

First Impressions

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression." – Will Rogers



Warm up

- How long do you think it takes to form a first impression of someone?
- Do you think first impressions are usually accurate? Why or why not?
- What's more important: how you look or how you act when making a first impression?
- How do first impressions affect job interviews, dating, or meeting new classmates?
- If someone were meeting you for the first time, what do you think their first impression of you would be?
- When you buy books, do you actually *judge a book by its cover*?



1. Brainstorming: What Shapes a First Impression?

Work in small groups and brainstorm what factors influence first impressions.
(Verbal, Non-Verbal, Situational)

Tone of voice
Word choice
Enthusiasm
Listening skills
Clarity and volume
Eye contact
Facial expressions
Gestures and posture
Clothing and grooming
Handshake or greeting style
Location and setting
Time pressure
Presence of others
Role or status differences
Cultural background

After brainstorming, compare ideas with other groups and discuss which factors are most important.



2. Look at the pictures of different people and answer the following questions in small groups or pairs.

Maggie Wood



Peter McCain



Suzie Jones



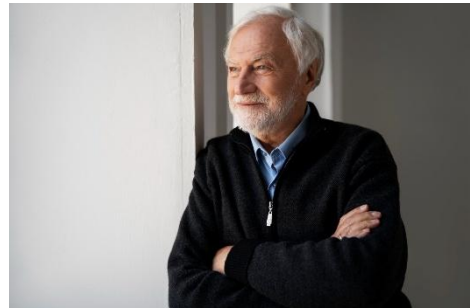
Sally Farrell



Mike Rose



Ollie Sanders



Jackie Biggs



Alice DeMarco



- What do you think each person does (or used to do) for a living? Why?
- Do they seem employed? What clues suggest this?
- Who looks the most approachable or trustworthy? Why?
- Would you trust any of them with something important, like house-sitting?
- What visual cues suggest reliability or professionalism?
- Imagine they are interviewing for a legal assistant position—how do you think an employer would react based on their appearance?



3. Elevator pitch challenge: Take turns introducing yourself in exactly 30 seconds.

You've just arrived at a professional networking event. The atmosphere is buzzing with people from different backgrounds, all eager to make connections. Everyone is expected to introduce themselves in a way that is engaging, memorable, and professional—but also natural. Your goal is to make a great first impression and start meaningful conversations.



Step 1: Prepare Your Introduction

Before you jump in, think about:

- ✓ How would you introduce yourself in a way that sparks interest?
- ✓ What makes you unique or memorable?
- ✓ What's one key thing you want people to remember about you?

Include:

- Your name
- Your profession or field of interest
- Something interesting about you (a fun fact, a skill, or what excites you about your work)
- Why you're at this event (e.g., looking for opportunities, learning, networking)



4. Discuss.

- Who gave the most memorable pitch?
- What made their introduction stand out?
- What elements made a strong first impression?



5. Read the dialogue below and answer the following questions.

Emma: How's the new job?

Lisa: Oh my god. I just started, and honestly, I have no clue what I'm doing. I feel like a complete fraud.

Emma: That's normal! Just remember—fake it till you make it. No one really knows what they're doing at first. If you act confident, people will believe in you.

Lisa: You're probably right. I just don't want to make a bad impression. Speaking of which, remember how I told you I thought my boss was a total nightmare?

Emma: Yeah! You said he ignored you on your first day and barely spoke. What happened?

Lisa: Well, it turns out I totally misjudged him. Don't judge a book by its cover, right? That day, his mum had been rushed to the hospital, and he was completely distracted. I felt so bad when I found out.

Emma: Wow. That's a huge misunderstanding.

Lisa: I know! But honestly, actions speak louder than words. Once I actually started working with him, I saw how much he supports his team. He's actually the best boss I've ever had.

Emma: That's a lesson learned. First impressions aren't always right.



- a. Find and write down the three idioms used in the conversation.

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- b. Why does Lisa feel like a fraud in her new job?
- c. How did Lisa's perception of her boss change over time?
- d. What lesson does Emma take away from Lisa's experience?
- e. Have you ever judged someone too quickly, only to change your mind later? What happened?

- f. Do you agree that “actions speak louder than words”? Can you think of an example where this was true?
- g. Do you think it’s always a good idea to “fake it till you make it”? Can this ever be bad advice?



6. Conference networking challenge.

Welcome to the Global Business & Innovation Conference! 🌍 ✨
 You are attending a professional networking event, where you will meet people from different industries. Your goal is to introduce yourself, engage in conversations, and make first impressions—but there’s a twist! Each participant has been given a secret persona that influences their behaviour.

How It Works

- 📄 Step 1: Get Your Role Card: Your card has a fake name, age, job, and behaviour to follow.
- 🤝 Step 2: Network: Walk around, introduce yourself, and stay in character during conversations.
- 📄 Step 3: Rate First Impressions: Fill out a survey rating people. (more info on the next page)
- 🔍 Step 4: Reveal & Discuss: Share your real identity and reflect on how first impressions were formed.



7. First Impression Feedback 📄

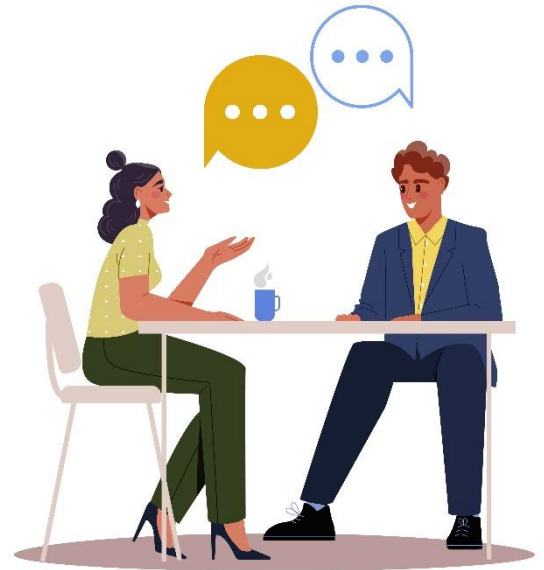
- 💡 As you meet people, take notes on their:
 1. Confidence (1-5)
 2. Friendliness (1-5)
 3. Professionalism (1-5)
 4. Would you work with this person? (Yes/No/Maybe)
 5. General notes (optional)

Pay attention to their body language, eye contact, and how they communicate. Stay objective and focus on their behaviour, not just your personal opinion!



8. Discuss.

- a. How did the event feel? Was it easy or challenging to stay in character? Why?
- b. Who made the strongest impression? What made them stand out?
- c. Did anyone surprise you? Were they different from what you expected?
- d. What behaviours made a good or bad impression? Any patterns?
- e. How did it feel being judged on a first impression? Was it accurate?
- f. Were there any funny or awkward moments? What happened?
- g. If this were a real event, who would you follow up with? Why?
- h. How does networking help in real life? Why is it a valuable skill?
- i. Do first impressions work differently in professional vs. social settings?
- j. What's one key strategy for making a great first impression?



Role Cards



James Carter, 42, Marketing Director – Super confident, makes strong eye contact, and loves talking about his past successes.	Sophia Lee, 29, IT Consultant – Very shy, speaks softly, and avoids eye contact.
Daniel Smith, 35, CEO of a Startup – Always checking his phone, takes calls in the middle of conversations.	Ava Williams, 50, Lawyer – Asks a lot of direct and challenging questions, making people feel like they're in an interview.
Ethan Brown, 27, Financial Analyst – Keeps talking about his kids and their achievements instead of work.	Olivia Martinez, 33, Architect – Enthusiastic and friendly, makes people feel comfortable right away.
Michael Chang, 60, Retired Engineer – Keeps bringing up “back in my day” stories about how things used to be.	Liam Johnson, 40, Doctor – Constantly interrupts and shifts conversations back to himself.
Emma Taylor, 31, Event Planner – Asks thoughtful questions and remembers details about people she meets.	Noah White, 38, Journalist – Seems distracted, keeps glancing around instead of focusing on conversations.
Hannah Kim, 45, HR Manager – Listens carefully, nods often, and asks follow-up questions to make people feel heard.	David Patel, 34, Sales Representative – Talks very fast, over-explains everything, and doesn't let others get a word in.
Isabella Rossi, 28, Graphic Designer – Speaks very formally and professionally, even in casual conversations.	Marcus Bennett, 55, Business Consultant – Keeps bragging about people he knows and important events he's attended.
Rachel Adams, 32, Social Media Manager – Keeps bringing the conversation back to social media trends and influencers.	Tyler Brooks, 26, Personal Trainer – Super energetic, uses lots of hand gestures, and always refers to fitness analogies.
Samantha Torres, 39, University Professor – Overthinks every question, pauses too long before responding, and speaks very seriously.	Omar Khalid, 50, Entrepreneur – Laughs a lot and tries to turn every conversation into a joke.
Grace Thompson, 36, Lawyer – Keeps checking the time, acting impatient, and rushing conversations.	Lucas Evans, 41, Engineer – Talks in a monotone voice, gives very short answers, and doesn't seem engaged.

