

Sentence Stems For Meaningful Dialogue In The Classroom

When working in a team, you may sometimes agree or disagree with each other. You must **always** be respectful to your team members as well as other teams. The following sentence stems can be used in a variety of situations to respectfully agree, disagree, switch topics, stay on track, resolve conflict, or push the conversation forward.

To Clarify Could you give me your thesis (main argument) in one sentence? Is it your position that...? To be clear, what you are saying is...? Could you please clarify...? I'm not sure what you meant when you said X, can you help me better understand? Could you explain that again? I have a question about...?	To Build Upon To build on what Y was saying... I agree with X because... Yes, and furthermore... Totally, and also... Adding to what Z said... Can I add on to that...? Another example of that is... I'd like to expand on that by... I'd like to respond to what X said...
To Agree I agree with X because... Y's point about X was important because... The evidence for what Z is saying is clear... X and I are coming from the same perspective. Despite disagreeing with Y, I completely agree with X that... My thoughts are similar to Z That's an interesting idea. I completely agree.	To Disagree I agree with what you said about X, but I'm not sure I agree with Y. The evidence I have suggests something different. I guess we see things differently.... I don't agree with you because... I'm going to push back a little on that... I have a different perspective on that... That is interesting, but here is how I see it. I've got to respectfully disagree with you...
To Paraphrase Others So what you're saying is...? Would it be fair to say that you believe...? Put another way, you are saying...? What I hear you saying is...? In other words, you think...?	To Summarize Your Thoughts Overall, what I am trying to say is... My main point is... My main argument is... What I am trying to say is... More than anything else, I believe...
To Express an Opinion, Interpretation, or Fact I believe that... It seems to me that... In my opinion, ... On page, X it says Y so... I'd like to point out... The fact is... I interpret that differently, in my opinion... According to {statistic, fact, expert opinion, etc}...	To Hold the Floor As I was saying earlier... Wait a second, what I am saying is... I don't think you understand what I'm saying... If I could finish my thought... Hold on, what I am trying to say is... Let me explain this in a different way. Let me try again. Actually, what I am trying to say is...
To Shift the Conversation I'd like to move on to a different topic/question/issue Could we move on to... We're running out of time, so I think we should... Let's shift to the topic of... Let's address some of the items in our compost pile... That's really interesting, but can we talk about...?	To Stay on Track Wait, before we move on can I add one last thing? We should explore that more, but can we finish this conversation first...? Let's put a pin in that and come back to it later, but for now... Let me write that down and we will come back to it...

To Nurture the Conversation I would love to hear more about... We haven't heard from you in a while, what are your thoughts on...? Let's do a quick whip to hear everybody's perspective Let's take a brief pause and then hear from people who haven't spoken in a while If you have spoken a lot, perhaps you could take a step back for a little while? I really liked what you had to say about... Wow, I never saw it that way.	To Dig Deeper Could you explain what you meant by...? Could I dig a bit deeper into your thoughts about...? What did you mean when you said...? How do you know? Aren't you assuming that...? Why do you think that? Is that an exception or the norm? Could you give an example to backup your point? But what is at the root of that problem? Is that really true? How do you know?
To Mediate or Resolve Conflict It makes me feel X when you say Y. That's a bit offensive, could you say that differently next time? That's culturally insensitive. Wait a second, what I hear him/her saying is Z, wouldn't you agree? Let's pause and think about where we/you agree? Perhaps, we'll have to agree to disagree. Let's try not to take this personally... You're being insensitive.	What other ones can you think of?

Sentence Starters for Teamwork Roles

Facilitators We're getting a bit off track. Can I bring our conversation back to...? Hold off on that, let's finish what we are doing first. That's a really good point, can you elaborate on that? Good point, but let's make sure we write that down before moving on. Could you write that down, please? Can you add that to our parking lot/compost? I want to move the conversation back to... We haven't heard from everybody yet... X, would you like to add anything? Perhaps we should check in with the evaluator...	Notetaker/Quality Control Let me write that down. Give me a second to write that down. What exactly did you say? Help me rephrase that? Help me summarize that? Whoa, wait a second, I've got to write that down. Write that down, it's important and I want to make sure I record it. So what do we all agree on, and where is there disagreement? Did I capture what was said accurately and full? Do we all agree with this?
Spokesperson Excuse me, could you help us with... We are not sure about... Our main takeaways from this dialogue were... While most agreed that X, Y felt differently... Our main confusion with this material/topic/task was... Our main conclusion was... We believe the main argument of this resource was... We are curious to hear from other groups what they thought about...?	Evaluator/Process Analyst We haven't heard from everybody in a while... Can I make a suggestion to the group? I noticed X number of people were very active and Y number of people were not so active today We could have used the parking lot/compost pile more today to avoid going off on too many tangents. The discussion on X topic was cut off, perhaps we should come back to that at some point. I noticed the note taker had a hard time getting all this down...

