

Phrases for conversations, debates and discussions

Asking someone their opinion on 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

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

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...

Phrases for conversations, debates and discussions

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 ...

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!

Phrases for conversations, debates and discussions

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, ...

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 ...?

Phrases for conversations, debates and discussions

Expressing Cause and effect

Cause

- The reason why... is ...
- The reason why ... is that ...
- Due to ...,
- ... Because...
- Because of (+noun)
- 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?

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...

Phrases for conversations, debates and discussions

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.
- 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?

Generalisation

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

Phrases for conversations, debates and discussions

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 summarise,...
- Summing up, ...
- To put it simply,...
- To put it in a few words, ...
- In a nutshell,...
- In brief, ...
- To be brief,...

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