

To debate or not to debate?

Aims: To encourage thinking and speaking skills by discussing unusual and sometimes amusing topics.
To practise fluency.

Length of lesson: 60 mins

Level/age: B2 Upper intermediate and above

Language: Language of debate. See handout.

Materials: Language of debate handout
<https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/cambridge-ideas.pdf>
Ideas for topics sheet
Support material for debates sheet

Preparation: Enough small pieces of paper for whole class with 'x' on half.
Photocopy handouts using.

Procedure:

Warmer: T introduces/sts select topic. Sts in pairs discuss what they know about topic. T gets feedback and boards interesting points.

1. T gives out small pieces of folded paper. Half have a cross on. Sts move to different sides of room according to whether they have a cross ('for') or a blank piece of paper ('against').
2. T gives out language of debate handout, or selects relevant parts, and goes through some of the language with the sts. Drill any phrases you think necessary/useful (depending on class level)
3. According to size of class T puts sts into pairs or small groups to brainstorm their ideas for the debate. Set time limit: 10-20 mins depending on level. T monitors and makes suggestions where necessary.
4. Appoint chairperson to open and close debate and keep order. (Or T can do this. If T does this for first debate, sts will know what to do next time)
5. Start debate. T makes notes of language errors to correct as whole class after debate or in following lesson.

For debates with lower level classes, introduce some sort of baton that learners have to hold in order to speak, so that everyone gets a chance to speak without being interrupted (other members of the same team can prompt if necessary). Higher level sts will probably want to interrupt each other and have a more animated debate.

Topics for Debate

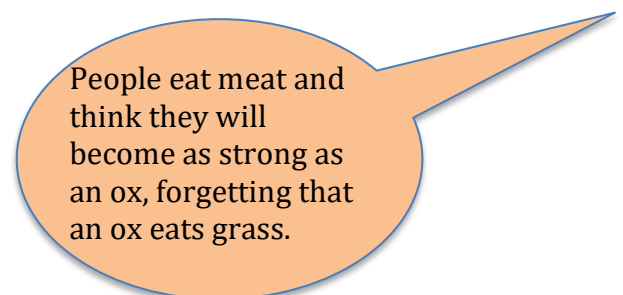
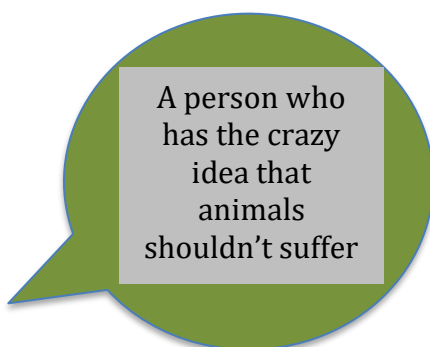
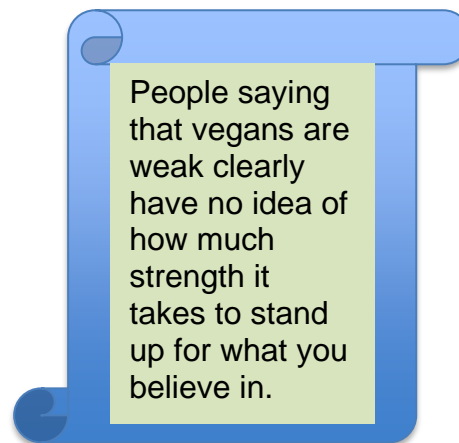
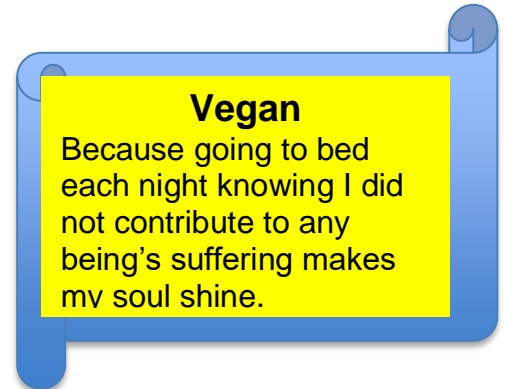
- Should spaghetti be cooked whole or broken in two? .
- All businesses should employ 50% men and 50% women. (Or The Equality of Women)
- There should be a “Robots Rights” equivalent of Human Rights.
- Parents should be able to choose their children’s hair colour.
- Is it more important to be respected or liked?
- Veganism is not a diet.
- Teachers should be able to teach what they want.
- Eat to live or live to eat?
- Women are less complicated than men
- Love means you shouldn’t have to say sorry.
- ‘The pen is mightier than the sword.’ (Bulwer-Lytton)
- Children should be given the right to vote.
- Are bad words always bad?

For more ideas, see also:

<https://owlcation.com/humanities/100-Philosophical-Questions-that-Make-You-Think-and-Discuss>

<https://conversationstartersworld.com/funny-questions-to-ask/>

Veganism is not a diet



Stop being a Vegan
and start enjoying
what you eat.

Are you guilty of any of these when you cook spaghetti?

Under-salting
the pasta
water

Adding oil to
the water

Cooking it
for too
long

Breaking spaghetti
into two



Your pot
is too
small

You're
rinsing
your pasta

Language of Debate

<p>CLARIFICATION & INFORMATION REQUESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you mean...? • What do you mean? • What does that mean? • Could you clarify...? • Could you repeat that? • Could you explain that (in more detail)? • What's the difference between X and Y? 	<p>OPINION & PARTICIPATION REQUESTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about...? • I'd like to know Q's opinion about... • Let's hear what Q has to say about this. • Let's consult other group members before proceeding. 	<p>DISAGREEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm afraid I don't agree because... • I'm sorry, but I have to disagree because... • I see your point, but... • No, I don't think that's true because... • I completely/totally disagree. • I take your point, but...
<p>AGREEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I agree with Q's point because... • That's a good point. • I think Q has the right idea. • I'd like to add something to that. • I completely/totally agree. • I fully support that stance. 	<p>INTERRUPTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excuse me,... • I'm sorry,... • Before you go on,... • I'd like to add something. • I'd like to comment on that. • Can I say something? • May I interrupt for a moment? • I have a question about that, if I may. 	<p>SUPPORTING & EMPHASIZING A POINT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By that, I mean... • What I mean is... • An example of this is... • To be more specific,... • I want to stress/highlight... • I'd like to emphasize... • The crucial/essential/fundamental point is...
<p>REPHRASING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In other words,... • That is to say,... • To put it another way,... • The point I'm making is... • What I'm suggesting is... • What I meant to say... • Let me put it another way. 	<p>CONNECTING IDEAS & SUMMARIZING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q said that..., and I'd like to add... • Returning to the previous topic,... • In light of what was said earlier,... • In other words, you're saying... • If I understand you correctly, you're saying... 	<p>EXPRESSING CERTAINTY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It seems to me... • I imagine... • As far as I know,... • I think/believe... • I'm pretty sure/certain... • I'd like to say/point out... • I'm positive/sure/certain/convinced that...
<p>FOLLOWING UP A QUESTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That's not really what I was asking. My question is about... • Perhaps I didn't make my question clear. In fact what I asked was... • I think you've answered a slightly different question. What I would like to know is... • I understand that but what I actually had in mind was... • Sorry, I'm still not clear about... 	<p>STAYING ON TOPIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think we're getting off topic. • Could we go back to...? • Perhaps we should return to the topic at hand 	<p>REFERRING TO RESEARCH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of Q shows/indicates/reveals that... • Q argues/points out/makes clear that... • In a study of X, Q found that... • Q has drawn attention to the fact that... • According to Q,... • In an article by Q,...