

Socialising in English

How to Create Questions



As you learnt in the blog post (<https://blog.tjtaylor.net/socialising>) the key to socialising is small talk. And the best way to make conversation is with questions.

This is a quick guide to forming questions in English.

1. Closed Questions

Closed questions are those questions which the responder can only reply to with 'yes' or 'no'.

For example:

A: Did you enjoy the English course?

B: Yes

We form closed questions using the following auxiliary verbs:

- am / is / are
e.g. Are you having a good time?
- do / does
e.g. Does he want to come for a drink?
- have / has
e.g. Has she called you yet?

We can also use modal verbs:

- should / shall
e.g. Should I bring some wine?
- will
e.g. Will you be on time?
- may / could / can
e.g. May I have some of that pizza?

We use:

Auxiliary or modal verb + subject + main verb

Verb	Subject	Verb	
Am	I	going	to see you later?
Is	he	meeting	us there?
Are	they	coming	to the party tonight?
Do	you	like	the food?
Does	he	work	here?
Have	you	seen	the film?
Has	she	called	yet?
Should	I	meet	you there?
Will	we	finish	on time?
Could	you	take	the meeting notes?

2. Open Questions

As you learnt in the blog post, open questions are essential for small talk.

Open questions encourage the responder to give a more detailed response. You can then use the information provided to ask more questions.

For example:

A: What did you enjoy about the English course?

B: I really enjoyed the speaking practice that we did. I need to speak a lot for my job.

A: Me too, what job do you do?

Open questions are formed using 7 words known as the 'wh' words, and an 8th word 'how':

- Who
e.g. Who did you meet at the party?
- Where
e.g. Where are you going this weekend?
- Which
e.g. Which present did you choose for Mary?
- What
e.g. What did you think of the film?
- When
e.g. When did you start learning English?
- Why
e.g. Why did you decide to become a lawyer?
- Whose
e.g. Whose bag is this?
- How
e.g. How do you know Emma?

To form open questions generally we use:

Wh-/How + auxiliary verb (have, be, do) + subject + main verb

e.g. What did you do at the weekend?

We can also use:

Wh-/How + modal verb + subject + main verb

e.g. What should we bring to the meeting?

Wh-/How	Auxiliary / modal verb	Subject	Main verb	
What	did	you	see	at the cinema?
How often	does	she	travel	for work?
Who	should	we	invite	to the party?
Where	have	you	been	on holiday this year?
When	did	you	start	working for this company?

Example Questions

Here are some examples you can practise with. There is some space to create your own.

NB: when using these questions to socialise, it is also a good idea to volunteer some information about yourself first, before you ask the other person the question.

e.g. I love crime novels. What about you? What's your favourite type of book?

Arts and
entertainment

What type of films / music / books do you enjoy?

What did you think of the film / show / exhibit?

What's the best show you've ever seen live?

Sports

What sports do you play?

Who is your favourite *[insert sport]* team?

Who do you think will win the league/championship this year?

What do you think of the manager of *[insert team name]*?

News

What did you think of the recent article / report about....?

What's your view on.....?

Family

Do you have any siblings/children?

What do your parents/brother/sister/children do?

Work

Why did you decide to become a ...?

What made you choose *[company name]*?

What do you enjoy most about your job?

How was your day at work?

Travel

Where are you going on holiday this year?

Where have you been on holiday this year?

Where is your favourite place you've visited? Why did you like it?

What did you think of *[insert country/city/town]*?

Hobbies

What do you like to do in your free time?

How did you become interested in *[hobby]*?

What do you like most about *[hobby]*?

Location of the venue

What do you think of the restaurant / bar / hotel?

Have you been here before?

So, how did you end up at this event?

Food

What do you think of the food here?

What's your favourite type of food?

What is your favourite restaurant?

For more advice
and information visit:

<http://blog.tjtaylor.net/socialising>