

♦ Unit 9 ♦
Using Small Talk Part One
♦ *Focus on the Conversation*

Strategy Exercise 1:

Step 1: With a partner, read the dialogs. Think about which people you would like to talk to at a party.

You: How was your day?

Curt: Fine.

You: How was your day?

Mari: Fine. I heard a really interesting story at work.

You: How was your day?

Luis: It was good. But I'm ready to start the weekend. I've got some great plans.

You: How was your day?

Jay: OK.

Step 2:

Answer the question: At a party, which two people (above) would you like to talk to?

Curt, Mari, Luis, or Jay? _____

Why? _____

Exercise 2:

Some people start a conversation with you. Choose the best "small talk" responses.

Situation 1: *You are sitting on an airplane.*

Passenger next to you: "Where are you flying to today?"

You: (Choose one.)

a) Home.

b) I'm going to Vancouver. How about you?

Situation 2: *You are walking in the park with your dog.*

Person in the park: "You have a beautiful dog."

You: a) Thank you. His name is Jake.

b) Thank you.

Situation 3: You just sat down at a table in a restaurant.

Waiter: “How are you today?”

You: a) Great! Have you had a busy day?

b) Great! I want a sandwich.

Situation 4: You are drinking coffee in a cafeteria at your job.

Co-worker: “Have you worked here for a long time?”

You: a) I started about a week ago. It seems like a good place to work.

b) I started about a week ago.

Situation 5: You are at school. You are taking a break outside.

Classmate: “Isn’t this a beautiful day?”

You: a) Yes, it is. Do you have plans to enjoy the sunshine after school?

b) Yes, it is.

Exercise 3: With a partner or alone, write “small talk” responses.

Situation 1: You are at party for Steve.

Person at a party: “Hi. Are you a friend of Steve’s?”

You: _____



Situation 2: You are sitting in a classroom. You are waiting for the teacher.

Classmate: “How do you like this class?”

You: _____

Situation 3: You are standing in line to buy a movie ticket.

Person in front of you: “I heard that this is a good movie.”

You: _____

Situation 4: You are waiting for an elevator.

day, isn’t it?

You: _____

Exercise 4: With a partner or alone, for each situation, write two possible answers:

one question and one response.



(Example) Situation: *You are sitting on a bench in a park.*

Person sitting next to you: “This is a beautiful park, isn’t it?”

You: Yes, it is beautiful. Do you come here often? (question)
Yes, it is beautiful. It's a great place to relax. (response)

Situation 1: *You are taking the bus to the shopping mall.*

Passenger: “I think it’s going to snow.”

You: _____ (question)
 _____ (response)

Situation 2: *You are sitting in a classroom.*

Classmate: “Are you a new student at this school?”

You: _____ (question)
 _____ (response)

Situation 3: *You are at work.*

Co-worker: “How was your weekend?”

You: _____ (question)
 _____ (response)

Situation 4: *You are taking a break in a lunch room at your job.*

Co-worker: “Do you have plans for the weekend?”

You: _____ (question)
 _____ (response)

Part Two ♦ Practicing the Conversation Strategy

Exercise 5:

Student A

Step 1: Read line 1. Student B will choose a response and read it. Then you choose a response and read it, etc.

1. Nice party, isn't it?
3. • That's amazing. Did you hear that on the radio? • Yes, I am. And I work with Ann too.
5. • Usually when it rains. • I'm a doctor. How about you? What do you do?
7. • Really! What kind of work do you do with computers? • Sure. I can do that tomorrow.

Step 2: Student B will start. Then you choose and read a response, etc.

2. • Yes, it is. Do you shop here often? • Yes, I am. I just finished school.
4. • That's too bad. I hope you feel better soon. • I work on Mondays. I usually shop on the weekend.
6. • I hope it doesn't rain today. • We are having a birthday party for my father, so I am shopping for a cake.
8. • He's 65 years old. • He's waiting in my car.

Step 3: Change parts with your partner. You will be Student B and do Ex. 5 again.

Step 4: While you wait for your classmates to finish, you can . . .

- talk to your partner about any topic that you want.
 - ask your partner these questions and have a conversation.
1. Do you go to parties often?
 3. What kind of job do you want to have in the future?

Exercise 5 *continued:*

Student B

Step 1: Student A will start. Then you choose and read a response, etc.

2. • Yes, it's very sunny. Where do you live? • Yes, it is a nice party. Are you a friend of Ann's?
4. • I see. What kind of work do you do? • That's too bad. What happened?
6. • Anne was my roommate in college. • I work with computers.
8. • I fix them for people who have problems. • No, it's kind of expensive.

Step 2: Read line 1. Student A will choose a response and read it. Then you choose a response and read it, etc.

1. This store is very busy today.
3. • Usually, I come on Mondays because it isn't so crowded on that day. How about you? • I work in a bank.
5. • Uh huh. That's a great movie. Did you like it? • Uh huh. What are you shopping for today?
7. • Oh, yeah? How old is he? • I'm sorry to hear that. You could go to a bakery.

Step 3: Change parts with your partner. You will be Student A and do Ex. 5 again.

Step 4: While you wait for your classmates to finish, you can . . .

- talk to your partner about any topic that you want.
 - ask your partner these questions and have a conversation.
4. Do people have big birthday parties in your country?

Exercise 6:



- 1) Silently read the lines in the dialog below.
- 2) With a partner or alone, complete the dialog.

Situation: *Eric and Yumi are having a conversation outside their houses.*

1. **Eric:** Isn't this a beautiful day, Yumi?
2. Yumi: _____
3. **Eric:** I see. Where do you play tennis?
4. Yumi: _____
5. **Eric:** I have to pick up my younger sister from school.
6. Yumi: _____

7. **Eric:** She's in first grade. Do you have any brothers or sisters?
8. Yumi: _____

9. **Eric:** Wonderful! Does he like to play tennis too?
10. Yumi: _____

11. **Eric:** That's amazing! Maybe he will become a professional someday.
Well, I have to go now. It was nice talking to you.
12. Yumi: _____

Exercise 7:***Student A*****Step 1:**

- 1) Silently read the situations.
- 2) Read the sentence in Situation 1 to Student B. Then have a short conversation with Student B for about 30 seconds.
- 3) Change partners and read the sentence in Situation 2 to a new Student B and have a short conversation for about 30 seconds. Then change partners again and read the sentence in Situation 3, etc.

Situation 1: *You are at Christine's party.*

Say this to Student B: "Are you a friend of Christine's?"

Situation 2: *You are taking a walk in a park. You see Student B with a baby.*

Say this to Student B: "How old is your baby?"

Situation 3: *You are waiting at a bus stop.*

Say this to Student B: "It seems that the bus is late today."

Situation 4: *You are taking a break at work.*

Say this to Student B: "Did you see the game on TV last night?"

Situation 5: *You are standing outside your house.*

Say this to Student B: "This is a really nice neighborhood."

Step 2:

- 1) Look at Situation 6. Student B will say a sentence to you. Then have a short conversation with Student B for about 30 seconds.
- 2) Then look at Situation 7 and talk to a new Student B for about 30 seconds, etc.

Situation 6: *You are at a party at Tom's house.*

Situation 7: *You are sitting in a classroom.*

Situation 8: *You are walking in a park.*

Situation 9: *You are in the lunch room at work.*

Situation 10: *You are at school. You are taking a break outside.*

Exercise 7 *continued:***Student B****Step 1:**

- 1) Silently read the situations.
- 2) Look at Situation 1. Student A will say a sentence to you. Then have a short conversation with Student A for about 30 seconds.
- 3) Then look at Situation 2 and talk to a new Student A for about 30 seconds, etc.

Situation 1: *You are at Christine's party.*

Situation 2: *You are taking a walk in a park. You are carrying a baby.*

Situation 3: *You are waiting at a bus stop.*

Situation 4: *You are taking a break at work.*

Situation 5: *You are standing outside your house.*

Step 2:

- 1) Read the sentence in Situation 6 to Student A. Then have a short conversation with Student A for about 30 seconds.
- 2) Change partners and read the sentence in Situation 7 to a new Student A and have a short conversation for about 30 seconds. Then change partners again and read the sentence in Situation 8, etc.

Situation 6: *You are at a party at Tom's house.*

Say this to Student A: "Are you enjoying the party?"

Situation 7: *You are sitting in a classroom.*

Say this to Student A: "Are you an international student?"

Situation 8: *You are walking in a park.*

Say this to Student A: "Do you like this new park?"

Situation 9: *You are in the lunch room at work.*

Say this to Student A: "You look a little tired today."

Situation 10: *You are at school. You are taking a break outside.*

Say this to Student A: "I read in the newspaper that it's going to rain tonight."