

Good and taboo questions about your company and job

Talk to someone who you haven't met before, or imagine that you are doing so if you have met before. Listen to a question from below and:

- answer the question if it is a good question when you meet someone for the first time
- politely reject the question if you think it isn't a good question when you meet someone for the first time

Ways to politely reject questions

"I'd rather not say (if you don't mind/ if that's okay) (because...)"

"I don't think that it's okay to ask someone that (the first time that you meet someone) because..."

"I don't think that's a suitable question (in this situation) because..."

If you are scoring, you get a point if everyone agrees that your response was correct. Then ask a question for your partner to do the same things with.

As a class, ask about any questions which you are not sure about, with someone answering or politely refusing to answer each time.

After changing partner if you can, roleplay the same situations, but this time with no help.

How can you start and end such conversations?

Basic questions/ First questions

- What do you do?/ What's your job?
- What kind of business are you in?/ What kind of company do you work for?
- Who do you work for?
- Sorry, I've never heard of your company/ division/ department/ section. What does it do?
- What exactly do you do?/ What does your job involve?/ What do you do there?

Follow-up questions

- Do you like your job?/ Do you enjoy your job?
- Do you work with (*name*)?/ Is (*name*) (still) in your company/ division/ department/...?
- How are bonuses (this year/ recently)?
- How many countries do you operate in?
- How much do you earn?/ How much money do you make?/ What's your salary?
- How's business?
- I heard (the rumour/ some gossip) that your company/ section/ branch/... Is that true?
- I heard about the... scandal. Is that your company/ division/ team/ office/ subsidiary?
- I read the (bad) news about your company yesterday. How do you feel about it?
- Is it a big company/ division/ department/ section/ team/ office/ branch/ subsidiary?
- Is it a subsidiary of another company?/ Is it part of a larger group?
- I'm afraid I've never heard of it. Is it a famous company?
- Is it profitable?
- Sorry, can you say your company/ division/ department/ section/ team/ branch/ office name again (a bit more slowly)?
- Sorry, I've never heard that name before. How do you spell it?
- Sorry, what was your name again?/ Sorry, what was your company's name again?
- That sounds stressful. Is that right?/ That sounds stressful, or don't you think so?
- That sounds terrible. Is it?
- That's a strange name. How do you spell it?
- What are you working on (at the moment)?/ What's your present project?
- What do you specialise in?
- What kinds of products do you produce/ sell?/ What kinds of services do you provide?
- What's it like, working in/ for/ as...?
- What's the worst thing about your company/ your job/ your boss?
- What's your boss like?/ Do you have a good boss?/ Do you like your boss?
- What's your company most famous for?/ What's its most famous product?
- Where is your company based?/ Where are you based?/ Where do you work?/ Do you work near here?/ Is your office near here?/ Are you based near here?
- Where is your head office/ HQ?/ Where are your headquarters?
- Where is your office/ branch/ section/ team?
- Who are your main competitors?
- Who do you report to?
- Why are you here in...?/ What brings you (here) to...?
- Why are you here?/ What are you doing here?