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| Communication Skills: Debating |

*A. What is an argument? What is a debate?*

*B. Language for Debating*

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| **Useful Expressions**  Expressing Opinion  I think that…  I believe that…  It seems to me that…  It’s my feeling that…  In my opinion,…  If you ask me,…  From my point of view, I…  I feel that…  I’m convinced/sure/positive  I think/believe/feel  I tend to think  I’m inclined to feel. | Agreeing  I agree and…  Yes…  Of course, and…  Absolutely…  You’re right…  You are absolutely right  I agree with you.  I think so, too.  That’s a good point.  That’s right. / You’re right.  I feel the same way.  That’s exactly how I feel.  That’s just what I was thinking. |
| Sequence Markers  First...second...third...fourth...  Paraphrasing  If I hear what you are saying…  If I understand you correctly…  So what you are saying is that…  So basically…  What you mean is…  Let me repeat what you said…  Summarizing  To summarize…  Let me restate the main ideas…  Here are the key points… | Disagreeing  I don’t agree with that statement…  I disagree.  Have you thought about… instead.  Or…  And if you consider…  I agree with you, but I also think that…  I se what you mean, but…  You have a point, but…  That may be true, but…  Maybe, but don’t you think that…?  I’m afraid I disagree with you.  I’m sorry, but I can’t agree with you. |

*C. The Structure of An Argument: The following is the structure of an argument in English.*

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| Position (opinion) |
| Supporting Points |
| Paraphrase or Summary of Position (opinion) |

*D. A Quick Debate: Have a quick debate with your partner, following the procedure given below.*

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|  | **Procedure** |
| 1. | Write a statement with two clear viewpoints on the board, for example, “Dogs are better pets than cats.” |
| 2. | Have the class get into pairs. |
| 3. | Assign “agree” to one person in each pair, and “disagree” to the other. Indicate that they will have five (or up to ten, depending on the class and topic) minutes to convince their partner that their viewpoint is correct. Stress that they must defend the viewpoint they have been assigned. They should use the language of debating they have learned. |
| 4. | At the end of the time limit, survey the pairs to see who managed to convince their partner to change their viewpoint. Solicit points that the “agree” people used to defend their position. Then solicit points that the “disagree” people used. |

*E. A Formal Debate: In a formal debate, members of two debating teams take turns presenting the team’s argument. Following the structure below, work in teams to debate the topic assigned by the instructor.*

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| **Time** | **Team A** | **Team B** | **Team** |
| 1 | Debater #1: Introduces the team’s position | Debater #1: Introduces the team’s position | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #2: Provides supporting point | Debater #2: Provides supporting point | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #3: Provides supporting point | Debater #3: Provides supporting point | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #4: Provides supporting point | Debater #4: Provides supporting point | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #5: Rebuts | Debater #5: Rebuts | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #6: Rebuts | Debater #6: Rebuts | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #7: Rebuts | Debater #7: Rebuts | 1 |
| 1 | Debater #8: Offers concluding remarks | Debater #8: Offers concluding remarks | 1 |