

People and Voices and Words

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Duration: any

Materials: one or more people

Optional materials: chairs, pens, books, notepads, food, water

Basic instructions:

Conduct an interview. Alternate between asking questions and responding.

But first, read over the lines and actions listed on page 2. Keep them available for reference.

Questions that are grouped under one number are to be asked and answered one at a time, by a single pair, before moving on.

The choice of section and question is open to each person at the point of asking it.

Answers can be of any length.

participants and configuration:

One person:

Read questions aloud. Give answers aloud.

Two people:

Alternate between asking and responding.

OR

Complete a section and then switch roles.

Three people:

Person A asks, B responds, B asks, C responds, C asks, A responds, etc.

OR

A-B, B-C, C-A as above, but complete a whole section before switching roles.

Four to six people:

Follow the instructions immediately above or below.

Seven or more people:

Break up into groups of one to six people and follow the corresponding instructions.

Lines and actions that are always possible:

1. Let's stop./Let's set a time to stop./I have to leave at ____.
2. I'll be back in a few minutes./Do you want a break?/Do you need anything?
3. Let's skip this question/section./This question doesn't apply./I'll ask this question another way.
4. Give me some time to think.
5. Let's go off the record./Will you promise not to tell anyone else?
6. I have more to say about this question/an earlier question/an earlier section.
7. Can you say more about that?/I have a follow-up question/comment.
8. I'm going to write/ask a new set of questions.
9. Let me look that up.
10. I'm going to write that down.
11. You already know that. Do you still want me to answer?
12. [long, awkward, undefined silence]
13. Can you say that again? (I don't understand./I didn't hear./I want to hear it again.)
14. Let's switch places/rearrange the space.
15. Let's break into smaller groups./Let's rejoin the larger group./Let's rearrange groups.
16. I'll answer on some other (real/fictional/newly invented) person's behalf.
17. I'll change my voice a little bit.
18. We don't need the questions anymore. Let's just talk.
19. _____.
20. _____.

Sections

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| A. Weather | J. Writing | S. Projects |
| B. Color | K. Growing | T. Advice |
| C. Listening | L. Names | U. Past |
| D. Looking | M. Boredom | V. Present |
| E. Counting | N. Happiness | W. Future |
| F. Reading | O. Annoyance | X. _____ |
| G. Learning | P. Food | Y. _____ |
| H. Playing | Q. Home | Z. _____ |
| I. Speaking | R. Travel | |

A. Weather

1. How often do you ignore the weather?
2. Did you notice today's weather?
3. What season do you look forward to the most?
4. How do you dress for the weather?
5. How cold is too cold?
6. How hot is too hot?
7. Is there someone in your life who loves good weather more than you?
8. Is there someone in your life who hates bad weather more than you?

B. Color

1. What's your favorite shade of red?
2. What's your favorite shade of blue?
3. Do you prefer black, white, or gray?
4. Copper, silver, gold, or steel?
5. Pine, maple, oak, teak, rosewood, or mahogany?
6. Amethyst, granite, jasper, mica, or quartz?
7. Fall, winter, spring, or summer colors?
8. What's the loudest color? What's the second loudest color?
9. What's the quietest color? What's the second quietest color?
10. Do you ever imagine there are other colors?

C. Listening

1. What's a machine that you often hear? Can you describe it?
2. Are there natural sounds that you notice in your daily life? Can you describe them?
3. Whose voice do you hear a lot these days? Is their speaking voice high or medium or low? Do they have an accent? Do they speak fast or slow? What are some of the words they often use? Is there some other way you can describe their voice?
4. Can you describe your own speaking voice?
5. Can you describe my speaking voice?
6. How has your listening changed since you were younger?
7. What do you want to hear differently or more or less in the future?
8. Do you have a favorite place to listen to music?

9. What were some of your favorite pieces (or songs or tracks) from when you were little until now?
10. What do you want to hear that you haven't heard before?

D. Looking

1. What do you spend most of your time looking at most days?
2. What would you like to look at more often?
3. Tell me about something you stared at for a long time.
4. Are you good at making eye contact with people? Does it depend on how well you know them? Does it go better with animals?
5. If you walked around in this area for a few minutes, do you think you'd see anything surprising? Do you want to try it? Should I come along? Did you see anything surprising?

E. Counting

1. Do you count things in your daily life? What things do you count?
2. Can you count in a language other than English? How high can you count in that language? Do you want to count aloud, either in that language or in English? Up to what number? Backwards or forwards? Do you want to start right now?

F. Reading

1. What's the last thing you read that was printed on paper?
2. What do you read most often online?
3. Do you want to read faster or slower?
4. What do you remember most about your favorite children's book?
5. What do you want to read next? Do you have it with you? Do you want to read a little of it now? Will you read it out loud or to yourself?

G. Learning

1. What have you been learning recently?
2. Is there a skill you want to develop?
3. What would you study if you had the chance?
4. Is there something that you wonder about often? Do you think there's someone who could help answer your questions? Why do you think it's on your mind?

H. Playing

1. Do you play any games?
2. Is there a game that you used to play that you miss?
3. Do you play tricks on yourself, like setting the clock ahead?
4. Have you ever tried to gamify your life? Are you winning?
5. Do you think of yourself as a playful person?
6. Do you want to make up a new game? Can we play it now?

I. Speaking

1. Do you want to clear your throat?
2. Do you want some water?
3. Are you using your most usual speaking voice?
4. Do you use a different voice when you talk to children?
5. Do you use a different voice when you're speaking at a public event?
6. Have you gotten used to public speaking?
7. Are you surprised when you hear a recording of your own voice?
8. How would you describe your speaking voice?
9. Do you yell much?
10. Do you whisper much?
11. Could you pitch your speaking voice much higher or lower if you wanted to? Have you ever had a reason to do that before? Do you want to do that now?
12. Are you good at imitating a robot? Do you want to try it now?

J. Writing

1. Do you ever worry that your emails are too long or too short?
2. How do you feel about text messages?
3. Do you keep a journal? If you do, do you ever read it later?
4. Do you ever read things you wrote in the past?
5. What kinds of writing do you do?
6. When did you have to write the most? Did it get easier for you?
7. Can you describe your writing style?
8. Does your writing style match your personality?

K. Growing

1. Are you done growing?
2. When you were little, did you think you'd be taller or shorter than you are?
3. Have you gotten more mature in the last couple years?
4. Are you curious about how you will keep changing? Are you worried that you'll get worse?
5. Are you curious about how anyone else will grow up? Do you have some ideas about what will happen?

L. Names

1. What's your first name? What does it mean? Do people call you anything else?
2. Do you feel like your name belongs to you?
3. Do you know any stories about how you got your name?
4. Do people ever call you by the wrong name?
5. When do you call yourself by your own name?
6. What's your last name? Did you always have that last name? Where did it come from? Is it hard for people to spell? How do you spell it? Is it hard for people to say? Is it too common or uncommon to be convenient?
7. Do you have any stories about your last name?
8. Does anyone call you by your last name?
9. Do you have a middle name? Do you use it often?

M. Boredom

1. Are you afraid of boredom? How does that fear affect you?
2. When were you most bored?
3. Do you ever do things you thought would be boring and find that they're not?
4. Is there something good about boredom?

N. Happiness

1. Do you ever stop and say to yourself, I'm happy?
2. Do you ever ask yourself, am I happy?
3. Do other people ask you if you're happy? Do you like that question?
4. Do you think you were more happy as a kid?

5. Are there things you do to seek out happiness? Do they work? For how long?

O. Annoyance

1. What sound bothers you the most? What do you do when you hear it? Can you imitate it? Are you willing to imitate it?
2. Do anyone else's pet peeves annoy you? Are you the cause of them?

P. Food

1. What did you have for breakfast today?
2. Do you like ice in your water?
3. Have your views changed on cilantro?
4. Have you ever bitten into an apple the way confident characters do on TV?
5. Do you have any snacks with you? Do you have enough to share?
6. Have you found a new favorite meal recently?

Q. Home

1. How far do you live from here? How long have you lived there?
2. What do you do to make yourself feel more at home?
3. How many times have you moved? Do you remember how those other places have felt like home?

R. Travel

1. How soon before a trip do you pack?
2. Window or aisle seat?
3. Where is the last place you went for the first time? Do you think you'll go back?
4. Where have you gone most often? Why do you keep going back?
5. Where else do you want to go? What would you do there?

S. Projects

1. What's the biggest project you did as a teenager?
2. Do you ever still think about it?
3. What are some of the big projects you've finished as an adult?
4. How many projects are you working on right now?

5. How many future projects have you got in mind? Do you want to talk about any of them?

T. Advice

1. Do you like giving advice?
2. Do you like taking advice?
3. Do you want people here to give you advice? What do you want their advice about?
4. Would you want to give advice to other people here if they asked you? Is it a good idea to open up that conversation?

U. Past

1. What period or area of history do you want to understand better? Why that one?
2. How would you do on a living-in-the-past reality show?
3. Is there a period of your own life that still puzzles you? What kind of person could help you understand it better?
4. Do you miss your own childhood?

V. Present

1. Are we almost done?
2. What time is it?
3. Is anything different now from when we started?

W. Future

1. Should we write some new questions?
2. What are your plans for tomorrow?
3. What's the next thing you have to prepare for?
4. Is there something you're looking forward to? Do you want to talk about it?
5. Is there something you're dreading? Do you want to talk about it?
6. What are you doing after we finish here?

X. _____

1. _____?
2. _____?
3. _____?

Y. _____

1. _____?
2. _____?
3. _____?
4. _____?
5. _____?
6. _____?

Z. _____

1. _____?
2. _____?
3. _____?
4. _____?
5. _____?
6. _____?
7. _____?
8. _____?
9. _____?
10. _____?