

How to have a good conversation

1. Look at the following types of conversations. Do you know the difference between them? Match with the correct definition.

a tittle-tattle	It's an informal conversation about things that are not very important
a heart-to-heart	It's a very private conversation between two people, usually concerning their personal feelings.
gossip	It's a friendly conversation in which people tell jokes and laugh at each other a lot.
a chat	It's a talk about what someone else is doing, especially when it is not true or accurate.
small talk	It's a conversation about unimportant subjects, especially people's private lives.
banter	It's a friendly and informal conversation.

2. Look at the sentences below. What words are missing? Match:

tittle-tattle / heart-to-heart / gossip / chat / small talk / banter

1. I'm afraid that kind of _____ is really inappropriate at work. You could get fired!
2. I don't enjoy parties where I have to make _____ with complete strangers.
3. I had a _____ with my boss today about a possible pay rise.
4. We stayed up late and had a lovely _____ over a bottle of wine.
5. Why should we even care about what she's said! It was just a silly _____.
6. You should never listen to office _____ !

3. Let's talk! Answer the questions below:

1. When was the last time you had a chat with a friend? What was it about?
2. Have you ever had a painful heart-to-heart with someone?
3. Are you good at small talk?
4. Do you listen to and believe family gossip?
5. Do you consider yourself a master of witty banter?
6. Have you ever been a part of a nasty tittle-tattle?

4. Look at the topics below.

Decide which ones would NOT be appropriate for small talk?

Explain why.

books	salary	travel	pets
illnesses	hobbies	global warming	refugee crisis
	TV shows	the weather	

5. Look at the topics below. Decide which ones could be mentioned in a heart-to-heart.

gardening	feelings	travel	taxes
art	natural disasters	beer	work
	divorce	financial problems	

6. We often compare a conversation or discussion to a journey. The speakers go from one place to another and reach a certain place. Follow this metaphor and match the words from the box.

return / roundabout / go back / heading / arrive / turn / wandered

1. After two hours, we finally _____ at a conclusion.
2. Could we _____ to what you were saying earlier? I have one more question.
3. I'm really confused. I can't quite see where you're heading.
4. Can we _____ to the previous point?
5. The conversation took an unexpected _____.
6. We talked about so many things! We really _____ off the topic.
7. It's a _____ way of saying he's refusing our offer. I wish he'd accepted it.

Do you know any other words or expressions that would match this metaphor?

7. Look at the following nouns that we can use to talk about people. Can you explain the difference between them? Try! Match with the correct definition to find out.

bore	someone who talks for a long time in a boring, annoying, or confusing way
rambler	someone who talks a lot and is unable to keep anything secret
chatterbox	someone who is interested in other people's private lives and tries to get involved in them in a way that is annoying
busybody	someone who talks a lot
bigmouth	someone who talks too much about things that are not very interesting
snoop	someone who tries to get secret information about someone

8. Match the words from the box with the correct sentences.

bore / rambler / chatterbox / busybody / bigmouth / snoop

1. I could never confide in my grandma. She was a bit of a _____. No secret was safe with her.
2. My cousin is such a _____. She pokes her nose into other people's business every time she has a chance.
3. My aunt is a horrible _____. She used to be an academic teacher and she's ninety now, so I guess it's normal to get things mixed up.
4. My niece is only five years old. But she's such a _____. She asks one hundred questions per minute. She never shuts up.
5. Gosh! My German teacher is such a _____. He rambles on about grammar all the time. We hardly get any speaking practice.
6. Jack is the worst _____ I've ever met. He got involved in almost all of his colleagues' lives.

9. Look at some useful conversational phrases. Put them into the correct place in the table.
There are three you don't need.

Sorry for interrupting, but... / Shall I get us started? / I think we can finish here. /
Any thoughts on...? Shall I start the discussion? / I know you're dying to jump in, but... /
Could I just finish what I was saying? If you let me /allow me to finish... /
What's your take on...? / Can I just say something here? / I have to interrupt, but... /
Before you continue, can I just say... / I'd like to start the discussion by ...

OPENING A DISCUSSION	INTERRUPTING	STOPPING INTERRUPTION

10. Look at the following headings. Choose one for each group of conversational phrases.

apologising

inviting participation

asking a question

wrapping up

agreeing and disagreeing

Any thoughts on...?	I guess we've covered everything.
What's your take on...?	I think we can finish here.
I'd be interested in hearing your views.	All right, I think that's everything.

11. Imagine you are having a discussion with a group of people you don't know very well.

You are talking about: **HOW TO HAVE A GOOD CONVERSATION.**

Finish the following conversational phrases:

1. I'd like to start the discussion by ...
2. Any thoughts on...?
3. Sorry for interrupting, but...
4. Before you continue, can I just say...
5. I know you're dying to jump in, but...

12. Look at some questions that are good conversation starters for any social situation.

Who might use them? In what situation?

1. What do you think has been the best movie of the year so far?

2. What song do you wish you could put on right now?

3. Are you a cat person or a dog person?

4. How long have you been at your current job?

5. What's your favorite restaurant around here?

13. Collocations are words that usually go together. Choose the verbs that collocate with the word CONVERSATION.

carry on / go to / have / hold / make / take / give / gossip / begin / draw sb into / greet / engage sb in / fall for / fall into / deport / get into / take after / open / sleep in / hang out / strike up / ramble on / be deep in / be sure / be engaged in / reserve / continue / alienate / hold onto / take off / keep up / sink / control / navigate / dominate / bring in / steer / cease / offend / end / stop / align

For example:

carry on a conversation – correct collocation

go to a conversation – incorrect collocation. We can't say: *I go to a conversation.*

14. Match the words in bold with the corresponding pair of synonyms.

avoid/dodge

tedious/dull

strong/natural

tragic/heartbreaking

liaison/bridge

1. Honesty is a conduit to real, long-term connections.

2. I'm quite emotional, so I tend to skirt intense emotions and keep them to myself.

3. The play was very intense. Just full of raw emotions.

4. His speech was so bland. I kept dropping off at my desk. I hope he didn't see me.

5. It is poignant that we keep making the same mistakes and expect different results.

15. Do you agree with the following statements? Why? Why not?

- Children should be taught at school how to **shape** a good conversation.
- In conversations with others, it is better to stay on the **surface** of events.
- Feelings are the only **conduits** to real connections
- People should **skirt** the **raw** and intense emotions
- Bland** chats with people are very useful
- Conversations in which people show **vulnerability** might be emotional
- It is **poignant** that people make so much effort to **come together** but often don't manage to connect

8. People hate finding out that their own sorrows **echo** in the lives of others
9. Talking about how great things go for others makes conversations very **appealing**.
10. It is **vulnerability** that destroys friendships.

16. Post-quarantine conversation

Watch a Saturday Night Live skit of partygoers having the weirdest conversations and answer the questions:

 [Post-Quarantine Conversation - SNL](#)

What are the topics the people in the video are trying to discuss?

Were you able to identify yourself with any of the people from the party? In what way?

17. Watch the video again and try to complete the common but meaningless phrases/sentences used by people in the video:

It's such a _____ time.

It's such a crazy _____ .

I know, _____ ?

It was, _____ , it was okay... some _____ and _____ .

It was really great _____ you.

So fun _____ up.

18. Look at the word cloud. Group them.

bigmouth
bore
snoop
chatterbox
rambler
banter
tittle-tattle
chat

words to describe different types of
conversations

words to describe different people