

Small Talk

Quick Mastery Guide



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About Me

To briefly introduce myself, I help business professionals improve their English communication and presentation skills to increase their chances of working in a foreign country or landing their dream job.

In my career as an English teacher, I have worked with many professionals from Mainland China, Japan, South Korea, and other Asian countries and I always felt that the material they were given did not suit their needs.

This is why I felt the need to make a suitable program, especially for business professionals from Asian countries who want to further their career.

My name is Inge and I live in The Netherlands. I live in Groningen in the north of The Netherlands. It's a University town with lots of students from all over the world.

It is a lovely city with a lot of history and historic buildings. The atmosphere is friendly and relaxed.

I hope you enjoy this Small talk guide!



What is 'small talk'

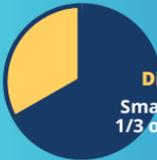
and how can it help you in your career?

Small talk is short conversations about everyday topics, such as the weather, news and sports.

In business, being able to **make small talk comfortably and confidently** is a **key skill** that can **lead to great opportunities** in your career.

This is because **small talk helps you build relationships with people**, and often **leads to longer and more important conversations**.

Let's focus on some **key phrases and strategies** we can use to make small talk in English simple and enjoyable.



Did you know?

Small talk makes up 1/3 of human speech.



7 Strategies

to become a pro at making small talk

- 1 Be the **first** to say hello and introduce yourself. **Take the initiative and break the ice.** Others will be thankful you did.

(Break the ice = doing or saying something in a social situation that makes other people feel comfortable.)

- 2 **Ask questions** about the other person and what you perceive their interests and passions to be. The more the other person talks about what they are interested in, the more they will enjoy the conversation with you.

- 3 Use **'open' questions** instead of 'closed' questions.

"Is everything ok?" = closed

"How are things going with you?" = open

"Do you enjoy your job?" = closed

"How do you feel about your job?" = open

- 4 **Be a good listener.**

- 5 **Show your interest.** (we'll take a look at some phrases in the next section you can use to do this).

- 6 **Find out** what you and the other person **have in common.**

- 7 **Extend the conversation.** Once you know someone's interests and what you have in common, it will be easy to keep the conversation going. Remember to use 'open' questions ;)

Introducing yourself

Introducing yourself in English is very simple;
“Hi, I’m _____”

Usually the other person will share their name, and you can respond with: “**It’s great to meet you, (name)**”



Extra tip: Use a **strong adjective** to create a **better first impression**, e.g. nice -> great

If the other person doesn’t tell you their name (or you met them earlier and forgot it), you can say: “I’m sorry, I didn’t catch your name (earlier)”



Top Tip: Once you know a person’s name, **use it immediately**. This will make the other person feel more comfortable in your presence. It will also make it easier for you to remember that person’s name the next time you meet them.

*“A **person’s name** is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language.”*

- Dale Carnegie.

Showing interest

when making small talk

When we are **very interested or surprised** our voice is higher and louder. Use a **rising intonation** ↗ to communicate this.

Here are some English phrases you can practise using.

Normal Response

- Uh-huh.
- Got it.
- That's interesting.
- Oh, I see.
- Right.

Stronger Response

(higher intonation)

- Really? ↗
- Wow! That's amazing! ↗
- That's incredible! ↗
- No way! ↗
- You're joking! ↗

What to say *when there's a misunderstanding*

If a misunderstanding happens, don't worry! **It's totally normal.** **The most important thing** is that you know how to deal with them when they do.

Here are some **useful English phrases** you can use to get the conversation back on track.

When you don't understand the other person

1. What do you mean exactly?
2. I'm sorry, I'm not sure what you mean.
3. I'm sorry, I'm not sure I follow.
4. I'm afraid I don't follow.

When the other person doesn't understand you

1. What I mean is ... (summarize your main point)
2. In other words... (summarize your main point)
3. Basically, (summarize your main point)



Client case study

How Josh went from anxiety, low confidence, and a constant fear of making mistakes, to a confident English communicator.

Josh is an awesome **professional with an abundance of experience and technical skills**. Unfortunately, due to a **lack of confidence and practice communicating in English**, he was **struggling to reach his potential at work**. He felt **shy speaking** with colleagues and clients and opportunities to advance in his career were passing him by.

By following the guidance of my **10-week Spoken English Program for Marketing Professionals** and learning to communicate confidently in important professional situations, he has seen satisfying **growth in just months**.

- ✓ He's already communicating with **more fluency**.
- ✓ He's making **fewer mistakes**.
- ✓ His **anxiety** is starting to **vanish**.

*By working on his English communication skills, Josh has already **accelerated his professional progress**, and I'm excited to see the opportunities are waiting for him in the future.*



*Being able to make small talk effectively is a powerful skill, **but alone it isn't enough!***

Here's what you need to do!

- 🎯 **Expand your key vocabulary and practice regularly** so you can feel more confident expressing yourself in English with your colleagues, bosses and clients at work.
- 🎯 **Focus on your pronunciation** so you can avoid embarrassing misunderstandings when speaking up in meetings or on calls.
- 🎯 **Learn how to write professional emails and messages** in English which means you'll save time and feel less anxious the next time you need to hit that send button.

It's taken me years of blood, sweat, and tears to develop the **most effective strategies** to help you achieve all of the above

I share these exact **proven strategies** in my **10-week Spoken English Program for Marketing Professionals**.



*If you're interested in learning more, **send me a private message on LinkedIn saying "SMALL TALK!"** and we can figure out how I can help you.*

Thank you!

Thank you for downloading
my guide about Small talk



Making small talk confidently and comfortably is a **key skill that can lead to great opportunities**. The more you practise, the more confident you'll become, and the more **you'll start to enjoy it**.

Inge, Martens

