

Listening and responding

To join in a conversation or discussion you need to be able to express your ideas clearly. But it's also important to listen carefully to what others say so that you can make a relevant comment or response.

Have a look at this **conversation**:

- A "We need to do a stock check of the stationery cupboard and make out an order."
 B "The new temp was late again today."



This isn't a successful conversation because speaker B didn't listen and respond to what speaker A said. A **better reply** would be something like:

- "Yes, I know we're running low on A4 envelopes."
 or "I'll get on with that after I've finished sending this mail out."
 or "Yes, good idea. I've been keeping a note of what people have been asking for."

Any of these show that B listened to A and gave a reply that was relevant to A's comment.

Discussions work well if everyone listens carefully to the other people and tries to respond to what others have said. They don't work well if someone changes the subject and talks about something completely different.

Here are some **useful expressions** for showing that you've listened to someone's opinion and want to add your opinion to keep the discussion going.

Show you agree	Show you disagree	Show you neither agree nor disagree
I agree, I think that...	I disagree. I think that...	Mmm... maybe, I don't feel strongly one way or the other.
That's a good idea. What about...?	No, that's not how I see it. I think...	
I think you're right about...	I'm not sure I agree with that. Don't you think...?	You could be right. I haven't really thought about it before.
You're absolutely right. That's just what I think.	I completely disagree. I think...	