

### Small talk after not meeting for a while

Choose questions from below **that are really suitable to ask your partner**, thinking about things that you already know and don't know about that person and what communication you have had recently. Take turns asking and answering such questions, with follow-up questions if you like.

- (Are you) busy this week/ at the moment?
- (Have you been) busy this week/ lately?
- Are you making progress with...?
- Did you enjoy...?
- Did you go anywhere nice over the holiday/ at the weekend/ last night/ for lunch/...?
- Did you go to the meeting about...?
- Did you have a good flight/ journey/ holiday/ weekend/ trip/...?
- Did you hear (the news) about...?
- Did you see... last night/ last week/ at the weekend/ on...?
- Did you... last night/ last week/ at the weekend/ on...?
- Do you have many meetings today/ this week?
- Have you (almost/ nearly) finished...?
- Have you changed your hair?/ Have you had a haircut?
- Have you got hay fever/ a cold/...?
- Have you had many meetings today/ this week?
- Have you had the chance to... today/ this week?
- Have you managed to catch up with... yet?
- Have you... since we last met/ since I last saw you?
- Have you... today/ yet/ this week/since...?
- How are you (today)?/ How's life?/ How are things?/ How's it going?
- How has your day/ week been (so far)?
- How was the weather in/ on...?
- How was your flight/ journey/ holiday/ weekend/ day off/ break/ trip/ hotel/...?
- How's (name)/ your family/...?
- How's business?
- How's work?
- How's... going?
- Is that a new...?
- It's been (really) busy/ quiet/ cold/ humid/ ... recently, don't you think?
- It's got really hot/ cold/ humid/..., hasn't it?
- Long time no see. How have you been?
- Long time no see. How long has it been?
- Long time no see. What have you been up to?
- Thanks for your email/ message about...
- What are you working on (at the moment)?/ Are you still working on...?
- What did you do last week/ at the weekend/ after...?
- What time did you... last night?
- When did you get back from...?
- Where did you...?
- You look terrible/ sick/ tired/ hungover....
- You're looking (very) good/ healthy/ tanned/ relaxed. Have you...?

Ask about questions above which you don't understand, don't know how to answer, etc.

*Put a tick next to questions above which are suitable for (exactly) the situation that you were just in, write a cross (X) next to ones which probably aren't suitable, and write a question mark (?) next to those which you think might be okay or you aren't sure about.*

*Change partners and do the same speaking activity again, but this time pretend that you are in a meeting and so move onto really getting down to business after a minute or two of small talk. Note that you might need different questions with your new partner.*

*Brainstorm things that you can include in a phrase for getting down to business into the gaps below:*

### **Getting down to business (= really starting) phrases**

**1. Saying something polite or friendly about the small talk that you just had (“Well/ So/**

**Anyway/ Well then/ Okay then/ Right then, \_\_\_\_\_, but...”)**

**2. Giving a reason for ending the small talk (“\_\_\_\_\_, so...”)**

**3. Suggesting getting down to business/ really starting the meeting**

**4. Something short after that suggestion to make it softer and make other people reply**

*Use the key words below to help with the task above.*

1. Saying something polite or friendly about the small talk that you just had (“Well/ So/ Anyway/ Well then/ Okay then/ Right then, \_\_\_\_\_, but...”)

- great
- more

2. Giving a reason for ending the small talk (“\_\_\_\_\_, so...”)

- have to
- another
- busy

3. Suggesting getting down to business/ really starting the meeting

- down
- get
- make
- agenda

4. Something short after that suggestion to make it softer and make other people reply

- shall
- mind
- okay
- think

Compare your answers with those under the fold below. Many more answers are possible (with and without those key words), so check if you wrote something different.

-----fold, cover or cut-----

### Suggested answers

NOT... X in italics means something that is not suitable

1. Saying something polite or friendly about the small talk that you just had (“Well/ So/ Anyway/ Well then/ Okay then/ Right then, \_\_\_\_\_, but...”)

- Well, it’s been **great** to chat but.../ So, it’s been **great** to catch up but...
- Okay, I’d love to talk (about that) **more**, but.../ So, I wish I could chat **more**, but.../ Well, I’d love to hear **more** about that after the meeting but.../ So, you must tell me **more** about that later, but...

2. Giving a reason for ending the small talk (“\_\_\_\_\_, so...”)

- We **have to** be out of here by twelve, so...
- I have **another** meeting at 11, so...
- I know you’re very **busy**, so... - *NOT I am very busy..., so... X*

3. Suggesting getting down to business/ really starting the meeting

- Let’s get **down** to business.
- Shall we **get** started?
- I think we should **make** a start.
- It’s about time to look at the **agenda**.

4. Something short after that suggestion to make it softer and make other people reply

- ...**shall** we?
- ...if you don’t **mind**.
- ...if that’s **okay**.
- ...don’t you **think**?