

4. Dialogues

Fiona Jackson is in Munich to negotiate the sale of up to five large industrial packaging machines to a large manufacturing company. Read these three extracts from her conversation with Hans Braun, the Director of Operations. Answer the questions for each extract.

Extract 1

1. How do Hans and Fiona flatter each other? What adjectives do they use?
2. How do they respond to each other's flattery? What grammatical structure do they both use?
3. Why do you think they focused on flattering each other's companies?

H:	Ah, hello. Ms Jackson? I'm Hans, Hans Braun.
F:	Good to meet you at last, Hans, after all those emails. And please call me Fiona.
H:	OK, welcome to Munich, Fiona. Sorry to keep you waiting, by the way. I had an urgent phone call and couldn't get away.
F:	No problem. I was just admiring your brochure. It's really impressive. I didn't know you had so many famous clients!
H:	Thanks. Yes, well, we've got a great sales team, and we really go for quality in a big way here, much more than some of our cheaper competitors.
F:	Well, it certainly seems to be an effective strategy, judging by these recommendations.
H:	Thank-you. Yes, they're very positive, aren't they? We've also heard some great things about your company. I was looking at your website yesterday, and I thought it was really interesting. I loved the 'Our story' section, you know, the story about how your founder started the business from nothing. Fascinating.
F:	Yes, it's amazing, isn't it? I'm glad you read that – it means you've got a better idea about our approach to business.

Extract 2

4. What do you think of Hans's opening question? How else could he start a conversation to find things in common?
5. How many things in common did they find?
6. What phrases do they use to show interest?
7. What techniques did they use to echo what the other person said?
8. What example of generosity and gratitude is in the conversation?
9. How easy would it be for Hans and Fiona to continue this conversation? Why?

H:	So, is this your first time in Munich, Fiona?
F:	Well, yes and no. I came with my family when I was about 14, but ... well, that was a very long time ago. I don't remember much about it ... just museums and football.

H: Football? Are you a fan?
 F: Not really. But my dad was ... I mean he still is, obsessed with it. So he took us to matches all over Europe.
 H: Wow. That's really interesting! I'm also a little obsessed with football, but I don't drag my kids around to watch matches!
 F: No, it wasn't so bad. It meant we got to see lots of interesting places. How many kids have you got?
 H: Three: two girls and a boy. They're growing up fast. My eldest daughter is at university already.
 F: Really? You must be very proud. My kids are still very small, so I've got all that to look forward to. What does your daughter study?
 H: English, would you believe? She wants to study in Bristol next year.
 F: Bristol? That's interesting. My brother studied there. He had a wonderful time. It's a really nice city. I could ask him if he's got any advice, you know, where to go, where to avoid.
 H: Well, that would be excellent. I'd really appreciate that. You know what it's like to be a parent – you never stop worrying about your kids.
 F: Absolutely. My son's going on karate camp next week, his first time away from mum and dad, and I'm really stressed about it. He's only nine.
 H: Karate camp? Sounds interesting. I used to do a bit of karate myself, many years ago. Is he good at it?

Extract 3

10. What is the main example of generosity in this conversation?
11. How does Hans add a personal touch?
12. How does Fiona express gratitude? What do you think of the two techniques she uses?

H: So I thought we'd start with a tour of our factory, so you get a really good sense of what we do here and what we need. I'd also like to introduce you to a few of our key people here, if that's OK.
 F: That's great. It all helps me to get a better picture of how we can help you.
 H: That's what I thought. And then for lunch, I'd like to take you to one of my favourite restaurants ... a short drive out of the city.
 F: Oh ... that would be lovely, but please don't go to any trouble. I'd be happy with a sandwich!
 H: No, I wouldn't dream of it. This project is very important to us, so we want to treat you well! It's a lovely restaurant, and I've booked my favourite table. So I hope you're hungry!
 F: Well, that's very kind of you. In that case, you must let me return the favour if ever you visit our factory in Edinburgh.
 H: OK, that sounds nice. Thank-you.