# Small talk

*GET READY!*

*1- WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT WITH SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW WELL?*

*2- WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN A CONVERSATION IS GOING POORLY?*

*READING*

## Small Talk

By Hugh Trenchard

It happens to everyone. Somebody introduces you to a friend and then walks away. Now you're standing with somebody you don't know. What do you talk about?

The **weather** is always a possibility. But there isn't always much to say. To make a conversation **flow**, it's better to ask questions. Ask the other person what they do for a **living**, and what their job **involves**. **Discussing** your own former jobs is a good option, too.

Other safe **topics** include your home town and your education. But **avoid** asking people about their **religion**, age and **marital status** until you know them better.

**2 Read this extract from a blog, then complete the table using information from the passage.**

| When talking to someone you don't know ... | |
|---|---|
| talk about ... | 1 _____ |
| ask about ... | 2 _____ what their job involves |
| discuss ... | jobs you did in the past<br>3 _____<br>4 _____ |
| don't talk about ... | religion<br>5 _____ marital status |

*VOCABULARY*

**3 Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the word bank.**

WORD BANK

avoid discuss flow involves living

1 What does Heidi do for a _____?
2 Graham's job _____ buying supplies.
3 _____ personal topics with strangers.
4 Helen's conversation with Rick didn't _____.
5 Fiona chose not to _____ religion with clients.

*LISTENING*

**6 Listen to a conversation between a businessman and a colleague. Check (✓) the topics that are suggested to talk about.**

1 ❑ age
2 ❑ work
3 ❑ religion
4 ❑ weather
5 ❑ marital status
6 ❑ education

**7 Listen again and complete the conversation.**

**Businessman:** Sarah, I have to take a phone call. Please make 1 _____ _____ with Mr. Jensen until I'm free.
**Colleague:** But I don't know him! I have nothing to talk to him about.
**Businessman:** Just ask him what he does for a 2 _____.
**Colleague:** But I already know what his work 3 _____. After all, he's our consultant.
**Businessman:** Then why don't you 4 _____ the weather?
**Colleague:** It's not a very interesting 5 _____.
**Businessman:** Well, I'm sure you'll think of something. Just don't bring up his 6 _____ _____.
**Colleague:** Good to know, thanks.