



Key Advice

Differences between a discussion or debate versus a dialogue

Explain the fundamental differences between a discussion (debate or argument) and a dialogue (open, empathetic conversation). Emphasise the value of suspending personal opinions to explore diverse perspectives.

	Discussion / Debate	Dialogue
Starting point	Looking for 'the' best answer or that which is morally 'right'.	Reality and that which is morally good is not fixed and is multi-interpretable.
Basic attitude	Wanting to convince the other person from one's own judgement or knowledge.	Investigating. We have something to say to each other.
Speaking time of others	Participants demand speaking time and see the other person's speaking time and insight and/or knowledge as incorrect.	Suspension of judgements. Exploring your own and others' judgements through sincere questions is paramount.
The language that is used is characterised by	'Yes, but',	'Yes, and', asking (probing) questions, accurately formulating, and monitoring the process (e.g., summarising each other).
Process is characterised by	Momentum, acceleration, and conclusions and/or solutions.	Active listening, desires and answers that are evaluated are evaluated.
Focus is on	Objective and/or effective knowing, decisions, conclusions and judgements.	Examining and testing the different points of view.
Levels of inference		Attention is focused on 'relative knowing'. There is room for not knowing and new questions.