

# 1 Small talk with neighbours

## Teaching the Topic

We talk with neighbours for social cohesion, to make new friends, to feel safer and part of a community (in addition to ethnic, religious and other communities). Most of us feel happier when we know who lives next door, even if we don't have long conversations with them.

### Resources

Neighbourhood Watch leaflets; notices about neighbourhood events – fairs, markets; maps of the neighbourhood with schools, shops, library, community centre, bus stops.

### Activities

- Use recordings of introductions, greetings and responses as listening models of ways of extending a conversation. (Make recordings with friends and family.)
- Draft a 'map' of neighbourhood houses together, then note down details, for example, *Four children* by asking and answering 'wh' questions like, *How many kids next door?*
- Role play introducing yourself to new neighbours – greetings and responses.
- Role play getting information about rubbish collection, the local library, after-school care. Locate any places on a local map.
- Brainstorm possible topics of conversation – remembering differences between men's and women's conversations (men are more likely to talk about sport, women about children).
- Practise conversation openers, open and closed questions, responses that show we understand, responses to show empathy, responses when we don't understand, seeking clarification and ending conversations.
- Ask the learner questions about their culture.

### Language

- Dwellings, places and services in the neighbourhood.
- Describing neighbours and their families.
- Introductions – self and others.
- Topics the learner feels comfortable to talk about – sport, the weather, schools, their job.
- Question forms, yes/no questions, adding to the answers.
- Initiating greetings, responding to *How's it going?*  
*How's things?*
- Ending conversations *Must be going, Must dash, Better go; use of So..., Anyway..., Well...*

## Using the Worksheet

*A possible introductory activity:* Discuss how people meet their new neighbours in the learner's country.

This is a dialogue with a neighbour. The learner chooses the most appropriate response to the neighbour's comment, from the three possible answers. The tutor can read Abdul's words aloud and the learner listens, or the learner reads the words.

### Main learning points

Listening skills in an exchange include being aware of the other speaker's expectations.

For example, *We don't know anybody* – Abdul expects Kevin to indicate that he understands how that feels. Abdul is keen to meet his new neighbour, so a positive response is good. The response to an invitation is generally *Thank you*, even if you are unable to go.

### What else could be learnt?

Other possible questions: *Where did you live before?*  
*How long did you live there? How many people in your family?*

Talk about the different greetings and farewells in the dialogue – *Hello, Hi, Kia ora, See you later, Bye.*

Notice abbreviated forms – *I'm, I'd, don't, it's, let's.*

If there is a conversation with a neighbour before the next session the learner can report back on what was said.



## Meet the new neighbours

Choose the best response to the sentences from a), b), or c).

Remember to also look at the sentence **below the responses** before choosing.

**Abdul:** 'Hello.'

**Kevin:** 'Hi, I'm Kevin. I've just moved in over the road.'

**Abdul:** 'Oh, hi Kevin. I'm Abdul.'

**a) 'Which street?'**

**b) 'Nice to meet you.'**

**c) 'What do you want?'**

**Kevin:** 'Thanks, you too. I thought I'd come and say hi. My wife and I don't know anybody yet.'

**Abdul:** **a) 'Mmmm, it's hard moving to a new place, isn't it?'**

**b) 'You should try the bus service.'**

**c) 'How long are you staying?'**

**Kevin:** 'Yes it is. Would you like to come over later today for coffee? Bring the family.'

**Abdul:** **a) 'Sorry, I have to go.'**

**b) 'We don't drink coffee.'**

**c) 'We'd love to come. What time?'**

**Kevin:** 'Let's say about three o'clock.'

**Abdul:** 'Okay. Can we bring anything?'

**Kevin:** 'No, just yourselves.'

**Abdul:** **a) 'Right, see you later then.'**

**b) 'See you tomorrow.'**

**c) 'I'm not sure.'**

**Kevin:** 'Yep, bye.'

**Abdul:** 'Bye.'



ANSWERS: b), a), c), a)