



I ILLINOIS
Gies College of Business

SMALL TALK?

“How to have interesting conversations with strangers”

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WHAT IS SMALL TALK?

Elizabeth's Definition: Small talk is polite and interesting conversation with people that has no real purpose.

Small talk is an incredibly important social skill that will help you **connect with people you do not know.**

Think of small talk as how people begin to **bond and build trust.**

Why is small talk important?

- Builds rapport
- Create social cohesion
- Awkward situations
- Eases increased communication
- Key business skill
- Teaching 'communication' not perfection!



WHAT IS SMALL TALK?



Good Topics

- Favorite Foods
- Employment
- Good Books
- Weather
- Travel
- University of Illinois
- Current Events (not political or controversial)
- Film
- Sports

Bad Topics

- Politics
- Religion
- Parties
- Personal Life Challenges
- Illegal Activity
- Unhealthy Activity
- Failed Relationships
- Offensive Jokes

Seek out common interests

WHAT IS GOOD SMALL TALK?



1. Be the one to **ask questions**
2. Be an **active listener**
3. Respond and ask additional questions or provide snippets from **your own experience**
4. Be prepared to **keep the conversation going**
5. **Welcome others** to your conversation

WHY IS SMALL TALK IMPORTANT?



Small Talk Is Important to the Job Search for two Reasons:

- 1. Engage** in conversation with alumni and other people you know
- People hire **people they like** (who they connect with)

VIRTUAL SMALL TALK



1. Be **active** in the chat (Keep it professional and positive)
2. **Follow up** after a session (provide information, inquire for more information, be thankful)
3. Add **value**

LET'S PRACTICE!

Breakout Rooms

- 5-7 minutes
- **Topic #1: Summer highlights**
- **Expectations:**
 - Introductions first (name, program, hometown)
 - Everyone must talk!
 - Keep the conversation going (use the entire time)



Discussion and Reflection

LET'S PRACTICE!

Breakout Rooms

- 5-7 minutes
- **Topic #2: Hobbies**
- **Expectations:**
 - Introductions first (name, program, hometown)
 - Everyone must talk!
 - Keep the conversation going (use the entire time)



Discussion and Reflection



Questions?

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