

How Questions- Practice Roleplays

In groups of two or three, choose roleplays from below and roleplay them in pairs. You can start with any roleplays you like, e.g. the easiest or most interesting. Please skip any situations which you don't understand or think are too difficult. Give true answers to questions during the roleplays if you can, but for some situations you will need to use your imagination. Continue until the end of the small talk or the end of the conversation, then pick another situation.

Useful phrases for ending the small talk

Well, it's been lovely to chat but I have to...

Anyway, I'd love to hear more but I need to...

So, it's been great to catch up but...

Ask about any situations which you don't understand and/ or can't think of a how question for.

Change groups and do the roleplays again, but this time by choosing numbers (between one and twenty three) at random and roleplaying the situation with that number below.

Brainstorm at least one suitable "How...?" question for each situation below, writing as many different questions as possible. You will get one point for each how question which is correct, isn't taboo or too personal, matches one of the situations, and hasn't been written by another group.

As a class, take turns saying one of the questions which you wrote and which you think other groups haven't thought of.

Match the suggested questions to the situations. Some situations have more than one phrase, and some phrases can be used more than once.

Practise asking and answering any questions which your group didn't think of.

Small talk questions with how roleplays

In groups of two or three, choose roleplays from below and roleplay them with your partner. You can start with any situations you like, e.g. the easiest or most interesting. Please skip any roleplays which you don't understand or think are too difficult. Give true answers if you can, but for some situations you will need to use your imagination.

Small talk situations

1. It's Monday morning. You don't know what your partner did for the last two days.
2. It's Monday morning. You know your partner's plans for the last two days.
3. It's nine o'clock in the morning. You went out drinking with your partner last night.
4. It's the second week of January. You haven't seen your partner since December.
5. It's Wednesday. You haven't seen your partner since Monday morning.
6. It's two o'clock in the afternoon.
7. You and your partner didn't work yesterday.
8. Your partner travelled a long way to get to where you are.
9. Your partner is travelling around the region/ country where you are based.
10. Your partner was in a negative situation when you last met (a cold, a broken leg, etc).
11. The last time that you met, your partner was planning to do something important (e.g. a presentation to a big potential client or a job interview).
12. You are chatting to your partner while you are eating together.
13. You are drinking together with your partner on Wednesday evening after work.
14. You are drinking together with your partner on Friday evening after work.
15. You are having a teleconference with your partner. You are in different countries.
16. You haven't seen your partner for a long time.
17. You haven't seen your partner since July. It's now six weeks later.
18. You know that your partner just got back from going abroad on business.
19. You support different teams (e.g. different football teams) from your partner. Both teams played recently.

Relationships

20. You are colleagues who see each other often.
21. You are family friends.
22. You don't know your partner well, but you have friends in common/ you know the same people/ you are friends of friends.
23. You have met but you don't know each other well.

Ask about any situations which you don't understand and/ or can't think of a how question for.

Change groups and do roleplays again, but this time by choosing numbers (between one and twenty three) at random.

Brainstorm at least one suitable "How...?" question for each situation below, writing as many different questions as possible. You will get one point for each question which is correct, isn't taboo/ too personal, matches one of the situations, and hasn't been written by another group.

Mixed suggested small talk questions with how

How are things?
How are you doing?
How are you?
How did you get on with...?
How did your team do...?/ How did your team get on...?
How did... go?
How do you feel about your team's...?
How has your day been?
How has your trip been (so far)?
How has your visit been (so far)?
How has your week been?
How have you been since we last met?
How have you been?
How is your... (now)?
How was (*name of a place*)?
How was the traffic?
How was the... match?
How was your Xmas?
How was your day off?
How was your day?
How was your flight?
How was your holiday?
How was your journey?
How was your lunch?
How was your summer?
How was your trip to...?
How was your trip?
How was your vacation?
How was your week?
How was your weekend?
How was your winter break?
How was...?
How's (*name*)?
How's it going?
How's the weather over there (now)?
How's the weather where you are?
How's your family?
How's your hangover?
How's your meal?
How's your mother?
How's your steak?
How's your team doing?
How's...?

Suggested answers

Small talk situations

- It's Monday morning. You don't know what your partner did for the last two days. – How was your weekend?
- It's Monday morning. You know your partner's plans for the last two days. – How was...?/ How did... go?
- It's nine o'clock in the morning. You went out drinking with your partner last night. – How's your hangover?
- It's the second week of January. You haven't seen your partner since December. – How was your Xmas?/ How was your winter break?
- It's Wednesday. You haven't seen your partner since Monday morning. – How has your week been?
- It's two p.m. – How has your day been (so far)?/ How was your lunch?
- You and your partner didn't work yesterday. – How was your day off?
- Your partner travelled a long way to get to where you are. – How was your journey?/ How was your flight?/ How was the traffic?
- Your partner is travelling around the region/ country where you are based. – How has your visit been (so far)?/ How has your trip been (so far)?
- Your partner was in a negative situation when you last met (a cold, a broken leg, etc). – How is your... now?
- The last time that you met, your partner was planning to do something important (e.g. a presentation to a big potential client or a job interview). – How did... go?/ How did you get on with...?
- You are chatting to your partner while you are eating together. – How's your meal?/ How's your steak?/ How's...?
- You are drinking together with your partner on Wednesday evening after work. – How was your day?
- You are drinking together with your partner on Friday evening after work. – How was your week?
- You are having a teleconference with your partner. You are in different countries. – How's the weather over there (now)?/ How's the weather where you are?
- You haven't seen your partner for a long time. – How have you been?/ How have you been since we last met?
- You haven't seen your partner since July. It's now six weeks later. – How was your summer?/ How was your holiday?/ How was your vacation?
- You know that your partner just got back from going abroad on business. – How was your trip?/ How was your trip to...?/ How was (*name of a place*)?
- You support different teams (e.g. different football teams) from your partner. Both teams played recently. – How's your team doing?/ How did your team do...?/ How did your team get on...?/ How was the... match?/ How do you feel about your team's...?

Relationships

- You are colleagues who see each other often. – How's it going?/ How are you doing?/ How are things?
- You are family friends. – How's your family?/ How's your mother?/ How's (*name*)?
- You don't know your partner well, but you have friends in common. – How's (*name*)?
- You have met but you don't know each other well. – How are you?