

How to have an intelligent conversations about controversial news

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You know that to improve, you always have to try new things, right? Well, I want to try to improve the way you learn with my video lessons.

So I'll try something new in the next few blog posts, and you tell me your opinion.

I'm going to share the transcript of the video lesson as the blog post.

This way, you can save the transcript to learn vocabulary, print it to follow with the video and write notes on pronunciation & comprehension. This will give you one more tool to improve your English.

Let me know in the comments if this helps you!

Here's the complete transcript for today's lesson:

Hey there, and welcome to Speak English with Christina, where you'll have fun becoming fluent in American English. I'm your English coach Christina, and today you'll learn how to manage conversations about fun topics like politics and religion. Oh yay!

This is part of the conversation secrets that you learn in my course Successful Small Talk, which teaches you to be fluent in everyday small talk conversations.

Can you manage conversations about Donald Trump, Brexit, and other sensitive topics?

Hmmm? Let's go!

Everyone has heard the classic advice "Don't talk about politics and religion." OK, but what if that's all that everyone is talking about? Unfortunately, terrorism, politics, religion, and racial issues are pretty common topics of conversation nowadays. If these subjects come up in conversation, it's best to be prepared!

ASKING FOR OPINIONS

It's ok to ask delicate questions, but prepare the terrain first. Send warning signals to the other person "Hey, I'm going to ask a delicate question! Careful!! Here it comes...." Don't say those exact words.

Introduce your question with phrases like: "Can I ask you something?" "Can I ask you something?" or "You don't have to answer this, but..." "You don't have to answer this, but..." or another one "Do you mind if I ask you..." "Do you mind if I ask you...."

These expressions show that you know the question is sensitive, and that you'll understand if they don't want to share a lot of details.

Here's an example:

Do you mind if I ask you, what do Americans think about Donald Trump now? Do they regret their decision?



Can you think of another example? Share it in the comments below, and we can check your English.

EXCHANGING DIFFERENT OPINIONS

During these conversations, you might disagree with the other person. But hey, you asked for it if you started the conversation. Just kidding. It's ok to have different opinions, but it's also important to be respectful. Remember, this is small talk, not a political debate! We Americans generally don't like debates in small talk. So be respectful.

If someone shares an opinion you don't agree with, you can respond with "Yes, but you have to admit..." "Yes, you have to admit..." or "You don't think...", "You don't think..." and then introduce some facts to support your own point of view.

For example, "Yes, but you have to admit that it's better when the entire population has access to healthcare." Because, yes, healthcare is kind of a sensitive topic in the US...

CONCLUDING A SENSITIVE CONVERSATION

At some point, the conversation may become tense. If you feel the other person is getting angry, or if you're getting angry, it's best to drop the subject, and walk away slowly. No, don't walk away, just change the subject. It's more polite.

When you realize that no agreement is possible, it's good to conclude with "Maybe we'll just have to disagree on this one." "Maybe we'll just have to disagree on this one."

And then, hop, change the subject. A good transition phrase is "So, anyway..." "So, anyway..." or "Oh, by the way...", "Oh, by the way..."

Your conclusion sounds like this: "I hear what you're saying, but maybe we'll just have to disagree on this one... So, anyway, did you see there's a new tapas restaurant that opened last week?"

Diplomatic disaster avoided!

RECAP

And here's the recap:

Introduce questions about sensitive topics with: "You don't have to answer this, but..." or "Do you mind if I ask you..."

Introduce your disagreements with "Yes, you have to admit..." or "You don't think...", and try to support your arguments with facts.

Conclude a tense discussion with "Maybe we'll just have to disagree on this one." And make a quick transition by saying "So, anyway..." or "Oh, by the way..."

And bam, you're a master of sensitive topic small talk in English!

If you want more lessons on secrets to fluent everyday conversations, be sure to check out my course Successful Small Talk. There's more information at christinarebuffet.com/courses

Now, what about you?

What sensitive topics have you discussed in English? How did the discussion go?

Share your stories in the comments below the video.





You know that Speak English with Christina is a big global community, and we can connect through our experiences learning English, especially from the challenges we face. Thanks so much for being part of the Speak English Community. I'm Christina, and I'll see you next week!

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