



01 BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?
LANGUAGE LINKS

Vocabulary: Small talk

1 Put the conversation in the correct order.

- 1 We were just talking about this new sports centre they're building. Do you play any sport at all, Kim?
- 2 Not yet, no. Why, are you doing something?
- 3 Against Real Madrid? No, I missed it. I had to go to a birthday party.
- 4 No problem. Oh, before I forget. I've got two tickets to see them in Manchester if you're interested.
- 5 No, me neither. Talking of football, did you see the match last night?
- 6 Oh, right. Thanks for telling me. Incidentally, have you still got my Rolling Stones CD?
- 7 Me? Well, not really. I used to play a bit of football.
- 8 No, nothing special. By the way, sorry to talk business, but did you remember to send that estimate to Clive?
- 9 Pity. It was a great game. On the subject of parties, have you made any plans for New Year's Eve yet?
- 10 Did you? Me too. I was never any good, though.
- 11 Oops! Yeah, sorry. I meant to give it back to you. I'll bring it in tomorrow. Thanks for lending it to me.
- 12 Yeah, I sent it yesterday. Oh, that reminds me. Clive said to tell you he won't be able to make Thursday's meeting. He said he'd call you.
- 13 Are you kidding? Of course I'm interested! I've never seen them live.

2 Find six expressions in 1 to guide the conversation or change the subject.

- a I....., ...
- b T..... of ...
- c B..... the w....., ...
- d B..... I f....., ...
- e T..... r..... me, ...
- f O..... t..... s..... of ...

3 Which words and phrases in 1 could you replace with ...?

- a Not so far.
- b Not to worry.
- c Nor me.
- d Shame.
- e So did I.
- f Are you joking?

Grammar: Tense review

1 Try to complete the tense quiz in under five minutes.

- 1 *He leaves at five* means
a today b every day c either
- 2 *We're having a meeting* means
a now b soon c either
- 3 *Profits went up*. Are profits up now?
a yes b no c maybe
- 4 *Profits have gone up*. Are profits up now?
a yes b no c maybe
- 5 *He's gone*. Is he here?
a yes b no c maybe

2 Read the e-mail and underline the best grammatical choice in each case.

From: Charles Wellcome
To: Deborah Newton, Stephen Clark, Willem Maes, Tatiana Korbutt
Subject: This year's client hospitality event

Dear all

As you (1) **know / are knowing**, the annual client hospitality event (2) **is fast approaching / will fast approach** and, as yet, we (3) **did not make / have not made** a final decision on where to hold it this year. One or two of you (4) **already came forward / have already come forward** with suggestions, which (5) **are currently considered / are currently being considered**, but, as we (6) **will have to / are having to** make the necessary arrangements quite soon, I'd like everybody's input on this asap.

What I particularly (7) **want / am wanting** to avoid is a repetition of the fiasco we (8) **had / have had** last year at the showjumping event. Apart from the fact that very few of our clients (9) **have / are having** even the remotest interest in the sport, the atrocious weather (10) **meant / was meaning** that we (11) **walked / were walking** backwards and forwards through the mud between the showing and the hospitality tent all day. The whole thing (12) **was / has been** a complete disaster. People (13) **still complained / were still complaining** about it six months later!

This year we (14) **have planned / had planned** to do something more cultural like go to the opera or even a musical, but (15) **I've wondered / I've been wondering** if this is a good idea. A musical event (16) **doesn't seem / isn't seeming** to be the best place to network. We can hardly ask the singers to keep the noise down while we all (17) **have / will have** a good chat!

I (18) **do think / am thinking**, however, that an indoor event (19) **makes / is making** most sense, so can I ask you to (20) **think / be thinking** along those lines over the next few days? (21) **I've scheduled / I'd scheduled** a meeting for next Friday to discuss the matter further. So, (22) **I'm speaking / I'll speak** to you all then.

Charles

- 6 *I've just been*. Am I back?
a yes b no c maybe
- 7 *When I arrived he was just leaving*. Was he there when I arrived?
a yes b no c we don't know
- 8 *When I arrived he'd just left*. Was he there when I arrived?
a yes b no c we don't know
- 9 *I've tried to phone her*. Am I still trying?
a probably b probably not c we don't know
- 10 *I've been trying to contact her all morning*. Am I still trying?
a probably b probably not c we don't know

You use the **Present Simple** to talk about permanent facts (*I'm Spanish*), routines (*I get home at seven each evening*) and scheduled future (*The bus gets in at one*).

You use the **Present Continuous** to talk about current, perhaps temporary, activities and situations (*I'm staying at the Hilton*) or future arrangements (*I'm flying to Rome in the morning*).

You use the **Present Perfect** to talk about things that started in the past and continue up to the present (*It's rained for a fortnight*), personal experiences no matter when they happened (*I've only ever snowboarded once*) and things which have an immediate consequence (*I've lost my car keys*). Words like *already*, *yet* and *since* are often in the same sentence as a present perfect verb.

You use the **Present Perfect Continuous** to talk about things that started in the past and may be recently completed or not yet completed (*She's been rearranging her office, I've been working here since January 2002*).

You use the **Past Simple** to talk about finished past actions or states (*I studied engineering at Oxford, I was a happy child*). Phrases like *last week*, *a year ago*, *in 2006* etc. make the time reference clear.

You use the **Past Continuous** to talk about an action in progress in the past (*The company was losing money*). The Past Continuous gives the background to more important events which are in the Past Simple.

You use the **Past Perfect** to emphasise that one event happened before another in the past (*By the time I left college, I'd already decided I didn't want to be a lawyer*).

Some 'state' verbs like *think*, *know*, *understand* and *seem* are not generally used in the continuous form unless the meaning is different: *I think* = *I believe*; *I'm thinking* = *I'm considering something*.

will is a modal verb and, amongst its other uses, one of many ways of talking about the future (*I'll see you later*).

Phrase bank: Making conversation

Read the following tips on how to master the art of small talk. Match each of the tips to four things you might say. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1 Use what you already know about people to start up a conversation.

2 Try to bring people into conversation with others you know.

3 Show enthusiasm; pay people you know well the occasional compliment.

4 Be careful not to contradict people too directly.

5 Change the subject smoothly by referring to what others have said.

6 Don't break off the conversation too abruptly at the end.

The art of small talk

a Oh, that reminds me: we're supposed to be meeting Leo at seven.

b I hear you speak Cantonese, is that right?

c Is that the time? I must be making tracks.

d Kenichi, there's someone I'd like you to meet.

e Erm, well, not exactly, no.

f Lisa, we were just talking about the property slump - you know a lot about this.

g Well, it's been really nice talking to you.

h I'm afraid I'll have to be going. But let me give you my card.

i I understand you used to work for 3M.

j Hey, that's great news! You must be pleased.

k Talking of stock markets, how's the DAX doing these days?

l Funny you should say that, something very similar happened to me.

m Ingrid, come and join us. We were just talking about you!

n Congratulations on the promotion, by the way!

o As a matter of fact, I don't - not really.

p You're looking well. Been on holiday?

q If you'll excuse me, I must rush. Catch you later.

r You're Mia, aren't you? Rachel asked me to say hello.

s Well, that's not entirely true, but I know what you mean.

t Nice watch! Is it new?

v Let's see what Max thinks. Max, we've got a question for you.

w Actually, it's not as bad as you might think.

x I couldn't help noticing your accent. You must be from New Zealand.

u On the subject of the merger, have you heard the latest?