

Tough talk

by Mike Hogan

1. Suitable topics?

Which of these topics are suitable for small talk? Which are not? Why? Discuss.

sport / hobbies

salary

business

health

politics

weather / travel

family

religion

2. How would you react?

Imagine that a colleague asks you the following questions. How would you react? Discuss with a partner.

1. How much do you earn?
2. There's been a lot of controversy over your religion these days. What's that about?
3. I didn't know your age until recently. I thought you were older.
4. Did you hear about Johannes in the other department? I heard that he's not changing roles but that he got fired!
5. Why aren't you married? You've been together with your partner for ten years, haven't you?

3. Role plays for small talk

Work with a partner. Pick a topic from exercise 1 and make small talk about it for two minutes, even if it is a "difficult" topic. Then reflect on how to improve the conversation in general, pick another topic and try again. Make some notes below on things you need to improve on.

Topic 1

Topic 2

