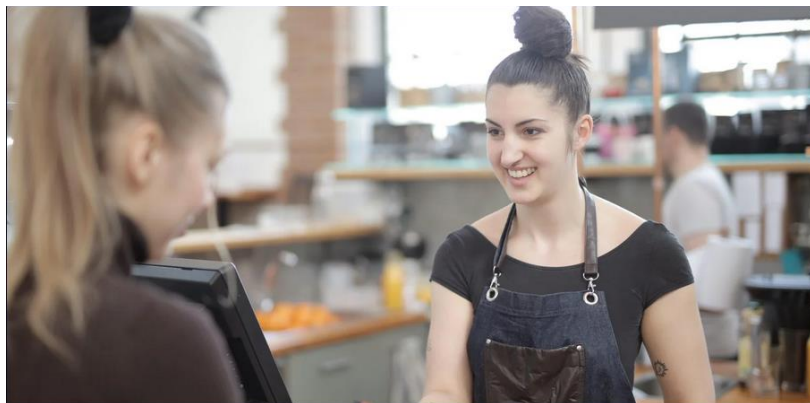


Chinwag conversation get-together

Tuesday 25 March 2025, 2.35pm – 3.35pm

Swinburne Library, Croydon campus

Chatting to others in English



What is chatting?

Chatting is light, informal conversations between people when people either don't know each other very well or chatting between friends and family members.

Other words describing chatting (or 'having a chat') are small talk, chinwag, chit-chat and banter.

Chatting to people we don't know very well

- At places where people are waiting for something (e.g. a bus stop)
- In queues at the supermarket
- At train stations
- At sporting events (maybe watching your child compete in a sport)
- At adult and children's parties
- When travelling in a car with someone
- At child care centres and schools
- At neighbourhood meetings
- Lots of other places where people gather!

Tips for having a good chat

- Ask open-ended questions like 'what was the best thing you did on the weekend?'
Don't ask questions that can be answered by one word (Yes or No), for example 'Did you have a good weekend?'
- The best way to have a good chat is to follow up simple questions with more, open-ended questions. For example: "Where are you from?" followed by another question 'What is your home town like?' and 'What did you like about it?'

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- Good topics include weather, shopping, television programs, holidays, sport, movies, food and cooking, hobbies, your neighbourhood or suburb, what activities you have been doing.
- Topics that possibly should not be used depend on who you are talking to. These include questions about their age, how much they earn or how much rent they pay, personal health issues, political views or religious activities.
- When talking with someone for the first time, it's good to keep away from asking about marriage, children and employment. As you get to know the person better, these topics may be raised.

Practice active listening

Making the most of enjoying a chat involves active listening. Active listening means carefully listening to what the other person is saying. Active listening includes:

- Making eye contact
- Not interrupting someone who is talking
- Being curious and asking questions
- Not offering unasked for advice
- Putting away your mobile phone!
- Using body language to express your interest in talking with someone
- If you do not understand what someone is saying to you, ask them to speak more slowly, or explain what they mean.

Having a chat with someone is good for you!

In some cultures chatting may be seen as unnecessary conversation. However in Australia, having a chat is a friendly thing to do and helps build relationships.

Over time, casual conversations can help you develop deeper connections with people you come in contact with in your everyday life.

If you are learning English, conversations with strangers, however brief, are very important. Practice having a chat whenever you can!

> Chinwag notes for 2024 and 2025 can be downloaded from:

<https://chinwag.ajeffrey.net> (Word format)

<https://chinwagpdf.ajeffrey.net> (PDF format)

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