

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 ... and ...?*
- *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?*

Delaying Strategies

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

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

Asking someone information

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

Presenting arguments

Presenting the most important point

- *The main thing is...*
- *The most important thing is...*
- *Primarily*
- *Most importantly,*

Presenting a number of arguments

- *First of all, ...*
- *Firstly, ...*
- *Well, firstly ...*
- *To begin with, ...*
- *I'd start by ...*
- *For a start, ...*
- *There're two points here. Firstly, ... Secondly, ...*
- *There are two problems here.... Moreover*
- *You also have to consider*

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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 ...*

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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.*
- *Hmmm, 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, ...*

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?*

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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...*

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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, ...*

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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?*

- *Then...*
- *And then?*
- *Such as...?*
- *Mh hm*
- *Uh-huh*

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*