DIFFERENT OBJECTIVES/GOALS
WHEN SPEAKING IN CLASS

When you participate in a discussion, there are a variety of roles you might play, or tasks you might take on, at any given moment. Some of the most common objectives when speaking in a discussion class are listed below, although you can probably think of others.

The objectives below are grouped into three categories, depending on whether:

A) you wish to expand on the topic under discussion, or
B) you wish to evaluate or react to a point that has been made, or
C) you wish to engage in argumentation.

In each instance, you will find sample opening statements or conversation “links” that will help make clear to your listeners the exact significance or relevance (to the ongoing discussion) of what you are about to say.

A) ELUCIDATING, EMPHASIZING, EXPANDING THE TOPIC UNDER DISCUSSION

1. RESTATING
   ♦ In other words . . . ♦ What you are saying is . . .

2. ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION OR MORE DETAIL
   ♦ Could you say a bit more about that? ♦ Would you explain/elaborate on that?

3. ASKING FOR DEFENSE OR JUSTIFICATION
   ♦ Would you spell-out your grounds for thinking that? ♦ On what basis are you claiming that?

4. ADDING SOMETHING
   ♦ Also . . . ♦ I’d like to add . . . ♦ In addition . . .

5. BRINGING UP A NEW POINT
   ♦ There’s also another point that we haven’t considered yet.

6. GETTING THE DISCUSSION BACK ON TRACK
   ♦ Returning to an earlier point . . . ♦ To get back to the original question . . .

7. GIVING A REASON
   ♦ The reason why . . . ♦ Because of . . . ♦ Considering that . . .

8. GIVING AN EXAMPLE
   ♦ As an illustration . . . ♦ To give you an idea . . . ♦ For example . . .

9. SUMMARIZING AND CONCLUDING
   ♦ In short . . . ♦ To sum up . . . ♦ In a nutshell . . . ♦ All in all . . .
B) EVALUATING, ASSESSING, OR RESPONDING TO WHAT IS BEING SAID

1. CONTRASTING APPEARANCE AND REALITY
   - It may seem . . . but in fact . . .
   - Many people think . . . but actually . . .
   - On the surface it appears as if . . . but in point of fact . . .

2. SEEING THE OTHER SIDE
   - Nevertheless . . .
   - Even so . . .
   - All the same . . .
   - Still . . .
   - Granted, but . . .

3. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT
   - Keeping in mind . . .
   - Seeing as how . . .
   - Allowing for the fact . . .
   - When you consider/remember . . .

4. STATING RESERVATIONS
   - I can’t see how . . .
   - I’m not sure that . . .
   - I am not so certain that . . .
   - I really wonder . . .

5. AGREEING
   - That’s exactly right.
   - I agree completely.
   - I concur.

6. DISAGREEING
   - I don’t think so.
   - I’m afraid I must disagree.
   - I can’t buy that.
   - That simply won’t hold up.

C) INTERPOLATING, EXTRAPOLATING, CHALLENGING

1. DRAWING INFERENCEs
   - Therefore . . .
   - Consequently . . .
   - Thus . . .
   - As a result . . .

2. MAKING PREDICTIONS
   - That should result in . . .
   - Then we should expect . . .
   - That would indicate . . .

3. GIVING AN INTERPRETATION
   - This suggests . . .
   - This might mean . . .
   - In effect . . .

4. POINTING OUT EXCEPTIONS
   - This does not include . . .
   - An exception to that is . . .
   - Not counting, of course . . .
   - A counter-example would be . . .

5. GIVING COUNTER-ARGUMENTS
   - Even if that is so . . .
   - That may be so, but . . .
   - Even taking that into account . . .

TWO THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The clearer you are (in your own mind) about your goal or intention in speaking, the more effective you will be in phrasing what you say, in timing when you say it, and in tying it together with what has already been said.

- The more help that you give your listeners (e.g., in the form of conversation links), the easier it will be for them to understand just what your goal or intention is, and the more successful your communication will be.