EXPRESSIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Asking someone for their opinion about a topic

**Yes/No Questions**

- Do you believe in ...?
- Do you think we should ...?
- Do you think everybody should ...?
- Do you think that...?
- Would you consider ...
- Would you ever consider ...

**OR Questions**

- Are you for or against ...
- Would you prefer ...
- Would you rather ...
- What is better: - ... or ...

**WH Questions**

- What do you think of ...
- What do you think of package holidays?
- What do you think is the problem between ...
- What do you think is the problem with ...
- What do you think are the causes of ...
- What are the advantages and disadvantages...

**Negative Yes/No Questions**

- Don’t they...?
- Don’t you think it’s better to ...
- Don’t you understand that ...
- Don’t you see that ...
- Can’t you see that ...
- Wouldn’t it be better to ...
- Wouldn’t it be wiser to ...
- Wouldn’t you agree that ...
- Why shouldn’t they?

**Delivering Strategies**

- I can’t answer that directly.
- I’ll need time to think about that.
- That’s a very interesting question, because...

β That’s a difficult question to answer, because...
β That’s a tough question to answer, because...
β To be honest, that’s a difficult question, because ...
β That’s a very good question. The reality is that ...
β What do you mean by that?
β What do you mean by ...
β Well, it depends on what you mean...
β Well, if you ask me, it all depends on your circumstances...
β Well....

Asking someone information

β I’d like to know
β I’m interested in
β Could you tell me..?
β Could I ask about ...?
β Do you know if...?
β Do you know what....is?
β Do you happen to know whether or not...
β Do you happen to know what.... Is?

Presenting arguments

**Presenting the most important point**

β The main thing is...
β The most important thing is...
β Primarily
β Most importantly,

**Presenting a number of arguments**

β First of all, ...
β Firstly, ...
β Well, firstly ...
β To begin with, ...
β I’d start by ...
β For a start, ...
β There’re two points here. Firstly, ... Secondly, ...
β There are two problems here.... Moreover
β You also have to consider
Adding an argument
- Also, ...
- Again, that depends on ...
- In addition, ...
- What’s more, ...
- I might add that ...
- Perhaps I should also mention ...
- Not to mention the fact that ...
- Plus the fact that ...
- Not only that, but ...

Giving your opinion about a topic

Expressing a strong opinion
- In my opinion, ...
- In my view, ...
- In my reckoning, ...
- I strongly believe in ...
- I definitely think that ...
- Well, if you ask me, ...
- Well, I think ...
- I believe ...
- I strongly believe ...
- I have a reason to believe ...
- I’m sure that ...
- I’m pretty sure that ...

Expressing a strong value (It’s / They’re + value adjective)
- It’s a nonsense to ...
- ... It’s a scandal, because ...
- It’s perfect for ...
- It’s wrong ... Likewise, ...
- They’re ideal ...

Expressing certainty
- According to government statistics, ...
- Actually, ...
- In fact, ...
- Clearly, ...
- Obviously, ...
- People have always ...
- People just won’t continue to ...
- Without doubt, ...
- There’s no doubt that ...
- Undoubtedly ...
- Surely, ...

Agreeing

Expressing complete agreement
- Exactly!
- Precisely!
- Totally!
- Absolutely!
- That’s right!
- Correct!
- You’re right!
- You’re so right!
- That’s so true!
- I couldn’t agree with you more!
- I’m with you on that
- That’s just what I was thinking!
- That’s exactly what I think.
- That’s a good point.
- That’s just how I see it.
- My feelings exactly.
- I’ll say!
- You can say that again!

Agreeing in part
- Yes, perhaps, however ...
- Well, yes, but ...
- Yes, in a way, however ...
- Hmm, possibly, but ...
- Yes, I agree up to a point, however ...
- Well, you have a point there, but ...
- There’s something there, I suppose, however ...
- I guess you could be right, but ...
- Yes, I suppose so, however ...
- That’s worth thinking about, but ...

Expressing conditional agreement
- I’d agree with you if ...
- I’d certainly agree if you’re thinking of ...
EXPRESSIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Disagreeing

Expressing complete disagreement

- I don’t think so!
- I disagree
- I disagree entirely.
- I’m afraid I can’t agree.
- I’m afraid you’re wrong
- On the contrary!
- Definitely not!
- Rubbish!
- Nonsense!
- That’s ridiculous!
- Never in a million years!

Using irony to express disagreement

- Come off it!
- Come on!
- Do you really think so?
- What!
- You can’t actually mean that!
- You can’t be serious!
- Are you pulling my leg?
- Are you kidding?
- You must be kidding!

Dismissing an argument as irrelevant or improbable.

- That isn’t the point.
- That’s highly debatable.
- That’s highly unlikely.

Disagreeing diplomatically (through doubt)

- I wonder whether that’s the case.
- Hmm, I’m not sure about that...
- I’m not sure (that) it works like that.
- I’m not so sure about that.
- I’m not so certain
- Well, I’m not sure whether you can really ...
- Well, I don’t know...
- Well, it depends...
- I’m inclined to disagree with that...

Disagreeing in part (appeal to logic)

- Not necessarily
- That doesn’t necessarily follow.
- That’s not necessarily true
- That isn’t strictly true.

Countering

Countering directly (through antithesis)

- But
- But who can say that ...?
- But why ...?
- But if ...
- But surely, ...

Countering politely (through agreement followed by antithesis)

- Yes, but remember that
- Yes, but it isn’t that ...

Countering politely (through partial agreement followed by antithesis)

- That may be so, but ...
- That may be true, but ...
- That may be so, ...
- That might have been the case once, but ...
- Well, maybe they do, but ...
- You may be right about ..., but ...
- Maybe... But the problem is...
- That’s a good idea, but...
- That’s a good point, but...
- I’d love to, but...
- That would be great, except that...
- That may be so, but...
- Possibly, but...
- ..., but what I’m concerned with is...
- ..., but what I’m afraid of is...
- ..., but what bothers me is...
- ..., but what I don’t like is...
- ..., but what I’m concerned with is...

Countering using "after all", "at least", "even so" both for concession and antithesis

- After all, ...
- At least there’s ...
- But at least...
- Well, even so, ...

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EXPRESSIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Logical Argument

Questions or conclusions based on conditions with "if"

- If ..., why don’t they just ...?
- What if ...?
- And what happens if ...?
- What would happen then if ...?
- If that is so..., (then) ....
- That would be true if...
- You would be right if...
- That would make sense if...
- It’d be O.K. if ...

Questions based on conditions with sentence adverbials "then" and "so"

- But if you... Then how do you go about ...?
- Then can you tell me what’s wrong with ...?

Expressing Cause and effect

Cause

- The reason why... is ...
- The reason why ... is that ...
- Due to ...,
- Because...
- Because of...
- Because..., 
- Since..., 
- ...is why...

Result

- For this reason,...
- For this reason alone, ...
- Owing to this, ...
- This is why ...
- That’s why...
- This is the reason why ...
- Therefore
- So
- As a result
- Consequently,...
- Thus,...

Clarification

Asking someone to repeat

- Pardon me?
- Pardon?
- Excuse me?
- Sorry?
- I’m sorry?
- I beg you pardon?
- Could you say that again?
- Would you repeat that please?
- Would you mind repeating that please?
- Sorry, what did you say?
- Sorry, what was that?
- What’s that again?

When you can’t follow the logical progression in someone’s argument

- You lost me there.
- I’m lost.
- I’m not following.
- I don’t follow.
- I didn’t get that.

Asking for clarification through short Yes/No Questions inviting illustration or example.

- And are they right?
- Does that make it ok?
- Can you be a bit more specific?
- Are you saying that ...?.
- Are we talking about ....?

Clarification through "What" or "How" Questions inviting illustration or example.

- What’s wrong with that?
- What’s wrong with ...?.
- What do you mean?
- What do you mean by ...?
- What are you trying to say?
- In what way?
- How do you mean?
- Why do you say that?.
- Why is that
- Why not?
- Can you explain why ...?
- Why do you think that?
**EXPRESSIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE**

Giving clarification / Reiteration through reference to subject

- I’m talking about …
- I’m saying that …
- What I’m saying is that …
- The whole point of this is that…
- That’s what this discussion’s about.
- I’m talking about …

Giving clarification after misunderstanding

- What I mean is…
- What I meant is…
- What I’m saying is…
- What I’m trying to say is…
- Don’t get me wrong…
- Don’t misunderstand me…
- Let me put it another way, …
- That’s not what I said…
- That’s not what I meant.
- What I said was…
- What I really said/mean/meant…
- You must have misunderstood me…
- Let’s get it straight…

Illustrating a point

- For example, …
- For instance, …
- Take for example …
- A classic example of this is…
- A classic example of this would be…
- To illustrate my point…
- Let me give you an example…
- Just as an example, let me …

Expressing solutions and alternatives

- The solution is to … Then you will …
- The best way to … is …
- To …, you really have to …. 
- There are many choices. You can … You can ……
- Alternatively, …
- Instead, …
- The alternative is…

Interrupting

Polite interruption

- Sorry, but…
- May I say something?
- May I add something? 
- May I ask a question?
- I’d like to say something about that

Holding the floor

- Hold on
- Hold on a second 
- Yes, I was about to mention that.
- Well, I was about to come to th.t
- Sorry, I haven’t finished yet
- … I haven’t made my point yet
- … I’m about to make my point
- … I’m almost done
- … If you could just give me a second
- … If you let me finish, I’ll tell you!
- Please let me finish
- Could you wait until I’m done?
- I’m talking here!
- Would you let me finish?
- Would you hold on a second?

When two people start speaking at the same time

- Please
- Go ahead
- You first
- Please, I can wait
- It wasn’t all that relevant
- It wasn’t important
- Never mind.

Specific cases

- In that case
- In that respect
- If you are talking about…, then...
- As far as that goes…
- On that point…
Exceptions

- There are exceptions, of course...
- One should mention, or course...
- An exception to that is...
- This does include...
- Except of course...
- One exception is...
- Another exception is...

Getting back to the point

- Anyway
- In any case,...
- To return to...
- Returning back to...
- To get back to the point...
- Let’s get back to the point...
- Where was I?
- What were we talking about?

Generalizations

- Generally,...
- In general, ...
- As a rule,...
- Usually,
- Typically,
- By and large,
- On average,
- Generally speaking,
- Speaking in general terms,...

Conclusions

- To make a long story short,...
- So in short,...
- So you see...
- So, finally,...
- So,...
- All in all,...
- In the end,...
- To conclude,...
- To sum up,...
- To summarize,...
- Summing up,...
- To put it simply,...
- To put it in a few words, ...
- In a nutshell,...
- In brief,...
- To be brief,...
Expressions for Discussion and Debate

Soliciting feedback

Making sure that you have the listener’s attention.

- Right?
- You know?
- (you) know what I mean?
- You understand?
- Got me?
- Got it?

Making sure that the listener is following your explanation or logical argument.

- (are) You following?
- Are you following me?
- Are you with me?
- Okay so far?
- Do you understand so far?
- Have you got it?
- (It) Makes sense, right?

Reminding the listener of something you said earlier.

- Remember?
- Remember when I said...

Providing feedback

Keeping the conversation

- Right
- Okay
- Yeah
- I know what you mean.
- I know.
- I see...
- Of course
- That’s normal
- True

Keeping the conversation by asking the speaker to provide more information.

- Yes?
- And?
- Well?
- So?

Keeping the conversation by showing surprise.

- Really?
- Is that right?
- I didn’t know that!
- Wow!
- Are you sure?
- How do you know?
- How do you know that?
- Who told you that?
- No way!
- No!
- (are) you serious?
- For real?
- How’s that possible?

Explanations

- Let’s see...
- Ok!
- Let me put it this way
- Let me put it another way.
- Let me see if I can explain it for you
- Here’s the thing.
- Here is what I mean.
- This is what I want to say.
- I’ll try to explain.
- Let me try again.
- Here’s what you need to know/remember