

The Question That Changes Everything | Small Talk in English, Episode 3

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

8 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

What have you been up to?

DEF

A friendly question about someone's recent activities.

The present perfect connects recent experience to now; up to can have other meanings in other contexts.

What have you been up to since we last met?

Hi, Sam, what have you been up to?

2

You mentioned...

DEF

A way to return to something the other person said before.

Shows attention and invites a follow-up; use a clause or noun after mentioned.

You mentioned you were moving house.

You mentioned an exam; how did it go?

3

take turns

DEF

To alternate doing something with another person.

In conversation, both people get space to speak; take turns doing is a common pattern.

We took turns asking questions.

Please take turns speaking.

4

on paper

DEF

According to the recorded facts or plan, which may differ from lived reality.

Figurative here; it does not require actual paper.

On paper, Juan had plenty of contacts.

The plan looks excellent on paper.



5

acquaintance

DEF

Someone you know but do not know closely.

Less intimate than friend; it does not imply dislike.

She is an acquaintance from work.

An acquaintance can become a close friend.

6

dread

DEF

To feel strong worry about something that is going to happen.

Looks forward to an unwanted event; dread doing is a useful pattern.

I was dreading the interview.

He dreaded telling them the news.

7

go first

DEF

To be the first person to act or speak.

In the episode it means initiating honest sharing, not winning a race.

Somebody has to go first.

I was nervous, but I offered to go first.

8

might as well

DEF

Used to suggest a reasonable choice when there is no strong reason against it.

Gentle encouragement here, not a statement of strong obligation.

Somebody has to go first; it might as well be you.

We are already here, so we might as well ask.

