

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 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,...*

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?*

- § *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*