

Wh- Questions for Making Small Talk

Roleplay meeting someone for the first time and meeting the same person again, each time smoothly starting the conversation, chatting for about two minutes each time and smoothly ending the conversation.

Suggested small talk questions

- How
- How long
- How often
- What
- Where
- Who
- Why

Chat for about two minutes using the questions on the next page, not writing anything for now but just asking and answering in pairs. When there are options on one line, just choose one. Please give your own true answers – the ones given there are just to help you understand the questions.

Fill the gaps above with wh- question words. If there is more than one on one line, they take the same word.

Hint: The questions are in order of how useful the question words are.

Suggested small talk questions – mixed

- 1 _____ are you (today)?/ _____ are things?/ _____'s life? – (I'm) very well/ fine/ not bad/ good/ great + thanks/ thank you + And you?
- 2 _____ are your family? – Very well, thanks. My son has just started university.
- 3 _____ has your week been (so far)? – Not bad, thanks. Not so many meetings.
- 4 _____ was your journey?/ _____ was your flight? – Quite comfortable, thanks./ Not too good. It was delayed for nearly five hours.
- 5 _____ was your weekend? – Great. I played golf then went out for a drink.
- 6 _____'s (name)? – She's very well, thanks. She asked me to say hi to you.
- 7 _____'s business?/ _____'s your business doing? – Very well, thanks. Our new product is selling well.
- 8 _____'s the weather (outside now)? – Unfortunately it's still raining./ It's stopped raining, luckily.
- 9 _____'s the weather in your country (now)?/ What's the weather like in your country (now)? – It's even colder than here./ I'm not sure now, but it was raining when I left.
- 10 _____'s work? – Very busy. It always is at this time of year. How about yours?
- 11 _____'s your project going? – Very well. We should finish on time.
- 12 How's your hotel?/ _____'s your hotel like? – It's not bad. The swimming pool is very nice.
- 13 _____ do you do?/ _____'s your job? – I'm an auditor.
- 14 _____ does your company do?/ _____ kind of company do you work for? – It's an insurance company.
- 15 _____ does your division/ department/ section/ team do? – We develop new products.
- 16 _____ exactly do you do (in your job)?/ _____ are your duties?/ _____'s your role? – I supervise the quality control process.
- 17 _____'s your bestselling/ main/ most famous product? – We sell all kinds of things, but most people know us for our household insurance.
- 18 _____ are you from?/ _____ do you come from? – I'm from South Korea./ I'm Canadian.
- 19 _____ are you staying?/ Is your hotel near here? – I'm staying in the Mandarin Oriental. It's about five minutes on foot from here.
- 20 _____ do you travel on business? – Mainly Southeast Asia, especially Singapore.
- 21 _____ have you come from today?/ Did you have to come far today? – Not far. Our office is in Shibuya.
- 22 _____'s your company based? – Its HQ is in Shinjuku, near the Tokyo Metropolitan Building.
- 23 _____ are your (main) competitors? – The market leader is Nike.
- 24 _____ do you work for? – AIG. It's an American insurance company.
- 25 _____ are you here (in Tokyo)? – About three months, maybe longer./ Just this weekend.
- 26 _____ do you come here (to Tokyo)? – Usually once or twice a year.
- 27 _____ are you at this conference/ trade fair/ meeting/ job fair?/ _____ are you here today?/ What brings you here today? – I'm mostly just networking./ I'm looking for new suppliers.

Suggested answers

- 1 How are you (today)?/ How are things?/ How's life? – (I'm) very well/ fine/ not bad/ good/ great + thanks/ thank you + And you?
- 2 How are your family? – Very well, thanks. My son has just started university.
- 3 How has your week been (so far)? – Not bad, thanks. Not so many meetings.
- 4 How was your journey?/ How was your flight? – Quite comfortable, thanks./ Not too good. It was delayed for nearly five hours.
- 5 How was your weekend? – Great. I played golf then went out for a drink.
- 6 How's (name)? – She's very well, thanks. She asked me to say hi to you.
- 7 How's business?/ How's your business doing? – Very well, thanks. Our new product is selling well.
- 8 How's the weather (outside now)? – Unfortunately it's still raining./ It's stopped raining, luckily.
- 9 How's the weather in your country (now)?/ What's the weather like in your country (now)? – It's even colder than here./ I'm not sure now, but it was raining when I left.
- 10 How's work? – Very busy. It always is at this time of year. How about yours?
- 11 How's your project going? – Very well. We should finish on time.
- 12 How's your hotel?/ What's your hotel like? – It's not bad. The swimming pool is very nice.
- 13 What do you do?/ What's your job? – I'm an auditor.
- 14 What does your company do?/ What kind of company do you work for? – It's an insurance company.
- 15 What does your division/ department/ section/ team do? – We develop new products.
- 16 What exactly do you do (in your job)?/ What are your duties?/ What's your role? – I supervise the quality control process.
- 17 What's your bestselling/ main/ most famous product? – We sell all kinds of things, but most people know us for our household insurance.
- 18 Where are you from?/ Where do you come from? – I'm from South Korea./ I'm Canadian.
- 19 Where are you staying?/ Is your hotel near here? – I'm staying in the Mandarin Oriental. It's about five minutes on foot from here.
- 20 Where do you travel on business? – Mainly Southeast Asia, especially Singapore.
- 21 Where have you come from today?/ Did you have to come far today? – Not far. Our office is in Shibuya.
- 22 Where's your company based? – Its HQ is in Shinjuku, near the Tokyo Metropolitan Building.
- 23 Who are your (main) competitors? – The market leader is Nike.
- 24 Who do you work for? – AIG. It's an American insurance company.
- 25 How long are you here (in Tokyo)? – About three months, maybe longer./ Just this weekend.
- 26 How often do you come here (to Tokyo)? – Usually once or twice a year.
- 27 Why are you at this conference/ trade fair/ meeting/ job fair?/ Why are you here today?/ What brings you here today? – I'm mostly just networking./ I'm looking for new suppliers.



Try to think of questions that would get these answers, then check above. Note that many other answers are possible.

- 1 (I'm) very well/ fine/ not bad/ good/ great + thanks/ thank you + And you?
- 2 Very well, thanks. My son has just started university.
- 3 Not bad, thanks. Not so many meetings.
- 4 Quite comfortable, thanks./ Not too good. It was delayed for nearly five hours.
- 5 Great. I played golf then went out for a drink.
- 6 She's very well, thanks. She asked me to say hi to you.
- 7 Very well, thanks. Our new product is selling well.
- 8 Unfortunately it's still raining./ It's stopped raining, luckily.
- 9 It's even colder than here./ I'm not sure now, but it was raining when I left.
- 10 Very busy. It always is at this time of year. How about yours?
- 11 Very well. We should finish on time.
- 12 It's not bad. The swimming pool is very nice.
- 13 I'm an auditor.
- 14 It's an insurance company.
- 15 We develop new products.
- 16 I supervise the quality control process.
- 17 We sell all kinds of things, but most people know us for our household insurance.
- 18 I'm from South Korea./ I'm Canadian.
- 19 I'm staying in the Mandarin Oriental. It's about five minutes on foot from here.
- 20 Mainly Southeast Asia, especially Singapore.
- 21 Not far. Our office is in Shibuya.
- 22 Its HQ is in Shinjuku, near the Tokyo Metropolitan Building.
- 23 The market leader is Nike.
- 24 AIG. It's an American insurance company.
- 25 About three months, maybe longer./ Just this weekend.
- 26 Usually once or twice a year.
- 27 I'm mostly just networking./ I'm looking for new suppliers.

Try to think of good answers for these questions, then check above. Note that many different answers are also possible.

- 1 How are you (today)?/ How are things?/ How's life?
- 2 How are your family?
- 3 How has your week been (so far)?
- 4 How was your journey?/ How was your flight?
- 5 How was your weekend?
- 6 How's (name)?
- 7 How's business?/ How's your business doing?
- 8 How's the weather (outside now)?
- 9 How's the weather in your country (now)?/ What's the weather like in your country (now)?
- 10 How's work?
- 11 How's your project going?
- 12 How's your hotel?/ What's your hotel like?
- 13 What do you do?/ What's your job?
- 14 What does your company do?/ What kind of company do you work for?
- 15 What does your division/ department/ section/ team do?
- 16 What exactly do you do (in your job)?/ What are your duties?/ What's your role?
- 17 What's your bestselling/ main/ most famous product?
- 18 Where are you from?/ Where do you come from?
- 19 Where are you staying?/ Is your hotel near here?
- 20 Where do you travel on business?
- 21 Where have you come from today?/ Did you have to come far today?
- 22 Where's your company based?
- 23 Who are your (main) competitors?
- 24 Who do you work for?
- 25 How long are you here (in Tokyo)?
- 26 How often do you come here (to Tokyo)?
- 27 Why are you at this conference/ trade fair/ meeting/ job fair?/ Why are you here today?/ What brings you here today?