

Coffee Shop Discussions

The Foundations of “Good” Discussion

英語で発信力を鍛えるディスカッション
— 日常トピックスで考えを伝えてみよう! —



Alan Bossaer



NAN'UN-DO

To the Students

Welcome to *Coffee Shop Discussions*! This book was written for any student (High Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced) who wants to express their opinions in English but who lacks confidence in their vocabulary or language skills and/or would like to learn, how to have a good discussion.

One of the first things you will discover about a Discussion class is that it is different from a Conversation class. Much more vocabulary is needed, critical thinking skills are vital, and there is more structure. In this book you will learn the skills of discussion, new vocabulary, and how to use your knowledge of the topic and your critical thinking skills in order to present your opinions clearly and logically.

Coffee Shop Discussions has many examples of *new language* for you to use, but it also allows you to use the English you have already learned. The discussion topics in this book are topics that most of you will be familiar with which will make it easier for you to form an opinion. In fact, most of you will already have opinions on the topics. This book has been designed to give you the tools necessary to express those opinions.

At first, having a discussion in English will feel strange (and challenging) but after a few units, you will understand the structure of a discussion and become more and more comfortable and confident. Many students have trouble discussing a topic (logically) for 1 minute in English. By the time you finish this course, many of you will be able to carry on a discussion for 8 to 10 minutes.

Happy discussing!

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Alan Bossaer

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Unit 1

Welcome to Coffee Shop Discussions!

A Let's Get Started!

Read the two dialogs below. Which dialog do you think is a **discussion**? Which one is just a **conversation**? Why?

Dialog _____ is a discussion because it has _____.



Dialog 1

A: **So**, what did you do yesterday?
 B: **Oh**, I just stayed at home and watched TV. How about you?
 A: Me? **Ah**, I went shopping with my mom.
 B: What did you buy?
 A: **Umm**, I bought a hat and some shoes.
 B: Nice.

Dialog 2

A: **So**, what do you think about the new school uniforms?
 B: Me? **Umm**, I like them. They're so comfortable.
 A: Really? I disagree. I think they're uncomfortable. I mean, they don't feel good.
 B: **Hmm**, yeah, maybe, but ...

B The First Step in a Discussion - Giving an Opinion

We now know that discussions often have opinions. In the cartoon bubbles below, underline the opinions. How many opinions are there?

There are _____ opinion(s).



Giving an opinion is the first step in a discussion.

People can agree and/or disagree with an **opinion** because it is (not) a fact.

Fact: Tokyo is a big city.
 [You can't disagree.]
 Opinion: Tokyo is the best city in Japan.
 (Someone might disagree)

Pairwork **Groupwork**

With a partner or in a small group, practice giving your opinion on the topics below. If you agree with your partner or classmates, express agreement. If you disagree, show disagreement.

1. Getting married at 20
2. Online shopping
3. A game center on campus
4. K-Pop vs J-Pop
5. Horror movies and comedies
6. Smartphones for junior high school students

Stating (giving) opinions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I think getting married at 20 is okay / not a good idea." • "I really think fantasy movies are better than dramas." • "I think tea is better than coffee." 	
Expressing agreement	Expressing disagreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I agree." • "That's true." • "You're right." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I disagree." • "Umm, I don't agree." • "Umm, I think ___ is/are better."

C The Second Step in a Discussion - Pros and Cons (support)

Giving an opinion is an important step in a discussion. It usually comes at the beginning of the discussion or near the beginning. However, we also need support or reasons to help make our opinion stronger. The support part of the discussion is where we give good and bad points. We often call these good points "**Pros or Benefits**" and we call the bad points "**Cons or Drawbacks**." Having many good points (pros) and bad points (cons) makes our opinion stronger.

What are two other ways to say **pros**? What are two other ways to say **cons**? Write them below.

Pros = _____



Cons = _____

Pairwork **Groupwork**

With a partner or in a small group, think of two or three pros and cons for a game center on campus.



A game center on campus

Pros (good points)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Cons (bad points)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

D The Third Step in a Discussion - Building Vocabulary

Opinions and support are key elements of every good discussion. However, it is important to build up a strong vocabulary as well. Without vocabulary, it is difficult to have a meaningful discussion.



Example #1 - Weak vocabulary and weak or no support

- A: I think a game center on campus is not good.
- B: Really? Why?
- A: Umm, it's bad.
- B: I think so, too.

This discussion has an opinion but it doesn't have support. The word **bad** is very simple and is just repeating the opinion in different words. We don't know why a game center is not good (i.e. bad).

Example #2 - Stronger vocabulary with stronger support

A: I think a game center on campus is a bad idea.
 B: Really? Why?
 A: Umm, it's **distracting**. I mean, students can't focus on their studies.
 B: Hmm, but a game center could be **refreshing**. I mean, it could relieve their stress.

This discussion has opinions and stronger support. The word **distracting** is a stronger word than **bad**. Student A also gives a simple meaning of the word **distracting** (i.e. "can't focus on their studies") which makes the support clear. Student B disagrees and also gives strong support with the word **refreshing** and the meaning (i.e. "could relieve their stress").

E The Fourth Step in a Discussion - Agreeing and/or Disagreeing 

In Part B, we learned that there are different ways to agree and disagree with someone's opinion. Listen to the four dialogs below. Fill in the missing agreement/disagreement words.

Dialog# 1

Ayako: I love our new school uniform. It's so stylish. What do you think?
 Hidemi: Really? _____. I think the design is too simple.

Dialog# 2

Ayako: Social networking sites are risky. I mean, they can be dangerous.
 Hidemi: _____. Your private information could be stolen.

Dialog# 3

Kai: I think an iPad is more convenient than a laptop. I mean, it's easier to carry.
 Noah: _____ a laptop has more storage.

Dialog# 4

Kai: An iPad is lighter than a laptop.
 Noah: _____, but many laptops are light, too. And they have more memory than an iPad.

F One More Important Point about This Textbook - Q & A

In this book, students ask and answer many questions related to the topic. By asking questions, students get a deeper understanding of a topic. It's also a good way to learn new vocabulary and grammar you can use in your discussions.

Pairwork Groupwork

1. Here are some questions that are related to the topic of a game center on campus. In pairs or in small groups, ask and answer the questions below.

- Q1: What do you think is the main purpose of going to university?
- Q2: What's a good way to make new friends on campus?
- Q3: What's a good way for university students to relieve stress?
- Q4: Are there places on campus where students can relax?
- Q5: Do you think students can stay focused on their studies if there is a game center on campus?



2. Here is a list of **Pros** and **Cons** for Game Center on Campus. The pros and cons are connected to the questions above. Decide which sentences are pros and which are cons? Write the letter in the correct column. Fill in any blanks using the questions and/or your own ideas. Is your idea a pro or a con?

Game Center on Campus - Pros and Cons

Pros (Benefits)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Cons (Drawbacks)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

- A. A game center on campus is a good place to make _____.
- B. A game center is too noisy.
- C. A game center is fun so it's good for relieving stress.
- D. I think university students should focus on studying not on playing games.
- E. The main purpose of university _____.
- F. School is difficult and students need a place to _____.
- G. _____.