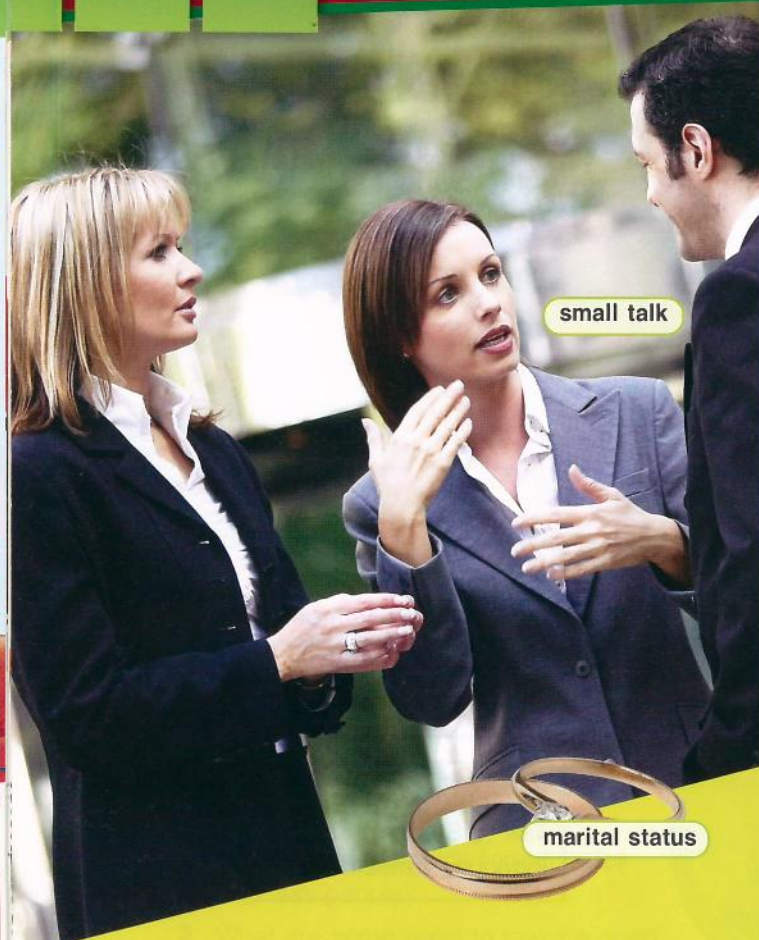


7

Small Talk



Dear Business Advice,

I have a successful career in business. I was recently promoted to vice president of the company. This is good news and bad news. As vice president, I have to meet with clients. But I am terrible at **small talk**. Do you have any advice?

Sincerely,
Steve R.

Dear Steve,

The first step to being great at small talk is to remember to keep it small. **Refrain** from **discussing** important **topics** like **religion** or **politics**. **Inquire** instead about hobbies or **sports**. Avoid potentially awkward subjects like **marital status**. Keep the conversation light and casual. It may seem like a cliché, but you could even ask about the **weather**.

And, remember, people enjoy talking about subjects they know well. Chat with your client about what she or he does for a **living**. Or ask them if they can make a **recommendation** for a **local** hotspot. Most of all: relax!

Get ready!

1 Before you read the passage, talk about these questions.

- 1 Why is small talk important for business people?
- 2 What are some common casual conversation topics?

Reading

2 Read the advice column. Then, choose the correct answers.

- 1 Why does the man need advice?
 - A He doesn't know how to discuss important topics.
 - B He does not enjoy talking about business.
 - C He wants to be promoted to vice president.
 - D He has trouble with casual conversation.
- 2 Which of the following is usually NOT appropriate for small talk?
 - A keeping the conversation light
 - B inquiring about local recommendations
 - C discussing marital status
 - D talking about the weather
- 3 What is a suggestion the article makes?
 - A to relax and be casual
 - B to discuss local politics
 - C to ask about a client's marital status
 - D to avoid inquiring about hobbies

advice column

Vocabulary

3 Match the words or phrases (1-8) with the definitions (A-H).

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 — sport | 4 — weather | 7 — living |
| 2 — politics | 5 — religion | 8 — marital status |
| 3 — local | 6 — small talk | |

- A a system of beliefs
- B casual conversation
- C a game or activity with rules
- D relating to a specific place
- E the state of the atmosphere
- F a government's activities
- G one's source of income
- H whether one is married