

## Lesson 2

# SMALL TALK AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

### SMALL TALK

#### Safe topics

1a Look at the list of safe and taboo topics for small talks. Add three more into each category.

SAFE TOPICS	TABOO TOPICS
the location	religion
weather	finances
jobs	age/appearance
free time	sex
food	death

1b Complete the missing words. Add three questions to the last category.

#### Talking about the weather

Beautiful day, isn't .....?  
Can you believe all of this rain we've been .....?  
It looks like it's ..... to snow.

#### Talking about current events

Did you hear about that fire ..... Fourth St?  
I read in the ..... today that the Sears Mall is closing.  
I heard on the radio today that they are finally going to ..... building the new bridge.

#### At a social event

So, ..... do you know Justin?  
..... you tried the cabbage rolls that Sandy made?  
Are you enjoying .....?

#### Jobs

What do you ..... for a living?  
How ..... business?  
Have you always ..... in this department?

#### Free time

.....  
.....  
.....

### Small talk strategies

- **Ask open-ended questions.**
- **Practice active listening.**
- **Show enthusiasm and sympathy.** *Really? That's amazing! That's incredible! That's fantastic!  
You're joking! You're kidding!  
Really? Oh no! That's awful! That's terrible!*
- **Pay compliments.** *I love your dress. Can I ask where you got it?*

### At a party

#### 2 Read the small talk below and find 6 mistakes.

**Woman 1:** (Standing in a corner drinking a glass of wine by herself)

**Man:** Hi there. Why aren't you dancing?

**Woman 1:** (Smiles. No response.)

**Man:** Hello. Have you tried Felicia's punch yet?

**Woman 2:** No, but I was just about to.

**Man:** Don't. It's terrible.

**Woman 2:** Oh. Okay.

**Man:** So, how do you know Rick?

**Woman 2:** Oh, Rick and I go way back. We studied nursing together.

**Man:** Nursing. Hmm. I heard on the radio today that all of you nurses are on strike. Are they not paying you enough?

**Woman 2:** Actually it's about working conditions.

**Man:** I see. So, have you had a chance to take a dip in the pool yet?

**Woman 2:** No, not yet. How about you?

**Man:** No, I need to lose some weight before I put on a bathing suit. But you have a great figure.

**Woman 2:** Uh, thanks. Well, I better go and mingle. There are a few people I haven't said hello to yet.

**Man:** Wait! Did you hear that the Pope is coming to town?

**Woman 2:** Ya. I heard that on the news today. I bet it'll be really tough to get to see him.

**Man:** I know. But I'm not Catholic anyway. Are you?

**Woman 2:** Yes, I am actually. Well, it looks like the sun is finally coming out. I think I'll go take that swim.

**Man:** You'd better hurry. I hear they are calling for thunderstorms this afternoon.

## INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS

### Culture and entertainment

#### 3a Complete the missing letters.

1. a group of people who are involved in the practical and technical business of shooting a film – F \_ \_ \_ C \_ \_ W
2. a report in the media in which someone gives their opinion of a new film – R \_ \_ IE \_
3. the main events of a play, novel, film, or similar work – P \_ \_ \_
4. an artist who makes statues – SC \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
5. a series of extracts from a film or broadcast, used for advance publicity – TRA \_ \_ \_ \_
6. the place at the theatre where people can leave their coats – CL \_ \_ KR \_ \_ M
7. to practise it in order to prepare for a performance – R \_ H \_ \_ \_ SE
8. a person who writes the words for films or radio or television broadcasts – SC \_ \_ PTWR \_ \_ ER
9. a person who writes music, especially classical music – C \_ \_ P \_ \_ ER
10. an unexpected change or development in a story – T \_ \_ \_ \_

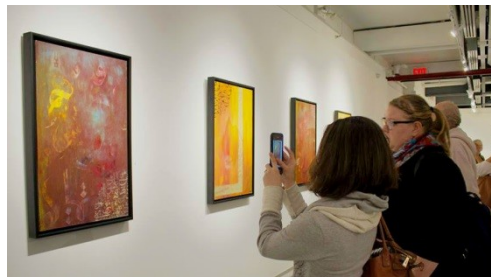
#### 3b Match the words to their meaning.

blockbuster	tearjerker	out of tune
boo	usher(ette)	still life
conductor	moving	gripping
mediocre	deadly dull	skilled

Words	Meanings
	a person in the orchestra who direct the musicians
	to show disapproval of a performer
	very boring
	a person or musical instrument that does not produce exactly the right notes is
	a person who shows people to their seats, especially in a cinema or theatre
	a painting or drawing of an arrangement of objects, typically including fruit and flowers
	a very sad or sentimental movie
	having the ability and experience to do something well
	of only average quality
	exciting
	a film or book that is very popular and successful, usually because it is very

	exciting
	producing strong emotion, especially sadness or sympathy

**4 Compare and contrast the different types of entertainment shown in the photos. Which one do you prefer?**



**General questions**

**5 Work in pairs. Choose three questions that you find interesting. Ask your partner.**

- Have you ever been to an amusement park?
- What was the last book you read?
- Do you like to cook?
- Have you ever lived in another country?
- Have you ever met a famous person?
- Do you like pets? Do you have any?
- How do you feel about your country's traditional music?

Sources:

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