

ARGUE vs DEBATE vs DISCUSS

Many words in English are commonly confused by both those learning the language and native speakers alike. When it comes to expressing opinions or ideas, the words "argue", "debate" and "discuss" are often used interchangeably. However, they have distinct meanings that should be understood in order to use them appropriately in a sentence. In this guide, we'll take a look at the difference between "argue", "debate" and "discuss" and how to use them correctly in a sentence when speaking or writing.

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Argue

"Argue" is a verb that means to express a point of view or opinion with the aim of persuading someone else to accept it. It is a strong and forceful form of communication that often involves a conflict of ideas or interests. When we argue, we try to prove our point and convince the other person that our argument is correct. The tone of an argument is often confrontational, and it can lead to a heated discussion or disagreement. The object of "argue" is the topic being put forward, which is often introduced with a "that" clause. If you want to say who is involved in the argument in addition to the subject, you can connect that person using the preposition "with".

How to use "argue" in a sentence:

1. The couple argued about where to go on vacation.
2. The students argued with their teacher over the assignment.
3. The lawyers argued their case in court.
4. He argued that the policy was unfair.
5. She argued that the movie was a masterpiece.
6. My neighbours are always arguing with each other.

Debate

"Debate" can be used as a noun or verb that refers to a formal or informal discussion between two or more people with different points of view. Unlike an argument, a debate is typically more structured and organised. Participants take turns presenting their ideas and responding to those

of their opponents. The aim of a debate is to explore different perspectives and reach a conclusion or resolution. Debates can take place in various settings, including classrooms, political forums, and public events. As a verb, the direct object of "debate" is the theme of the debate. When used as a noun, "debate" can be followed by the preposition "about" or "over" to specify the theme.

How to use "debate" in a sentence:

1. The politicians debated for hours on the issue of healthcare reform. (verb)
2. We debated the pros and cons of getting a dog. (verb)
3. The students debated the topic of climate change in their class. (verb)
4. The presidential debate was watched by millions of people. (noun)
5. There was a heated debate in the courtroom about the admissibility of the evidence.
(noun)
6. The scientists engaged in a lively debate over the results of their study. (noun)

Discuss

"Discuss" is a verb that means to talk about something in a detailed and thoughtful way. It is a more neutral and informal form of communication than arguing or debating. When we discuss, we exchange ideas and opinions with the aim of understanding each other's viewpoints. The tone of a discussion is typically friendly and collaborative, and it can lead to new insights or solutions to a problem. The direct object of "discuss" is the theme of the discussion.

How to use "discuss" in a sentence:

1. Let's discuss the details of the project.
2. The family discussed their plans for the weekend.
3. The group of friends discussed their favourite movies.
4. The teacher and student discussed the assignment in class.
5. The team met to discuss the upcoming game.
6. World leaders will discuss the implications of climate change at the G7 conference.

Why are "argue", "debate" and "discuss" commonly confused?

The words "argue", "debate" and "discuss" are often confused because they all involve the exchange of ideas and opinions. However, the key difference lies in the level of formality and the tone of communication. Arguing is forceful and confrontational, while debating is more structured and aims to reach a conclusion. Discussing is neutral and collaborative, and it seeks to explore

different perspectives. It is important to choose the right word for the right context to convey your message effectively.

Spanish speakers in particular may confuse the words as a heated disagreement between two people is "discutir", which sounds like "discuss", but in fact would translate as "argue". Likewise, "argumentar" is a Spanish verb that is used more like "discuss" in English.

Summary

argue – a verb to express a point of view with the aim of persuading someone else to accept it, especially in a forceful or heated way

debate – a verb related to a formal or informal discussion between two or more people with different points of view, especially to reach a conclusion

discuss – a verb to talk about something in a detailed and thoughtful way to find out about others' viewpoints

Do you know the difference between "argue", "debate" and "discuss"?

Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the word ("argue", "debate" or "discuss"):

1. The two politicians continued to _____ the issue of healthcare reform, each arguing their side passionately.
2. Let's _____ the upcoming project and see how we can work together to make it a success.
3. My parents always _____ about what movie to watch on family movie night.
4. The group _____ for hours on the best approach to tackling climate change.
5. I'm not trying to _____ with you, I'm just trying to express my point of view.
6. The panel of experts gathered to _____ the future of artificial intelligence.
7. The couple was _____ loudly in the restaurant, causing a scene.
8. The students were asked to _____ whether or not social media has a positive or negative impact on mental health.
9. The book club met to _____ the latest novel they had read.
10. The two friends _____ playfully about who was the better cook.

Answers: 1. debate, 2. discuss, 3. argue, 4. debated, 5. argue, 6. discuss, 7. arguing, 8. debate, 9. discuss, 10. argued