

First Impressions

Read the following texts carefully and then answer the following questions:

First impressions are important in our personal and professional lives, which is why we need to be aware of the signals we are sending out and, if necessary, change them. Most people understand that a smile and eye contact are generally perceived positively so they make use of these strategically. On the other hand, they may be completely oblivious to the fact that their crossed arms can make them look closed or even hostile. Occasionally, even the most amiable person can have something on their mind which can affect how they feel. Rather than letting this show, they can use a technique such as thinking of something amusing that will put a smile on their face as they enter the room to meet and greet the people there.

1)What does the underlined pronoun “them” refer to?

- A)the signals
- B)first impressions
- C)personal and professional lives
- D)most people

2)The signal that might be perceived negatively in a first impression is:

- A)eye contact
- B)crossed arms
- C)smiling
- D)handshake

3)According to the text, what technique can amiable people use to create a positive impression when entering a room?

- A)Thinking of something amusing to smile naturally.
- B)Crossing their arms without noticing.
- C)Thinking of something sad so that they seem serious.
- D)Letting their mood show as they greet others

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So, you’ve conquered your nerves and turned up at the dinner party. You stride into the room, smile at everyone and greet them with a firm handshake. But what now? After all, first impressions are not just about physical appearance. We also make judgements about people when we start to talk to them. Introverted people seem to be at a disadvantage, but all is not lost. There are tried and tested topics, such as the weather, for example, or you can use visual or oral clues to stimulate the conversation: an interesting accent – ‘Where are you from?’ A band T-shirt – ‘Oh are you a fan?’ If you are lucky, the person you ask will be a chatty extrovert happy to be in the company of someone who doesn’t interrupt their well-practised anecdotes.

4)Based on the text, which of the following is an example of visual clues?

- A)a band T-shirt
- B)an interesting accent
- C)talking about the weather
- D)the well-practised anecdotes

Whenever the topic of first impressions is raised, job interviews are sure to be mentioned. Many of them start off with a few introductory questions aimed at settling the interviewee's nerves, as if this was a friendly encounter rather than a serious assessment of suitability. In an interesting study, objective outsiders were split into two groups to watch a video of the interview. One group watched the entire thing, the other missed out the initial, informal chat. The first group's judgement of the candidate's performance was, to a large extent, dependent on the impression they made at the start. So, it turns out that a talented candidate may be rejected for a position simply because they find social chit-chat difficult.

5) According to the text, why might a talented candidate be rejected in a job interview?

- A) Because they struggle with informal social interaction.
- B) Because they cross their arms during the interview.
- C) Because they answer introductory questions too confidently.
- D) Because they focus only on casual conversations.

ANSWER KEY:

1	A
2	B
3	A
4	A
5	A