

Expressing Opinions

Learning Outcomes:

- In the professional world, opinions can be dangerous. Holding a controversial opinion can damage your reputation; stating an opinion that contradicts your boss's can leave you vulnerable; voicing your opinion at the wrong time can make you appear foolish. The old adage attributed to Abraham Lincoln goes, "It's better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt," and in the realm of business, that seems to be the truth.
- However, holding your opinions back can actually be more damaging than speaking them. In fact, opinions are what fuel momentum--all ideas, plans, and decisions begin and end with opinions, and if you consistently refrain from voicing yours, you'll be doing both your employer and your career a disservice.
- Breaking past that intimidation barrier can be tough, especially if you're used to holding onto your opinions, but it's vital that you practice regularly speaking your mind in your career. Be mindful of the appropriate times and places to speak your opinion, but never be afraid to let your true feelings be known.

Introduction

When we are negotiating, expressing opinions or simply chatting with a friend, we often have to agree or disagree with the other person. Also, we don't want to make a fight out of this, so we must know how to show empathy with different opinions and also disagree without sounding aggressive. It is very difficult to convince when they think you are attacking. We need to express our opinions and, at the same time, show that we are listening, understanding and appreciating the other opinions. If they feel comfortable, they will be more open to our ideas, opinions or suggestions. Here are different ways of doing so in a conversation.

✓ It is always a good idea to justify your opinions. Don't just say 'I agree' or 'I disagree' but say 'I agree because I think that ... (explain your reason)', etc.

Use these lists as a reference, don't try to memorize them. Practise dialogues with another student and try to use expressions from here, you will slowly get familiar with them.

1. Expressing Personal Point of View

I bet that

I dare say that ...

I gather that ...

In my opinion...

In my experience...

As far as I am concerned, ...

As far as I know...

As far as I understand...

As for me / As to me, ...

As I see it...

From my perspective

From my point of view, ...

I (strongly) believe that...

I am not sure/certain, but...

I am of the opinion that ...

I am sure / I am certain that ...

I'm absolutely convinced...

I am sure/certain/convinced that...

I am under the impression that ...

I believe that...

I guess that ...

I have no doubt that ...

I have the feeling that ...

I hold the opinion/ view that ...

I might be wrong but...

I really feel that...

I suppose

I tend to think that...

I think /consider /find /feel /believe /suppose /presume /assume that ...

I would say that ...

I'd like to point out that...

I'd suggest that

If you ask me...

In my experience...

It goes without saying that ...

It's obvious to me...

It is my impression that ...

It seems to me that ...

My impression is that ...

My own feeling on the subject is that ...

My view / opinion / belief / impression / conviction is that ...

Personally speaking...

Personally, I think...

The point is that...

To my mind, ...

What I mean is...

I don't know about other people, but I can say...

Three Ways to Give a Personal Opinion

1. Expressing a Strong Opinion

I bet that

I dare say that ...

I'm absolutely convinced that...

I'm sure that...

I strongly believe that...

I have no doubt that...

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

2. Expressing a Neutral Opinion

I am not sure/certain, but...

I think...

I feel that...

In my opinion...

In my view...

I tend to think that...

I suppose that...

It seems to me that...

I must admit that I'm not sure...

2. Expressing a Subjective Opinion

In my experience...

I don't know about other people, but I can say...

What I've found is...

As I see it...

If you ask me...

In my experience...

To my mind, ...

As far as I am concerned, ...

As far as I know...

As far as I understand...

As for me / As to me, ...

3. Expressing General Point of View

We use these words and phrases to express a general point of view:

Some people say that...

Many/Most people think/believe that...

It is often said that...

It is generally accepted that...
 Everybody knows that...
 According to scientists...
 It is thought that...
 Some people say that...
 It is considered...

It is generally accepted that...
 The research seems to suggest...
 Apparently...
 I've heard that...
 ...

SUMMARY

When we are negotiating, expressing opinions or simply chatting with a friend, we often have to agree or disagree with the other person. Also, we don't want to make a fight out of this, so we must know how to show empathy with different opinions and also disagree without sounding aggressive. It is very difficult to convince when they think you are attacking. We need to express our opinions and, at the same time, show that we are listening, understanding and appreciating the other opinions. If they feel comfortable, they will be more open to our ideas, opinions or suggestions. Here are different ways of doing so in a conversation.

It is always a good idea to justify your opinions. Don't just say 'I agree' or 'I disagree', but say 'I agree because I think that ... (explain your reason)', etc.

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EXPRESSING OPINION

Personal:

In my opinion...
 In my experience...
 Speaking for myself...
 Personally, I think...
 I (strongly) believe that...
 I really feel that...
 If you ask me...

General:

Some people say that...
 Many/Most people think/believe that...
 Everybody knows that...
 According to scientists...
 The thing is that...
 The point is that...

CHECKING IF THEY UNDERSTAND

Do you know what I mean?

Does it make sense?

I don't know if I'm explaining it correctly.

EXPLAINING THINGS BETTER

What I mean is...

What I'm trying to say is that...

ASKING FOR AN OPINION

What's your idea (on...)?

What do you think about it?

Do you agree with that?

Is that what you think?

Have you got an opinion about it?

How do you feel about it?

Do you have anything to say about it?

And you? What do you think?

Is that right?

Practice Exercise

If you have somebody to practise, you can use this list of topics:

1. University should be free
2. We should build more nuclear power stations
3. Dogs are better pets than cats

4. Television is increasing violence in our society
5. Alcohol should be illegal
6. Spring is much nicer than autumn
7. A weekend in the mountains is better than on the beach
8. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day
9. Females are better students than males
10. When learning English, listening is more difficult than speaking
11. Summer is the best season of the year
12. Secondary school students should wear uniform
13. People should be older than 20 to have a driving license
14. Everybody should go to university

Practice Conversations

1. Formal

The city council is going to build a new parking site under the park over there.

Oh no, why are they going to do that? It's terrible.

You think so? I think it's a very good idea, actually.

On the contrary, I think it's a disaster.

A disaster? I think we need more parking sites.

Well, I agree with that, but not under the park.

Why not? It's the best place.

Do you think so? I totally disagree. Why the park?

Well, you need a big open space for that.

I see your point, but don't you think trees are more important than cars?

Of course I agree, but we all have cars, and we need a place to park them.

Yes, that's right. But they can do it near the station.

Oh no, that's too far away, we need a parking site in this area.

Well, that's true, but maybe walking a bit wouldn't hurt anyone.

A bit? The station is at least 10 minutes away. Just imagine, on a rainy day...

You could be right, but I still think trees are more important than cars.

You've got a point there, but maybe they can plant trees near the station instead.

Oh, that sounds very good, but we're talking about very old and big trees.

Yes, but we have to choose, don't we? We can't have everything.

Yeah, I suppose you're right, but still, I think it's a very bad idea.

2. Informal

Man, did you hear that? They're gonna build a parking site under the park over there.

Are you serious? But that's crazy, why do they want to do that?

Why? Well, because there are too many cars in the area. We need more parking space.

Nonsense! What we need is more trees. Cars should disappear.

You can't be serious.

Yes, I am. They pollute and are too noisy and...

Come on, man, that's all B.S. Do you think you could live without a car today?