career advice you've ever received? How about the worst?

Entertainment

9. Are you reading any good books right now? I'd love some recommendations. How about shows?
10. Are there any apps on your phone that you can't live without?
11. If you could only watch one genre of movies for the rest of your life, what would it be?
12. What's a book you hated that everyone else loved, and vice versa?
13. Do you have any podcast suggestions for my commute?
14. What's the last movie that made you cry? Or laugh aloud?
15. Who is your favorite person to follow on Instagram?

Food

17. If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?
18. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
19. What's your go-to comfort food?
20. Are there any foods that you absolutely would not eat?
21. What's something that's easy to bring in for lunch that isn't a sandwich?
22. What are the best cheap eats around here?
23. Does your family have any "secret" or famous recipes?
24. What's your favorite restaurant that other people don't tend to know about?

Travel

25. What's the best "hidden gem" around here?
26. If you could fly anywhere for free, where would you go?
27. What's the coolest road trip you've ever been on?
28. Where's the last place you traveled? What did you do there?
29. Do you prefer action-packed vacations or relaxing on the beach?
30. What's the next trip you have planned?
31. If you could take a workcation or sabbatical, where would you go and what would you do?
32. What's your favorite thing to do around here on the weekends?

Life Story

33. Where did you live before this? What are the biggest differences you see?
34. What did you think you were going to be growing up?
35. Do you have any hidden talents or surprising hobbies?
36. What was your favorite extracurricular in elementary school?
37. What was the must-have accessory or item when you were growing up?
38. What's the most unbelievable thing that's ever happened to you?
39. Who's the most important role model or mentor you've had in your life?
40. What's the best piece of advice you've ever received?

Totally Random

41. If you were in charge of picking the eighth wonder of the world, what would you choose?
42. What do you wish you had placed in a time capsule 15 years ago?
43. What's the strangest compliment you've ever gotten?
44. Have you ever thought of a cool invention or company, only to discover someone had already invented or started it?
45. If you could teach a college course on any subject you want, what would it be?
46. What's the most out-of-character thing you've ever done?
47. What would be your ideal superpower?
48. If you could have any type of animal for a pet, what would it be?