

12 Start it up!

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1 Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.

- a When did you last start up a conversation with a stranger? What was the first thing you said to him/her?
- b In what kind of situations do you start up conversations with strangers? In what kind of situations do you never start up conversations with strangers?

2 Look at the following statements and questions. Can you identify any which are inappropriate for starting up a conversation? Think of situations in which you could use the other ones.

- 1 I don't think much of your laptop!
- 2 Have you been here before?
- 3 Do you have the time on you?
- 4 Could I have a look at your newspaper?
- 5 Are you here for the conference?
- 6 How are you enjoying the book?
- 7 Hello. You look like you could do with a drink!
- 8 Have you got a tattoo?
- 9 Did you hear about what happened to ...?
- 10 Have you seen this article about ...?
- 11 Are you single?
- 12 I like your bag. Where did you get it?
- 13 I've been watching you for the last ten minutes.
- 14 Are you going to the trade fair, too?
- 15 Could I possibly borrow / use / take a look at / see ...?
- 16 This is the first time I've been stuck in a lift. What about you?
- 17 Excuse me, could you tell me where ...?
- 18 Do you mind if I smoke in here?
- 19 You look like you earn a lot. / How much do you earn?
- 20 What do you think of the conference?



3 Work with a partner. Take turns to start up a conversation in each of the following situations.

You are at a conference. You are in the bar and one of the keynote speakers walks in. You were very interested in the talk he/she just gave. Start a conversation with him/her.

You are on a long-haul flight to Brazil. You have been upgraded to first class. The person next to you is reading a book which you have recently read. Start a conversation with him/her.

You are sitting in your hotel lobby. You are waiting for a taxi to take you to a trade fair. You notice that a person sitting near you is reading some information about the same trade fair. Start a conversation with him/her.

You have a meeting with a potential client where you are going to present your company's products to him/her for the first time. You are sitting outside his/her office waiting to be introduced. A secretary has brought you a cup of coffee. Start a conversation with him/her.

You are in a hotel restaurant. You are eating breakfast alone. Someone joins you at your table. He/She is also alone. Start a conversation with him/her.

You are visiting a foreign subsidiary on business. You are in the lift when it breaks down. One other person is in the lift. Start a conversation with him/her.