MUNI FI

Mastering small talk

1. Complete the gaps below to explain the purpose of each sentence.

attention	belonging	boost	networking	question

a) *"I'm all ears."* >>> giving somebody your full ……………..

b) *"How did you get into the IT industry?"* >>> doing professional ……………..

c) *"How long did you stay in the USA?"* >>> asking a follow-up ……………..

d) *"My family have really supported me since I decided to change careers."* >>> expressing a sense of ……………..

e) *"I've been overjoyed ever since I got a dog."* >>> reporting a …………….. in happiness

2. Read the definition below and discuss how the phrases in ex. 1 might be linked to small talk.

> **SMALL TALK** (uncountable; *make* small talk)
> a light, informal conversation, usually with someone
> you do not know well

3. Complete each sentence with a preposition.

a) Starting a conversation with a stranger can come ……….. as awkward.

b) Corporate office parties are a great opportunity for single people to pair ……….. to dance, rather than dance alone.

c) At business events it's good to reach ……….. to people you don't know.

d) Staying engaged ……….. a conversation with a stranger can sometimes be difficult.

e) People should put their phones ……….. during small talk.

4. Decide whether or not you agree with the statements from ex. 3 and why.

5. **Discuss the questions below. Then, watch a <u>video</u> [https://youtu.be/JWybsoGx5UY] (to 03:20) about small talk and check your answers.**
   a) What two things do people usually do if they don't know anyone at a party?
   b) What's the 'liking gap'?
   c) When you make small talk, what can you do to be more likeable?
   d) What follow-up question could you ask when a person tells you they like travelling?
   e) What can come across as impolite during small talk?

6. **Complete the gaps with one word each. Then, watch the <u>video</u> again (to 03:20) and check.**
   a) So you have two options: the obvious one of staring …………….. at your phone, or the terrifying one of talking to strangers.
   b) They asked each person to …………….. how much they liked their partner and how much they thought their partner liked them. People consistently …………….. how much people liked them and enjoyed their company.
   c) Questions like 'What do you do?' can be pretty …………….. .
   d) Asking follow-up questions is important. This shows you're …………….. listening.
   e) Studies have shown that people who texted during a conversation were seen as less polite and …………….. .
   f) For example, experts …………….. that three out of four jobs are found through professional networking rather than a job ad.
   g) Research has found that people report feeling happier when they chat with someone like a bartender or barista and treated them more like an …………….. than a stranger.
   h) …………….. interactions can be really positive experiences.

7. **Discuss the questions.**

   - How useful would you rate the video, on a scale from 1 to 10? Justify your answer.

   - According to the video, people feel better when they treat strangers as acquaintances. What could be the reason behind that?

   - In your opinion, why is the liking gap so common?

   - How important is professional networking to you?

   - How good are you at small talk? Has it always been like that? If not, why has it changed?

   - When was the last time you made small talk? How did it go?

8. **Choose two topics from the box and create a small talk question for each one. Try not to make the questions dull!**

new IT project	food	hometown	upcoming events	weather

9. **Pair up (if possible, with a person you don't know very well) and ask your partner your questions from ex. 8. After each answer, ask at least one follow-up question. Try to keep the conversation going for as long as you can.**

10. **In pairs, imagine you are at the corporate party organized by the company's headquarters with a guest you have just met. Your teacher will give you each a card with two phrases. Try to lead the conversation so that you are able to use the phrases as casually as possible. At the same time, pay attention to what your partner is saying because you will have to work out which two phrases they were given by the teacher. Wait until the end of the conversation to guess what is on your partner's card.**

11. **In pairs, tell each other what you remember from the video, using the words below. Once a word has been used, cross it out. Talk until you have used up all the words.**

> acquaintance   put away   estimate   underestimate   actively
> mindlessly   pair up   networking   reach out   casual
> attentive   attention   engaged   follow-up   dull   rate
> belonging   boost   come across