

Give Them the Language to Disagree

Give learners language to challenge a claim respectfully and support the disagreement with evidence.

5 min preparation | Science, Maths and Humanities

Before the lesson

Choose a question with competing interpretations and evidence to discuss.

Teach it in four steps

1. Give learners language to challenge a claim respectfully and support the disagreement with evidence.
2. State a disagreement using a respectful opening.
3. Offer evidence or a reason that challenges the claim.
4. Invite a response and revise the claim if the evidence warrants it.

Worked example: Give Them the Language to Disagree

"I read the poster differently because its purpose was persuasion. It shows the promoted message, but not everyone's opinion." The disagreement concerns what the source supports.

Teacher prompt: "Show the relationship and explain the choice you made."

Check understanding

Listen for a claim, reason and relevant evidence rather than a disagreement phrase alone.

Fade the support

Remove the opening bank once learners can challenge ideas productively.

Adapt it across subjects

Science: challenge an explanation using a result. Maths: challenge a solution with a counterexample.

Adjust the language support

A1-A2 access: keep the subject goal; use visuals, a small word bank, pointing or drawing and partner rehearsal. Use a home language to establish meaning where helpful.

B1-B2 extension: ask for fuller explanations, precise subject vocabulary and qualifications. Reduce sentence openings when learners can organise the response independently.

These are starting points, not placement rules. Judge support from the learner's response to this task; proficiency can differ across skills.