
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Small talk



BBC
LEARNING
ENGLISH

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hello. This is The English We Speak. This is Rob...

Rob

And this is Feifei. So, Feifei, how did the blind date go?

Feifei

Not great – a disaster in fact.

Rob

Oh no. Why didn't you just follow my advice?

Feifei

I did! Wear something nice, turn up late and make *small talk*.

Rob

Yes, make small talk. Exactly.

Feifei

Well, when I started making small talk, the guy looked at me in a strange way and then walked off.

Rob

Oh no. What did you say?

Feifei

Things like 'hi', 'good', 'yes', 'no', 'great' – small words.

Rob

But no sentences? I think you've got the wrong end of the stick here – I mean you've misunderstood – making small talk means making informal conversation about unimportant things. If you're meeting someone for the first time, it's a good way to make them feel relaxed – you know, break the ice.

Feifei

Right! Make 'small' conversation.

Rob

I guess we should hear some examples...

Examples

I didn't know anybody at my cousin's wedding so I tried to make small talk with the guests.

I'm shy and not very good at small talk. That's why I hate going to parties.

At the office party, we all had to stand around making small talk, but all I really wanted to do was go home!

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. And we're learning about the expression 'small talk' – that's informal conversation which is meant to make people feel more relaxed and stops any embarrassing silence. Actually, Rob, I do know about small talk. It's just that...

Rob

So, why didn't you say?

Feifei

Well, I was going to tell you that...

Rob

You'll never get a boyfriend if you don't speak up, Feifei! You really need to talk more.

Feifei

Rob.

Rob

Yes?

Feifei

What I was *trying* to say was, I did not have time for small talk because my date would not stop talking. He was rude, arrogant and wouldn't let me get a word in edgeways! Now, who does that remind me of?!

Rob

Err... Nice weather for the time of year, don't you think?

Feifei

It's a bit late for small talk now, Rob. You've said far too much.

Rob

Oh.

Feifei

Bye bye!

Rob

Bye!