

NUMBER ONE ESL DISCUSSION BOOK & REFERENCE GUIDE



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Dedicated to all the students
in Korea and Taiwan
with whom I have had
many interesting discussions

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Introduction

Welcome to this comprehensive guide to mastering English through discussions. This book aims to support second-language English learners at various stages of their learning journey. Whether your students are at the pre-intermediate level or more advanced learners aiming to refine their skills, you will find this resource both practical and enriching.

Part 1: Topic Discussion

The first section of this book focuses on discussions that span a diverse range of topics. With approximately 30 topics covered, you will find questions that encourage deep thinking and lively discussion. From everyday life to more complex issues, these topics are designed to help your students practice speaking and thinking in English. Each question gives students the opportunity to express their thoughts, share their experiences, and listen to others. This approach not only enhances their speaking skills but also builds confidence in using English in various contexts.

Part 2: More Discussion

This section takes conversation practice further with a variety of random questions, beginner-level prompts, and quick end-of-class discussion topics. Comprehension of popular idioms is reinforced with discussion questions, and if your students are mature enough, a section on more controversial topics.

This part of the book is also perfect for warming up before diving into more complex topics or for casual practice. By engaging with these questions, students will improve their ability to think on their feet and respond to a wide array of queries in English.

Part 3: More Speaking Practice

Students get ample opportunity in the first two sections to express and discuss their opinions and ideas and relate their experiences. The first part of this section goes back to the basics: practicing simple question and answer dialogs with different grammatical structures.

More opportunity is then given where students can practice their speaking skills with short speeches, imagined stories, and statements of fact and fiction.

Part 4: Language Reference

This section provides concise and clear explanations of English grammar. Also included are lists of nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Understanding the rules of grammar and having a rich vocabulary are essential components of fluency. Use this section to clarify doubts, learn new words or review vocabulary, and refine grammatical and even spelling accuracy.

Part 5: Factual Reference

Lists of important historical events and influential people, alongside data about countries, their capital cities, and their populations await learners in this section. Additionally, you will find 26 maps that visually represent geographical information, helping students connect language learning with real-world knowledge. This section also provides excellent material for informed discussions and learning activities.

Using this book

Start with the topics that interest your students the most and gradually explore other areas. Use the discussion questions as a springboard for longer conversations. It is not essential to go through all the questions. Some students may have no interest in a topic; sometimes they're too young or too old. Modify the questions as you see fit.

Suggestions on how to use the discussion questions:

1. In a one-on-one session, go through all the questions or select questions you regard as more interesting or appropriate.
2. In classes with six or more students: Group 1 chooses one question from, for example, questions 1-3, discuss the question, then report back; group 2 chooses one question from questions 4-6, discuss the question, then report back, and so on.
3. Students can also be given a choice of select questions for individual homework assignments.

Additional tips:

- Adapt the difficulty level based on your students' progress. Consider providing vocabulary lists for more challenging topics.
- Encourage active participation by asking follow-up questions.
- Use visuals, role-playing, or games to make the discussions more interesting.

Remember, language learning is a journey, and every discussion, question and answer session, and new fact learned brings language learners one step closer to fluency.

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Tips on answering discussion questions

Here are some tips on how to answer discussion questions effectively:

Understand the question: Take your time to read and understand the question properly. Pay attention to any keywords or instructions given.

Organize your thoughts: Before answering, take a moment to organize your thoughts. Consider what points you want to make and how you can structure your response coherently.

Use the question as a guide: Make sure your answer directly addresses the question asked. You can use the question itself as a guide to structure your response.

Provide examples: Support your points with examples or personal experiences whenever possible. This helps to illustrate your ideas and make your answer more engaging.

Speak clearly and confidently: When delivering your answer, speak clearly and confidently. Take your time and avoid rushing through your response. Pausing to gather your thoughts is perfectly fine.

Listen actively: During discussions, actively listen to what others are saying. This can help you build on their ideas or provide counterpoints during the conversation.

Ask for clarification if needed: If you're unsure about the question or need clarification, don't hesitate to ask. It's better to seek clarification than to provide an answer that doesn't fully address the question.

Engage with others: Don't be afraid to engage with other participants in the discussion. Ask follow-up questions, express agreement or disagreement respectfully, and be open to different viewpoints.

Practice active participation: Engage in discussions regularly to improve your speaking and listening skills. The more you practice, the more comfortable and confident you'll become in expressing your ideas.

Reflect on feedback: After participating in discussions, take time to reflect on any feedback you receive. Use it as an opportunity to identify areas for improvement.

By following these tips, students can enhance their ability to answer discussion questions effectively and actively participate in group conversations.

PART 1: TOPIC DISCUSSION

Breaking The Ice

Personal and Family Background

1. Where were you born? Were you raised in _____? Have you lived anywhere else?
2. Are you married? If you are, how long have you been married? Do you have any children? If you do, how many? How old are they?
3. Where do you live? Do you live in a house or an apartment? If you are not married, do you have any roommates?
4. Do you have any siblings? If you do, how old are they? If you don't, would you have liked to have siblings? Why or why not?



Education and Profession

5. If you are working, what is your profession? Where do you work? How long have you worked there? Do you work full-time or part-time? What other jobs have you had? Do you like your job?
6. If you are a student, where do you go to school? What is your major? If you've graduated from college or university, where did you study? What did you study? Why did you choose this major?

Language Learning

7. Why do you want to improve your English? What do you think is the best way to learn a new language? What is the best way to improve your language skills?

Hobbies and Preferences

8. What are your hobbies? What do you like to do over the weekend, or in your free time during the week?
9. What is your favorite season? Why _____? What is your favorite type of food?

10. How often do you follow the news? Are you more interested in politics or sport? Are you more interested in fashion news or stories about healthy lifestyle? Are you more interested in celebrity gossip or articles on how to make money?

Emotions and Personality

11. Talk about your best friend. Who is he or she? Where and when did you meet? Why is this person your best friend? What are their best qualities?
12. What are things that put you in a bad mood? What do you usually do to improve your mood when you're in a bad mood?
13. If you had to choose one animal that best matches your personality, what animal would you choose and why?

Travel and Experiences Abroad

14. Have you ever lived or studied in another country? If yes, what did you like or dislike about it? If not, would you like to live or study in another country? Which country?
15. How often do you travel? What are your favorite travel destinations in your own country? What is your favorite place in your city?
16. Have you ever traveled abroad? If yes, which countries have you visited? Which countries would you like to visit?
17. Do you prefer to travel alone, with family or friends, or with strangers in a tour group? Why is this your preference?
18. Do you prefer to make your own travel plans, or do you prefer to go on a travel package?

Life Achievements and Goals

19. What have you done in the past that makes you proud?
20. What are your dreams for the future? Do you have a life goal? What is your goal for the next year, or for the next five years?
21. What are some goals you set some time ago that you have already achieved?
22. Some people have a list of things they want to do before they are too old to do them. Do you have such a list? If you do, what is on your list?

[END OF PREVIEW]

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