



# DISCUSSION

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# Discussion skills

- Discussion is part of public speaking skills. Discussion can involve two to a larger group of interlocutors. In discussion, people are expected to actively participate by expressing, and clarifying their opinion, agreeing or disagreeing with other's opinion and sometimes compromising with different opinions to come to an agreement. This shows that having a discussion requires some skills on the part of both speaker and listener.
- In formal public speaking, discussion is often chaired or moderated to ensure the smooth flow of discussion and the balance of amount of talk among speakers.



# Skills to learn today

- Expressing opinion
- Agreeing and disagreeing

Let's look at some useful language expressions to express opinion as well as agreeing and disagreeing with an opinion.

# Expressing opinions:

## Asking for an Opinion

What's your opinion of . . . ?

1. ▷ view.

What's your 'position on . . . ?

What do you think of . . . ?

I'd like to hear your views on . . .

## Asking for a Reaction

Could I ask for your reaction to . . . ?

*I was wondering where you 'stood on this question?*

Where 'exactly do you 'stand on this issue?

I wonder if you'd like to comment, Mrs Lang?

1. Here "what is your point of view?"

2. Can show impatience.

## Giving Strong Opinions

I 'firmly believe that . . .

I'm absolutely convinced that . . .

It's my belief that . . .

There's no doubt in my mind that . . .

It's 'quite 'clear that . . .

I'm 'certain that . . .

*It's my 'sincere opinion that*

1. Strongly.

▷ sincerely.

2. Here completely.

3. ▷ evident.

4. ▷ sure.

5. Suggests that you have thought a lot about the subject.

|                                                                                                                             | Stating an opinion                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Formal</b><br><br><br><br><br><br><br> | You know what I think... I think that_____ |
|                                                                                                                             | Wouldn't you say that_____?                |
|                                                                                                                             | Don't you agree that_____?                 |
|                                                                                                                             | I'd just like to say that_____             |
|                                                                                                                             | I'd like to point out that_____            |
|                                                                                                                             | In my opinion_____                         |
|                                                                                                                             | I think that_____                          |
|                                                                                                                             | I feel that_____                           |
| <b>informal</b>                                                                                                             | I believe that_____                        |



## Giving Neutral Opinions

I <sup>2</sup>think that . . .

In <sup>1</sup>my <sup>3</sup>opinion, . . .

It's <sup>1</sup>my <sup>3</sup>opinion that . . .

As <sup>1</sup>I see it, . . .

As far as <sup>1</sup>I'm concerned . . .

<sup>4</sup>From <sup>1</sup>my point of view . . .

1. In all these phrases *1/my/our* is usually stressed.
2. ▷ believe — more formal.  
▷ feel — less formal.
3. ▷ view.
4. Note the preposition: **from** *my point of view*, but *in my view*.

## Giving Tentative Opinions

It <sup>1</sup>seems to me that . . .

I <sup>2</sup>would say that . . .

As far as I'm able to <sup>3</sup>judge . . .

I think it <sup>2</sup>would be fair to say that . . .

1. ▷ would seem — more formal.
2. Using *would* gives more flexibility in case you need to change your view later. It is diplomatic and avoids offending the listener(s) (See page 10).
3. Here form an opinion.

|                                                                               | Requesting to repeat or explain                |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Formal</b><br><br>↓<br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><b>informal</b> | I don't understand what you mean               |
|                                                                               | Would you explain that, please?                |
|                                                                               | I'm sorry, but I didn't understand your point. |
|                                                                               | Could you give an example?                     |
|                                                                               | What do you mean by_____?                      |



# Agreement



## ■ Strong

I 'completely agree.  
I agree entirely with your point of view.  
I'm of exactly the same opinion.  
I'm in 'total 'agreement.

## ■ Partial

I agree in principle, but ...  
I agree with you on the whole,  
but it could be said that ...

## ■ Neutral

I agree.  
I think we are in agreement on that.  
I think you're right.  
I think we 'can accept your position on that.

## ■ Strong disagreement

I 'totally disagree with you.  
I don't agree at all.  
You're completely mistaken.  
I disagree entirely.  
Under no circumstances could I agree to tha  
What you are saying is just not 'feasible.



# Disagreement

- Strong

I <sup>1</sup>totally disagree with you.  
I <sup>2</sup>don't agree at all.  
You're completely mistaken.  
I disagree entirely.  
I <sup>3</sup>Under no circumstances could I agree to that.  
What you are saying is just not <sup>4</sup>feasible.

- To soften strong disagreement

<sup>1</sup>Frankly, . . .  
<sup>1</sup>To be quite frank, . . .  
To put it <sup>2</sup>bluntly, . . .  
<sup>3</sup>With respect, . . .

- Softening neutral disagreement

I'm afraid . . .  
I'm sorry, . . .  
With respect, . . .

- Neutral

I don't <sup>1</sup>completely agree with you on that.  
I really can't agree with you on that.  
I can't say that I share your view.  
<sup>2</sup>We'll have to agree to differ.  
I'm not <sup>1</sup>totally convinced by your argument.  
I can't accept your point of view.  
I can't help feeling that . . .  
I feel I must disagree.  
I really must take <sup>3</sup>issue with you here.



- Partial (tactful) disagreement

I agree up to a point, but . . .

To a certain extent I agree with you, but . . .

You have a point there, but . . .

I 'take your point, Mr Hoffman, but have you  
considered . . .?

I can see your point of view, but surely . . .

I have some sympathy with your <sup>2</sup>position, but . . .

# Relevant language functions:



- - expressing agreement with a statement
- - expressing disagreement with a statement
- - inquiring about agreement and disagreement
- - requesting someone to do/say something
- - expression ignorance of a word or expression
- - paraphrasing
- - repeating what one has said
- - asking if you have been understood
- - spelling out a word or expression
- - supplying a word or expression

→ Excuse me, what is the English word for ....?

→ Excuse me, how do you say ..... in English?