

Sentence starters for moderation, structure, and mutual understanding

2.1 Opening the discussion

- “To begin: What does democracy mean to you personally, in one sentence?”
- “Our guiding question today is ... We will take ... minutes for this.”
- “Before we start: Which rules are particularly important to you?”

2.2 Agreeing and adding points

- „I agree with you because ...”
- “That adds to my point: ...”
- “Another aspect is ...”

2.3 Politely disagreeing

- “I see it differently, namely ...”
- “May I add a different perspective? ...”
- “I notice that ... could also be understood like this ...”

2.4 Asking follow-up questions and clarifying

- “Could you explain that with an example?”
- “Do you mean that ...? Have I understood you correctly?”
- “Which term should we clarify briefly?”

2.5 Bringing in examples and experiences

- “From my experience in ...”
- “I have observed that ...”
- “In my country of origin/at home, it is the case that ...”

2.6 Summarizing and structuring

- “Let me summarise: So far, we have mentioned three points ...”
- “So far we agree on ..., what is still open is ...”
- “Let’s sort the arguments briefly: pro ..., con ...”

2.7 Steering back to the topic

- “I’ll put this point on the parking poster and return to the guiding question ...”
- “Interesting — but for today our focus is ...”
- “What is the link to our initial question ...?”

2.8 Involving others

- “Who has not spoken about this yet and would like to add something?”
- “I would like to hear voices that disagree.”
- “Would anyone like to respond from another subject perspective?”

2.9 De-escalating and staying respectful

- “Let’s take a brief breath and return to the factual level.”
- “I hear strong feelings — what do we need to continue constructively?”
- “We criticise ideas, not people.”

2.10 Expressing uncertainty and embracing a learning culture

- “I am unsure and I would like to ask openly ...”
- “I will correct myself: Earlier I said ..., a better way to put it is ...”
- “I don’t know the source right now — can we look it up?”

2.11 Clarifying sources and facts

- “Which reliable source supports this statement?”
- “Let’s distinguish between opinion, experience, and facts.”
- “Can we compare two sources before we continue the discussion?”

2.12 Closing and transfer

- “What do we take away as our shared result?”
- “Which question remains open, and who will take on the research?”
- “How will we put this into practice in our school?”

2.13 In simple language (for vocational integration/second language learning)

- Start: “Today we talk about democracy. What does it mean to you?”
- Agreement: “I think that is good because ...”
- Disagreement: “I see it differently. My reason is ...”
- Asking: “Please explain it. Do you have an example?”
- Summarizing: “We have three ideas: ...”
- Back to the topic: “That is a different topic. Today we talk about ...”
- Including others: “Would anyone else like to say something?”
- Respect: “We are friendly. No insults.”
- Uncertainty: “I don’t know. Can we check it?”
- Ending: “What do we take with us? What do we do next?”