



Let's Think

1. Do you think you are quiet or talkative?
2. When you first meet someone, what do you usually talk about?

You are Katrina. You are reading the script of a speech given by a school social worker.

Good afternoon everyone,

It's my pleasure to give a talk here. I'm Miss Leung, the school's social worker. Today I'm going to talk about how to make small talk with people you meet for the first time.

I think all of you have had the experience of meeting new people but not knowing how to start a conversation with them. In the UK, people usually start a conversation by talking about the weather. How about you? Do you kick-start a conversation by asking the person whether he or she has had lunch yet? If you have difficulty in finding suitable topics, you may find my speech useful.

Since you have just met someone for the first time, it's better to talk about something light. What would be good choices? Well, films, pop stars, sports or hobbies would be interesting enough. By exploring such topics, people can know more about one another without conveying any significant information. What about politics or religions? These topics might not be appropriate and are rather serious; people can easily get annoyed and this may even set off a heated debate. You won't want to argue with your new friend, will you?

So what should you do when you are talking to others? Pay attention and show that you are listening. As you are listening, you may give responses as you find anything that interests you. Then, he or she could feel that you enjoy talking with them.

This kind of small talk allows people to build relationships and interact with others as it lets people know about one another's common interests. It marks the beginning of many friendships!

This is the end of my speech. I hope it gives you ideas on establishing effective communication. Thank you!

(289 words)



Part A

Answer the following questions using the information from the speech script. Choose the **BEST** answer and blacken **ONE** circle only.

1. What is the main purpose of having small talk?
 A. to give others important information
 B. to kill time
 C. to collect more information about others
 D. to build relationships
2. In line 5, the pronoun 'them' refers to _____.
 A. the previous speakers
 B. the audience members
 C. people whom one meets for the first time
 D. fellow classmates
3. Which of the following are suitable topics for small talk?
i) racism ii) the Chief Executive
iii) golf iv) the newest film
 A. i, ii and iii B. ii and iii
 C. ii, iii and iv D. iii and iv
4. Read line 12. What does 'conveying' mean in the speech script?

conveying v.

- A. expressing a thought, feeling or an idea
- B. delivering a formal message to someone
- C. taking someone or something to a particular place
- D. transferring a property to another person

5. In line 14, 'a heated debate' can best be replaced by '_____'.
 A. a passionate meeting B. an intense argument
 C. an enthusiastic interview D. a big fight

Grammar Corner

We use an **adjective ending in '-ing'** to describe how something or someone makes others feel.

e.g. *Films, pop stars, sports or hobbies would be interesting enough.*
(Lines 10-11)

We use an **adjective ending in '-ed'** to describe how someone feels.

e.g. *People can easily get annoyed and this may even set off a heated debate.*
(Lines 13-14)

Part B

Answer the following questions using the information from the speech script. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1. Who is Miss Leung, who gave the speech?

2. Find one word which means 'important'.

What can students learn from the speech?

3. Do you think the speech is useful to students? Give one reason to support your answer.



4. Which paragraph is each of the following comments related to? Read the following comments and match each of them to its corresponding paragraph.

(a) 'I didn't know I could ask questions when I was listening to others. I hope there can be more interaction!'

(b) 'It is very typical for Hongkongers to start a conversation by talking about meals. Food is an important part of the Chinese culture.'

(c) 'Last time I talked about politics with a new friend. Luckily, we didn't argue but now I know I should avoid it next time.'



5. Why are questions added to different parts of the speech script?

Vocabulary Bank

The following are some conversation topics. Match them with the correct pictures. One of the words is not used.

travel experience current affairs blockbusters childhood memories
 future plans delicacies sports events precious moments hobbies



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.



8.



Let's Discuss

1. It is inappropriate to talk about certain topics especially when you first meet someone. Can you think of some?
2. Some people think that small talk is rather meaningless. Do you agree?