

P6	Interaction Discussion	Team Worksheet
----	---------------------------	----------------

### Project Task

Prepare and moderate a discussion about one/more aspect(s) of your seminar's topic.

### Why are discussion skills essential?

- Participating in discussions is an essential element of active learning and a skill required in many jobs.
- Group discussions offer an opportunity for extended speaking (and listening!) practice by all of the contributors.
- Developing group discussion skills is useful as professionals regularly discuss matters with colleagues and business partners. Discussions may vary from very informal chats to serious talks.

### How to make a discussion succeed?

To participate effectively in professional situations, discussion leader and participants must be suitably prepared for discussions. If English is not your first language, study and practise typical discussion phrases.

You can use the following resource material for preparing discussions:

- Emmerson, P. Business English Handbook. Advanced. Macmillan. Oxford. 2007.pp.68-71
- [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1756\\_how\\_to\\_discuss/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/radio/specials/1756_how_to_discuss/)
- <http://quizlet.com/819532/useful-phrases-for-discussion-english-german-flash-cards/>
- <http://www.lernkaertchen.ch/paket528-Useful-phrases-for-discussion-and-composition>
- <http://englischlehrer.de/language/discussion.php>
- [http://giselagoldstein.eu/english/phrases\\_discussions.pdf](http://giselagoldstein.eu/english/phrases_discussions.pdf)
- [http://www.julius-echter-gymnasium.de/jegcms/media/jeg/docs/fachschaften/englisch/redemittel\\_discussion\\_phrases.pdf](http://www.julius-echter-gymnasium.de/jegcms/media/jeg/docs/fachschaften/englisch/redemittel_discussion_phrases.pdf)

### Tips for discussion leaders (DL)

Participants need to understand that you as the DL/s are truly interested in having them talk meaningfully to one another. This requires establishing the right environment for healthy discussion.

Consider the following:

1. Participants have to believe that the DL is really interested in the participants' responses.
2. Encourage the participants to speak to one another, not through you.
3. Before you ask a question or initiate a talk, understand what kind of discussion you expect. Is it e.g.:
  - an argumentative discussion
  - an inquiry discussion
  - a brainstorming discussion
4. Make certain that your questions are open-ended enough to foster true discussion.
5. Inject energy and passion into your discussion set up.
6. Allow participants to reflect on your question(s) before you finally start the discussion.
7. When needed, re-clarify the topic under discussion to keep the participants focused.
8. When a participant says something, offer feedback—don't let the comment "flop".
9. Praise participant comments—"Thank you, great insight," "That's a unique way to look at it," "Good aspect," etc. This will encourage more participation.
10. At various points in the discussion, tie together statements made by different participants by rephrasing, summarizing, synthesizing, referencing, etc.

## Language Practice Project 'English for Special Purposes Seminar' (ESPS)

### Tips for participants:

Your body language conveys your interest in a discussion and your willingness to participate. Show your interest by sitting upright, and making eye contact with other speakers. In this way, you will feel more involved and ready to contribute.

You can do this in a range of ways:

- Agree with what someone has said.
- Ask the speaker to clarify what they mean (perhaps by asking for an example).
- Ask a specific question related to what the speaker has said.
- Give an example for the point under discussion.
- Disagree with what someone has said and give reasons for your differing opinion.
- Try to relate what has been said to other points discussed earlier.

As with any spoken interaction, it is important to respect the opinions of others and be aware of the etiquette of spoken interaction (for example, turn-taking).

Compiled and adapted from the following resources:

<http://cms.unimelb.edu.au/student-services/asu/speaking/participation>. accessed 31 Aug 2011

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/print/472> accessed 31 Aug

<http://www.workshopexercises.com/DiscussionTips.htm> accessed 31 Aug

### Exercise:

- **Brainstorm ideas**

1. What makes a good discussion?
2. Which types of discussions do you know?
3. How should DLs and participants prepare for a discussion?

- **Compile a list of recommendations in pairs/groups.**

4. How should DLs manage a discussion?
5. How should participants contribute to a discussion?
6. Which phrases should DLs use in a discussion?
7. Which phrases should participants use in a discussion?