

informal conversations

1. What does having a chat mean? When do people tend to have a chat?

Person A: Er, a chat is a friendly conversation between two or more people. And normally people tend to have a chat at any point during the day, maybe in the morning, at school, or at work, or perhaps in the evening, on the telephone, online or face-to-face.

Person B: Having a chat means having a discussion about a certain topic, usually, ah, not too long. People tend to have a chat when there's just something that they need to talk about.

Person C: Well, having a chat means something smaller than a conversation for me, and a chat does not necessarily need to have an outcome. You can just have a chat for fun. That's probably the main difference between chat and conversations.

Person D: For me, having a chat is when you talk with someone in a nice friendly way. Er, it's pretty informal so you wouldn't use it for a formal discussion. So I'd maybe have a chat with my friends, um, before work or at lunch time.

2. What is gossip? What kind of things do people gossip about?

Person A: Er, gossip is when two or more people talk about ... often about someone else and when they're not in the room. And they usually talk about ... perhaps their private lives, possibly what they look like, what they're wearing that day.

Person B: Gossip isn't very nice. Gossip is, ah, when you talk about someone behind their back or when they're not there, ah, usually about things that aren't really your business.

Person C: Well, gossip is a conversation or a chat you have about people that you know, and I think it's important that everybody knows what they're talking about. The moment you don't know the people you're

gossiping about, you're losing interest. Gossiping is mainly about people and what they did. Usually, it's not very nice things they did or not very glamorous things that they did.

Person D: Talking about other people's business. Erm, news about other p ... gossip is news about other people, um, especially if it's about their personal relationships or private lives.

3. Can you explain what banter means? What type of people have banter with each other, and about what?

Person A: Banter is a conversation between two friends, and often it's when they're making jokes or laughing at each other. The type of banter that people have is ... it could be to do with anything ... so maybe a shared interest like a football team. Or it might be something related to their work, or their school, or anything that makes them both laugh.

Person B: Banter is, um, it's sort of funny chat that you might have, um, joking and making, sort of, silly ... silly comments that don't really mean anything.

Person C: It's the type of talk you have with people who do things together or are interested in the same things and it can be about sports or about work. And it's usually the type of talk that you have where not everybody says nice things all the time, but if they say things which aren't nice, they're meant in a humorous kind of way or to just, you know, be sociable with one another.

Person D: Er, friends have banter with each other. Um, I think banter is making fun of people but again in a nice way. I don't think you'd have banter with someone that you didn't know or like very much.

4. How would you describe small talk? What are some common small talk topics?

Person A: Small talk is like a chat, but I think it's more in a business context. So often before giving

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a presentation or before having a meeting you will maybe have a very informal discussion about the weather, about your day, about the weekend, about y ... perhaps even your family or friends. Er, and it normally lasts for about ... from anywhere between 20 seconds to two minutes.

Person B: Small talk is what you talk about when you don't know someone. So, um, if you're introduced to someone you might ask them where they're from, um, or you might ask them about their family, ah, or travelling, movies, that kind of thing. So it sort of breaks the ice to get into a discussion, and then maybe you can talk about some deeper things.

Person C: Small talk is pleasantries. It's the kind of conversation that you have before you get to the really important conversation. And as such, I think it follows that small talk topics must be not offensive, not really serious, so you're gonna be talking about weather or, er, very simple things about holidays, or very simple topics about your family, but nothing that would ever offend anybody before you're meant to have this really important conversation later.

Person D: Small talk is very basic personal information. So, How's work going?, How's the family?, er, British classic: Hasn't the weather been lovely recently? Um, you'd never cover any difficult topics in small talk, it's all very light and superficial.