

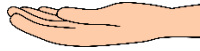
Discursive Sentence Starters



Hand gestures can signal the kind of thinking move a student intends to make when it's their turn. Some possibilities are suggested here. Students can create their own hand gestures for the key moves they plan to make!

First Moves (put palm of hand up)

- ✿ I think ...
- ✿ My view is ...
- ✿ What I think this means is ...



Agree/Support (thumbs up)

- ✿ I agree with X because ...
- ✿ What X is saying here is ...
- ✿ I really like X's point ... ; I'd add ...
- ✿ Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully support their final conclusion ...



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Build Upon (layer hands)

- ✿ To build on X's idea ...
- ✿ X's argument ... is also supported by ...
- ✿ This issue/idea is important because ...
- ✿ An example that helps to prove ... is ...
- ✿ Another point of view that supports this idea is ...

Mixed Feelings (thumb to middle / side)

- ✿ I agree ... but I disagree ...
- ✿ My feelings are mixed. On the one hand, I support the idea ... ; on the other hand, I'm not sure if ...
- At first I thought ... ; now I think ...

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Exploring an Idea Further (pull hands apart)

- ✿ This idea is important because ...
- ✿ What is the effect of ... on ...?
- ✿ One of the implications of X / X's idea is ...
- ✿ If X is right ... then we need to ...
- ✿ The assumption we are making when we say ... is ...
- ✿ While some believe ..., others believe ... (still others believe ...)
- ✿ X's idea is very useful because it helps us to understand the difficult problem of ...
- ✿ The finding ... should be of interest to ... because ...
- ✿ An alternative explanation is ...

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Challenging an Idea (palm forward)

- ✿ I challenge the idea ... because ...
- ✿ Although I agree with X up to a point, I have trouble accepting their main assumption/conclusion ... because ...
- ✿ X is mistaken because they overlook ...
As a result ...
- ✿ X's statement assumes ...
- ✿ By focusing on ..., X overlooks the deeper problem ...

Anticipating Counter-Arguments

- ✿ Although some might object ..., I would reply ...
- ✿ A limit or weakness in my idea is ...

Clarifying One's Own Idea

- ✿ My point is not ... but ...
- ✿ An example to show what I mean is ...

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Clarifying the Group's Ideas (cup hands)

- ✿ We can summarize the ideas so far by saying ...
- ✿ Though X and Y seem to be at odds about ..., they may actually not be that far apart.
Here's why: ...
- ✿ The big ideas we are all concerned about are ...
- ✿ If I've heard you correctly, you think/claim/feel that....

Shifting the Conversation

- ✿ The question/problem we can turn to next is....
- ✿ Now that we've agreed...., let's consider this question:....
- ✿ We all seem to agree...; we are still wondering...
- ✿ This explanation accounts for....but does not explain....

Adapted from: *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, 2014.

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Closing/Reflection

- ✿ The greatest strength in our dialogue was....As a result of this strength....
- ✿ The greatest weakness in our dialogue was....As a result of this weakness...
- ✿ I used to think/At first I thought....; now I think....
- ✿ A new question on my mind as a result of this dialogue is....

Point of View

- ✿ I am thinking of the question/issue/event from the point of view of....
- ✿ I think....because....(share your thoughts and feelings)
- ✿ A question/concern I have from this viewpoint is....
- ✿ What new observations/thoughts and insights do you have about the issue, now you've heard these points of view?
- ✿ What new questions do you have about the issue?