+49 511 4739339
james@englisch-lehrer.com · www.englisch-lehrer.com

A2 · SMALL TALK · ≈ 27 MIN

Starting Conversations — *practice on paper*

You have built the lesson — now you keep the rally going. New situations, same pattern.

> Small talk is a **rally** : open light · answer short + return · follow up with an **open** question

NAME _____ DATE _____

YOUR BUILD — 1 · SORTING ◯ — 2 · FILL-IN ◯ — 3 · CORRECT ◯ — 4 · WRITE ◯

BRICK 1 · SORT BY QUESTION TYPE · APPROX. 4 MIN ●○○

Read each question quietly. Question word (**what/how/why**) → open question in the left column. Auxiliary verb first (**do, did, are …**) → yes/no question in the right column. Remember: open questions keep the rally going.

- What did you think of the workshop?
- Did you enjoy the workshop?
- How did you get into marketing?
- Are you from around here?
- What do you usually do at the weekend?
- Do you work in this building?
- Why did you choose this city?
- Was the traffic bad this morning?
- How do you spend your lunch breaks?
- Have you met the new manager?

OPEN QUESTION (WHAT/HOW/WHY)	YES/NO QUESTION

BRICK 2 · FILL IN THE MISSING WORD · APPROX. 6 MIN ●●○

Fill in exactly one word per gap. Read the whole exchange quietly before you choose — the reply usually tells you which word is missing.

01 " ____ 's the weather like in Dublin?" — "Grey, as always."
02 "Good, thanks. And ____ ?"
03 " ____ this your first time in Munich?"
04 " ____ do you know Thomas?" — "We were at university together."
05 " ____ kind of music do you like?"
06 " ____ you enjoy the workshop yesterday?"
07 " ____ long have you lived in Frankfurt?" — "About five years."
08 " ____ did you think of the keynote?" — "I loved it."

YOUR BUILD · 1 · SORTING · 2 · FILL-IN · 3 · CORRECT · 4 · WRITE

BRICK 3 · FIND AND CORRECT THE MISTAKE · APPROX. 7 MIN

Each line hides exactly one small-talk mistake — word order, translation trap, greeting reply, topic, question type or tone. Underline it and write the whole line correctly.

01 Where you work?

02 "How's it going?" — "It goes, thanks."

03 "How are you?" — "Honestly? My back hurts and I slept badly."

04 Nice to meet you! What does your company pay you?

05 Was your hotel OK?

06 What's up, Mr. Henderson? Nice to finally meet you.

BRICK 4 · WRITE YOUR OWN LINES · APPROX. 8 MIN

Write your own line for each prompt. Remember the rally: open light, answer short, follow up with an **open** question.

01 In the lift with a colleague from another department: "Busy …?" — open with a light question.

02 A visitor from Dublin has just arrived: "How was …?" — greet her and ask about the journey.

03 A colleague in the corridor says "How's it going?" — answer short and positive and return the question.

04 Networking break: the person next to you has just mentioned they work in marketing. Ask an open follow-up.

MINI-CHECK – CAN I DO THIS YET?

- ☐ I can open a conversation with a light question that anyone in the room can answer.
- ☐ I answer "How are you?" short and positive and return the question: "Good, thanks. And you?"
- ☐ I keep the conversation going with open questions (what/how/why) instead of yes/no questions.
- ☐ I know safe topics (weather, travel, projects) and taboo topics (salary, politics, age).

Not every box ticked? Build the lesson once more and try this sheet again tomorrow.

Answer key

Check only when you have finished. Every answer comes with the **why** — the rule matters more than the result.

BRICK 1 · SORTING

01 What did you think of the workshop? → **open**
Question word "what" — invites a small story.

02 Did you enjoy the workshop? → **yes/no**
Starts with "did" — the answer is yes or no.

03 How did you get into marketing? → **open**
Question word "how" — an open question.

04 Are you from around here? → **yes/no**
Starts with "are" — a yes/no question.

05 What do you usually do at the weekend? → **open**
Question word "what" — an open question.

06 Do you work in this building? → **yes/no**
Starts with "do" — a yes/no question.

07 Why did you choose this city? → **open**
Question word "why" — an open question.

08 Was the traffic bad this morning? → **yes/no**
Starts with "was" — a yes/no question.

09 How do you spend your lunch breaks? → **open**
Question word "how" — an open question.

10 Have you met the new manager? → **yes/no**
Starts with "have" — a yes/no question.

BRICK 2 · FILL-IN

01 **What**'s the weather like in Dublin?
"What … like?" asks for a description — with "like" only "what" fits.

02 And **you**?
The return question is "And you?" — that's how the ball goes back.

03 **Is** this your first time in Munich?
First-time question: "Is this your first time …?" — a yes/no question starting with "is".

04 **How** do you know Thomas?
"How do you know …?" asks about the connection — question word + do + subject + verb.

05 **What** kind of music do you like?
"What kind of …?" asks about the type.

06 **Did** you enjoy the workshop yesterday?
"Yesterday" calls for the past: "did".

07 **How** long have you lived in Frankfurt?
"How long …?" asks about duration.

08 **What** did you think of the keynote?
"What did you think of …?" asks for an opinion.

BRICK 3 · CORRECT

01 Where **do** you work?
Question word + do + subject + verb — without "do" it sounds like a German sentence.

02 "How's it going?" — "**It's going well**, thanks."
"It goes" is a word-for-word translation from German — the natural move is a short answer like "It's going well".

03 "How are you?" — "**Good, thanks. And you?**"
"How are you?" is a greeting, not a health survey — short, positive, return it.

04 Nice to meet you! **What do you do?**
Salary is a taboo topic in small talk — ask about their job instead.

05 **What's your hotel like?**
Open questions with "what" invite a story — yes/no questions stop the rally.

06 **How are you**, Mr. Henderson? Nice to finally meet you.
At a first client meeting "How are you?" is the safe choice — "What's up?" suits colleagues.

BRICK 4 · WRITE

Your lines may differ — just check: opened light? Answered short? Followed up openly?

01 "**Busy morning**, Tom?"
"Busy …?" works on any day — light and guaranteed answerable.

02 "**How was the train journey**, Aoife?"
Ask visitors who have just arrived about their journey.

03 "**Not bad, thanks — and you?**"
Short positive answer plus a return — the ball goes back.

04 "**What** does your team work on?"
Pick up the keyword "marketing" and ask openly — "what" invites a story.

NEXT BRICKS — KEEP BUILDING FREE ONLINE

PAIR WITH THIS
Answering the Phone
englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons/answering-the-phone

NEXT STEP
Tell Me About Yourself
englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons/tell-me-about-yourself

ALL LESSONS
45+ free lessons
englisch-lehrer.com/en/lessons

HANOVER
Schaufelder Straße 11 · 30167
englisch-lehrer.com/hannover

BERLIN
Kurfürstendamm 30 · 10719
englisch-lehrer.com/berlin

ONLINE COURSES
englisch-lehrer.com/online
worldwide on Zoom

CONTACT
+49 511 4739339
james@englisch-lehrer.com