

Debating in Business

Advanced



“I love argument, I love debate. I don't expect anyone just to sit there and agree with me, that's not their job.”

Margaret Thatcher

“It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it.”

Joseph Joubert

“Get this economic plan passed. Later on we can all debate it.”

President George Bush

“I would be most grateful , and I mean it...if you were to interrupt and ask questions or make statements or say you're dead wrong.”

Peter Drucker

DEVELOPING AN ARGUMENT

Activity 1

● In pairs, read the following sentences. Do you agree or disagree with each?

1. American movies are very popular in Japan. **In fact**, Japanese culture is being lost because of them.
2. Japanese food is very healthy, **For instance**, natto has been proven to improve brain power.
3. Manga should be read by children only. **What's more**, adult manga should not be sold at all.
4. Driving in Japan is difficult due to crowded conditions. **However**, families need a car to get around.
5. **On the whole**, Japanese politics is working very well and makes Japan a better country.
6. Japan is the perfect country for tourists to visit. **At least** the historic and coastal cities are.
7. Tokyo is getting more and more crowded. **Therefore**, the capital should be moved somewhere else.
8. Japan is a safe place to live as well as being exciting and full of opportunity. **In a word**, it's heaven.

Activity 2

● Match the underlined linking words or phrases from the sentences above in the left column with a similar word from the right column.



- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. ___ in fact | a) for instance |
| 2. ___ as a result | b) in a word |
| 3. ___ for example | c) what's more |
| 4. ___ however | d) actually |
| 5. ___ furthermore | e) therefore |
| 6. ___ in summary | f) on the other hand |

Activity 3

● Now put the words from Activity 2 into the appropriate boxes (two words or phrases go in each box).

EXPLAINING BY GIVING AN EXAMPLE	GIVING REAL, TRUE OR SURPRISING INFO	MAKING A CONTRAST
ADDING ANOTHER, DIFFERENT IDEA	GIVING A RESULT	SUMMARIZING

Activity 4

● **Complete the sentences using some of the words from Activity 2.**

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

“Western food is better than Japanese food.”

“Japanese food is better than western food. Almost all Japanese food tastes great. _____¹, it’s healthy. Japanese typically have a healthy diet. _____², Okinawans live the longest in the world. _____³, more and more people are eating fast food. _____⁴, new health problems have been appearing recently. _____⁵

Japanese food is better than western food because it tastes great and is very healthy.”

Activity 5

● **Select one of the following statements, or one of your own ideas and prepare an argument to deliver to a partner or the class. Use the linking words from Activity 2 to create a logical argument.**

BUSINESS	PERSONAL
<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology has made the world a better place to live. • The most important aspect of a job is the money a person earns. • Businesses should hire employees for their entire lives. • It is better to be a member of a group than to be the leader of a group. 	<p>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television has destroyed communication among friends and family. • Parents are the best teachers. • The best way to travel is in a group led by a tour guide. • Only people who earn a lot of money are successful.

Note

● **To make a strong argument don’t use the words “could”, “might/may”, etc. Use words that imply that you are sure of what you are arguing, such as “is”, “will”, “must”, etc.**

✗ Parents could be the best teachers.

✓ Parents are the best teachers.

DISAGREEING

Activity 6

● Read the following ways of disagreeing.

DIRECT	INDIRECT
I can't agree to that, because ...	I suppose we could ..., but...
I can't support that, because ...	While I agree with what ... you say ...
I don't think that's right, because ...	You may be right, but on the other hand ...
I don't agree.	I understand what you're saying, but ...
Really? I don't think so.	I'm not sure about that.

Activity 7

● With a partner, practice paraphrasing the following sentences and offer an opposite opinion (refer to what the speaker said that you disagree with). Use some of the phrases above to help you.

Example:

Nakamura: I think we should upgrade our software to the latest Office version.

Bob: Nakamura-san, **you said that** we should upgrade to the latest Office version. (**reference**) **I can't agree to that because** that would mean retraining our staff. (**disagreement**)

- Most of our clients smoke, so we're thinking about allowing smoking in all meeting rooms.
- The company would like you to take English lessons from 7:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. everyday.
- To reduce costs, the company is going to stop heating the building in winter.
- As I see it, meetings are a waste of time so we should stop having them.
- Living in the countryside is more convenient than in the city.
- I think everyone should work at least two hours extra everyday without getting paid.

Activity 8

● Have a two minute mini-debate with a partner on any of the following topics, or create your own topic. Switch for and against roles often.

Soccer is more exciting than baseball.

Living in the city is better than in the country

Knives & forks are easier to use than chopsticks

Chinese will be more useful than English in 10 years.

Smoking should be totally banned.

An open plan office is better than one with cubicles.

your idea ...

STRUCTURING AN ARGUMENT

Activity 9

- **Supporting your opinion with logical reasons is very important. Read this paragraph about ABC Travel and note the language used to emphasize reasons and help make a logical, easy-to-follow argument .**

Well, in this country we are facing two main problems regarding tourism: **Firstly**, our product line is based on just one main theme, historic Japan, which is limited to Kyoto and other cities in the Kansai region. **Secondly**, tourists who come here find it expensive and don't spend much money. **It is true that**, we have benefited from our existing packages, **but on the other hand** ABC Travel can achieve higher sales if we have more products to offer. **We must** re-evaluate our product line, **otherwise** we will continue to miss sales that we might be able to get if we have more to offer.

As regards to the income from our visitors, the only solution is to offer more options to our packages. **Unless we** give our customers more options **we won't** improve sales **What's more** we may even lose customers.

As far as our options **are concerned**, we need to include the Tokyo and Okinawa regions. **To start with**, we could market Tokyo as the "excitement tour" **and then** an 'Okinawan paradise' package could also be included for those who want something more relaxing.

On the whole, we have excellent potential, **but** it will take a thorough review of our existing products and some new products to increase sales. For example, a Tokyo and Okinawa product should be introduced.

Activity 10

- **Put the underlined phrases from the above paragraph into the correct areas below. Some phrases may be split into two parts.**

Listing more than one point

1. Firstly, Secondly, _____

2. _____

Giving both sides of an argument

1. _____

2. _____

Saying what will happen in certain circumstances

1. _____

2. _____

Introducing another point

1. _____

2. _____

USING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE

Activity 11

- Using the phrases from Activity 10, consider a change that you would like to make in your company. e.g. Something practical, such as a staff cafeteria, bigger work areas or a free coffee machine. Or, something not so practical, such as staff pool tables, company cars for everyone or a three-day weekend. Develop an argument and tell it to a partner.

Activity 12

- Intonation is very important when trying to be persuasive. Say these pairs of sentences strongly and directly. Say the sentences on the right in a more indirect and polite way: speak slower, pause and begin each sentence in a higher voice.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Can I comment on that? | 1. Could I just comment on that? |
| 2. That's very expensive. | 2. That's a little expensive, isn't it? |
| 3. We have a problem. | 3. It seems we have a slight problem. |
| 4. Can we meet for lunch? | 4. Perhaps we could meet for lunch? |
| 5. The design will take too long. | 5. Won't the design take a bit too long? |
| 6. Call the customer, don't email him. | 6. Wouldn't it be better to call than email? |
| 7. That isn't right. | 7. That may not be quite right. |

Tips

Diplomatic Language

- 1. **Would, could** and **may** are less direct:
This is a problem ⇒ this **could / would / may** be a problem.
- 2. Understate by adding "**a little**", "**a bit**":
You are behind schedule ⇒ You are **a little / a bit** behind schedule.
- 3. Turn a statement into a question:
That is too expensive. ⇒ **Isn't** that too expensive?
or use a tag question: That's too expensive, **isn't it?**

Activity 13

- Rewrite these sentences to make them sound more polite.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. That desk is too big for my office. | _____ |
| 2. Our project is behind schedule. | _____ |
| 3. Your quote for materials is too high. | _____ |
| 4. It will be difficult to send the order today. | _____ |
| 5. There's a problem with our network. | _____ |
| 6. Go over last year's sales figures again. | _____ |

PRACTICE USING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE

Activity 14

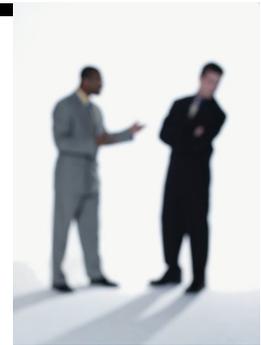
Do a mini role-play of each of the following situations using the language from Activity 12.

	STUDENT A	STUDENT B
SIMULATION 1	You work for an investment brokerage firm. Your fees have gone up 5% overall. Phone one of your biggest clients.	You are a private investor. You haven't been doing so well lately. Your investment broker calls you to give you some information.
SIMULATION 2	You are a receiver in XYZ Co.. You ordered one computer from Quicky Computers and received one. Expect a call from Quicky.	You are the shipper for Quicky Computers. You think you may have shipped ten computers to the wrong company,XYZ. Phone them and ask.
SIMULATION 3	You need to take Friday off to attend a family event. However, you have a meeting then. Ask a co-worker to attend instead of you.	You've got a busy schedule on Friday and you are thinking about leaving early to catch a baseball game on television.
SIMULATION 4	You are the boss. Tell your subordinate that they have to prepare some reports by tomorrow, for an upcoming audit.	Your boss asks you to prepare some reports by tomorrow. It will take longer than that and you are already busy.
SIMULATION 5	You are having problems with your computer. You can't access the files on the shared computer or Internet. Call your IT person.	You, the IT Specialist, receive a call from a colleague. He / She is the only one experiencing trouble. You have more urgent matters.

PRACTICE DEBATING

Activity 15

- **With a partner or in small groups, debate some of the following topics, or choose your own. Each student spend a few minutes preparing your argument. Then, in turns, deliver your argument to your partner(s) and debate the topic.**



Everyday Topics

1. In some countries, teenagers have jobs while they are still students. Do you think this is a good idea? Support your opinion by using specific reasons and details.
2. It has been said, "Not everything that is learned is contained in books." Compare and contrast knowledge gained from experience with knowledge gained from books. In your opinion, which source is more important? Why?
3. Some people believe that the Earth is being harmed (damaged) by human activity. Others feel that human activity makes the Earth a better place to live. What is your opinion? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? With the help of technology, students nowadays can learn more information and learn it more quickly. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Modern technology is creating a single world culture. Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinion.
6. Your own topic.

Business Topics

1. A company has announced that it wishes to build a large factory near your community. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this new influence on your community. Do you support or oppose the factory? Explain your position.
2. Some people prefer to work for themselves or own a business. Others prefer to work for an employer. Would you rather be self-employed, work for someone else, or own a business? Use specific reasons to explain your choice.
3. Some people prefer to work for a large company. Others prefer to work for a small company. Which would you prefer? Use specific reasons and details to support your choice.
4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Businesses should do anything they can to make a profit. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.
5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? A person should never make an important decision alone. Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
6. Your own topic.

PRACTICE DEBATING: DEBATE OPTION ONE

Final Debate

- Think of a situation that you have encountered or may encounter in the future. Use the following guidelines to help you create a debate situation that you will role-play with a partner or a group.

When complete, explain the situation to your partner(s) and then role-play it.

Who will be / was involved:

Party A: _____

Party B: _____

Other parties: _____

Where will it be / was it?

What will be / was the desired outcome?

What will be / were the issue(s)?

PRACTICE DEBATING: DEBATE OPTION TWO

Problems in Japan in the 21st Century

Step 1

- What are some problems facing Japan in the 21st century? In pairs , brainstorm your ideas and put them in the box below.

Step 2

- Choose one problem from the box above and write it here: (Example: The rising temperatures in summer).

Step 3

- Write a clear solution to the problem here (your proposition): (Example: We believe that more parks and green space should be built in Tokyo).

Step 4

- List your supporting arguments here: (Example: Lining the streets with trees will help cool the downtown area and lessen humidity, too).

Step 5

10 minutes for each pair

- In turns, each pair present your problem and proposal to the class. Class members ask questions and disagree. Pairs, defend your proposals.

ANSWER KEY

Activity 2:

1d, 2e, 3a, 4f, 5c, 6b

Activity 3:

Explaining by giving an example: 3a; Giving real...: 1d; Making a contrast: 4f; addin another...: 5c; Giving a result: 2e; Summarizing: 6b

Activity 4:

Japanese food tastes great. In addition/furthermore¹, it's healthy. Japanese typically have a healthy diet. In fact/Actually², Okinawans live the longest in the world. However/On the other hand³, more and more people are eating fast food. Therefore/As a result⁴, new health problems have been appearing recently. In summary⁵ Japanese food is very healthy and good for society.

Activity 9:

Listing more than one point: 1) Firstly... Secondly... 2) To start with... And then...

Giving both sides of an argument: 1) It is true that...2) On the other hand...

Saying what will happen in certain circumstances: 1) We must...otherwise... 2) Unless we...we won't... 3) On the whole...but...

Introducing another point: 1) As regards to... 2) What's more... 3) As far as...are concerned...

Activity 13:

1. That desk **may be a little / a bit** too big for my office.
2. **It seems** our project is (**a bit / a little**) behind schedule.
3. Your quote for materials is **a bit / a little** high, **isn't it?**
4. **Won't it be** difficult to send the order today?
5. There seems to be a slight problem with our network.
6. **Could you just** go over last years sales figures again?