

Present Simple taboo questions game

Part One: Classify the Present Simple questions

Give each question below a rank from 1 point (= a normal conversational question, even suitable for asking when you speak to someone for the first time) to 5 points (= completely taboo).

- “Do you buy lottery tickets?”
- “Do you drink alcohol?”
- “Do you gamble?”
- “Do you have any allergies?”
- “Do you have any illnesses?”
- “Do you have any painkillers with you?”
- “Do you pick your nose?”
- “Do you prefer a bath or a shower?”
- “Do you read your star sign?”
- “Do you see a fortune teller?”
- “Do you take any medicine?”
- “Do you wear glasses?”
- “Do you wear pyjamas?”
- “How do you feel about your mother-in-law?”
- “How long do you spend exercising every week?”
- “How many pairs of shoes do you have?”
- “How much do you weigh?”
- “How much money do you earn?”
- “How much money do you spend on going out?”
- “How often do you get drunk?”
- “How often do you take a bath or shower?”
- “How often do you tidy up your house or flat?”
- “What do you think about nuclear power?”
- “Where do you buy underwear?”
- “Where do you come from?”
- “Where do you usually go on holiday?”

Part Two: Answering questions challenge game

Change groups. Your new partner will ask you a question from their list, but first choose what rank of question you want to be asked, i.e. how many points you want the question to be for. If you answer the question, you will get that many points. If you don't want to answer the question or can't think of an answer, you can use the phrases in the Useful Language box below, but you won't get any points. Discuss if you agree with the ranking of that question if you like, then take turns doing the same.

Useful language for politely refusing to answer a question

“I'd rather not answer that (if you don't mind).”

“I'd rather not say (if that's okay).”

“I'm afraid that's (seems) a bit personal.”

When you finish, compare the scores which you gave to each question.

Part Three: Question writing and further speaking practice

Write more Present Simple questions for each of the five categories:

5 points = Extremely difficult questions/ Taboo questions

4 points = Very difficult questions/ Almost taboo questions

3 points = Quite difficult questions/ Somewhat difficult questions

2 points = Quite easy questions/ Fairly easy questions

1 points = Very easy questions/ Typical questions (when meeting for the 1st time)

If possible, change groups again. Play the same game as above, but this time with your own questions or the questions from another group.

Part Four: Good and taboo topics discussion

What topics are best and worst when you meet someone for the first time?

What does that depend on? Does it vary from country to country/ culture to culture?