

Activity Type

Reading, matching writing, listening and speaking activity

Focus

Discussion phrases

Aim

To learn and practice discussion phrases and their functions.

Preparation

Make a copy of the two-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

35 minutes

Introduction

In this discussion phrases worksheet, students learn and practice phrases that are commonly used in discussions and their functions.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the two-page worksheet.

First, students reorder words to make phrases used in discussions.

Exercise A - Answer key

1. Just to build on Tracy's point...
2. Why don't we move on and come back to this if necessary?
3. Why don't we start by...
4. Does anyone agree or disagree with that point?
5. It seems to me that...
6. Just to be clear, do you mean it is...?
7. This is because...
8. I see what you mean but...

Next, students match each phrase to another phrase that has the same function.

Exercise B - Answer key

- | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| a. 7 | b. 2 | c. 8 | d. 3 |
| e. 6 | f. 1 | g. 5 | h. 4 |

After that, students match the phrases from Exercises A and B to their function. The students then write a new phrase for each function.

Exercise C - Answer key

- | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. 3, d | 2. 8, c | 3. 4, h | 4. 2, b |
| 5. 5, g | 6. 7, a | 7. 1, f | 8. 6, e |

The students then move on to complete gaps in a discussion with phrases from the worksheet.

Exercise C - Suggested answers

1. the question we are discussing today is
2. I think one of the key points
3. I see what you mean
4. This is because

Finally, brainstorm discussion topics with the class. Then, put students into small groups and assign each group with a topic. Students then practice the phrases by having a group discussion on their topic.

A. Reorder the words to make phrases used in discussions.

1. build on / Tracy's point / just to

.....

2. come back to this / if necessary / move on and / why don't we

.....

3. we start / why don't / by

.....

4. agree or disagree / does anyone / with that point

.....

5. it / to / that / seems / me

.....

6. be clear / mean it is / just to / do you

.....

7. because / is / this

.....

8. what you / I see / mean but

.....

B. Match each phrase above with a phrase below that shares the same function.

a. The evidence for this is... ..

b. Could we move on to considering...?

c. I am not sure I agree because... ..

d. The question up for discussion is... ..

e. Am I right in understanding that...?

f. I'd like to add to that by saying... ..

g. I think one of the key points is... ..

h. What do you think...?



C. Match the phrases from Exercises A and B to their function below by writing their number and letter. Then, write a new phrase below each function.

- 1. Getting started:
.....
- 2. Disagreeing:
.....
- 3. Bringing others in to the discussion:
.....
- 4. Moving on to a new point:
.....
- 5. Making a contribution:
.....
- 6. Expanding a point:
.....
- 7. Supporting another's point:
.....
- 8. Asking for clarification:
.....

D. Complete the gaps in the discussion with appropriate discussion phrases.

Cherry: OK everyone! So (1), "Is a universal basic income a viable option?" Why don't we start by going around the table and getting some thoughts? Would anyone like to start?

Hans: OK let me start. (2) about UBI is that it reduces poverty and income inequality. The evidence for this is that a UBI trial back in 2012 in Namibia halved poverty rates within just a year.

Emma: (3) Hans, but I am not sure governments can afford it. (4) a study showed that a UBI in the United States would cost \$3.81 trillion per year which is almost 80% of all tax revenue.

E. In groups, practice using the phrases by discussing a topic given by your teacher.