

EXPRESSIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Asking someone for their opinion about a topic

Yes/No Questions

Do you believe in ...?
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 ...?
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, ...

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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 that
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