**ENGLISH COMMON PHRASES**

1. Supporting opinion
2. Contrasting
3. Discussion Techniques
4. Clarifying
5. Giving Instructions
6. Checking for Understanding
7. Analyzing Problems
8. Exploring Options
9. Classifying
10. Elaborating
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**Supporting opinion**

**Giving your opinion**

I think that . . .

I don't think that . . .

In my opinion . . .

**Asking for support or details**

Why do you think that?

Could you elaborate?

Could you give (me) an example?

Can you illustrate that?

What evidence do you have?

Could you explain it in more detail?

Could you provide some details?

**Supporting your opinions**

Let me illustrate,

For example,

For instance,

To give you an example,

Let me give you an example,

To elaborate,

First, (second), etc.

(These phrases can be followed by details, examples, elaboration, or a summary of your main points.)

### Contrasting

On the other hand,

However,

Yes, but . . .

You may be right, but . . .

I may be wrong, but . . .

Correct me if I'm wrong, but . . .

|  |
| --- |
| On the contrary, |
| (Be careful with this one. It appears to be a direct negation of what was just stated, but can actually be an emphatic reaffirmation of one's own opinion. For example: *It's not hot. On the contrary, it's cold.??Not hot?* and *?cold?*mean the same thing.) |

### Discussion Techniques

## Opening a discussion

To begin with,

We need to discuss . . .

determine  
find out

Let's start by (V ing)

We'll start by (V ing)

The problem here is . . .

issue  
question

The important thing (here) is . . .

The main thing we need to discuss is . . .

Let's look at . . .

It looks like . . .

It appears that . . .

## Asking for input

What do you think?

How about you?

How do you feel about that?

Any ideas on that?

## Responding

That sounds like a) good idea.

Sounds good.

The problem with that is . . .

That raises the issue of . . .

brings up

### Clarifying

## Clarifying your own ideas

In other words,

What I mean is . . .

What I'm trying to say is . . .

What I wanted to say was . . .

To clarify,

## Asking for Clarification

What do you mean (by that)?

What are you trying to say?

What was that again?

Could you clarify that?

## Clarifying another's ideas

You mean . . .

What you mean is . . .

What you're saying is . . .

(I think) what she means is . . .

What he's trying to say is . . .

If I understand you, (you're saying that . . . )

If I'm hearing you correctly,

So, you think (that) . . .

So, your idea is . . .

### Giving Instructions

**Asking for Instructions**

How do you (do this)?

How do I . . . ?

What is the best way to . . . ?

How do I go about it?

What do you suggest?

How do you suggest I proceed?

What is the first step?

**Giving Instructions**

First, (you) . . .

Then, (you) . . .

Next, (you) . . .

Lastly, (you) . . .

**Sequencing**

**Starting out**

Before you begin, (you should . . .)

The first thing you do is . . . .

I would start by . . .

The best place to begin is . . .

To begin with,

**Continuing**

After that,

The next step is to . . .

The next thing you do is . . .

Once you've done that, then . . .

When you finish that, then . . .

**Finishing**

The last step is . . .

The last thing you do is . . .

In the end,

When you've finished,

When you've completed all the steps,

### Checking for Understanding

(Do you) know what I mean?

Do you know what I'm saying?

Do you understand?

Are you following me?

Are you with me (so far)?

Have you got it?

Any questions?

Got it?

## Showing Understanding

I see.

I understand.

I get it./I got it.

Gotcha. (Informal)

## Expressing Lack of Understanding

I don't get it.

(I'm sorry.) I don't understand.

What do you mean?

I'm not following you.

I don't quite follow you.

I'm not sure I get what you mean.

What was that again?

### Analyzing Problems

## Focusing on the main problem/issue

What is the main problem?

What is the real issue (here)?

(I think) the major problem is . . .

Our primary concern is . . .

The crux of the matter is . . .

(As I see it), the most important thing is . . .

The main problem we need to solve is . . .

We really need to take care of . . .

It all comes down to this:

## Asking for input

What should we do about it?

What needs to be done?

What do you think we should do?

What are we going to do about it?

Do you have any suggestions?

Any ideas?

## Making Recommendations

I recommend that . . .

I suggest that . . .

I would like to propose that . . .

Why don't we . . .

### Exploring Options

## Asking for input

What do you think (about . . . )?

How do you feel (about . . . )?

Any ideas?

What are the alternatives?

## Exploring Options

Let's look at Option 1.

What (do you think) about Plan B?

How about the third alternative?

Let's consider Bob's proposal.

## Moving on

Let's move on to Option 2.

What about Plan C?

Let's look at the fourth choice.

How about Mary's idea?

Should we move on to the next point?

Before we move on, we need to consider . .

### Classifying

There are five kinds of . . .

There are two types of . . .

There are three categories of . . .

We can divide (this) into three parts:

1)

2)

3)

This can be broken down into four sections.  
They are:

A)

B)

C)

D)

### Elaborating

## Asking for Elaboration

Could you elaborate (on that)?

Could you tell me a little more about it?

Could you give (me) some details?

Could you fill me in on that?

Could you expound on that?

What else can you tell us (about that)?

Is there anything else you can tell us?

Is there more to it?

## Elaborating

To elaborate,

To give you more information,

Let me explain.

Let me elaborate.

Let me tell you a little more (about it).

Let me give you some details.

What's more,

### Interrupting

## Interrupting politely

Excuse me,

Pardon me,

Sorry to interrupt,

May I interrupt (for a minute)?

Can I add something here?

I don't mean to intrude, but . . .

Could I inject something here?

Do you mind if I jump in here?

## Getting back to the topic

Anyway,

Now, where was I?

Where were we?

What were you saying?

You were saying . . .

To get back to . . .

### Simple Presentations

## Introduction

(Good morning, afternoon, evening)

I'm happy to be here.

I'm glad to have this opportunity to . . .

Today, I'd like to talk (to you) about . . .

My topic today is . . .

The focus of my remarks is . . .

I'd like to share some thoughts on (topic)

## Main points

Let me start by . . .

First, let me tell you about . . .

I've divided my topic into (three) parts: (They are . . .)

## Giving examples

For instance,

Let me illustrate,

To illustrate,

## Conclusion

In conclusion,

To conclude,

To summarize,

To sum up,

### Conceding to Make a Point

## Conceding to Make a Point

That may be true, but . . .

I may be wrong, but . . .

You might be right, but . . .

You have a good point, but . . .

You could say that, but . . .

Correct me if I'm wrong, but . . .

I don't mean to be rude, but . . .

I hate to bring this up, but . . .

I don't mean to be negative, but . . .

This may sound strange, but . . .

### Conversation Starters

**General greetings and inquiries**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | How's it going?  (This means "How are you?" ***not*** "Where are you going?")  How's everything?  How's life? |  |  |   **Asking about present activities**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | What's up?  What's happening?  (What are you doing now?) |  |  |   **Asking and telling about recent events**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | What's new?  (What interesting has happened since I last saw you?)  Guess what?  (I want to tell you something. Ask me about it.)  (The appropriate response to this is "What?") |  |  | | A: Guess what?  B: What?  A: I just got a new job. |  |  |   B: Congratulations! |

**Bringing up a serious topic**

Can I talk to you for a minute?

Do you have a minute?

Got a minute?