Small talk at work English

Easy small talk phrases for work: greeting colleagues and visitors, asking about the weekend, travel and weather, keeping the conversation going and ending it politely.

Model dialogue

Laura	Hi, I don't think we've met. I'm Laura, from marketing.
Ben	Nice to meet you, Laura. I'm Ben. I just started in finance.
Laura	Welcome! How long have you been with the company?
Ben	Only two weeks. Before that, I was in Toronto.
Laura	Really? That sounds great. What was it like?
Ben	Cold in winter, but I loved it. Are you doing anything nice this weekend?
Laura	I'm going hiking with some friends, if the weather's good.
Ben	Me too! Well, maybe not hiking, but I'm going to the mountains.
Laura	Anyway, I'd better get back to work. It was nice talking to you.
Ben	You too. See you around.

Key vocabulary

Word	Meaning	Example
colleague	a person you work with	My colleagues are very friendly.
department	a section of a company	She works in the finance department.
be based	to have your main place of work	I'm based in the Madrid office.
commute	the journey to and from work	My commute takes forty minutes.
catch up	to talk about recent news	Let's catch up over coffee.
get to know	to learn about someone	It's good to get to know the team.
day off	a day when you don't work	Friday is my day off.
break	a short rest from work	Let's take a coffee break.

Useful phrases

Starting a conversation

Hi, I don't think we've met. I'm Laura.	introducing yourself
Nice to meet you.	replying to an introduction
How's it going?	casual greeting
How was your weekend?	Monday small talk
Did you have a good trip?	to a visitor

Safe topics

Lovely weather today, isn't it?	weather
Have you been here before?	to a visitor
Are you doing anything nice this weekend?	weekend plans
Where are you based?	asking where someone works
How long have you been with the company?	asking about work

Keeping it going

Really? That sounds great.	showing interest
What was it like?	asking for more
Me too!	showing something in common
Oh, I didn't know that.	reacting to news

Ending politely

Anyway, I'd better get back to work.	ending
It was nice talking to you.	ending warmly
See you at the meeting.	ending with a plan
Enjoy the rest of your day.	saying goodbye

Practice and role-play

A. Complete the phrases

Write one word in each gap.

1. Hi, I don't think we've _____.
2. How was your _____?
3. Lovely weather today, _____ it?
4. How long have you been with the _____?
5. Really? That _____ great.
6. Anyway, I'd _____ get back to work.
7. It was nice _____ to you.
8. Where are you _____?

B. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence has one mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. How is going?

2. Nice to know you.

3. I'm working here since two weeks.

4. What do you do in the weekend?

C. Role-play

Student A. You meet a new colleague in the kitchen at work. Introduce yourself, ask three questions, find one thing in common, and end the conversation politely.

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Student B. You are new in the company and just moved from another city. Answer the questions, ask two of your own, and agree to have lunch one day.

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Answer key

A: 1 met · 2 weekend · 3 isn't · 4 company · 5 sounds · 6 better · 7 talking · 8 based

B: 1 How's it going? · 2 Nice to meet you. · 3 I've been working here for two weeks. · 4 What do you do on the weekend?