



6

*Having a
conversation*



Getting Started in TTO





In TTO you learn English so that you can communicate clearly with the rest of the world. Have you noticed that when you are in a foreign country (*buitenland*), you often have to speak English to be understood? Many people around the world use English as a communication tool (*gereedschap*)!

At school there will be many opportunities (*mogelijkheden*) to practise your speaking skills:

- in a discussion with your classmates
- when giving your opinion
- when giving a presentation
- in many other situations

When we practise speaking English, we develop our communication skills and personality. This is all part of becoming a Global Citizen.

Task

1

Can you match the words below with their definition?

Chat	a talk between or among two or more people
Discussion	to stand up in front of a group and give a presentation.
Talk to/with	a serious talk with a group
Speak to/with	Same as talk to/with
Give a talk	to talk about someone's / people's personal lives behind their back
Conversation	to have a conversation with someone, usually important
Gossip	informal conversation with two or more people



Speaking a new language can make you feel a bit nervous. Don't worry! Just try - make a start. The more you practise the easier it will be.

It's only natural to make mistakes:

- English is not your mother tongue
- Even in your own language you make mistakes now and then, don't you?
- Be proud that you are trying to speak English, most English people don't speak another language
- There are many new words to learn, you can't know them all at once

If you can't remember a word, don't worry. You don't always have to know the word in English, you can also describe the item or situation. For example: The word for *paraplu* is *umbrella*. Of course, you knew this! But if you can't remember you can describe it: *You use it to keep you dry when it rains.*



LET'S TALK

Task

2

Which descriptions fit the words below? Match the words with their descriptions.

Word	Description
Lunchbox	You keep your pens and eraser in it
Zebra	Your last name
Lightbulb	It looks like a horse but it has black and white stripes
Surname	It looks like a pear and it gives light
Pencil case	You can keep your sandwiches in it for your lunch



Task 3

Before you start a conversation, it is important to get clear what is the aim of your conversation.

Is it:

- an informal chat?
- a discussion, in which you have to give your opinion?
- a conversation in which you ask for information?

Below are some videos showing different conversations. Say which type of conversation you think they are.

1 Meeting people

- A Giving your opinion
- B Informal chat
- C Asking for information



Video 6.1: Meeting people

2 At the shop

- A Giving your opinion
- B Informal chat
- C Asking for information



Video 6.2: At the shop

3 Different opinions

- A Giving your opinion
- B Informal chat
- C Asking for information



Video 6.3: Different opinions

C

Follow a step-by-step plan

In TTO your teachers will often ask you to discuss some parts of the subject you are learning, with your classmates. That is why we will zoom in on discussions in this section.

To have a proper discussion, it's useful to follow a step-by-step plan. There are three main steps:

- 1 prepare for the discussion
- 2 keep things in mind while having the discussion
- 3 after the discussion, check if all went well

The great thing about a discussion is that other people can help us to see another point of view, which we didn't know before.



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STEP 1

Prepare for the discussion

To prepare for a discussion, you have to do at least two things:

- 1 If necessary, look up some information which you will need during the discussion. In subjects like Biology, History and Geography, this is usually information you have just learned.
- 2 Form your opinion: get clear what you think about a certain subject.

Task

4

Discussions usually start with a statement (*stelling*) or a question. Below is an example of a statement.

School is great because you learn new things and you meet interesting people.

- a** Do you need to find out any extra information before you have your discussion? Finish one of the sentences below.

Yes, I need to find out extra information about

No, I don't need to find out extra information, because

- b** Now write your opinions down in bullet points. For example:

- meeting new people is fun



STEP
2

**Keep things in mind while
having the discussion**

Now that you have written down your opinion points you're almost ready to start a discussion with your classmates.

While having a discussion, it's very important to talk respectfully with the other people in the group:

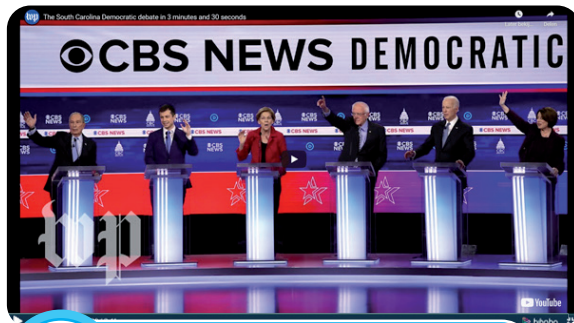
- listen to each other
- give every person the chance to speak
- give them time to finish what they want to say
- use polite language
- ask questions

Keep these things in mind.

Task 5

Below are two examples of discussions. Before watching them, look at the questions you will have to answer. Then watch and answer the questions.

1 South Carolina Democratic Debate



Video 6.4: South Carolina Democratic Debate

Did these people...

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1 ask questions? | Yes / No |
| 2 listen to each other? | Yes / No |
| 3 give every person the chance to speak? | Yes / No |
| 4 give the other person time to finish what they want to say? | Yes / No |
| 5 use polite language? | Yes / No |

2 Fast Food at School: Yes vs No



Video 6.5: Fast Food at School: Yes vs No

Did these pupils...

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1 ask questions? | Yes / No |
| 2 listen to each other? | Yes / No |
| 3 give the other person the chance to speak? | Yes / No |
| 4 give the other person time to finish what they want to say? | Yes / No |
| 5 use polite language? | Yes / No |

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Giving opinions

In a discussion, giving opinions is important. In this way, you learn what other people think about the topics you are talking about.

- Give your opinion short and clearly.
- Use arguments (facts) so that other people can understand you.
- Remember that everyone is allowed to have their own opinion; your opinion is not the only one that is important!

In the document *Speaking Frames* you will find sentence starters for giving your opinion. You can take a look if you want to.

Speaking frames

In your textbook you find many talking points; most of these ask for your opinion. In pairs or in small groups you can discuss these points. In this way you learn to value subjects and you practise your conversation skills. In your workbook, there are assignments in which you have a conversation or discussion too. The sentences and sentence starters below help you to have a proper conversation.

Giving an opinion

I think ... / In my opinion ...
I would say ... / If you ask me ...
I tend to think ... / I feel that ...
It seems to me ... / It's obvious that ...
I think it's important that ...
All the evidence shows / points towards ...
As I see it, ...

Asking for an opinion

What do you think?
How about you?
What's your opinion?
What would you say?
Any thoughts on this?
Do you agree?

Agreeing with an opinion

Absolutely.
I couldn't agree more.
That's an excellent point.
I'd agree with that.
Great idea!
Of course!
Indeed!
I think you have a very good point there.

Disagreeing with an opinion

I don't think so.
How can you say that when...?
Absolutely not.
I don't agree with that.
I don't believe that.
You cannot be serious!
I disagree.
I think otherwise.

(dis)agreement, followed by an opinion

Yes, but...
That's true up to a point, but...
That could be true. However, ...
What's more, ...
You could be right, but ...

Showing you are not certain yet

I'm not sure.
It might be ...
I can't say I'm convinced.
Perhaps ...
I'm uncertain ...

Giving contrasting ideas

(On the one hand ...) On the other hand ...
On the contrary ... / (Mean)while ...
While it is true that ...
However... / Yet ...
Still ... / Nevertheless ...
Sure, ..., but... / Then again ...
To be fair, ...

Interrupting

Sorry, can I just say ...
Wait a minute.
Sorry, if I can stop you there, ...
Hang on ...
Excuse me, but ...

Showing a surprise/shock

I'm amazed that ...
I can't believe that ...
How is it possible that ...
I find it shocking that ...
I do find that hard to believe.
I'm very surprised to hear this.
I'm flabbergasted ...
I'm stunned by this.
This can't be true.

Making suggestions

Let's ...
What about ...
Why don't we ...
We could ...
We should try to ...
We might ...
Maybe...
Possibly



Task

6

While giving an opinion, you can use sentence starters. For example:

*I think ...
In my opinion ...
I would say ...
If you ask me ...*

Use the bullet points you have written down in Task 4 to finish the following sentences.

- 1 I think _____

- 2 In my opinion _____

- 3 I would say _____

- 4 If you ask me, _____





How do you agree or disagree with something someone has said?



To express you agree or disagree, you can use the document with *speaking frames*. Sentence starters in this document help you to make sentences you need to agree or disagree (*eens of oneens zijn*) and much more.

To express you agree with an opinion, you for example can use:

Absolutely!
Great idea!
I think you have a very good point there.
I couldn't agree more.

To express you disagree with an opinion, you for example can use:

I don't think so.
I don't agree with that.
I disagree.
I think otherwise.

Half way through the discussion, you may want to change your opinion. No problem! After you have heard what other people say about the topic, you might think differently about it.

Task

7

Which of the statements below do you think are polite ways to agree / disagree with someone?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1 You're completely wrong!
That's not at all what it's about. | <i>polite / impolite</i> |
| 2 I see your point, but you're not 100% right. | <i>polite / impolite</i> |
| 3 I agree with you because ... | <i>polite / impolite</i> |
| 4 I can't agree with you because ... | <i>polite / impolite</i> |
| 5 Right you are! | <i>polite / impolite</i> |
| 6 You're right, you've made a good point. | <i>polite / impolite</i> |



H

How do you end a discussion?

Finish the discussion with a clear conclusion. To make a clear conclusion, you:

- make a small summary (*samenvatting*) of all the points that you have spoken about
- say what the outcome of these points is
- find out whether most people agreed or disagreed with these points.

In this way, you remind the group what you have discussed.



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STEP 3

After the discussion

In the document *Discussion Checklist* you will find a list of points for evaluating your discussion. You can use this document to give each other feedback.



Discussion Checklist

Did you.....	Yes	No
• give clear opinions?		
• ask questions?		
• listen to each other?		
• give every person the chance to speak?		
• give the other person time to finish what they wanted to say?		
• use polite language?		
• finish the discussion with a clear conclusion?		

Task

8

Over to you! After all the information you've read and seen about a discussion, you're going to have one yourself.

- 1 Get into groups of three: Two people will have a discussion and the third person will listen and time the discussion. (2 minutes)
- 2 Read the statement below.

School is great because you learn new things and you meet interesting people.

- 3 Do you need to find out any more information about this topic? Yes? Then spend just a few minutes looking up some information. No? Then go to step 4.
- 4 Make bullet points for your own opinions. You may use the bullet points you have written down in task 4.

- 5 Have the discussion. Have the *Speaking frames* with you so that you can use them. Keep these things in mind:
 - give clear opinions
 - ask questions
 - listen to each other
 - give every person the chance to speak
 - give the other person time to finish what they want to say
 - use polite language
 - finish the discussion with a clear conclusion
- 6 After 2 minutes, change discussion partners.

Now you know how to have a discussion. And what is more, you have had your discussion in English! Well done! Did you enjoy it?