



- What is the liking gap?
- What should you do in a conversation to be considered more likable?
- Why are follow-up questions important?
- What should you avoid in a conversation?
- What are the benefits of small talk?

Small Talk conversation lesson

level: pre-intermediate (A2)+

class: one-to-one/group

time: 30/60 min.

skills: speaking, listening

Note

This lesson comes with a ready-made [Genially](#) board game, which can be used as a part of this lesson plan (60 min.) or as a separate activity (30 min.). The board game is reusable and can be used as a template for other creations, so you can adapt the material to your students' needs.

Warm up

1. Make a little small talk with the students, **chatting** about their weekend, holiday plans, the weather or anything else. Don't let this stage take too long, though.

Conversation

2. Tell the students that today you're going to talk about **small talk**. Ask: 'How do you feel about small talk? Has that changed compared to pre-covid times? When was the last time you made small talk with someone? What did you talk about?'

To talk or not to talk about...

3. Using a virtual board, put together a list of the **best and worst small talk topics**. The best topics might include the weather, hobbies, sports, culture and entertainment, travel, work or family. Some of the topics that are considered the worst are politics, religion, finances, sex, death, personal gossip, appearance and offensive topics.
4. Ask the students if they have a favourite small talk topic.

How to master small talk

5. Watch an excerpt of this [video clip](#) (0:50 – 3:09) and answer the questions in worksheet 1. (a. a phenomenon when people underestimate how much other people like them and enjoy their company; b. ask more questions; c. they show you're actively listening; d. using your phone/texting; e. you might find a job, it increases your sense of belonging and happiness)

Snakes & ladders

6. To practise small talk, play this [board game](#) of snakes and ladders. You can read the instructions when you click on the book icon on the right.
You can either share your screen and move the counters for your students, or, if you're teaching one-to-one, you can send the link to the student and have them share their screen as they play.
7. As an optional extension activity, you can put an extra task on some of the questions and **role-play** them in pairs rather than just answer them as a monologue. If you're teaching a student one-to-one, play the role of the second person yourself. Remember to ask follow-up questions!
(Don't use the extension activity with all the questions as that would take too much time.)

Cooler

8. Pick one question from the board game that each student struggled with. Let them take their time to think about it and have another go at answering it.