

Yeah, but ... No, but ... The *real* language of opinions

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Three things:

- speaking activities to activate opinions
- traditional ELT opinions language
- the *real* language of opinions



What kinds of 'opinions' speaking tasks are there?

Work in groups. You are going to hold a debate about which is better, box sets and on-demand viewing or more traditional weekly TV shows.

Traditional weekly TV shows are better.

Here are some ideas for your argument. Add some ideas of your own.

- You look forward to the show more.
- You don't become too obsessed with the show.
- There is no danger of binge-watching, which can ...
be bad for your health or eyesight.
make your brain too active and cause sleeplessness.
waste time.

Box sets and on-demand viewing are better.

Here are some ideas for your argument. Add some ideas of your own.

- You can watch episodes when you want to and when is convenient for you.
- You will never miss an episode.
- It is easier to find a time to watch an episode or several episodes with other people, which can ...
be a fun social event.
bring people closer together because of shared interest.
help people to get to know each other.

Debating language

Building an argument

- *First, ...*
- *Also, ...*
- *Furthermore, ...*
- *On top of that, ...*

Agreeing and disagreeing

- *I (don't) agree.*
- *Yes, but ...*
- *I see what you mean, but ...*
- *You have a point, but ...*

SPEAK Work in pairs. Which sentences in Exercise B do you agree or disagree with? Tell your partner.

Work in groups. Compare your ideas. In your group, decide on the best animal picture.





What do you think is happening?



SPEAK Work in pairs. Discuss your opinion of the two adverts. Which do you think is the more creative, clever or original? Why?

Identifying opinion and attitudes of speakers

Listen for expressions that people use to express their opinions and attitude and to agree or disagree.

Expressing opinion or attitude

I (don't) think ...

In my opinion, ...

... to be honest.

To agree

I agree.

Yes, ... / Yes, and ... / And yes, ... / Yes, but ...

To disagree

I don't agree. / I disagree.

Actually, ...

I'm not (so) sure ...

The language of opinions

Elementary

I (really) think that ...
I believe (that) ...
I'm sure that ...
In my opinion / My opinion is ...

Pre-intermediate

I agree with ...
I feel that ...
I guess/imagine ...
I have no doubt that / I'm certain that ...
I strongly believe that ...
I've never really thought about this before, but ...
My personal opinion is that / Personally, my opinion is that ...
To be honest / In my honest opinion, ...

Intermediate

As far as I know, ...
I agree with the opinion of ...
I could be wrong, but ...
I'd definitely say that ...
I'd guess/imagine that ...
I'd say that ...
I'm absolutely certain that ...
I'm fairly confident that ...
I'm no expert (on this), but ...
I'm positive that ...
I'm pretty sure that ...
It seems to me that ...
It's a complicated/difficult issue, but ...
My (point of) view (on this) is ...
Obviously, ...
Some people may disagree with me, but ...
This is just my opinion, but ...
Without a doubt, ...
You probably won't agree, but ...

Upper-intermediate

After much thought, ...
After weighing up both sides of the argument, ...
Although I can see both points/the opposite point of view, ...
As I see it, ...
Correct me if I'm wrong, but ...
For me/ From my point of view, ...
Frankly, ...
I am not very familiar with this topic, but ...
I do believe/ feel/think ...
I have come to the conclusion that ...
I might change my mind later, but ...
I reckon/suppose ...
I tend to think that ...
I'm not sure I'm the right person to ask, but ...
I have very limited experience of this, but ...
I'm pretty confident that ...
I've always thought that ...
If you ask me, ...
I'm (absolutely) convinced that ...
In my humble opinion / IMHO, ...
It could be said that ...
It seems clear to me that ...
It would seem to me that ...
My initial reaction is ...
Not everyone will/would agree with me, but ...
Personally speaking / Speaking for myself, ...
The way I see it (is) ...
To be (perfectly) frank, ...
To the best of my knowledge, ...
What I think is ...
You could say ...

Advanced

After giving this matter some (serious) thought, ...
As far as I'm concerned, ...
As the old saying goes, ...
Having given this question due consideration, ...
I am of the opinion that ...
I can't help thinking that ...
I know this is a minority view, but / I'm in the minority in thinking that ...
I tend towards the opinion that ...
I think it's fair/reasonable to say ...
I'll tell you what I think, ...
I'm entirely/quite convinced that ...
I've come to the conclusion that ...
If I must come up with an opinion / If you (really) want my opinion, ...
In my limited experience, ...
It could/might well be that ...
Know what I think? ...
My opinion was best expressed by ... when s/he said/wrote ...
My view/position on this (issue) (is clear and) is that ...
Off the top of my head, ...
Plainly, ...
Quite frankly, ...
There is a part of me that says ...
This may well be controversial, but ...
To my mind / To my way of thinking, ...
To summarise my (rather complex) views on the matter, ...
What I always say is ...
With some reservations, ...
Without a shred/shadow of doubt, ...
You'd have to be crazy not to agree that / Any idiot can see that ...

Elementary

I (really) think that ...

I believe (that) ...

I'm sure that ...

In my opinion / My opinion is ...

Pre-intermediate

I agree with ...

I feel that ...

I guess/imagine ...

I have no doubt that / I'm certain that ...

I strongly believe that ...

I've never really thought about this before, but ...

...

My personal opinion is that / Personally, my opinion is that ...

To be honest / In my honest opinion, ...

Intermediate

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To summarise my (rather complex) views on the matter, ...

What I always say is ...

With some reservations, ...

Without a shred/shadow of doubt, ...

You'd have to be crazy not to agree that / Any idiot can see that ...

In my opinion, ... 20

In my view, ...
As far as I'm concerned, ... } 10
To me, .. }

If you ask me, ... 4

As I see it, ... 1

What's your _____ of ...?

What do you _____ about/of ...?

How do you _____ about ...?

In my _____, ...

As I _____ it, ...

As _____ as I'm _____, ...

In my view, ...

If you _____ me, ...

It seems to me,

I (completely/totally) agree (entirely).

I _____ agree more.

I see what you _____, but ...

I agree up to a _____, but ...

I (completely/totally) disagree.

What's your opinion of ...?

What do you think about/of ...?

How do you feel about ...?

In my opinion, ...

As I see it, ...

As far as I'm concerned, ...

In my view, ...

If you ask me, ...

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What do you think about/of ...?

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In my opinion, ...

As I see it, ...

As far as I'm concerned, ...

In my view, ...

If you ask me, ...

It seems to me,

I (completely/totally) agree
(entirely).

I couldn't agree more.

I see what you mean, but ...

I agree up to a point, but ...

I (completely/totally) disagree.



Boris Johnson	Joe Biden	The anti-vax movement
The British	Brexit	Donald Trump
The handling of the pandemic	North Korea	The Climate Crisis
Being a student	Studying (in) English	Oxford



In my opinion, ...	As far as I'm concerned, ...	If you ask me, ...
I see what you mean, but ...	I agree up to a point, but ...	In my view, ...
I don't disagree, but ...	I agree entirely.	I completely disagree.
As I see it, ...	I couldn't agree more.	To me, ...



PRONUNCIATION

Agreeing and disagreeing

A Listen to and read a conversation about agreeing and disagreeing. Then work in groups and practice the conversation copying the word stress and intonation.

Tim: Personally, I think football's pretty boring.

Sarah: It seems to me that football these days is just all about the money.

Tim: In my view, it's just some guys running around a field kicking a ball.

Beth: I completely agree.

Sarah: Exactly.

Andy: I totally disagree.

Sarah: Oh, please!

Complete the conversation with the words in the box.

disagree see seems strong true view

A: It ¹ _____ to me that things are getting more and more expensive all the time.

B: Yeah, that's ² _____. Each time I go to the supermarket, things have gone up in price.

A: In my ³ _____, footballers' pay is disgusting!

B: I ⁴ _____ what you mean. It's a great pleasure to millions of people.

A: I'm sorry, but I totally ⁵ _____ think, Chris?

C: I don't have a ⁶ _____ honest. I'm not at all interested.

SPEAKING

A Complete the sentences with your own opinions.

- 1 I think _____ is the greatest band of all time.
- 2 In my view, _____ food is the best food in the world.
- 3 I think the safest way to travel is _____.
- 4 It seems to me that most celebrities are _____.
- 5 Personally, I think money makes people _____.

B Work in pairs. Student A – read one of your sentences in Exercise A. Student B – agree or disagree. Take turns.

Complete the TV discussion with the correct phrases to express opinions.

Mario: Let's ask our panel of experts. You first, Tim, what do you think?

Tim: Well, in my ¹ _____, they should be banned.

Asif: If you ² _____ me, we shouldn't ban them.

Ana: As far as I'm ³ _____, a ban is the answer.

Sue: I think we should do more research. Don't you ⁴ _____?

ELF question: How long before 'I am agree with you' becomes generally accepted in academic discussions?

[#ammarking](#) [#eap](#) [#academicenglish?](#)

The *Real* language of opinions

The most common way of agreeing:

Yeah, and ...

The most common way of disagreeing:

Yeah, but ...

Nice. Wintry

Yeah, and not that cold.

But those that learn your preferences are pretty cool

Yeah, but a bit scary, too

I don't understand anything
in French from this notebook



Well use it or lose it

exactly

It's all a bit rubbish))

Indeed!

Yes, but it's easy when you
know.

True

All work and no play makes
Jack a dull boy

absolutely

A: MAN! THAT SHOW WAS INSANE!
B: HELLA!

Respond to the statements using the words in the box.

absolutely *indeed* *exactly* *true*

- 1 What a great film, hey.
- 2 It was a bit confusing, I thought.
- 3 Not the best meal I've ever had.
- 4 ...

Agreement by ...

- exemplifying:** A *The exam was tough.* B Yeah, *especially* paper three.
- generalising:** A *He's being a real pain.* B He *usually* is.
- repeating the intensifier:** A *It'll be very expensive, no?* B Yeah, *very*.
- replying with an intensifier:** A *It'll be expensive, no?* B Yeah, *very*.
- synonym:** A *It was great, wasn't it?* B *Brilliant*, I thought.
- repeating the auxiliary:** A *It won't work.* B No, it *won't*.
- run-on/continuation:** A *This wine's great!* B And it's *not expensive*.
- echoing:** A *It's much too late.* B Yeah, *much too late*.
- additional point:** A *We need to think again.* B Yeah, and *soon*.

Disagreement by ...

stating an exception:

A *The exam was tough.* B Well, **except** paper three.

mitgating:

A *He's being a real pain.* B **Mmm, that's not like him.**

negating the intensifier:

A *It'll be very expensive, no?* B No, **not very.**

negative intensifier

A *It'll be expensive, no?* B No, **not very.**

antonym:

A *It was great, wasn't it?* B **Terrible**, I thought.

query with the auxiliary:

A *It won't work.* B **Won't it?**

run-on/continuation:

A *This wine's great!* B *But it's a bit pricey.*

echoing as query:

A *It's much too late.* B **Too late?**

additional point:

A *We need to think again.* B Yeah, **but not just yet.**

Agreement by ...

exemplifying:

A The exam was tough.
B Yeah, _____ paper three.

A The weather's been awful recently.
B Yeah, _____ the last couple of days.

generalising:

A The lecture was really good.
B It _____ is.

A It's been raining non-stop for days.
B Yeah, it _____ does this time of year.

synonym:

A Well, that was rubbish.
B _____, wasn't it?

A That was a useful presentation, wasn't it?
B Absolutely. Really _____!

A We'd better hurry, then, if we want to get there on time.
B Yeah, we need to _____.

A The problem is, he worries all the time.
B Yeah, he's always _____.

Agreement by ...

exemplifying:

- A The exam was tough.
B Yeah, **especially** paper three.
- A The weather's been awful recently.
B Yeah, **especially** the last couple of days.

generalising:

- A The lecture was really good.
B It **usually** is.
- A It's been raining non-stop for days.
B Yeah, it **generally** does this time of year.

synonym:

- A Well, that was rubbish.
B **Awful**, wasn't it?
- A That was a useful presentation, wasn't it?
B Absolutely. Really **helpful**.
- A We'd better hurry, then, if we want to get there on time.
B Yeah, we need to **get a move on**.
- A The problem is, he worries all the time.
B Yeah, he's always **fretting about something**.

Practise agreeing with the statements by exemplifying. Use the cues given.

Statement

cue

response

Great film, that!

the ending

Yeah, especially the ending.

I love Led Zep.

early stuff

.....

Lovely meal!

that yummy dessert

.....

Social media, aaargh!

so-called experts

.....

Practise agreeing with the statements by generalising. Use the cues given.

Statement

cue

response

Overton's are late paying again.

always

They always are.

The can't reach a final decision.

never

.....

It's all down to agreeing a price.

usually

.....

It's not just a marketing issue.

rarely

.....

The new Ferrari is overpriced.

all

.....

Germany would be better than the UK.

anywhere

.....

Practise disagreeing with the statements using *Yeah, but ...* and *No, but ...* and the cues given.

Statement

cue

response

It's time we went.

not just yet

Yeah, but not just yet.

We could email them.

won't reply

.....

It's not ideal.

could be worse

.....

I don't wanna go.

gotta

.....

Respond to the statement using the prompts.

Great conference, so far!

- Yeah, especially ...
- It usually ...
- Yeah, and ...
- Yeah, but ...
- ..., I think.

Thank you!

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Tim doesn't disagree that it's time for the US to get out of Afghanistan - but the way it's being done has him questioning the strategy.

It's not that I disagree. But ..

It's not that I don't agree, but ...

I don't necessarily disagree. But ...

I'm not unsympathetic to it ... I'm not saying not anyone can't come.

Jeremy Corbyn, 2017

