

Debating - Useful Expressions

1. to order a sequence of arguments

firstly - secondly - finally

to begin/start with - next - lastly

first of all - and also

let me begin by pointing out - and besides

in addition to this

furthermore / moreover

Essentially, the problem is ...

to top it all

basically

besides

above all

what is more

2. to express one's personal opinion

In my opinion / view ...

To my mind ...

It seems to me that ... (> tentative)

I feel / think / believe that ... (> neutral)

I have the feeling / the impression that ...

As I see it, ...

I rather think that ...

I am sure that ...

I am convinced that ... (> strong)

certainly / surely / possibly

3. to state something as a fact

There can be no doubt that ...

It is a fact that ...

Everyone knows that ...

indeed / actually

4. to be evasive (ausweichend)

I'm afraid I can't give you a definitive answer at present.

Sorry to sound evasive, but there is no straightforward answer to that.

I'd need more information to answer your question.

5. to express and qualify one's argument

That is a very important point.

I couldn't agree more.

This can only / not be accepted if / on condition that / in case / unless ...

That seems reasonable.

admittedly / admitting this

6. complete agreement (völlige Zustimmung)

I agree.

I agree completely / entirely.

I think you're quite right.

I think so, too.

I don't think so, either.

That's exactly what I think.

That's just what I was thinking.

Yes, definitively.

That's right.

7. qualified agreement (zurückhaltende Zustimmung)

maybe / perhaps (not)

I see your point.

That seems reasonable.

To a certain degree ...

Yes, up to a point ...

8. to express one's disagreement or doubt

I don't quite agree here.

I cannot accept your view that ...

I cannot share this view.

9. qualified or polite disagreement

That seems obvious.

Do you really think so?

I wouldn't say so.

I don't know.

I'm not quite so sure.

although

nevertheless / still

even so

yet

however



10. definite disagreement

I don't think so.
I don't agree with you.
I can't agree, I'm afraid.

That's not how I see it.
I disagree (completely).
I don't agree at all.

11. to discuss the pros and cons

on the one hand - on the other hand
There are two sides to this question: ...
An argument for this would be ...
- Others against it are ...

Some people think ... - Others say ...
however
yet
but

12. to summarize one's arguments

To conclude...
In conclusion...
It follows from this that...

To sum up...
so
therefore

13. making suggestions and recommendations

I'd like to hear your ideas on this.
Any suggestions?
Do any of you have any suggestions?
What do you recommend / suggest?

It might be a good idea to ...
I think we should ...
Have you thought of ... +gerund / noun
I see no alternative but to ...

14. to give reasons

The reason for this is that ...
There is no reason why ...
because

since
as

15. to interrupt someone

If I could just make a point here.
Sorry to interrupt, but I'd just like to say that ...
Could I make a suggestion?

16. to give in gracefully

I suppose you're right somehow.
There's something in what you say, I guess.
I guess you are right.
It's just that I was thinking of.

17. to apologize

I am terribly / awfully / very / really sorry that ...
I sincerely apologize for (not) ... +gerund / noun
I greatly / deeply regret ...
I do / must / would like to / wish to / sincerely apologize for ... +gerund / noun
I hope you will excuse /forgive me for (not) ... +gerund / noun
Please, accept my apologies.

Note:

Never say or write "I beg your pardon" if you want to apologize for something, the meaning of this expression being that you haven't understood and would like the other person to repeat.

"Excuse me!" is not so much a true apology as a polite remark enabling you to make a request or cover up a slight disturbance.

"Sorry" is a true apology, i.e. when stepping on someone's foot.