

# Language for ...

## informal conversations

### 1 Warmer

Read the sentences and look at the phrases in bold – how are their meanings different?

- ‘It’s very warm today, isn’t it?’ she said, desperately trying to **make conversation**.
- I **had a long conversation** with my cousin in America last night.
- He met one of the organizers on the train, and they **got into conversation**.



### 2 Listening

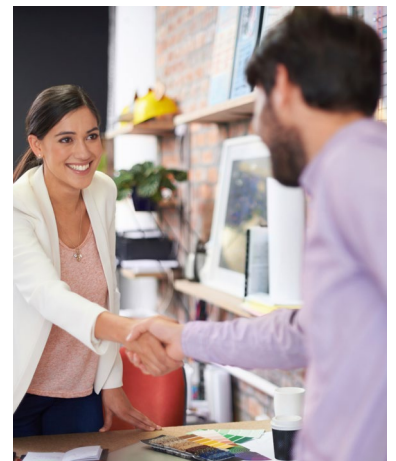
**a** You’re going to listen to four people talking about different types of informal conversation. First, choose the correct options to complete the sentences below. Then listen to the speakers to check your answers.

- 1 A chat is a *face-to-face / friendly / long* conversation. People chat *in the morning / before work / anytime*.
- 2 Gossip is talking about *other people / today’s news / your business*.
- 3 Banter is a humorous conversation between *colleagues / friends / teams*. Banter often happens when two people are interested in *different / funny / the same* things.
- 4 Small talk generally occurs when people *don’t know / see / like* each other. Small talk topics aren’t usually *interesting / serious / informal*.

**b** Listen again. Then read the conversations 1–4 below and match them with the best description a–d.

- a chat                      b small talk                      c gossip                      d banter

- 1 A Have you heard about Imogen?  
B No. I haven’t seen her in ages; what about her?  
A Apparently, she’s moving to Australia with her boyfriend.  
B Wow! Really? I didn’t even know she had a boyfriend. When?  
A After Christmas, I think, or at least that’s what Karl told me ...
- 2 A I really enjoyed the new Avengers film.  
B The film, or Scarlett Johansson? Go on, admit it, you really like her, don’t you?  
A Well, yes ... but it had great CGI and special effects!  
B Now, would you have gone to see it if she hadn’t been in it?  
A Haha, no, probably not!
- 3 A Hi Eve, how are you doing?  
B I’m fine, thanks. How’s things with you?  
A Not bad, thanks. We’ve just come back from a weekend in Edinburgh.  
B Ooh, sounds lovely.  
A Well, it was OK, but Ben didn’t feel well and so he slept most of the time.



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B Oh no, what a shame! Is he OK now?

A Yeah, he's fine - nothing serious, it was just a cold.

4 A Lovely and warm in the sun today ...

B Fantastic, isn't it?

A Let's hope it lasts until the weekend!

B Absolutely. That would be nice.

### 3 Language in use

#### a Match the words and phrases 1-7 with their uses a-g.

1 Sure.

a an informal way of saying 'yes' when someone asks you for something

2 Never mind.

b used for showing that you are very impressed by something

3 Really?

c used when someone has just told you that something bad has happened

4 Wow!

d used for saying goodbye to someone in a friendly way

5 Oh no!

e used for telling someone not to worry or not to be upset about something

6 Oh well ...

f used for accepting a bad situation or disappointment

7 Take care.

g used for showing that you are surprised by or interested in what someone has just told you

#### b Choose the best option to complete the responses.

1 A It's too late to watch the film now.

B Oh well. / Oh no! / Cool, we can watch it tomorrow.

2 A I can't believe it - someone has stolen my bike!

B Wow! / Oh no! / Never mind. We should tell the police.

3 A Jackie's leaving the company next month; she's got a new job.

B Sure. / Really? / Oh well. Who told you that?

4 A I've just passed my driving test!

B Take care. / Sure. / That's great. Congratulations!

5 A It was really good to see you, Jen.

B You too. How lovely. / Take care. / Sure.

6 A I made a cake for the party, but it got burnt in the oven.

B Never mind. / How awful. / Really? We can buy one instead.

7 A Can you help me carry a box upstairs?

B Sure. / That's great. / Take care. Which one?

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**c** Complete the sentences with the words in the box.

gossip      repartee      chatter      banter      conversation      small talk      chat

- 1 Ed and Tom are always making fun of each other; they like a bit of friendly \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 2 Please be quiet – it’s impossible to concentrate with all this constant \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 3 Mia didn’t enjoy the party. She didn’t know anyone and she’s never been very good at \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 4 Have you heard the local \_\_\_\_\_ ? Jack and Melanie are getting divorced!
- 5 Stefan, I think we need to have a quick \_\_\_\_\_ about what to do next.
- 6 The play is classic Noël Coward – full of witty \_\_\_\_\_ .
- 7 The journey was long, but eventually I got into \_\_\_\_\_ with the person sitting next to me.

### 4 Communicate

**Practise having a short conversation. Find a partner and start talking to them about something informal or telling them a piece of news. Then swap roles and practise responding to what your partner says. Use your own ideas or the ideas in the box below.**

You’ve just enjoyed a holiday in Ireland.

You and your partner went to school with Joe. You’ve heard that Joe is getting married in July.

You can’t find your wallet.

You’re a fan of FC Barcelona. Your partner likes A.C. Milan. Barcelona has just beaten Milan.

You’re going to cook a special meal for some friends. You’d like to borrow your partner’s recipe book.

#### More useful phrases

Do/Did you know that ...?	Sounds great / exciting / awful / terrible ...
What a nuisance/shame/pity ...	I know/see (what you mean).
Oh dear.	Of course. / No problem.

### 5 Discussion

**How do chat, banter and gossip in English compare with similar ways of communicating in your language and your country? With your partner, discuss any similarities or differences and report back to the class.**

#### Red Words

conversation (noun) \*\*\*      chat (noun)\*      chat (verb) \*\*      of course (adverb) \*\*\*  
really (adverb) \*\*\*      sure (adverb) \*\*\*