



20

WHEN I ARRIVED at the Hydro Bar, the women, who were wearing fashionable dresses and smart suits, were giggling nervously as they put on badges with a number on them. 'Maybe my jeans are a bad idea,' I thought. I chatted to other people while we waited. People I spoke to said they had doubled the number of dates they had in a year with just one night of speed dating. The men included a chef, a banker, a photographer, an engineer, a management consultant, and a novelist. They were just pleased they could stop having to try to chat up strangers in bars: 'It's so hard to meet girls in London. With speed dating you meet 20 or 30 single girls in one night,' said one man. 'You can't talk to girls at salsa classes,' said another. Matt, 28, said, 'After doing this once I got several dates. There's a good atmosphere; it's safe and it's really good. It's like being at a party with lots of single women.'

Then it started. I made eye contact with the girl next to me so we could compare our opinions of the men; we raised our eyebrows for a possibility, exchanged a smile if the man was good-looking, and made a grimace if he made three minutes feel like three hours.

I thought it was boring just to ask questions like 'What do you do?' or 'Where are you from?' so I tried to think of more interesting and imaginative questions to ask, like 'If you could be an animal, what animal would you be and why?'

In the end I ticked six boxes. A couple of days later, I was told that four of the men had ticked me too. Four new dates. Not bad in 66 minutes.

Glossary 2

- 1 _____ a small piece of metal, plastic, or cloth with words or a design on it
- 2 _____ an expression on your face that shows you are in pain
- 3 _____ laugh in a silly way because you are amused or nervous
- 4 _____ move the line of hair above your eye upwards
- 5 _____ ^{ph} talk (to sb) in a friendly way because you are attracted to them
- 6 _____ talk in a friendly, informal way

- f Complete Glossary 2 with the correct word or phrase.
- g Using your own words, answer questions 1–4 with a partner.
 - 1 Why did the journalist feel a bit uncomfortable at first?
 - 2 What kind of men went to this speed dating evening?
 - 3 What kind of signs did she make to the girl next to her? What for?
 - 4 What kind of questions did she think worked best?
- h Do you think speed dating is a good way of meeting people? If you were looking for a partner, would you try it? What questions would you ask?

5 LISTENING

a Listen to a radio programme about speed dating. A man and a woman who have both tried it talk about their experiences. How successful was it for them?

b Listen again. Then answer the questions with E (Emily), A (Alex), or B (both).

Who...?

- 1 preferred to ask normal questions
- 2 was asked an unusual question
- 3 was asked the same question again and again
- 4 got the fewest matches
- 5 had a disastrous date because he / she wasn't feeling well
- 6 was invited on a date which never took place
- 7 had a good date in spite of having had some bad news
- 8 realized on a date that his / her first impression was wrong
- 9 says he / she isn't planning to go speed dating again

c Does hearing about Emily and Alex's experiences make you feel more or less positive about speed dating?

6 SPEAKING

GET IT RIGHT reacting and asking for more information

When you ask someone a question and they answer, it is normal to show interest, e.g. *Really?*, *Oh yes?*, *Yes, me too*, *Me neither*, *I know what you mean*, or by asking for more information, either with another question, e.g. *And what happened then?* or simply with a question word, e.g. *Why?* *When?*, etc.

- a You are going to do 'speed questioning' with other people in the class. Before you start, think of five questions to ask.
- b When your teacher says 'Start', you have three minutes to talk to the person next to you. Ask and answer each other's questions and ask for more information. When the teacher says 'Change', stop and go and talk to another student.
- c Which questions were the best for finding out about other students?