

Getting the Hang of Group Discussions

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APPENDIX A: Useful Phrases for Group Discussion

For . . .

Initiating: *Okay, let's get started; the topic for discussion is . . . Who would like to start?
Does anyone have something they'd like to say on the topic?
Any thoughts on this?*

Wrapping it up: *Okay, are we ready to move on? Anyone have one last thing they want to say?*

Disagreeing: *I'm not sure I agree.
I'm sorry, I don't see it that way.
I see it a little differently.*

Interrupting: *Sorry, do you mind if I say something here?
I'm sorry to interrupt, but . . .
Do you mind if I jump in here?*

Agreeing: *I think you're absolutely right about that.
That's a good point. I agree.*

Asking for more information: *Would you mind saying a bit more about that?
Sorry, I didn't catch that, is it possible to repeat the last point . . .*

Getting everyone involved: *(Name), we haven't heard from you.
Do you have any thoughts on this?
Would you like to add something?
Does anyone else want to add anything?*

Dealing with interruptions when you want to finish speaking:
*Please, let me just finish what I was saying
Please let him/her finish what he/she was saying.*

Adding more information: *Before we move on to the next point, may I add . . . ?
Excuse me (name), may I add to that . . . ?*

Misunderstandings: *I don't think you understood me correctly
I'm sorry. I guess I'm not being very clear
Let me try to explain what I mean more clearly.*

Impolite phrases for interrupting

DON'T use these phrases:

- *Wait a minute!*
- *What?!?*
- *Hold on!*
- *Be quiet for a minute.*
- *It's my turn to talk . . .*
- *What are you talking about?*
- *But, I already said that!*
- *You're not listening to me . . . I said . . .*

APPENDIX B: Discussion Roles/Tasks

(to be cut into strips and handed out)

Start the discussion and end the discussion.

Politely interrupt the discussion and/or politely disagree with someone.

Express agreement with someone.

Help get everyone involved.

Ask someone for more information about someone's idea.

APPENDIX C: Try It Out!

- In groups, you will have a series of discussions using the topics listed below.
- Your instructor will give each person in the group a slip of paper telling them what their role or task is. Look at the role/task assigned to you and look at the phrases that will help you fulfill your role.
- One person will be assigned to start the discussion. This person will choose a topic from the list and announce it.
- Others should keep the discussion going. Listen. Share ideas. Respond to one another's ideas. Support your ideas. Interrupt politely as needed. At some point during the discussion, fulfill the role assigned to you.
- If someone in the group interrupts, the person speaking at that time should politely deal with the interruption.
- Use any of the other phrases as needed.
- The same person who started the discussion will also end the discussion appropriately.
- Pass your slip of paper clockwise to the person next to you. You now have a new role. A new person will pick a topic and start the discussion. Continue until everyone has had the opportunity to try all of the different roles.

Sample Topics for Discussion

- Do smart phones and tablets help or hinder communication?
- Do attractive people have advantages others don't? Why or why not?
- Which is more important, talent or hard work?
- Is complete honesty or kindness more important? Why?
- What is the most pressing world problem today? Why do you think so?
- What is the best way to adjust to living in a new culture?
- What roles should males and females have in the family? Who should do what?
- Were people kinder in earlier generations?
- How do you feel about zoos?