

GENERAL ENGLISH

Lesson 9 – EXPRESSING OPINIONS



Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Introduction

Expressing opinions in meetings, discussions, problem solving and other situations are an important part of a businessperson's day. Learning to express an opinion, to agree or disagree, in a positive and inoffensive manner is an important social skill.



Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Useful Expressions

Expressing a General Opinion

In my opinion ...

I think ...

I prefer ...



Expressing an Opinion about Taking Action

We could ... Maybe we could ... (softer)

Could we ...? (more polite)

I think we should ...

I *don't* think we should ...

Why don't we ... (more polite if inflected as a question)

How about ...

Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Useful Expressions

Expressing Agreement

Great idea!

I agree.

That's a good idea.

I think so too.

I would go along with that. (positive, but slightly neutral)

I might go along with that. (even more neutral, but slightly positive)

Maybe you are right. (positive, but slightly neutral)



Expressing Disagreement

I'm not sure about that (negative, but slightly neutral)

I don't know, but it seems that ... (gentle)

I don't think I agree.

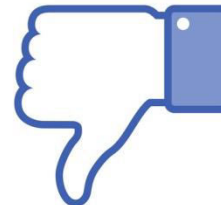
I don't agree. (stronger)

I'm afraid I disagree.

I'm sorry, but I don't agree.

I'm not sure that's the best idea.

Yes, but ...



Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Dialogue

Activity 1. Practice the dialogues with a partner.

Dialog 1 – Discussing Pricing

A: Sales have been off quite a bit this month. I think we need a big sale to get things moving.

B: I'm not sure that's the best idea. In my opinion, people will get used to the lower prices and not want to buy when the sale is over. The promo went on for so long people started thinking the lowered prices are the items' actual prices.

A: Maybe we could offer a short-term rebate*?

B: I might go along with that.

** rebate means refunding a portion of money that has already been paid.*

Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Dialogue

Dialog 2 – Shoddy service ...

A: What do you think we should do about our #1 salesperson jumping ship**? She's going to work for our competitors.

B: I think we should offer her a big raise to stay. She's worth it.

A: I'm afraid I disagree. If we make the offer, she will threaten to quit any time she wants more money.

B: Yes, but she'll be impossible to replace. The head office will be upset when sales go down.

A: Hmm, maybe you are right.

** *jumping ship* means leaving

Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Exercise

Activity II: Using the table below, work with a partner expressing your opinion about the issue your coworker has raised. Be sure to practice Agreeing AND Disagreeing.



Coworker:

I don't know, but it seems our sales are down because we raised our prices too high.



Coworker:

I'm really upset! The boss has asked me to work the weekend AGAIN! That's just not fair.

Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Exercise



Coworker:

Business is really up this year. I think we could increase business even more if we opened a new store on the other side of town.



The Boss!:

Sales are way down this month. I think you guys just aren't working hard enough.

Activity III: Now work with a partner expressing your opinions – agreeing AND disagreeing about issues that would be common where you work. If students are a little uncomfortable with expressing strong opinions with coworkers, just make up a funny issue about the company.

Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Useful Tips



When we are negotiating, expressing opinions or simply chatting with a friend, we often have to agree or disagree with the other person. Also, we don't want to make a fight out of this, so we must know how to show empathy with different opinions and also disagree without sounding aggressive. It is very difficult to convince when they think you are attacking. We need to express our opinions and, at the same time, show that we are listening, understanding and appreciating the other opinions. If they feel comfortable, they will be more open to our ideas, opinions or suggestions.

Lesson 9 – Expressing Opinions

Useful Tips

Tip # 1

It is always a good idea to justify your opinions. Don't just say 'I agree' or 'I disagree', but say 'I agree because I think that ... (explain your reason)', etc.

Tip # 2

To avoid misunderstandings or arguments, only talk about your political or religious beliefs in conversations with people you know well. It's probably also safer to avoid religious or political discussions with colleagues at work. The British, in particular, tend to view political and religious beliefs as extremely personal, and can sometimes find too much public discussion of these embarrassing or even insulting.



Next Lesson:

ASKING FOR and GIVING DIRECTIONS

The End