



Chatting and small talk

Lesson code: 1171-S6CD-KEX8

UPPER INTERMEDIATE +

 American English

1 Warm-up

Talk to your partner for five minutes about what you did last weekend.

2 Idioms

Match the following idiomatic expressions to their correct meaning and invent a sentence with each idiom:

1. Two months after Tom left her, Janet married another man on the rebound.
 2. I don't want everyone to know about this, so please keep it to yourself.
 3. I don't mind lending him money from time to time, but this is getting out of hand!
 4. My roommate is really driving me up the wall! He never does any cleaning.
 5. I have my final exam tomorrow. Keep your fingers crossed for me!
- a. becoming unacceptable or unmanageable
 - b. do not tell other people about this secret
 - c. making me very angry
 - d. starting a romantic relationship with somebody new while recovering from a previous relationship break-up
 - e. wish me good luck

3 Social expressions

Now listen to 5 dialogues and match them to each of the situations below.

- a. Tell someone a secret.
- b. Start a trivial conversation.
- c. Gossip about someone or something.
- d. Give someone a compliment.
- e. Moan about something.



Look at the following words and expressions from the dialogues. Match them to their functions:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Please keep this to yourself. | a. <i>asking someone not to tell others something you have said</i> |
| 2. Apparently, .. | b. <i>introducing something surprising or interesting</i> |
| 3. You have my word. | c. <i>introducing something you have been told (although you are not certain it's true)</i> |
| 4. Why don't you ..? | d. <i>making a promise to somebody</i> |
| 5. Guess what? | e. <i>making a suggestion</i> |
| 6. That's very kind of you. | f. <i>replying to a compliment</i> |
| 7. Nice weather today, isn't it? | g. <i>responding to a suggestion which you think is ridiculous</i> |
| 8. You must be joking. | h. <i>starting a conversation</i> |

Now complete the dialogues with the expressions above:

Mark: Hey, Emma, _____ ¹ I have some very interesting news about Maria.

Emma: What?

Mark: _____ ² she has a new boyfriend.

Emma: Really? But hasn't she just split up with Nick?

Mark: I think she must be on the rebound.

Mark: Hey Emma, We're going to organize a party for Tom's birthday.

Emma: Great!

Mark: Yes, but _____ ³ . It's a surprise party and we wouldn't want him to find out.

Emma: I won't tell a soul. _____ ⁴ .

Simon: Hi Alice, sorry I'm late. I was stuck in traffic again for almost half an hour this time. The construction in this city is really getting out of hand.

Alice: _____ ⁵ take the subway?

Simon: _____ ⁶ ! The subway really drives me up the wall. It's so overcrowded these days.

Simon: Your hair looks really nice today.

Alice: Thank you. _____ ⁷ .

Simon: Would you like to go out for a coffee this weekend?

Mark: _____ ⁸ ?

Emma: Yes. Lovely. I hope it stays like this for the rest of the weekend.

Mark: Keep your fingers crossed!



4 Grammar - Question tags

Read the following information on using question tags:

When we **invite someone to agree** with us, for example to emphasize a statement or start a conversation, we can add question tag to a statement, e.g. *Nice weather today, isn't it?*

Question tags can also be used to **ask real questions**, for example when you want to make a suggestion, ask for something or check that your information is correct, e.g. *Let's go out for a drink, shall we?*
You're coming to the party tonight, aren't you?
You don't know where Anne is, do you?

Listen and notice the difference in intonation:

Inviting agreement: *Lovely day, isn't it?*

Checking/asking for things or information: *It's time to go home, isn't it?*

Inviting agreement: *Tom isn't coming, is he?*

Checking/asking for things or information: *You don't have a pen I could borrow, do you?*

Question tags are formed with an **auxiliary verb** (**have, was, will, shall** etc.), **do/does** for the **simple present**, and **did** for **simple past**.

Complete the following rules by crossing out the incorrect alternative:

We normally use a positive/negative question tag after a positive sentence and a positive/negative question tag after a negative sentence.

5 Grammar practice

Complete the following sentences with question tags. Read your answers aloud and listen to check.



1. Excuse me, you don't happen to know what time it is, _____ ? / Yes, it's 3 o'clock.
2. She's a very pretty woman, _____ ? / Yes, she's gorgeous.
3. Let's go to the movies, _____ ? / Sure. Good idea.
4. He didn't come in to work today, _____ ? / Yes, I know. And it's not the first time!
5. Paula won't pass her exams, _____ ? / Probably not. She's hardly studied at all.
6. I saw Martin yesterday at the bar. / But he's supposed to be on vacation, _____ ?
7. That was a great game yesterday, _____ ? / Oh yeah! The Cowboys played really well!
8. Marta's been absent quite a lot recently, _____ ? / Yeah, she probably has the flu again.
9. Excuse me, you don't have a pen I could borrow, _____ ? / Yes, I do. Here you are.
10. He was very cheerful this morning, _____ ? / Yes, I know. He probably had a good weekend.



6 Role play

In pairs, write mini-dialogues for three of the following situations using language from this lesson. Act out the dialogues when they are ready:

1. There has been a scandal involving the president of your country. Gossip about it.
2. You are waiting to board a plane at an airport. The flight has already been delayed by two hours. You decide to start a conversation with the person sitting next to you in the departure lounge.
3. You see your friend for the first time in a month. He/she has a new look. Give him/her a compliment.
4. You are going to move to another town and you decide to tell your best friend, but you want him/her to keep it a secret for now.
5. You want to know the time and you decide to ask a stranger on the street.
6. You are discussing with a friend where to go out for the evening. Your friend suggests the most expensive restaurant in town.
7. You are going shopping with a friend. It is late and you think that the shopping center closes at 9 pm, but you are not sure.



3 Social expressions

Mark: Hey, Emma, guess what? I have some very interesting news about Maria.

Emma: What?

Mark: Apparently she has a new boyfriend.

Emma: Really? But hasn't she just split up with Nick?

Mark: I think she must be on the rebound.

Mark: Hey Emma, We're going to organize a party for Tom's birthday.

Emma: Great!

Mark: Yes, but please keep this to yourself. It's a surprise party and we wouldn't want him to find out.

Emma: I won't tell a soul. You have my word.

Simon: Hi Alice, sorry I'm late. I was stuck in traffic again for almost half an hour this time. The construction in this city is really getting out of hand.

Alice: Why don't you take the subway?

Simon: You must be joking! The subway really drives me up the wall. It's so overcrowded these days. Something must be done about the transport system in this city!

Simon: Your hair looks really nice today.

Alice: Thank you. That's very kind of you.

Simon: Would you like to go out for a coffee this weekend?

Mark: Nice weather today, isn't it?

Emma: Yes. Lovely. I hope it stays like this for the rest of the weekend.

Mark: Keep your fingers crossed!

5 Grammar practice

A: Excuse me, you don't happen to know what time it is, do you?

B: Yes, it's 3 o'clock.

A: She's a very pretty woman, isn't she?

B: Yes, she's gorgeous.

A: Let's go to the movies, shall we?

B: Sure. Good idea.

A: He didn't come in to work today, did he?

B: Yes, I know. And it's not the first time!

A: Paula won't pass her exams, will she?

B: Probably not. She's hardly studied at all.

A: I saw Martin yesterday at the bar.

B: But he's supposed to be on vacation, isn't he?

A: That was a great game yesterday, wasn't it?



B: Oh yeah! The Cowboys played really well!

A: Marta's been absent quite a lot recently, hasn't she?

B: Yeah, she probably has the flu again.

A: Excuse me, you don't have a pen I could borrow, do you?

B: Yes, I do. Here you are.

A: He was very cheerful this morning, wasn't he?

B: Yes, I know. He probably had a good weekend.



1 Warm-up

GROUP LESSONS: Go around the class monitoring the activity and providing any necessary vocabulary.

2 Idioms

1. d 2. b 3. a 4. c 5. e

3 Social expressions

Play the audio file or use your mobile device to scan the QR code (make sure you have installed a QR code reader app and can access the internet on your device).

- a. 2; b. 5; c. 1; d. 4; e. 3

Expressions-functions:

1. a 2. c 3. d 4. e 5. b 6. f 7. h 8. g

Complete the dialogues:

1. guess what?
2. Apparently
3. please keep this to yourself
4. You have my word
5. Why don't you
6. You must be joking
7. That's very kind of you
8. Nice weather today, isn't it

4 Grammar - Question tags

Play the audio file or read out the sentences. Have the students point out the difference in intonation between inviting agreement (voice goes down at the end) and checking/asking for things or information (voice goes up).

We normally use a negative question tag after a positive sentence and a positive question tag after a negative sentence.

Note: a negative sentence + positive question tag is often used to ask for things or information, e.g. You haven't got a pen on you, have you? / You don't happen to know where the station is, do you? etc.

Teach the question tag 'shall we?' for suggestions beginning with 'Let's...', e.g. Let's take the bus, shall we?.

5 Grammar practice

Students can work alone and check in pairs. Play the audio file or use your mobile device to scan the QR code (make sure you have installed a QR code reader app and can access the internet on your device).

1. do you 2. isn't she 3. shall we 4. did he 5. will she
6. isn't he 7. wasn't it 8. hasn't she 9. do you 10. wasn't he

