

100

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

TO MASTER SMALL TALK
IN ENGLISH!



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100 QUESTIONS FOR SMALL TALK

SPEAKING LESSON



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Small talk is often dreaded by English learners and advanced speakers alike. It can be awkward and intimidating. This lesson will give you 100 questions you can ask, and some example answers to see how you might respond if you are asked these questions.

GENERAL

1. How was your day today?

It's been pretty busy, but I've had a good day. Thanks.

2. What did you do last weekend?

Last weekend I visited my family in Bedfordshire, and we celebrated my brother's birthday.

3. What hobbies or interests do you have outside of work?

I really like running, and I've just bought a **treadmill**, so I'm enjoying using that.

4. Have you watched any interesting movies or TV shows recently?

I've really been enjoying watching The White Lotus. It's quite relaxing because it's set in a holiday destination.

5. What type of music do you enjoy listening to?

I honestly don't listen to a lot of music, but I do really like Taylor Swift. She always makes me smile.

6. Do you have any pets, and what's unique about them?

Oh, good question. I have a dog and a cat, and what's **unique** about them is they have Spanish names because I love Spain: Diego, the dog, and Alfonso, the cat.

**7. What's your favourite thing about the current season?**

Oh, we're coming into spring, and I love seeing all of the **bulbs** that I've planted in my garden start **to peek up** and show their petals.

8. What's the most recent book you've read that you enjoyed?

My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante, an Italian author. I read it in English, but my goal is to read it in Italian.

9. What's your favourite type of cuisine to eat and why?

Oh, that's hard. I love so many different types of **cuisine**. I love Lebanese food. Anything that involves fresh fruits and vegetables.

10. Do you prefer living in a city or a rural area, and why?

I absolutely prefer to live in a **rural** area because I find nature so relaxing. Although I do miss the **conveniences** of living in a city.

VOCABULARY

treadmill *n* /'tredmɪl/ - an exercise machine that has a moving surface that enables users to run or walk while staying in place
I like to exercise on the treadmill at the gym.

unique *adj* /ju:'ni:k/ - special or unusual; the only one of its kind
My friend has a unique style of dressing.

bulb *n* /bʌlb/ - the round underground part of a plant, like an onion
The bulb is an important part of the plant's growth.

to peek up *phr v* - to appear or stick out slightly in a way that is barely seen
The sun started to peek up over the clouds, despite the rainy weather.

cuisine *n* /kwɪ'zi:n/ - a style of cooking
I love trying different cuisines from around the world.

rural *adj* /'rʊərəl/ - areas away from cities, with fewer people and resources compared to urban areas; countryside
My grandparents live in a rural area where there are more farms than houses.

convenience *n* /kən'vi:niəns/ - something useful that makes life easier
Although the hotel is in a rural area, it has all the modern conveniences.



WORK AND CAREER

11. What do you do for work, and what's one thing you enjoy about it?

I run an education company, so when I'm not on YouTube, I'm making my English courses, my online English courses, and my favourite part of the job is receiving feedback from my students who've taken the courses.

12. How did you get started in your line of work?

It all started with this YouTube channel here in 2016, and then slowly, it grew into something a little bit bigger.

13. What project are you currently working on?

We are currently working on a huge project, which is our C1 level course, our advanced English course. It's going to be amazing. It's going to come out in May. If you're watching this in the future, check the description box. I will leave a link, and if you are interested, I have left the **waiting list** so you'll be the first to know.

14. What do you think the future of your industry looks like?

I think it has a lot more **artificial intelligence** involved.

15. What's one thing you've learnt recently that's helped you in your job?

I have learnt to listen carefully to **criticism** but to not take it all to heart.

16. What's the best professional advice you've ever received?

Well, it's not the most impressive, amazing, **mind-blowing** piece of advice ever, but when my YouTube channel was starting **to take off**, I was starting to make a little bit of income. I asked my dad if I should do it or if I should continue with my planned career path, and he said, "**Give it a go**. Do it for two years. If it doesn't work, you'll only be 23. All you've lost is a little bit of time." It ended up being the best piece of advice I've ever followed.

17. What do you think sets successful people apart in your field?

I think they are excited about what they do and what they create.

18. What's one challenge you've faced at work, and how did you overcome it?



One thing I found really difficult is managing a team of people. That's not ever something I thought I was going to be doing, and I've been trying to overcome it. I'm still learning. Recently, I have opened my calendar so that at the beginning of every month, everyone who works for me can check in for a 20-minute chat. We start this next week, so I hope that will help me be more in touch with my employees.

19. Do you have any career goals you're working towards?

I would say more of a lifestyle goal. I would like to not have to work all the time whilst my children are young. I am not expecting children at the moment, but I would like to have them in the future.

20. Have you ever had an interesting work experience or job?

I worked in a juice bar for a number of years, and I learnt a lot about fruit, and I love fruit, so that was great for me.

VOCABULARY

waiting list *n* - /'weɪtɪŋ lɪst/ - a list of people who are waiting for something, such as a service, a product, or an opportunity
I signed up for the waiting list for the concert tickets since they were already sold out.

artificial intelligence (AI) *n* /,ɑ:trɪfɪl ɪn'telɪdʒəns/ - the study and development of computer systems, hardware and software that can copy human behaviour
Artificial intelligence is used in many modern technologies, such as self-driving cars and virtual assistants.

criticism *n* /'krɪtɪsɪzəm/ - the act of analysing, evaluating, and expressing disapproval or approval of someone or something based on one's opinion or standards
It is important to listen to constructive criticism to improve yourself.

mind-blowing *adj* /'maɪnd bləʊɪŋ/ - something that is so amazing, surprising, or unbelievable that it has a profound impact on one's thoughts and emotions
The view from the mountaintop was mind-blowing; I never saw something so beautiful before.

to take off *phr v* - to succeed or become popular and widely accepted in a short period of time
The new restaurant took off quickly due to its unique menu and excellent service.



to give something a go *idiom*- to try something, typically for the first time, and see how it turns out

If you want to learn to speak Mandarin, you should give it a go and practise every day.

TRAVEL

21. Have you travelled anywhere recently, and where did you go?

Most recently, we visited Thailand, and we went to Phuket and Koh Yao Noi, and it was beautiful.

22. What's your favourite place you've ever visited, and why?

That would have to be Seville. I totally fell in love with the city and its culture, and its people.

23. Where would you like to go on your next trip?

We really would like to go to Vietnam. I am desperate to try pho I think it's called—the bone broth soup with noodles—pho. I just really am desperate to see that country.

24. Do you prefer relaxing vacations or adventure trips, and why?

I like to have a good balance. I do need to get the relaxation out of my system. I need to read a book. I need to lie in the shade. I need to swim. But I go a bit stale if I stay relaxing for too long. I need to do things and see things.

25. What's one unique or exotic food you've tried while travelling?

Most recently, mangosteen. That fruit blew my mind. It was so delicious. I wish I could eat it every day.

26. What's the craziest or most memorable thing you've done on vacation?

I would say climbing to the top of Lion's Head in Cape Town at sunrise. That was absolutely beautiful.

27. What's your favourite way to travel (road trip, plane, train, etc.)?

In style.

28. Do you prefer travelling alone or with others, and why?



Always with my husband. Well, my husband was a farmer, and now he works with me. And before, I used to travel alone, and I used to think, “damn it, he would love to see this.” I always used to feel so sad that he couldn't come with me. So now it's such a pleasure to travel together.

29. Have you ever had a negative travel experience, and how did you handle it?

Yes. I once turned up at a supposedly five-star hotel that was nothing like the photos, and I very calmly explained that I was going to move to another hotel and I'd like a refund. And luckily, they did comply.

30. What's one cultural experience you've had while travelling that you'll never forget?

La Feria de Abril en Seville—the Feria in Seville. It's just this incredible party with striped marquees everywhere. Everyone wears flamenco dresses. I can't wait to go back.

VOCABULARY

desperate (for something) *adj* /'despəɾət/ - wanting something badly and being willing to do almost anything to get it
I'm desperate for a cup of coffee; I haven't had one all day.

to go stale *idiom* - to become dull and unexciting
Bjorn tends to go a bit stale if he is stuck inside for too long.

exotic *adj* /ɪg'zɒtɪk/ - originating from a foreign or distant place, having unique or unusual characteristics that are often considered fascinating or intriguing
I tried an exotic fruit called durian on my trip to Indonesia.

mangosteen *n* /'mæŋgəsti:n/ - a tropical fruit with sweet white flesh and a purple, hard exterior shell
Mangosteen is a delicious exotic fruit that I discovered on my trip to Vietnam.

to blow one's mind *idiom* - to surprise or impress someone greatly
The fireworks show was amazing; it blew my mind.

in style *idiom* - in a fashionable or trendy way
Kerry arrived at the premiere in style with a custom-made gown.



five-star hotel *noun phrase* - a luxurious and high-quality hotel that provides exceptional services and amenities to its guests
We stayed at a five-star hotel for our honeymoon; it was very luxurious.

to turn up *phr v* - to arrive or show up at a place or event
She didn't turn up at the meeting, and we sat there waiting for 45 minutes.

to comply *v (i) /kəm'plaɪ/* - to follow a rule, regulation or request, often by following specific instructions
You must comply with the library rules—not talking!

flamenco *n /flə'mençəʊ/* - a traditional Spanish dance characterised by expressive movements and fast-paced footwork
My sister took flamenco lessons over the summer

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

31. What's one hobby or interest you're passionate about?

Exercise. It just makes me feel so good.

32. What's the most recent hobby or interest you've taken up?

I would say learning Italian with my tutor, Alice, who is amazing. I found her on LanguaTalk, which is a platform that I'm a part of. You can find your own tutor for the language you're learning.

33. Do you have any hidden talents that people might not know about?

I can play the violin, and I'm also really flexible.

34. What's one thing you've learned recently that's related to your hobby or interest?

I've learnt to speak Italian a little bit.

35. Have you ever taken a class or workshop related to your hobby or interest?

Oh, well, a **workshop** I took recently was a jewellery-making workshop where I learnt to make a silver **bangle**, and that was great fun.

36. What's the most adventurous or daring thing you've done related to your hobby or interest?



Well, to do with language learning, I think going to Spain at the age of 16, 17 and spending a week there, immersing myself in the language, was quite **daring**. I spent ages saving up for the language course myself, and it was fantastic and the start of my language teaching career, basically.

37. What's one thing you'd like to learn or accomplish related to your hobby or interest?

Well, if we're going to talk about language learning, I always like to learn how to make people laugh in the language I'm learning. That gives me a lot of satisfaction.

38. Do you prefer indoor or outdoor activities, and why?

Well, it's hard to say. If the weather is good, outdoor 100%. But I'm English. I live in England, so I've just bought a treadmill to run indoors.

39. What's one activity or interest you'd like to try in the future?

Oh, I don't know why, but I really want to try **archery**.

40. What's the most interesting thing you've ever learnt unrelated to work or school?

How to run a business. It is such an amazing experience, and I learnt absolutely nothing about it at school.

VOCABULARY

workshop *n* /'wɜ:kʃɒp/ - a hands-on learning event where participants engage in practical activities related to a specific topic
Greg attended a workshop on digital marketing last week.

bangle *n* /'bæŋɡl/ - a bracelet or anklet in the shape of a large ring made of metal, wood or plastic
Gladys wore a beautiful golden bangle on her wrist.

daring *adj* /'deərɪŋ/ - willing to take risks or face danger
It takes a daring person to speak in front of a large audience.

to immerse *v* (t+i) /'ɪmɜ:s/ - to become completely involved in something
I like to immerse myself in a good book at weekends.

archery *n* /'ɑ:tʃəri/ - the sport of shooting an arrow with a bow
We learnt archery at summer camp when we were kids.



FOOD AND DRINK

41. What's your favourite type of food, and why?

Fruit, because it's so **refreshing**. It tastes amazing, and it makes me feel good.

42. Do you enjoy cooking, and what's your favourite dish to prepare?

I love cooking, and my **go-to** dish is actually normally a **risotto**. I can whip up a good risotto with very few ingredients in my fridge.

43. What's one unique or exotic food you've tried and enjoyed?

Well, in Thailand, we actually went on a cookery course, and we learnt to make Pad Thai and mango sticky rice and green Thai curry, and that was amazing.

44. Do you have any dietary restrictions, and how do you manage them?

I don't. I'm very, very lucky to have no **dietary restrictions**, so I don't need to manage them.

45. What's your favourite restaurant or café, and what do you like about it?

I love a good local pub. We've got some great ones around us. For me, the best part is on a sunny day, an unexpectedly sunny day in England, sitting outside in a pub garden.

46. What's one dish or cuisine you've been wanting to try, but haven't yet?

Vietnamese food. I need to try pho.

47. What's your favourite type of alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage?

I really like wine and gin for alcohol. Non-alcoholic, I love fresh fruit juice. Fresh fruit and vegetable juice.

48. Do you prefer sweet or savory foods, and why?

Definitely **savoury**. Sometimes sweet foods can be **overpowering**, and also, because we eat them at the end of the meal, I often don't have room. I'm not very good at managing my **appetite**.

49. What's one food or drink you've tried that you didn't like?



For me, it's anything that is really, really spicy. I can handle spice, but not **obnoxious** levels of spice. Not the level that hurts your tongue.

50. Have you ever tried cooking a new dish, and how did it turn out?

I tried cooking pierogi I think they're called. Potato dumplings that you often find in Ukrainian and Polish cuisines. And they went okay. I found them delicious, but when I showed my Polish friend, she said I'd done the wrong.

VOCABULARY

refreshing *adj* /rɪ'frɛʃɪŋ/ - making one less tired or hot

Nothing beats a refreshing breeze on the beach while on vacation.

go-to *adj* /'gəʊ tu:/ - something or someone that is relied upon or frequently used for a particular purpose

My go-to store for groceries is the one near my office.

risotto *n* /rɪ'zɒtəʊ/ - an Italian rice dish often made with meat, vegetables or seafood

My wife's Italian grandmother taught me to make the best risotto!

to whip up *phr v* - to quickly and easily prepare or make something, often without prior planning

When I'm in a hurry, I often whip up a quick meal of scrambled eggs and toast.

dietary restrictions *n* - limitations on what a person can eat or drink due to medical, cultural or personal reasons

Due to her dietary restrictions, she avoids eating foods that contain gluten.

savoury *adj* /'seɪvəri/ - salty; not sweet

The savoury aroma of the roasted potatoes made our mouths water.

overpowering *adj* /,əʊvə'paʊərɪŋ/ - very strong or intense to the point of being unpleasant

Mary's perfume was so overpowering! It made me feel ill.

appetite *n* /'æpɪtaɪt/ - the natural desire or physical need for food, typically accompanied by hunger or craving

After exercising, I always have a strong appetite for a healthy snack.



obnoxious *adj* /əb'noʊkjəs/ - something or someone that is extremely unpleasant, offensive or annoying

His obnoxious behaviour at the party made everyone uncomfortable.

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS

51. Do you have any siblings, and what's your relationship with them like?

I do have a younger brother called George. He's four and a half years younger than me, and we have a fantastic relationship. I consider him a good friend.

52. What's your family like, and what do you enjoy most about spending time with them?

My family is small. My mum, my dad, my brother, my husband and me. And what I love about spending time with them is that we just do not stop laughing.

53. Do you have any nieces or nephews, and what do you enjoy doing with them?

I have got a niece or nephew that is due to be born in April, so I'm going to be an aunt. I'm so excited. I haven't met them yet. But if they are watching this in the future, I'm so excited to meet you.

54. Are you in a relationship or married, and how did you meet your partner?

Yes, I am married to my husband, Will, who is doing a very good job reading out these questions to me. And we met at Young Farmers Club, which is a very British rural teenager social club which is just as cool as it sounds. But if you get a husband out of it, it's totally worth going to.

55. Do you have any children, and what do you enjoy most about being a parent?

I don't have any children, so I can't really answer that question. But I hope to have them at some point one day.

56. What's one challenge you've faced in a past relationship, and how did you overcome it?

Being **unsuitable** for each other and leaving.

57. What's one piece of relationship advice you'd give to someone in a new relationship?



Infatuation is very different to long-lasting love, but you can enjoy both stages with each other in different ways.

58. Have you ever been on a memorable or interesting date, and what happened?

Once, I went on a date with a guy, and he asked me what I wanted to drink, and I said, "Please, can I have a gin and tonic?" And the barman said, "normal or **slimline**?" and the guy looked me up and down and said, "slimline". And it wasn't a joke. He was weird.

59. Do you have a best friend, and what's one thing you love about them?

I have two best friends, and I love them in different ways. I've got my friend Ellie. I have loads of history with her. We've known each other since we were born, basically. And my friend Felicity is someone I see **sporadically**, but when we get together, it's like no time has passed at all.

60. What's one memorable family holiday or trip you've taken together?

So, growing up, my grandparents had a little apartment in the south of Portugal. They used to **hibernate** there in the winter and play golf, and we went there every summer as a family. And I hadn't been back there for seven years, and I went back last year with my husband and my parents, and it was amazing to be in my childhood holiday location and to have my husband. I just, I felt like a child and an adult all at once. It was a crazy, crazy experience.

VOCABULARY

sibling *n* /'sɪblɪŋ/ - a brother or sister

Gary doesn't have any siblings, but he's been like a brother to me.

unsuitable *adj* /ʌn'su:təbl/ - not right for a particular purpose, situation or person

The outfit she wore to the job interview was unsuitable for this professional setting.

infatuation *n* /ɪn'fætʃu'eɪʃn/ - a strong and often short-lived feeling of intense attraction, fascination, or love towards someone or something
I had a brief infatuation with my classmate, but it quickly faded.

memorable *adj* /'memərəbl/ - worth remembering, leaves a lasting impression; significant and meaningful

Our trip to Europe last year was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.



slimline *adj* /'slɪmlaɪn/ - containing little sugar and few calories
She never drinks the slimline tonic water because it tastes like chemicals.

sporadically *adv* /spə'rædɪkli/ - occasionally or at irregular times
She only sees her old friends sporadically, but they always have a great time when they get together.

to hibernate *v (i)* /'haɪbənɪt/ - to escape the cold by staying indoors or moving to a warmer place, especially during the winter months
During winter, I tend to hibernate indoors and watch films.
 Extra Note: 'to hibernate' typically refers to the act of animals entering a deep sleep during cold winter months.

CURRENT EVENTS

61. Have you been following any interesting news stories lately, and what are your thoughts on them?

One big news story in the UK recently was about a woman that went missing and called Nicola Bulley. And I found that really, really scary and fascinating to watch at the same time.

62. What's your opinion on the current political climate or social issues?

Oh, well, that's the big question. **Dire.**

63. Have you tried any new technology or gadgets recently, and what's your review of them?

I have been playing around with **ChatGPT**, and it has been scary and useful all at the same time.

64. What's one recent scientific discovery or breakthrough that caught your attention?

Definitely the development of artificial intelligence. I feel that we are at a **turning point.**

65. Have you been following any sports news, and what teams or athletes do you support?

Not really. I mean, the Six Nations is going on, and my husband talks a lot about it, but I can't say that sport really interests me too much.

66. What's your opinion on the latest celebrity gossip or news?



I used to follow a lot of celebrity **gossip** and news. I just don't find it as interesting anymore. But I do really like seeing beautiful dresses on the **red carpet**.

67. What's your take on the current state of the economy or job market?

Oh, I'm really worried about the economy at the moment. We have huge **inflation**. Food is really expensive. Fuel is really expensive. It costs a lot to heat your home. In the job market, I've heard rumours that people are taking a little bit more control and not accepting as low pay, and I'm really for that.

68. Have you discovered any interesting books, podcasts, or other media lately, and what did you like about them?

There are two podcasts that I've been enjoying recently, and they are two British newspapers that are leaning to the left and the right. So I get both sides of the same story, really. One is *Stories of Our Times* by the Sunday Times. The other is *Today in Focus* by The Guardian. And it's really interesting to hear them both cover the same story but in slightly different ways.

69. What's your opinion on climate change, and what actions do you think we can take to combat it?

I feel frustrated by climate change because there are these huge corporations making so much of a negative impact that sometimes, as one human, I feel quite insignificant. But I'm really, really making an effort to take more control over what I can do to improve climate change.

70. Have you been following any recent cultural trends or movements, and what's your take on them?

I have been interested in the anti-work or anti-work movement. I like using Reddit, and I've seen some things on that **Reddit** sub-forum, and I find them really interesting that people are suddenly **sticking it to the man**.

VOCABULARY

dire *adj* /'daɪə(r)/ - extremely serious

Our cafe is in dire need of a new strategy to stay competitive in the market.

ChatGPT *n* /tʃætʒi:pi:ti/ - a large language model created by OpenAI that provides answers and conversation based on user input

I often use ChatGPT as I would Google.



breakthrough *n* /'breɪkθruː/ - a significant development or discovery that represents a major advancement or success in a particular field
His discovery was a major breakthrough in the field of health.

turning point *n* /'tɜːnɪŋ pɔɪnt/ - a critical moment or event in one's life or a situation that marks a significant change or shift in direction
Meeting her partner was a turning point that helped her see life in a new and positive way.

gossip *n* /'ɡɒsɪp/ - informal talk or stories about others' lives that may not be entirely true
The constant gossip in my office was one of the reasons why I quit—this isn't secondary school!

red carpet *n* /,red 'kɑːpɪt/ - a long piece of red carpet that is laid out for the arrival of important people at an event
I couldn't take my eyes off her dress as she walked down the red carpet.

inflation *n* /ɪn'fleɪʃn/ - a fall in the value of money and the increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over time
Inflation has caused the price of groceries to increase over the past year.

Reddit *n* /'redɪt/ - a social news and discussion website where users submit and vote on content
We enjoy browsing Reddit to keep up with the latest news and trends.

stick it to the man *idiom* - to oppose or resist power and authority, usually in a rebellious manner
The protesters were determined to stick it to the man and demand change.

PERSONAL

71. Where did you grow up, and what was it like?

I grew up in a tiny village in Bedfordshire, and it was a very happy childhood, very rural in the countryside, lots of playing in the garden.

72. What's one childhood memory that stands out to you, and why?

I remember waking up; it must have been my seventh birthday, I think, and my parents had put a **trampoline** in the garden, and I kid you not, I spent every waking hour on that trampoline. I absolutely loved it.



73. What was your relationship like with your sibling when you were both growing up?

Well, it was funny because I was five years older than George. That's a big gap when one is 2 and one is 6 or when one is 10 and one is 14. So we weren't so close as children. It's only now we're adults that we are really close.

74. What's the best thing that's ever happened to you, and how did it make you feel?

Our wedding day. I just felt **high on life**. I was so unbelievably happy. I got to marry the man of my dreams and be surrounded by everyone I loved. And it was just after COVID, so it was the first time I'd seen so many people in over two years.

75. What's one challenge or obstacle you've faced in your life, and how did you overcome it?

I was really ill as a teenager from the age of 14 to 16. I had **glandular** fever and then a weird post-viral **chronic fatigue** thing, and it wiped me out, and it was a rubbish time, and I was very depressed. It's such a blur that I don't even know how I overcame it. I just know that I had a lot of support from my family.

76. Do you have any personal goals or aspirations that you're working towards?

Oh, a big goal is to have a happy family with a couple of children.

77. What's one thing you're proud of or accomplished recently, outside of work or school?

I've made some pretty big charity **donations** this year that I'm personally very proud of, I think.

78. Who's one person that's influenced or inspired you, and how have they impacted your life?

My dad. My dad, because he's so supportive, so kind, so encouraging. And that's how I hope to be.

79. What's one thing you've done for someone else recently, and how did it make you feel?

I helped someone very close with me achieve something they've wanted to do for a long time, and it made me feel really good. And that's all I can say!



80. What's one thing you've learned in life that's helped you grow or become a better person?

Not everyone is going to like you, and that is okay.

VOCABULARY

trampoline *n* /ˌtræmpəˈliːn/ - a bouncy platform for jumping, acrobatics, and fun, consisting of a stretched fabric and springs

Bouncing on a trampoline feels like defying gravity and makes me forget all my worries.

high on life *idiom* - feeling happy, content, and fulfilled without the use of drugs or alcohol; enjoying life naturally

Whenever I achieve a goal, I feel high on life, like I could conquer the world.

glandular *adj* /ˈglændʒələ(r)/ - related to glands, which are organs in the body that secrete hormones or other substances into the bloodstream

His doctor says his glandular system is imbalanced, and he must watch his diet to regulate it.

chronic *adj* /ˈkrɒnɪk/ - continues over a long period of time or is recurring, usually in the context of a disease or health condition

My dad has been suffering from chronic back pain for years, affecting his quality of life.

fatigue *n* /fəˈtiːg/ - a feeling of extreme tiredness, exhaustion or lack of energy, often caused by physical/mental exertion or illness

After a long day at work, Martina is always overcome with fatigue and just wants to crash on the couch.

donation *n* /dəʊˈneɪʃn/ - the act of giving something, usually money or goods, to a person or organisation in need

I feel so good after making a donation to a charity, knowing that my small contribution could make a big difference in someone's life.

TECHNOLOGY

81. What's one technology or gadget you can't live without, and why?

Oh, it has to be my phone. So much of what I do is done on my phone.



82. Have you tried any new apps, software, or devices recently, and what's your review of them?

I've started wearing an Apple Watch, and I found it really good. Although the battery life is terrible.

83. Do you prefer Apple or Android products, and why?

I prefer Apple products. I think they are really **user-friendly**, and unfortunately, I love the way they all connect with each other.

84. Have you ever built or customised a computer or device, and how did it turn out?

No, I've never done that. I would be interested in learning, though.

85. What's one recent technological advancement or development that you find interesting?

AI. Definitely artificial intelligence. I feel like we're **on the cusp of something** amazing. This is the worst it's ever going to be. It's only going to get better. And I feel you have to keep up or get left behind.

86. Have you tried virtual reality or **augmented reality**, and what was your experience like?

I have, very briefly at an event, and I thought it was amazing. I'd love to explore it more.

87. What's one useful app or tool you use regularly, and how does it help you?

I use an app to track my menstrual cycle, and it helps me understand why I'm feeling rubbish some days.

88. Do you think technology has more positive or negative effects on our lives, and why?

I'd say in the **grand scheme** of things, positive. There are lots of negative parts, but definitely from medical advancements: positive.

89. What's one technological issue or challenge that you wish could be solved?

My internet connection. Please! I can't believe it's 2023, and in rural parts of the UK, you still can't get solid reliable internet.



90. Do you have any tips or recommendations for staying safe and secure online?

Don't trust anyone! There are so many **scammers**. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

VOCABULARY

user-friendly *adj* /ju:zə 'frendli/ - easy to use and understand, designed to make interaction and navigation comfortable for users
We are working to develop software that is more user-friendly.

on the cusp (of something) *idiom* - at the edge or brink of something, often indicating a transition or change that is about to occur
After years of hard work and dedication, she was on the cusp of becoming a successful entrepreneur and was poised to launch her new business.

augmented reality (AR) *n* /ɔ:g,mentɪd ri'æləti/ - a technology that enhances real-world environments with computer-generated information, enhancing sensory perception
They've been researching how to implement AR into their new apps.

grand scheme (of things) *idiom* - the big picture; a plan or design that encompasses all relevant aspects objectively
You not getting the promotion is just a tiny detail in the grand scheme of things!

scammer *n* /'skæmə(r)/ - a person who deceives others by gaining their trust and stealing their money or other valued possessions
I get calls from scammers at least three times a day.

LIFESTYLE

91. What's your typical daily routine, and how do you make the most of your time?

We normally wake up at around 6:30. I nearly always have porridge for breakfast, lunch between midday and 1:00, and dinner between 6:00 and 8:00. That's a bit random. And I make the most of my time by trying to get as much done in the morning as possible.

92. Do you prefer to stay in or go out, and what do you enjoy doing during your free time?



I don't know if it's a hobby, it's an activity, but taking a bath, and especially a bath with a view. I have a bath near a window, and sometimes there are sheep in the field, and it's just lovely.

93. What's one activity or hobby you find most relaxing or stress-relieving?

I don't know if it's a hobby, it's an activity, but taking a bath, and especially a bath with a view. I have a bath near a window, and sometimes there are sheep in the field, and it's just lovely.

94. Do you have any daily rituals or habits that you swear by?

I have a coffee in bed every morning, and I love that. I love that little 20-minute period of waking up having a coffee. I know lots of people say you shouldn't have it first thing in the morning, but it works for me, and it makes me feel good.

95. What do you typically have for lunch?

I normally have soup in the winter or a salad in the summer.

96. What's one way you like to stay active or healthy, and how has it benefitted you?

Well, we love walking our dog, so we walk him for at least an hour every day. I also have a **stationary** bike and a treadmill, which is great for winter because I don't have to go outside when it's cold.

97. Do you have any guilty pleasures, and what do you enjoy about them?

I love a glass of wine. I love Lindor Truffle every now and again.

98. What's one way you like to spend a lazy day or relax after a long week?

I love collapsing on the sofa with my husband, my dog and my cat and watching a **predictable** movie.

99. What's one activity or practice you do to de-stress or unwind?

I like to listen to audiobooks, so I might put one on whilst I'm in the bath.

100. What's one thing that brings you joy or fulfilment in life, and why?

There are so many things! Teaching is one of them. My husband is another. My family.



VOCABULARY

ritual *n* /'rɪtʃuəl/ - something that is done regularly and in the same way
Coffee and the newspaper are part of Patrick's morning ritual.

stationary *adj* /'steɪʃənri/ - in the same spot, not moving
I can't believe you almost hit that stationary car!

guilty pleasure *idiom* - something that you enjoy even though you don't feel good about it
Having a read through the Twilight books is definitely one of my guilty pleasures.

predictable *adj* /prɪ'dɪktəbl/ - something you know in advance or easy to figure out what will happen next or in the future
Pop music is getting so predictable these days.

fulfilment *n* /fʊl'fɪlmənt/ - the state of being satisfied and content with one's life, achievements and relationships
Jane finally achieved her dream of becoming a doctor, and her sense of fulfilment was overwhelming.



VOCABULARY

appetite *n* /'æpɪtaɪt/ - the natural desire or physical need for food, typically accompanied by hunger or craving
After exercising, I always have a strong appetite for a healthy snack.

archery *n* /'ɑ:tʃəri/ - the sport of shooting an arrow with a bow
We learnt archery at summer camp when we were kids.

artificial intelligence (AI) *n* /,ɑ:tɪfɪʃl ɪn'telɪdʒəns/ - the study and development of computer systems, hardware and software that can copy human behaviour
Artificial intelligence is used in many modern technologies, such as self-driving cars and virtual assistants.

augmented reality (AR) *n* /ɔ:gmentɪd ri'æləti/ - a technology that enhances real-world environments with computer-generated information, enhancing sensory perception
They've been researching how to implement AR into their new apps.

bangle *n* /'bæŋɡl/ - a bracelet or anklet in the shape of a large ring made of metal, wood or plastic
Gladys wore a beautiful golden bangle on her wrist.

to blow one's mind *idiom* - to surprise or impress someone greatly
The fireworks show was amazing; it blew my mind.

breakthrough *n* /'breɪkθru:/ - a significant development or discovery that represents a major advancement or success in a particular field
His discovery was a major breakthrough in the field of health.

bulb *n* /bʌlb/ - the round underground part of a plant, like an onion
The bulb is an important part of the plant's growth.

ChatGPT *n* /tʃætʒi:pi:ti/ - a large language model created by OpenAI that provides answers and conversation based on user input
I often use ChatGPT as I would Google.

chronic *adj* /'krɒnɪk/ - continues over a long period of time or is recurring, usually in the context of a disease or health condition
My dad has been suffering from chronic back pain for years, affecting his quality of life.



to comply *v (i)* /kəm'plaɪ/ - to follow a rule, regulation or request, often by following specific instructions

You must comply with the library rules—not talking!

convenience *n* /kən'vi:niəns/ - something useful that makes life easier

Although the hotel is in a rural area, it has all the modern conveniences.

criticism *n* /'krɪtɪsɪzəm/ - the act of analysing, evaluating, and expressing disapproval or approval of someone or something based on one's opinion or standards

It is important to listen to constructive criticism to improve yourself.

cuisine *n* /kwɪ'zi:n/ - a style of cooking

I love trying different cuisines from around the world.

daring *adj* /'deərɪŋ/ - willing to take risks or face danger

It takes a daring person to speak in front of a large audience.

desperate (for something) *adj* /'despərət/ - wanting something badly and being willing to do almost anything to get it

I'm desperate for a cup of coffee; I haven't had one all day.

dietary restrictions *n* - limitations on what a person can eat or drink due to medical, cultural or personal reasons

Due to her dietary restrictions, she avoids eating foods that contain gluten.

dire *adj* /'daɪə(r)/ - extremely serious

Our cafe is in dire need of a new strategy to stay competitive in the market.

donation *n* /dəʊ'neɪʃn/ - the act of giving something, usually money or goods, to a person or organisation in need

I feel so good after making a donation to a charity, knowing that my small contribution could make a big difference in someone's life.

exotic *adj* /ɪg'zɒtɪk/ - originating from a foreign or distant place, having unique or unusual characteristics that are often considered fascinating or intriguing

I tried an exotic fruit called durian on my trip to Indonesia.



fatigue *n* /fə'ti:g/ - a feeling of extreme tiredness, exhaustion or lack of energy, often caused by physical/mental exertion or illness
After a long day at work, Martina is always overcome with fatigue and just wants to crash on the couch.

five-star hotel *noun phrase* - a luxurious and high-quality hotel that provides exceptional services and amenities to its guests
We stayed at a five-star hotel for our honeymoon; it was very luxurious.

flamenco *n* /flə'men:kəʊ/ - a traditional Spanish dance characterised by expressive movements and fast-paced footwork
My sister took flamenco lessons over the summer.

fulfilment *n* /fʊl'fɪlmənt/ - the state of being satisfied and content with one's life, achievements and relationships
Jane finally achieved her dream of becoming a doctor, and her sense of fulfilment was overwhelming.

to give something a go *idiom* - to try something, typically for the first time, and see how it turns out
If you want to learn to speak Mandarin, you should give it a go and practise every day.

glandular *adj* /'glændʒələ(r)/ - related to glands, which are organs in the body that secrete hormones or other substances into the bloodstream
His doctor says his glandular system is imbalanced, and he must watch his diet to regulate it.

to go stale *idiom* - to become dull and unexciting
Bjorn tends to go a bit stale if he is stuck inside for too long.

go-to *adj* /'gəʊ tu:/ - something or someone that is relied upon or frequently used for a particular purpose
My go-to store for groceries is the one near my office.

gossip *n* /'gɒsɪp/ - informal talk or stories about others' lives that may not be entirely true
The constant gossip in my office was one of the reasons why I quit—this isn't secondary school!

grand scheme (of things) *idiom* - the big picture; a plan or design that encompasses all relevant aspects objectively
You not getting the promotion is just a tiny detail in the grand scheme of things



guilty pleasure *idiom* - something that you enjoy even though you don't feel good about it

Having a read through the Twilight books is definitely one of my guilty pleasures.

to hibernate *v (i) /'haɪbəneɪt/* - to escape the cold by staying indoors or moving to a warmer place, especially during the winter months

During winter, I tend to hibernate indoors and watch films.

Extra Note: 'to hibernate' typically refers to the act of animals entering a deep sleep during cold winter months.

high on life *idiom* - feeling happy, content, and fulfilled without the use of drugs or alcohol; enjoying life naturally

Whenever I achieve a goal, I feel high on life, like I could conquer the world.

to immerse *v (t+i) /'ɪmɜːs/* - to become completely involved in something
I like to immerse myself in a good book at weekends.

infatuation *n /ɪnˈfætʃu'eɪʃn/* - a strong and often short-lived feeling of intense attraction, fascination, or love towards someone or something
I had a brief infatuation with my classmate, but it quickly faded.

inflation *n /ɪnˈfleɪʃn/* - a fall in the value of money and the increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over time
Inflation has caused the price of groceries to increase over the past year.

in style *idiom* - in a fashionable or trendy way

Kerry arrived at the premiere in style with a custom-made gown.

mangosteen *n /'mæŋgəstiːn/* - a tropical fruit with sweet white flesh and a purple, hard exterior shell

Mangosteen is a delicious exotic fruit that I discovered on my trip to Vietnam.

memorable *adj /'memərəbl/* - worth remembering, leaves a lasting impression; significant and meaningful

Our trip to Europe last year was one of the most memorable experiences of my life.

mind-blowing *adj /'maɪnd bləʊɪŋ/* - something that is so amazing, surprising, or unbelievable that it has a profound impact on one's thoughts and emotions

The view from the mountaintop was mind-blowing; I never saw something so beautiful before.



obnoxious *adj* /əb'nɒksjəs/ - something or someone that is extremely unpleasant, offensive or annoying

His obnoxious behaviour at the party made everyone uncomfortable.

on the cusp (of something) *idiom* - at the edge or brink of something, often indicating a transition or change that is about to occur

After years of hard work and dedication, she was on the cusp of becoming a successful entrepreneur and was poised to launch her new business.

overpowering *adj* /,əʊnə'paʊərɪŋ/ - very strong or intense to the point of being unpleasant

Mary's perfume was so overpowering! It made me feel ill.

to peek up *phr v* - to appear or stick out slightly in a way that is barely seen

The sun started to peek up over the clouds, despite the rainy weather.

predictable *adj* /prɪ'dɪktəbl/ - something you know in advance or easy to figure out what will happen next or in the future

Pop music is getting so predictable these days.

Reddit *n* /'redɪt/ - a social news and discussion website where users submit and vote on content

We enjoy browsing Reddit to keep up with the latest news and trends.

refreshing *adj* /rɪ'freʃɪŋ/ - making one less tired or hot

Nothing beats a refreshing breeze on the beach while on vacation.

red carpet *n* /,red 'kɑ:pɪt/ - a long piece of red carpet that is laid out for the arrival of important people at an event

I couldn't take my eyes off her dress as she walked down the red carpet.

risotto *n* /rɪ'zɒtəʊ/ - an Italian rice dish often made with meat, vegetables or seafood

My wife's Italian grandmother taught me to make the best risotto!

ritual *n* /'rɪtʃuəl/ - something that is done regularly and in the same way

Coffee and the newspaper are part of Patrick's morning ritual.

rural *adj* /'rʊərəl/ - areas away from cities, with fewer people and resources compared to urban areas; countryside

My grandparents live in a rural area where there are more farms than houses.



savoury *adj* /'seɪvəri/ - salty; not sweet

The savoury aroma of the roasted potatoes made our mouths water.

scammer *n* /'skæmə(r)/ - a person who deceives others by gaining their trust and stealing their money or other valued possessions

I get calls from scammers at least three times a day.

sibling *n* /'sɪblɪŋ/ - a brother or sister

Gary doesn't have any siblings, but he's been like a brother to me.

slimline *adj* /'slɪmlaɪn/ - containing little sugar and few calories

She never drinks the slimline tonic water because it tastes like chemicals.

sporadically *adv* /spə'rædɪkli/ - occasionally or at irregular times

She only sees her old friends sporadically, but they always have a great time when they get together.

stationary *adj* /'steɪʃənri/ - in the same spot, not moving

I can't believe you almost hit that stationary car!

stick it to the man *idiom* - to oppose or resist power and authority, usually in a rebellious manner

The protesters were determined to stick it to the man and demand change.

to take off *phr v* - to succeed or become popular and widely accepted in a short period of time

The new restaurant took off quickly due to its unique menu and excellent service.

trampoline *n* /'træmpə'li:n/ - a bouncy platform for jumping, acrobatics, and fun, consisting of a stretched fabric and springs

Bouncing on a trampoline feels like defying gravity and makes me forget all my worries.

treadmill *n* /'tredmɪl/ - an exercise machine that has a moving surface that enables users to run or walk while staying in place

I like to exercise on the treadmill at the gym.

turning point *n* /'tɜːnɪŋ pɔɪnt/ - a critical moment or event in one's life or a situation that marks a significant change or shift in direction

Meeting her partner was a turning point that helped her see life in a new and positive way.



unique *adj* /juːni:k/ - special or unusual; the only one of its kind
My friend has a unique style of dressing.

unsuitable *adj* /ʌnˈsu:təbl/ - not right for a particular purpose, situation or person
The outfit she wore to the job interview was unsuitable for this professional setting.

user-friendly *adj* /ju:zə ˈfrendli/ - easy to use and understand, designed to make interaction and navigation comfortable for users
We are working to develop software that is more user-friendly.

waiting list *n* - /ˈweɪtɪŋ lɪst/ - a list of people who are waiting for something, such as a service, a product, or an opportunity
I signed up for the waiting list for the concert tickets since they were already sold out.

to whip up *phr v* - to quickly and easily prepare or make something, often without prior planning
When I'm in a hurry, I often whip up a quick meal of scrambled eggs and toast.

workshop *n* /ˈwɜ:kʃɒp/ - a hands-on learning event where participants engage in practical activities related to a specific topic
Greg attended a workshop on digital marketing last week.



Exercises!

Write the correct word in each sentence to complete the paragraph.

daring | memorable | go-to | exotic | immerse | appetites | cuisines | overpowering

Last year, my best friend Lilah and I decided to take a cookery course together. It was such a _____ experience to _____ ourselves in the art of cooking and to learn new techniques and recipes. We were exposed to a variety of _____, including rural and _____ dishes that we had never tried before. It was a _____ move for us, as we usually stick to our _____ meals, but we were pleasantly surprised by the flavours and aromas that we encountered.

Some of the dishes were _____, but we quickly learnt to balance the flavours and adjust them to our liking. The course even triggered our _____ for new culinary experiences, as we found ourselves eager to try new things and experiment with different ingredients. Overall, it was a wonderful experience that brought us closer together and inspired us to continue our food adventures.

Comprehension Check!

- 1) The two women did not try any new dishes.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 2) All of the food they tried was overpowering.
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 3) The cookery course resulted in the two women becoming better friends than before.
 - a. True
 - b. False

**Choose the correct answer each question.**

- 1) The painting was so _____ that it left everyone who saw it in awe.
- mediocre
 - unique
 - repetitive
- 2) Her story was very _____, which is how we knew she was lying.
- refreshing
 - fashionable
 - predictable
- 3) What is "archery"?
- a game played with a ball and a net
 - a sport where participants shoot arrows with a bow
 - a form of martial arts
- 4) Our private chef created a _____ dish by combining different spices and flavours.
- obnoxious
 - savoury
 - sweet
- 5) Wearing shorts and flip-flops to a wedding is _____ attire.
- suitable
 - common
 - unsuitable
- 6) Amazon is facing a _____ situation due to the pandemic.
- dire
 - fatigue
 - chronic
- 7) _____ is never a good thing, especially if it's untrue and damaging to someone's reputation.
- Criticism
 - Gossip
 - Inflation
- 8) Which of the following phrases describes something that is "in style"?
- outdated
 - classic
 - trendy
- 9) What does the word "mind-blowing" mean?
- confusing
 - unsuitable
 - incredible
- 10) She received _____ for her work but also brilliant suggestions for improvement.
- criticism
 - daring
 - convenience

The End!

© (01) > (6) > (8) > (2) > (7) > (9) > (5) > (4) > (7) > (9) > (5) > (2) > (7) > (1)