Small Talk That Goes Somewhere

LESSON SUMMARY | One-page reference • Business conversations

THE GOAL

Make small talk feel natural. Open warmly, react to what you hear, ask a useful follow-up, and share something real about yourself.

The four moves

MOVE	LANGUAGE FRAME	WHY IT WORKS
1 OPEN	How's your week going?	A friendly question that is easy to answer.
2 REACT	That sounds + adjective.	Shows you noticed the other person's situation.
3 FOLLOW UP	How did that go?	Invites a fuller answer, not just yes/no.
4 SHARE	I've been working on …	Keeps the exchange balanced and genuine.

Watch how the conversation moves

BEFORE A VIDEO MEETING

A: Hey, how's your week been?
B: Pretty good. We've just finished a big project.
A: Nice! How did it go?
B: Better than expected. What about you?
A: I've been preparing a new workshop.

Choose your reaction carefully

Good news: "We're opening a second office." → "That sounds exciting!"

Difficult news: "It's been a tough week. We're restructuring." → "That sounds challenging."

Tip: "That sounds …" can be exciting, interesting, challenging or stressful. Choose what fits; avoid assuming how someone feels.

One-minute challenge

In your next English conversation: (1) ask an easy question, (2) react to the answer, and (3) ask a follow-up or share a short update.

Remember: The goal is connection, not perfect grammar.