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| Culture: Small Talk |
| You are very familiar, at this point, with how to greet someone you don’t know:

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| * It’s a pleasure to meet you.
* Nice to meet you.
 | * I’m pleased to meet you.
 | * I’ve heard a lot about you.
 |

And someone you already know:

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| * How’s it going?
* How are you doing?
 | * What’s up?
* What’s new?
 | * How are things going?
* How’s life?
 |

Once we have greeted the person we then go on to make small talk. The topic of small talk varies greatly from one culture to the next. The two most common topics of small talk in Canada are the weather and compliments.We talk about the weather because it is something that everyone can relate to. Phrases to use when talking about the weather include:

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| --- | --- |
| * Great weather we are having!
* What do you think of the weather?
* Can you believe the weather?
 | * Beautiful weather, isn’t it?
* Love the weather!
 |

Offering someone a compliment tells them you are interested in them. People like to hear good things about themselves. It will make them more comfortable talking to you. Common ways to compliment someone include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * I like your dress/car/phone.
* Where did you get your…?
 | * I love your hairstyle/ watch/ring.
 | * What a great tie/necklace/suit!
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DON’T respond to a compliment by being modest. Respond by saying, “Thank you”, and then giving more information. This keeps the conversation going and leads to more questions and answers.  |

*A. Read the dialogue below and circle the greetings and compliment.*

Barbara: Hi, I’m Barbara.

Kathy: It’s nice to meet you. I’m Kathy.

Barbara: It’s a pleasure to meet you.

Kathy: For me also. Hey, I really like your necklace!

Barbara: Thanks. I bought it when I was in Mexico on vacation three years ago. We went to a craft market. There were artisans there making jewelry.

Kathy: Interesting. I was there two years ago but I didn’t find time to go to the markets.

*B. What are the topics of small talk in your culture? Why are these particular topics important?*

*C. Work with a partner to write a dialogue in which two people are introducing themselves. Include small talk about the weather and compliments.*

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