



Blog Writing Samples

BEST QUALITY

7 Key Tips for a Successful First Date

What if I spill something down my shirt? What if there are tons of awkward silences? What if they think I'm weird? What if we don't have anything in common? What if I get something in my teeth? What if I can't get my words out? What if...?

And breathe. Trust us; we've been there, done that, and worn the veritable wardrobe when it comes to first-date jitters. You certainly aren't alone in your frantic thinking, and although you've probably heard that before, it should provide some comfort. After all, if you're feeling nervous, you can put money on the fact your soon-to-be-date is too (yes, even if they seem super confident on Tinder/Hinge/any other online dating platform).

While the stress-inducing questions zipping through your brain may say otherwise, remember that this *could* be the love of your life, and therefore, definitely. Or they won't be, and that's okay too! Whether your first date turns into a lifetime of adventures or it's the first of many firsts, our seven top tips (and a few bonus tricks) have got your back.

So, guys, gals, and non-binary pals, let's jump right into the goodness.

Gen Z's Dating Scene

Before we get into the *real* juice, it's worth noting today's dating scene is worlds apart from the landscape experienced by Millennials.

Nowadays, it's all about genuine connection — even the online variety. Because despite what some older generations may believe, you *can* get to know others online. Love 'em or hate 'em, Hinge, Tinder, and Bumble do work (some) wonders and have undoubtedly become romance-saving floats in the otherwise-treacherous dating pool.

Apps have made a splash in the arena for years, helping Gen Zers build balanced, meaningful intimacy rather than casual engagements. Hello, stability era.



In keeping with this desire to incrementally create connections, “slow dating” is all the rage — you gradually get to know potential mates via social media before meeting IRL. Of course, this usually involves a lot of meme-sharing and (playful) banter.

But even all this online getting-to-know-each-other won’t stop the anxiety rising when it’s finally time to meet face-to-face. Our tips should, though!

Tip 1: Location, Location, Location

Nope, this doesn’t just apply to real estate; it’s perhaps one of the most important things to consider when planning your first date. The right spot goes a *long* way. After all, you don’t want to take a veggie to a steakhouse.

The best place facilitates two things — comfort and conversation — while effortlessly diverting from inappropriate intimacy and awkwardness. It should also be in a neighborhood you’re familiar with, so you know where to go and (more importantly) where to avoid.

- Here are a few ideas to get you started:
- Thrift stores
- Local trivia night
- Your favorite hike
- Weird museums (think Vegas’ Neon Museum or California’s International Banana Museum)
- Flea markets
- Paint night

And if you end up heading to a restaurant, always get a corner booth. Occasionally turning toward each other to exchange knowing glances about your worldly observations is much more exciting (and attractive) than being forced to make eye contact, thanks to the table setup.

Tip 2: First Impressions Count

Attire. Punctuality. Off-the-bat interactions. Roll these factors into one and there’s your first impression. How do you make sure you give off the *right* first impression? Come as you are (but with a bit of extra “oomph”).

Let’s start with clothing. We aren’t about to tell you what to wear. As we alluded to, you need to be yourself, but when it comes to your first date, you should dress to impress while maintaining comfort. Sounds like a tall order. However, we’ve found smart casual goes down a treat.



As for punctuality, just don't be late. Being on time shows respect and starts the date as it should go on — positively. If you've ever been left waiting half an hour for your supposed match to arrive, you know what it feels like!

Now for (arguably) the trickiest part of making a good first impression — the greeting and initial interactions. Humor is your best friend here. It works wonders to abolish any awkwardness involved.

If you've been talking to them online a while, you could even address the whole first greeting thing before the date. That way, you avoid the whole handshake/hug/nod/wave/smile/cheek-kiss debacle.

Tip 3: The (Nerve-Racking) Art of Conversation

Really, this tip should be called "The Art of Listening," because it's more about showing genuine interest in your date than anything else.

Eye contact (when your comfort level allows it) helps them know you're actively paying attention to what they have to say. Ask a question, listen to the answer, and follow up with an appropriate query/remark. It isn't just a sign of respect; it can help you keep the conversation flowing.

Although, said conversation is a two-way street — you don't want them to feel like they're under interrogation! Aim for equal amounts of giving and taking. This is the ticket to a satisfying, dynamic interaction (i.e., a greater chance of a second date).

Ultimately, don't overthink it. Go with the flow, see where the conversation takes you, and if you get stuck in a rut, try some of these first date icebreakers:

- If you could go anywhere right now, where would you go?
- What's something I wouldn't guess about you?
- What did you want to be when you were a child?
- What are your favorite TV shows/movies/books/songs/colors/etc.?
- Who's influenced you the most?
- If a zombie apocalypse started right now, what would you do?

Tip 4: Using Body Language Like a Pro

Body language and conversation go hand-in-hand. In fact, your body will tell your date more about how you're feeling than your words will, and vice versa.

Here's how to radiate positivity and interest with your face and body:



- **Smile genuinely** — It'll reach your eyes when you mean it.
- **Maintain eye contact** — Some people struggle with this, so don't worry too much if they're finding it hard to reciprocate.
- **Lean in** — You'll naturally lean toward people/things you're interested in. So much so that your feet will follow suit, pointing toward your date, too.
- **Make relaxed, open gestures** — Open palms, open arms, and still, relaxed legs will ensure your date knows you're into them.

When it comes to reading body language, the same applies. Are they relaxed, leaning in, smiling with their eyes, and maintaining eye contact? If so, that's a great sign.

Tip 5: Be You

You're probably rolling your eyes at the standard, glib "just be yourself" dating advice. *But* it's actually true — authenticity is the most crucial aspect of dating. Putting on a persona or changing yourself to fit somebody else's ideals will only end in tears (and not the happy kind).

However, we agree it isn't very constructive when you're struggling to tap into your true self in the dating scene. So, allow us to turn this otherwise-trash advice into something workable.

You are truly being yourself when you aren't thinking about it. It's your rawest, purest form. But what happens when you focus on things that typically happen automatically (e.g., breathing, blinking)? You mess it up because your brain isn't designed to consciously aid the process.

Apply this to being yourself on a first date. Trust yourself to do it automatically.

Tip 6: Let Go of Your Digital Anchor

When you're out in public and you feel awkward, what do you do? When you're bored at home, what do you do? Nine (if not ten) times out of ten, you likely pick up your phone and start scrolling through Insta or X (yep, we'd rather call it Twitter too).

This is a no-no when you're on a date. No matter how stiff or nervous you may feel, reaching for your cell isn't the answer. Don't panic; it gets easier, we promise!

Proper digital etiquette is vital for securing that all-important second meet-up. Keep your phone out of sight, switch your ringer off, and follow our conversation tips we offered earlier. You (and your date) will feel better for it. Let's leave phubbing where it belongs — in 2017.

Side note: Life can throw curveballs. And these curveballs won't care that you're on a first date. So, in case of an emergency, excuse yourself and keep the call short.

Tip 7: The Lowdown on Post-Date Chat



Once the date is over, you've got the agony of knowing when and how to follow up. The good news: it isn't all that agonizing if you take "Tip 5: Be You" to heart.

There's no set time to wait before reaching out. Some people text the next morning. Some people say they had an amazing time while they're traveling back from the date. You aren't trying to hide your personality, so text whenever you want!

What to say may be trickier and it comes down to how you feel about the person and the date.

It should be relatively easy to follow up if the conversating was flowing and the chemistry is strong. Just make sure you're specific and include plans to meet up again. You can start with a general statement (like, "It was great meeting you yesterday!") but follow it with something meaningful to you both (e.g., a funny thing they said, a podcast they recommended, etc.).

If you hear back, you're on to a winner! And if you don't, then they weren't feeling the sparks quite as much as you. That's okay; dust yourself off and get back on the dating horse.

On the flip side, it might be you who has received a "I had a great time" text and you just aren't feeling it. It's never wise to leave them hanging; ghosting is one of the worst feelings, causing people to wonder whether it was something they said or did.

Instead, let them know you respect them by being straight up. Try one of the following ideas:

- "Hey, I loved our date, but I don't think we're right for each other."
- "Hey, thank you for such a great night, but this isn't what I'm looking for at the moment."
- "Hey, I had a brilliant time. I just don't see things going where I'd like them to."

Short yet respectful and avoids leaving them on read.

3 Bonus Tips for a Fantastic First Date

#1 Stay Safe

Safety should be your number-one priority on a first date, closely followed by personal boundaries. Thankfully, your gut instinct (provided you allow yourself to trust it) will do a lot of the leg work for you — if something feels "off" then it is off.

Some simple safety tricks include telling a friend/relative about your date, meeting in a public plan, pre-planning your route home, never leaving your drink unattended, always leaving the moment you feel uncomfortable, and remembering that one red flag is enough.



#2 Deal with First-Date Jitters

The above-mentioned tips should calm most of your first-date nerves, but if you have a few uneasy butterflies fluttering around your stomach, we've got some last-minute tricks to calm your mind before you meet.

We suggest going for a walk, calling a friend, practicing mindfulness, pampering yourself, heading to the gym, leaving for the date in good time, and/or taking deep breathes while standing up straight. This last one may seem unhelpful, but the mere act of tilting your chin up and breathing can dampen anxiety of all kinds.

#3 Use Humor to Shatter the Ice

Laughing together is the foundation of many successful relationships, and thus, many successful first dates. Having a giggle is the perfect icebreaker, loosening both of you and aiding prolonged conversation.

Observational playfulness and comedy are easy wins. Finding the humor in your environment engages your date and boosts experiential intimacy. If it feels authentic to you, go for it. Just follow your gut and introduce more personalized humor as you get to know them.

You're All Set for Your First Date!

Unlock your playful side, remove your smartphone from the occasion, use positive body language, let your personality shine, and there's no reason you won't have a brilliant time. Just keep an open mind, go with the flow, and trust your gut. You're about to meet some amazing people — maybe even the elusive "one."



GREAT QUALITY

7 Key Tips For A Successful First Date

Ever felt like you have butterflies in your stomach because that really important first date is coming up? You're not alone; we've all been there, and had our embarrassing share of first dates too. Have you ever ended up accidentally spilling guac on your pants and like felt a fool? Realized only after you've got home that there's a gob of toothpaste on your cheek? Discovered a wardrobe malfunction far too late to do anything about it?

You're definitely not on your own, but these kinds of things can quickly sour a first date and leave you in the dust. Instead, you're going to want to arm yourself with some top tips for a first date, so you know it'll go smoothly and you can pencil in a second date!

Tip 1: Selecting The Ideal Venue

The ambiance and atmosphere that your date takes place in is pretty critical. A movie can work if you're feeling uninspired, but then you'll spend most of the date sitting in the dark and not talking – so it's not a great way to get to know your love interest, and it's certainly not memorable.

Instead, why not get a little inventive? There are plenty of unique dates you can go on. For example, you might want to check out your local museum, where you can walk around learning about history and each other – often for free or for a low entry fee.

If that doesn't appeal, consider something like meeting at a coffee shop and browsing in your local bookstore together, comparing favorite authors or favorite novels. This will often tell you a lot about the other person, and it's super romantic.

For those who prefer active first dates, paintballing or hiking or even rock climbing can be great fun and very memorable. Alternatively, a picnic in the park on a sunny day can also be wonderful, and won't break the bank if you're a little short of cash. Make sure your date is also enthusiastic about the activity, and don't pick something super athletic or intellectual without getting their okay first.

Tip 2: Making a Great First Impression

The first impression counts for a lot on the first date – something going wrong can have a lasting impact. That means dressing your best is pretty critical. You should make an effort with your clothes, although that doesn't necessarily mean cracking out a suit or an evening dress.



Instead, choose clothes that you think are reflective of who you are, but make sure they are nice.

If you aren't sure what to wear, a nice shirt and some smart pants is often a good choice for a guy, while a blouse and pants or a skirt can work well for a woman. However, comfort and authenticity should take the reins! Take a bit of time to look over your hair and makeup if applicable, and make sure you're clean.

It's also important to show up to your first date punctually; show you respect their time and that you're enthusiastic by making sure you get there as agreed. If something does make you late, let them know promptly and make sure you apologize.

Tip 3: Engaging Conversation Starters

What to say is another big question for many people, and not having a few ideas in your back pocket can lead to awkward silences. Hobbies are a great starting point for many people; it's a good idea to think about some of the things you enjoy doing and be ready to talk about them.

You can also ask some basic questions, like where your date grew up, whether they have siblings/pets, what their parents are like, etc. Any of these could spark a conversation. It's important to listen thoroughly to the things your date says and ask follow-up questions to demonstrate your interest.

Nodding, smiling, and responding to the things they say demonstrate that you're interested and will help your date to feel invested in you.

Tip 4: Body Language Matters

We say a surprising amount with our bodies! And it's as important to think about what your body's saying as what your mouth is saying. Positive body language involves leaning forward, keeping your arms uncrossed, nodding, etc.

Try to be relaxed, even if it's hard, and make sure you make some eye contact to show your date that you are listening to them. Pay attention to their body language too; if they are looking bored or restless, or staring away from you, consider changing the topic to something else they might find engaging.

Tip 5: Be Authentically You

Although it is tempting to try and be suave, cool, and the king of humor on a first date, authenticity is so much more important. After all, you want your date to like you for you – not for acting the part of somebody else.



That's why you should be as genuine as you can when you share your interests and your opinions. Don't agree with your date just for the sake of agreeing. Being inauthentic on your first date won't lead to a strong relationship, even if it seems to work in the moment. Instead, share your stories, your hobbies, and your true self, and trust that they will like you!

Tip 6: Navigating the Digital World

Spend all your time on TikTok? Okay, us too, but... not on a first date. It might be really tempting to look at your phone, Snapchat your best friend, or Instagram your delicious-looking dessert, but you need to avoid doing this too much, or your date will quickly feel ignored.

It's fine to quickly check a message if they're not actively talking, but otherwise, keep your eyes off your phone and pay attention to your date!

Tip 7: Post-Date Etiquette

So, what about the all-important aftermath of a successful date – or even an unsuccessful one? A lot of people talk about the games of when to text or call, and how long to leave it... but ultimately, it's better to be straight with each other and express your actual emotions.

You should communicate about how your date went and whether you want to meet up again, being honest and respectful. If you don't feel a spark and you'd rather move on to somebody else, make sure you treat them kindly and be polite. If you do feel that spark but they don't, try to accept the rejection gracefully.

If both of you are keen, great news – it's time to organize your next date and continue hitting it off!

Conclusion

As you can see, there are plenty of things to bear in mind for the first date, including choosing a venue that's right for you, and dressing to appear at your best. Prepare a few good conversation starters, and listen thoroughly, using your body language as well as your words to demonstrate your interest.

Combine this with being authentic to your true self and avoiding too much screen time, and then follow up the date with politeness and warmth, and you've got a real recipe for success, no matter what happens.

Dating can be a nerve-racking process for even the most confident individual, but embracing it with positivity and feeling excited about what's coming is a great start, and will set you well on the way to a successful experience!



GOOD QUALITY

5 Key Tips For A Successful First Date

Your phone pings as you take a last look in the mirror. You grab it, and an excited little thrill runs through your fingers as you smile and type back, "Me, too. See you soon."

The anticipation humming in the air right before your first date with a new guy or girl is the stuff of movie scenarios. You laugh, share food or an experience, do the payment dance, and either you meet again or you don't. Sometimes, what went wrong is clear. We picked the wrong date spot, overshared, kept checking our phones, or didn't express our authentic selves.

Gen Z daters know that first dates don't always pan out, so that's why we're dropping these 5 essential tips to make your first date an enjoyable success.

1. Choose the Right Setting

First dates aren't just about a traditional dinner and a movie anymore. The sky's the limit when it comes to first-date ideas that set a casual vibe and won't break the bank.

A first date helps two people get to know each other and gauge whether they want to invest the time and effort in a future date. That's why picking a comfortable spot conducive to conversation is crucial.

A pulsing nightclub may not provide the best atmosphere to get to know your date better. Consider off-beat ideas that will break the ice and allow you to enjoy each other's company.

For example, take a stroll in a beautiful park. You'll get exercise and enjoy fresh air, but it's often easier to talk when moving instead of standing still. Grab a brew and browse a bookstore to get that conversational spark going. Visit a museum for inspiration. Hit up an outdoor market space such as a farmer's market, antique fair, or art booth. Fun seasonal activities such as apple picking or ice skating are also great natural ways to spend real time together.

2. Listen and Engage

"Sorry our first date was so terrible that the conversation was more awkward than the silence."

We've all had those awkward first dates. One of you starts to spill about an ex. The other one can't stop talking about their cat. Both of you jump into the deep end on touchy topics like



religion or politics. The conversation jolts from one awkward topic to another for the entire date like a crazy rollercoaster ride.

The key to a great and successful first date is to engage your date's interest in a way that lets the conversation flow naturally. For example, discuss your current activity or what you plan to do. Break the ice by asking about your date's favorite things to do.

The most important thing you can do on a first date is to practice active listening. This means putting down your phone, making eye contact, and genuinely listening to what your date is saying instead of thinking about what you're going to say next.

3. Present Your Authentic Self

Not being yourself can quickly sabotage a great date. This can happen for many reasons. Many of us struggle to express our authentic selves if we're afraid of what the other person might think.

Being true to yourself will slash stress and help you see if you're a good fit for each other.

Take a bold step and express yourself by sharing your genuine opinions, discussing your interests, or showcasing your style. It's always best to be upfront about who you are instead of trying to mimic what your date wants to see or hear.

4. Use and Respect Body Language

Body language is a big cue to indicate that a date is going well. If you want a fun and successful time, use body cues to let your date know you are into them.

For example, lean forward, make eye contact, and smile or nod to indicate interest. Pay attention to your date's body language to check if they look closed off or if they're engaged with you.

Knowing how to express interest and understand body language can help you read and respect another person's body cues.

5. Practice Digital Etiquette

It's no secret that we're all glued to our phones nowadays. Whether it's a work message, a text from a friend, or scrolling through social media, it's hard to turn off even during a date.

The "pics or it didn't happen" mentality can keep us from being fully present in the moment. If you constantly text or check TikTok videos, it's easy to convey that you're not very interested in your date.



Like anything, a first date is a delicate balance between documenting the moment and staying present. If you need to answer a message, let your date know, respond quickly, and then put your phone away and get back to the person in front of you.

Conclusion

These 5 essential tips can help you choose a good date location, actively engage with your date, understand your and your date's body language, maintain good digital etiquette, and stay true to yourself.

Stay positive, stay authentic, and keep an open mind to have the best first date of your life.