

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 3 _____ 4 _____ |
| don't talk about ... | religion 5 _____ marital status |

VOCABULARY

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

word BANK

avoid discuss flow involves living

- What does Heidi do for a _____?
- Graham's job _____ buying supplies.
- _____ personal topics with strangers.
- Helen's conversation with Rick didn't _____.
- 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 <input type="checkbox"/> age | 4 <input type="checkbox"/> weather |
| 2 <input type="checkbox"/> work | 5 <input type="checkbox"/> marital status |
| 3 <input type="checkbox"/> religion | 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 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