

Making small talk

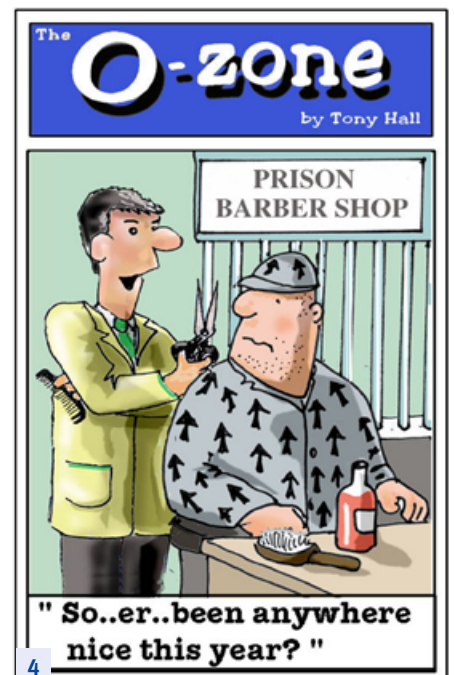
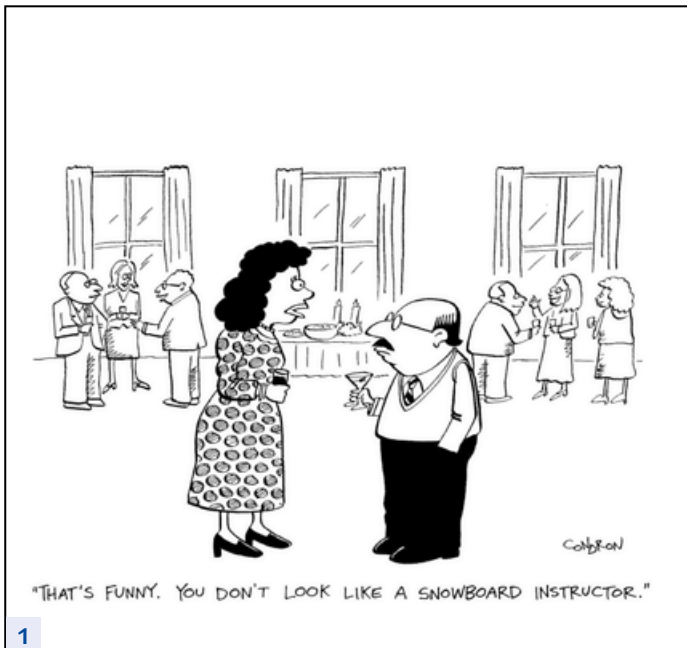
Would you like to work on your small talk skills a bit more? Here are some more things to think about.

Cartoon time!

Which rules of small talk are the people breaking?
For each situation, make suggestions for appropriate small talk.

Word bank

be direct / honest / friendly / polite / impolite |
show interest | pay attention to |
hog a conversation | judge / upset someone |
embarrassing situation | appropriate topic



barber shop [ˈbɑːbə ˈʃɒp] Frisörladen

The next time you practise small talk, use the following tips and phrases. They can help you with different small talk situations.

Talking about the weather

It's a national joke that British people like to make small talk about the weather. But actually, it often happens!

The weather is always around and anyone can talk about it. So when you don't want to have a personal or serious conversation, it's a safe topic. Talking about the weather is especially common for very short small talk conversations, for example in shops or at the bus stop. The usual answer is to agree with the comment.

Examples:

"It isn't very nice today, is it?" – "No, it isn't."
"Isn't it lovely today?" – "Not bad for the time of year."



Useful phrases

It's a bit better / worse than yesterday. | It almost feels like summer. |
There's not a cloud in the sky! | The weather forecast says it's going to ... |
At least it's not too windy. | I think it'll clear up later.

How would you reply to the weather comments in the cartoon?

How to keep a conversation going

It can be difficult to keep a conversation going. Here are some more tips:

Don't just ask yes / no questions.

Use open-ended questions ("WH-questions") to give the other person the chance to tell a story.

Show you are listening.

While the other person is talking, use short phrases to show your interest and understanding.

Change the subject.

If the conversation gets stuck, it can help to move to a new topic.

Useful phrases

What's your favourite subject? Why? |
How do you know (the name of the host)? |
Where would you like to go on holiday?

That's great / wonderful / awful / surprising!
I understand. | I agree. | Exactly!
I can't believe it! | Really? | No way!

By the way ... | That reminds me of ... |
Speaking of London, did you know ...?

especially [ɪ'speʃli] besonders; vor allem | common ['kɒmən] üblich; (weit) verbreitet | lovely ['lʌvli] schön; herrlich | to excel at sth. [ɪk'sel_ət] sich bei etw. hervortun | mild [maɪld] mild | snow [snəʊ] Schnee | duck [dʌk] Ente | to get stuck [ˌget 'stʌk] stecken bleiben; ins Stocken kommen | open-ended [əʊpən 'endɪd] offen | host [hɒst] Gastgeber/-in