

## Academic discussions prepositions and determiners pairwork

### Instructions

*Work in pairs. Choose one section on your (Student A or Student B) worksheet. Read out sentences with the word at the top of that section missing from each phrase until your partner guesses what the missing word is. Your partner can only guess once per hint (not shout out lots of answers). If you have used all the examples there and your partner still hasn't guessed the missing word, make up more example sentences with the same word missing and/ or give other hints.*

*Switch roles and do the same until your teacher stops the game. When you have used all the sections once, you can go back to a previous section again if there are still examples left which you haven't used.*

### Useful phrases for playing the game

- "No, that's not possible (because...) I'll read out another example."
- "That might be possible, but that's not what's written here. I'll give you another hint."
- "I'm not sure. Can you give me another hint?"
- "Sorry, can you repeat the sentence (a little more slowly)?"
- "Can you repeat all the sentences (so far)?"

*When you finish, ask about any phrases you don't understand, phrases you think could take different words in the gaps, etc, then work together on the brainstorming stage.*

**Student A****A**

A fairly small number of interviewees said that...  
A large number of academics have concluded that...  
A very limited amount of time has been spent on...  
Actually, I saw a TV programme on this just a couple of weeks ago.  
I don't think it's a very good idea to...  
I read a book which said...  
It might be a good idea to...  
It would have a positive effect on...  
Sorry, can you say that again a little more slowly?  
That's a tricky one.  
There have been a few cases of...  
There is a very good chance of...  
This is true in a couple of places.  
Without a doubt,...

**About**

I don't know much about this, but...  
I haven't thought much about this before, but...  
I'm afraid I know absolutely nothing about this subject. However,...  
I'm afraid I know almost nothing about this topic, but...  
I've never thought about this before, but...  
Sorry I'm still thinking about what I want to say.  
That's just about all I wanted to say.  
You obviously know more about this than me, but...  
I think we should be sceptical about the data from...  
What do you think about that?  
How do you feel about that?  
What was I talking about? Oh yes,...  
But you probably know more about this than me.

**An**

An absolutely tiny minority of...  
Can you give an example of that?  
To put that another way,...

**Any**

I don't see any merit in that.  
I don't have any personal experience of this, but...  
I'm afraid I can't add anything to that.  
I don't see any reason to doubt Jane Jones's statement that...

**As**

As far as I know,...

As a result of this...

I feel exactly the same way as you.

I feel more or less the same way as you about...

As Deborah Winger has stated, I believe that...

Anyway, as I was saying...

**At**

I don't agree at all.

Looking at it another way,...

We didn't really study this at school but...

**By**

... by which I mean...

Although by no means always, it is very common for people to...

Sorry, what do you mean by...?

This is caused by...

This is said by many to be...

**For**

Can I just interrupt for a minute?

For example,...

For instance,...

It's difficult to say for sure, but...

Sorry for waffling on and on.

**To**

That's just what I wanted to say.

That's pretty much all I wanted to say.

There are both pros and cons to this.

There is next to no chance that...

This is due to the fact that...

This will lead to...

To be honest,.../ To be (perfectly) frank,...

To give just one example,...

What I'm trying to say is...

To paraphrase Norman Chomsky, I think that...

I can see that you want to say something, but can I just add...?

**Your**

I can see your point, but...

I'm not sure that I agree with your view.

Go ahead, please have your say.



## **Student B**

### **In**

How can I best say this in English?

I'll let you finish in a minute, but...

In general,...

In most cases,...

In my limited experience,...

In my personal experience,...

In other words,...

This could result in...

Sorry to butt in, but...

### **My**

In my honest opinion,...

My first thoughts on this are...

My own experience of this is...

This is just my opinion, but...

No, that's okay. You have already answered my question.

### **Of**

Although I can understand that point of view,...

I don't have much experience of this, but...

I partly agree with that point of view.

One of the main benefits is...

Probably the best example of this is...

Sorry, can you repeat the first part of the question?

Sorry, I've never heard of...

The main consequence of that is...

The only drawback I can think of is...

This happens because of...

To the best of my knowledge...

You took the words right out of my mouth.

### **On**

According to the majority of experts on this matter,...

... and so on.

I saw on YouTube that...

I'm no expert on this, but I'd say...

No, please carry on.

On the other hand,...

Sorry, please go on.

Do you have any opinions on this topic?

Before you go on, can I just say...?

Before you carry on, can I say something about...?

**The**

I feel just the same way.  
I get the impression that...  
I have the opposite point of view.  
I'm sorry but I've never come across the word...  
Most of the people who are in this situation find that...  
Off the top of my head,...  
Sorry, can you rephrase the question?  
Sorry, I didn't understand the last word.  
The main disadvantage is...  
The vast majority of peer-reviewed studies say that...  
This happens virtually all the time.  
This is usually true, but it is occasionally the case that...  
What's the best way to answer that?  
You get the general idea.  
I find the claim that it has been proven rather unconvincing.

**To**

According to many experts,...  
According to most researchers in this field,...  
It seems clear to me that...  
It seems obvious to me that...  
It's very difficult to generalise, but...  
My initial reaction to this is...  
That makes total sense to me.  
That seems to make sense.  
That's exactly what I wanted to say.

**With**

I couldn't agree with you more.  
I don't really agree with that.  
I partially agree with you.  
I really don't agree with that idea.  
I'm afraid I'm not familiar with the word...  
I'm not very familiar with this topic, but...  
Not many people will agree with me, but...  
Some people will probably disagree with me, but...  
The only thing I can come up with is...

**Brainstorming stage**

*Without looking above, write suitable phrases in each gap below. Many phrases not above are also possible.*

**Giving opinions****Giving strong opinions****Giving weak opinions****Strongly agreeing****Weakly agreeing****Strongly disagreeing****Weakly disagreeing/ Politely disagreeing****Supporting your opinions****Generalising/ Hedging**

**Personal experience**

**Giving examples**

**Logical arguments (cause and effect, etc)**

**Looking at both sides**

**Rephrasing/ Restating**

**Other people's experiences/ Explaining the sources of your knowledge**

**Checking/ Clarifying**

**Filling silence/ Speaking while thinking of what you want to say (by commenting on the question, etc)**

**Turn taking  
Interrupting**

**Stopping interruption**

**Getting the turn back/ Getting back on topic**

**Turning down the chance to speak/ Asking the other person to continue**

**Signalling the end of your turn/ Inviting the other person to speak**

*Look above for examples, then brainstorm more.*

*Compare your phrases as a class or with the suggested answers. Many other phrases are possible, so please check if you wrote something different.*



**Suggested answers**

*Many other phrases are possible, so please check if you wrote something different.*

**Giving opinions****Giving strong opinions**

In my honest opinion,...

It seems clear to me that...

It seems obvious to me that...

To be honest,...

To be perfectly frank,...

Without a doubt,...

**Giving weak opinions**

As far as I know,...

I don't have any personal experience of this, but...

I don't have much experience of this, but...

I don't know much about this, but...

I get the impression that...

I haven't thought (much) about this before, but...

I'm afraid I know absolutely nothing about this subject. However,...

I'm afraid I know almost nothing about this topic, but...

I'm no expert on this, but I'd say...

I'm not (very) familiar with this topic, but...

I've never thought about this before, but...

In my limited experience,...

It might be a good idea to...

It's difficult to say for sure, but...

It's very difficult to generalise, but...

My first thoughts on this are...

My initial reaction to this is...

Not many people will agree with me, but...

Off the top of my head,...

Some people will probably disagree with me, but...

This is just my opinion, but...

To the best of my knowledge...

We didn't really study this at school but...

**Strongly agreeing**

I couldn't agree with you more.

I feel exactly the same way as you.

I feel just the same way.

That makes total sense to me.

That's exactly what I wanted to say.

That's just what I wanted to say.

You took the words right out of my mouth.

**Weakly agreeing**

I don't think it's a very good idea to...  
I feel more or less the same way as you about...  
I partially agree with you.  
I partly agree with that point of view.  
That seems to make sense.

**Strongly disagreeing**

I don't agree at all.  
I don't see any merit in that.  
I have the opposite point of view.  
I really don't agree with that idea.

**Weakly disagreeing/ Politely disagreeing**

Although I can understand that point of view,...  
I can see your point, but...  
I don't really agree with that.  
I'm not sure that I agree with your view.  
You obviously know more about this than me, but...

**Supporting your opinions****Generalising/ Hedging**

A fairly small number of interviewees said that...  
A large number of academics have concluded that...  
An absolutely tiny minority of...  
A very limited amount of time has been spent on...  
According to most researchers in this field,...  
According to the majority of experts on this matter,...  
Although by no means always, it is very common for people to...  
In general,...  
In most cases,...  
Most of the people who are in this situation find that...  
The vast majority of peer-reviewed studies say that...  
There have been a few cases of...  
There is a very good chance of...  
There is next to no chance that...  
This happens virtually all the time.  
This is true in a couple of places.  
This is usually true, but it is occasionally the case that...

**Personal experience**

In my personal experience,...  
In my limited experience,...  
My own experience of this is...

**Giving examples**

... and so on.  
For example, ...  
For instance, ...  
Probably the best example of this is ...  
To give just one example, ...

**Logical arguments (cause and effect, etc)**

This will lead to ...  
This could result in ...  
It would have a positive effect on ...  
This happens because of ...  
This is caused by ...  
This is due to the fact that ...  
The main consequence of that is ...  
As a result of this ...

**Looking at both sides**

Looking at it another way, ...  
On the other hand, ...  
The only drawback I can think of is ...  
There are both pros and cons to this.  
The main disadvantage is ...  
One of the main benefits is ...

**Rephrasing/ Restating**

In other words, ...  
To put that another way, ...  
... by which I mean ...  
What I'm trying to say is ...

**Other people's experiences/ Explaining the sources of your knowledge**

According to many experts ...  
Actually, I saw a TV programme on this just a couple of weeks ago.  
I read a book which said ...  
I saw on YouTube that ...  
I think we should be sceptical about the data from ...  
I don't see any reason to doubt Jane Jones's statement that ...  
As Deborah Winger has stated, I believe that ...  
This is said by many to be ...  
John Smith is probably the leading authority on this topic and he says that ...  
I find the claim that it has been proven rather unconvincing.  
To paraphrase Norman Chomsky, I think that ...

**Checking/ Clarifying**

Can you give an example of that?  
I'm afraid I'm not familiar with the word ...

I'm sorry but I've never come across the word...  
Sorry, can you repeat the first part of the question?  
Sorry, can you rephrase the question?  
Sorry, can you say that again a little more slowly?  
Sorry, I didn't understand the last word.  
Sorry, I've never heard of...  
Sorry, what do you mean by...?

### **Filling silence/ Speaking while thinking of what you want to say (by commenting on the question, etc)**

How can I best say this in English?  
That's a tricky one.  
The only thing I can come up with is...  
What's the best way to answer that?

### **Turn taking**

#### **Interrupting**

Can I just interrupt for a minute?  
I'll let you finish in a minute, but...  
Before you go on, can I just say...?  
Before you carry on, can I say something about...?  
Sorry to butt in, but...

#### **Stopping interruption**

I can see that you want to say something, but can I just add...?

#### **Getting the turn back/ Getting back on topic**

Anyway, as I was saying...  
What was I talking about? Oh yes,...

#### **Turning down the chance to speak/ Asking the other person to continue**

I'm afraid I can't add anything to that.  
Sorry I'm still thinking about what I want to say.  
No, please carry on.  
Sorry, please go on.  
No, that's okay. You have already answered my question.

#### **Signalling the end of your turn/ Inviting the other person to speak**

Sorry for waffling on and on.  
You get the general idea.  
That's pretty much all I wanted to say.  
That's just about all I wanted to say.  
But you probably know more about this than me.  
Go ahead, please have your say.  
What do you think about that?  
How do you feel about that?  
Do you have any opinions on this topic?