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Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast, a podcast for learners of English all around the world. Here is a brand new episode for you and let me just tell you what you can expect from this one and then we will get started straight away.

So this episode has a lot to offer and I think it's brilliant. Am I allowed to say that about my own podcast episode? I don't know, I don't know if I'm allowed to say it but I'm saying it anyway. This is a brilliant episode and I think it has a lot to offer and a lot of stuff that you can learn from it.

It's all about debating, debating skills in English. What is debating? It basically means expressing your opinion, questioning other people's opinions, persuading other people that you are right or that the things you're saying are actually correct, discussing things, the various methods of doing this and we get into plenty of details with plenty of examples as you will see and so this is a very practical and useful episode which I believe presents a great deal of value for you and considering this is free to listen to, that's massive isn't it? I mean you're getting extra value, you're getting your money's worth on this one. So my guest in this episode is Ray Adam.

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Ray is an English teacher from Glasgow in Scotland, no need to say more about him. He was on the podcast many years ago, he's back again and Ray is interesting because he actually has spent a lot of time developing English courses for various specific purposes including a course that he's done about debating skills in English and so he brings a lot of experience of teaching these skills himself in his own work and so he was kind enough to kind of bring a lot of that to this episode. If you want to check out more of Ray's stuff you can find links in the description.

So Ray Adam on the podcast with me talking about debating skills. I should probably clarify the difference between debating, discussing and arguing, right? A discussion, an argument and a debate. I think those are things that are worth defining at this point.

So a discussion, an argument and a debate, okay? A discussion then is just you know when people explore ideas together, share perspectives, share opinions. Maybe there's some disagreement and some persuasion going on but it's essentially quite a serious conversation, exploring ideas, sharing perspectives, maybe disagreeing and agreeing a little bit. Ideally you're trying to make a decision or reach a common understanding.

A discussion is quite cooperative, you're working together, it's open, it's normally fairly casual, there aren't sort of clear rules, it's fairly loose, it's unstructured, anyone can speak at any time. So that's a discussion. It's like the sort of thing you would have in a business meeting at work where you're trying to make a decision about something, whether you should do this or not do this, what do you think of that, what do you think of this, hmm that's an interesting point.

So this is a discussion, right? Then an argument, an argument, well there's several meanings of an argument. One meaning of an argument, your argument, is the way that you have presented your ideas, the way you've structured some ideas, put them together in order to provide some sort of persuasive series of statements. So that's an argument, he presented his

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argument, that's a very good argument, that's an interesting argument, that's one meaning of it.

The other meaning of an argument is a bit like a discussion, so it's a form of conversation, but normally between two people, but it's a lot more emotional, it's a strong disagreement between people and it's normally emotional, it involves some frustration and some emotions and it's possible to win or lose an argument, it might involve people getting upset, people even shouting, using strong language, it's usually quite personal. Arguments can happen in professional contexts, but usually there's drama, people feel hurt afterwards, hurt feelings. A synonym of an argument is a row, typically you think of domestic arguments, that's where a husband and wife for example, or a boyfriend and girlfriend or whatever, end up sort of shouting at each other or something, that is an argument.

It can be kind of an intellectual discussion to an extent, or it can be a very emotionally charged conversation. It could be informal, for example with your wife, it could be a, do we have formal arguments? I suppose so, you might have some strong disagreements at work, but certainly if there's a sense of charged emotion, that's probably an argument and it's a win or lose kind of situation. Normally they don't have clear formalised rules, normally they just happen spontaneously and fairly chaotically, so that's an argument.

Obviously I've just used the word chaotic to explain the word argument and the normal rules of English teaching state that you shouldn't use a word that is rarer and more complex to explain a word that's probably quite well known. But anyway, I think you get the idea, right? A discussion, then an argument is much more emotional, and then a debate is a lot more formalised. A debate has a purpose which is to persuade either the audience who are observing the debate, or even a judge whose job it is to decide who wins and who loses, but there's an element of persuading other people who are observing the debate that your position generally is superior to your opponent's, and debates are normally quite formal.

They're normally organised in maybe an academic situation, it might be a political situation, it could be a debate on television, even for entertainment

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purposes, so it's a lot more formalised. There might be rules, there might be structure, for example you get to say what you think for two minutes and then this person says what they think for two minutes, and then you get a chance to respond for a minute, and then you have a chance to respond for a minute, and then there's like a freeform section, and then the audience decides who won, so that's a debate, right? They can be informal too, they can happen spontaneously, a bit like a discussion, but there is a sense that with a debate there is a form of academic discipline involved, respectful turn-taking, and the principles of debating, certainly in the West, were largely founded in ancient Greece, okay? It's a sort of an intellectual pursuit, it's competitive but it is civil, it's focused on logic and evidence usually, very structured, often very formalised, in a debating club or in a debating event, fixed time limits, clear turns and things like that. But having said that, yes, debates can also end up being quite informal, and as you'll hear, Ray gives an example of a situation, a social situation, where he was just like standing around chatting about something, and someone came in and challenged his opinion directly, and Ray didn't know how to respond, and since then he's learned all the things he should have done, all the things he should have said in that social situation.

So debating is a sort of formalised academic intellectual exercise, but a lot of the skills that we use in debates can be transferred to all sorts of other situations in which you will need to speak, and that includes discussions, arguments, any time when you have to give your opinion, negotiations, meetings, you know, any sort of robust conversation in which you will express your opinion and respond to other people's opinions, and probably aim to try to persuade people that your opinion is right, while maintaining a certain level of control as well, so you don't get emotional. In a debate, getting emotional in the way that you might do in an argument, where you end up shouting or getting very heated, that's normally not a sign of success in a debate, so it's a sort of more logical intellectual pursuit. So obviously very key skills that you can learn from this episode, not just so that you can take part in debates and discussions more effectively, but also I think that learning to do this sort of thing can really help you with your confidence, okay, and that's an important point to make, that maybe some of you out there, you feel like this, that's not for me, sort of having disagreements and

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expressing my opinion and trying to persuade people sounds a bit aggressive, it's not really for me.

I think it's a vital thing to be able to do in English, is to be able to give opinions and respond to opinions, even to a certain extent, even if you are not incredibly aggressive and applying yourself to discussions like this, I think a certain level of ability to express opinions and disagree with people, I think is a really important thing. There are cultural issues involved in that, where I'm from in the UK, also in France, in Europe, large parts of the Western world, it is totally normal in a social or work context to have an opinion and to express that opinion and also to defend that opinion. I think that's a massive cultural thing, in some parts of the world that's less common, that there's more of a consensus driven approach to situations, whereas certainly in English you would probably be expected to have an opinion and to defend it to a certain extent, like in meetings and things like that.

So all of these techniques and ideas can help you with all of that. So watch out for those techniques, and there are a few different things listed, certain specific debating techniques listed, but also look out for the specific language used in debates and discussions. How do we actually construct our sentences, not just in terms of the debating method, but also the specific wording of what we're saying.

Those are things to look out for. There is a PDF transcript, which you can find linked in the description, that will help you if you want to review things. At the end of the episode, I will come back and talk a little bit, and I'll explain and highlight certain bits of vocabulary that I've noticed in this conversation, that you will hear, that I think are worth noting.

Some quite nice substantial bits of vocab here. For example, words like combative, egregious, disagreeable, in good faith, bad faith, and more. So I'll give you a little vocab review at the end.

First, we talk about Ray's accent, since he's from Glasgow, and we talk about Glaswegian accents more broadly, before we then get properly into the subject. About 10 distinct debating techniques are discussed and

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demonstrated, and near the end of the episode, we do these mini debates, where we actually demonstrate real debates on a variety of different topics. Some of them serious, some of them a bit more ridiculous.

I think that's probably the most entertaining part of the episode, so stick around for that. Also, we have a question for you, so keep listening for that question. We want to know your answer in the comments section.

That's it for this introduction. Let's get started. Let's meet Ray from Glasgow, the English teacher, with a lot to say about debating skills in English.

I'll speak to you again at the end, but now let's get started, and here we go. It's been a long time, actually, hasn't it? Do you remember the last time we spoke together? That's right. It's already been about four or five years, can you believe it? I know.

Time flies, doesn't it? Yeah, that's right. What have you been doing with yourself over the last five years? So, a lot's changed since the last time I was here. The last time I was here was before the war started in Ukraine, and after that begun, there was a lot of Ukrainian refugees arriving here in Scotland.

So, I got a job with the local government, helping to teach English as a second language to the refugees who are arriving in the country, and that was a really rewarding job, you know. I got to make a lot of friends and learn a little bit about the Ukrainian culture and a little bit of their language as well. So, yeah, that was fun, but that contract came to an end in 2024, at which point I just went back to my private practise.

So, I've now done more than 8,000 lessons on Preply, teaching students how to speak English fluently, confidently, and with a wide vocabulary for passing the IELTS exam or speaking English in general in business settings. And most recently, I've started my own school called Elevate English, and there I've been working with groups of intermediate to advanced-level learners, helping them to use lots of idioms and phrasal verbs and advanced vocabulary in real discussions. And as part of the programme, students get access to all the courses I've made, and that includes a course on how to pass job interviews.

And in that course, I actually do a job interview. It's a real-life job interview, which I privately recorded, and students get access to that. I recorded a course with a comedian, which was about how to be funny in English.

We cover exaggeration and sarcasm and self-deprecating humour. There's a course there on how to small talk and make friends. It's particularly useful for people who are in a new country or a new job.

And of course, there's also a section on how to debate, which we'll be talking about today. So, that's what? Elevate English, is it? Elevate English, that's right. People just Google that and they'll find it? Yeah, it's on School.

I can share a link with you maybe, and you can put it in the description if that's okay. School is a platform for delivering online courses, is that right? Courses and communities and group sessions and all of the above. Okay.

All right, cool. So, you've been busy. You're from Scotland and in Scotland, is this right? That's right.

Is it obvious from my accent? Some people think I don't sound Scottish, some people think I sound very Scottish. Well, I can definitely tell you're Scottish. I can definitely hear a Scottish accent.

But you're from Glasgow, right? That's right. Probably where the strongest Scottish accent is. Yeah.

But I mean, I guess people say that you don't have a very strong Scottish accent, or they say that they can't tell you're from Scotland. I mean, I can just because I'm so familiar with the different accents. But compared to some Glaswegian accents, yours is certainly quite mild.

I would say it's a little softer. You know, I got married not too long ago. And my wife is from Burma.

When I was talking about the things I've done in the last five years, I only spoke about my work. I didn't talk about my personal life. So yeah, I got married and my wife has been here now for almost four years, and she still doesn't understand the Glaswegian accent totally.

Well, it's difficult, isn't it? I mean, she understands your accent, but I guess, you know, just sort of sometimes, sometimes really. Yeah. But I can imagine going out and about in Glasgow, she's going to encounter some people with pretty strong accents.

But sometimes I don't understand the Glaswegian accent. Really? Well, because there's, I suppose, a generational difference. For example, the millennials have grown up in a very globalised Glasgow.

And we've got a lot of immigration. We have a lot of universities and a lot of foreign students. You know, my generation has grown up on the internet and watching Netflix.

But the previous generations were just a lot more Scottish. And sometimes when I'm talking to them, I have no idea what they're saying. I can give you an example, right? Yeah, yeah.

I was at work back when I was doing that job with the government, and the other English teachers were all much older than I was. And once I sat down with them having lunch, and I was on my phone, I wasn't really listening to their conversation. But one of them decides he wants to include me in the conversation.

So I just to say I don't, I didn't know the context of what they were discussing. And he says, Ray, I was like, Yeah, says Jairne. And I was like, Come again, says Jairne.

As I go one more time, he says, Jairne your clays. Do you get it? I do. Yeah.

Do you do you iron your clothes? Do you iron your clothes? But okay, so I get the Jairne bit, which, you know, is like just a sort of contracted version of do

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you iron Jairne? And do you, you know, I guess, across all of British English, like, regardless of Scottish, English, Welsh, whatever, everyone turns do you into J. So yeah, Jairne. But iron, that's a particularly difficult word. And I suppose in a Glaswegian accent, it's gonna sound different to the way I say it.

Iron. Yeah, definitely. But then your clothes, that was the difficult bit.

Clays. Your iron clays. Clays.

Your clays. Yeah. Clays.

Wow. Yeah. Yeah, that's, that's pretty good.

That's a good example. Also, I guess in Glasgow, there's a there's a whole dialect as well. And some even argue that it's not even English, that it could be, I mean, there's, there's some people call it Scots.

There's Scots. Scots. Gaelic.

Is that the right term? Yeah. But actually, to be honest, I think there's Gaelic and there's Gaelic, one's from Ireland, one's from Scotland, but I always mix the two up. I can't remember which one is.

I should get this right. Scots. Hold on a sec.

I think you could call it an endangered language because so few people speak it. Now, there were a couple of initiatives to bring it back, but there's just not enough people who speak it. Gaelic is the one from Scotland, Scottish, Gaelic, and Gaelic would be the Irish one.

But I mean, there's that, which is a whole language, you know, unto itself. But also, when I guess some Scottish people speak English, they will use a lot of dialect words as well, and quite different pronunciation. Half of the time, I have no idea what they're talking about.

Really? Yeah, I have. So, for example, people who have been to university or who have worked in, you know, bigger companies, they've probably had more exposure to people from other countries and they've neutralised their accents. But the Scottish or the Glaswegian people, which have been raised in communities where primarily people are just speaking with that accent, they haven't developed or globalised in any way.

And their accent and their language is still incredibly Glaswegian. And sometimes I have no idea what they're talking about. That's very interesting.

There's a couple of videos you can look up on YouTube, Impossible Scottish Accent, and every single one of those videos is from Glasgow, by the way. Yeah. I can understand maybe 75% of them, but even other native English people understand like 50%.

I find it fascinating and wonderful, to be honest. I mean, I haven't been to Glasgow. Unfortunately, I'd love to go.

You should. It's beautiful. I'm sure it is.

And my wife and I keep talking about going to Scotland. We're going to do it one day. I'd love to show her Scotland.

It's an amazing country. I've been to Scotland a few times, but just, you know, I've never been to Edinburgh either. I've just been to other parts.

But yeah, I'd love to go. But my experience, I guess, mainly with Scottish accents is, mainly through television, you know, when I was a kid, there was a show on TV called Rabsey Nesbitt. Okay, I don't know that one.

You don't know it? Oh, it's about like a working class guy from Glasgow, and you just follow his life. And this is just the strongest Glaswegian accent. It's amazing.

Anyway, we're getting sidetracked, which is quite normal on this podcast. But yes, you mentioned debating. That's one of the courses that you've created in your online school.

But debating is the subject that we're going to talk about. So why have we chosen to talk about debating in this episode? Well, for a lot of the people listening to this, and myself included at one point in time, I would cringe when I'd hear the word debating. I thought that debating was synonymous with arguing.

And I thought it was only for university clubs for highly disagreeable people, or for politicians. But for a normal person who wants to live a peaceful life and go to work and earn your salary and see your friends and go home, I thought I thought I could live through my whole life without ever needing to debate. But now I've completely changed my opinion.

And the fact is, if you are someone who has opinions, you're probably going to need to debate them at some time. Like your opinions could be related to social issues, environmentalism, they could be related to your diet, if you're vegan or vegetarian. Your opinions can, of course, be the classics, religion and politics, the more contentious ones.

But if you have opinions on anything, it's quite likely that people are going to say things which you find to be offensive, egregious, or disagreeable. And then what do you do in those situations? Well, you can just be quiet and put your head down. And that's quite a sad thing to do.

Because a lot of students and a lot of people I've known are in the situation that they're a professional, they've got lots of experience. But then someone says something, which they totally disagree with. And because one, maybe English is their second language, or two, they're not feeling too confident, or three, they're not really used to how to conduct themselves in a debate, they end up saying nothing and putting their head down.

And if you can just hear things that you disagree with, and put your head down and not respond to it, then you probably don't need these techniques.

But if it bothers you, if you want to know how to strategically respond to points which are disagreeable for you, if you want to know how to put your own arguments forward in a convincing way, then these can be really useful tips. And also a lot of the listeners here, they're probably perhaps from Europe, or Asia, or Middle East or Africa.

And perhaps they're now living in an English speaking country. Or perhaps they're now working in a company where they use English. And not only has the language changed, but the culture has changed, the beliefs have changed, what's right and what's wrong has changed.

And you're going to be in situations where people will say things which you completely disagree with. So by learning these techniques, this is basically the jab, cross, hook, and uppercut of debating. For anyone who doesn't know it yet, those are your four basic punches, right? This is how you're going to defend your ideas.

And see if you know how to debate, you actually never need to argue. Because see if you're getting into these discussions, and it's becoming emotional, and people are shouting, or people are getting upset, then it's not a good job of debating. But if you're a good debater, you'll be able to dismantle your opponent's arguments and put your own arguments forward in a productive way.

So yeah, it's been something which has been transformative and beneficial for me. And it's been something that my students enjoy practising as well. So hopefully your audience will enjoy it.

Also, I would just like to add three points. So one is that the fact that Yeah, what you said is very well put, that a lot of people in different cultures, sort of, let's say, arguing or defending your point of view is not necessarily the normal way of doing things that in some places, it's much more normal to just agree with what you feel everyone is saying in the room. And everyone just kind of quite quickly slots into having the same opinion, you know.

I mean, just as an example, I live in France now, I used to live in Japan, and the cultures are really different in those two places. France is more similar to the UK. Although in the UK, we have a slightly more, let's say, indirect way of putting things.

But the similarity between France and the UK is that you're expected to have an opinion, and you're expected to share your opinion. So that could be in a social situation, or it could be in a work situation, in a meeting, let's say, you're expected to have, you know, a point of view on things. And it shows character, if you're able to express it.

That doesn't have to be combative, it doesn't have to be disagreeable, it doesn't have to be an argument or disagreement. But it just shows that you are a serious person, if you've got a point of view, and that you can express it. Whereas, I mean, in Japan, obviously, people have points of view, they express them and things like that.

But I've noticed that people are more likely to, perhaps, agree. They're a bit more agreeable in a social setting. There's probably a cultural element to it, definitely.

Yes. I mean, in my experience as a teacher, I'll, for example, have a class and I think to myself, right, we're going to have a discussion today. We're going to have a discussion about these issues in the class, and I want to create a sort of discussion.

And I'll put the issue on the table, and everyone in France has got stuff to say, and a discussion quite quickly happens, and there's disagreement. And it's friendly, often friendly disagreement, but there's disagreement going on. In my experience in Japan, I would think, right, I'm going to have a discussion in this class, and I'd put the point for discussion on the table or write it up on the board.

And one person, probably the more confident person in the group, would give their opinion. And then I go, okay, that's really interesting. What do you think? Yeah, I agree with him.

What about, okay, what about you? Yeah, me too. And everyone would just agree with the guy who spoke first. I get the feeling that some of them didn't agree, but they just perhaps weren't, they just felt it wasn't quite appropriate to challenge that person who was probably older, maybe a bit more fluent.

Well, there's a couple of really interesting elements here. The first one is that, so there's a cultural element, we might find in some of the Asian countries, that people have got more of a tendency to agree. And there's another element of people tend to listen to the person with the most confident voice.

So if someone says something very confidently, this is how we should do it. Everyone knows that this is the right way. Even if you disagree, you don't want to be someone outside of the, everyone knows.

And then people just follow, and they agree with it anyway, and people are too scared to challenge it. So yeah, I think it's really important to learn some of these skills. But see for those students who are from these cultures where they're a little bit more reserved or conservative, or they're more agreeable, for them to come into these cultures where, for example, I think here in the UK, the dynamics of we just listen to the person who's older or more experienced, it's not the same.

Like here in the UK, I've seen cases where much younger people will argue and put their point forward. So people who are coming from these cultures are now working in like English companies or British companies or whatever it may be, it can be a total culture shock for them. Yeah, absolutely.

Another thing I wanted to say, so my two other points, my second point is that debates are not always serious. Sometimes they can be quite friendly. So I was going to raise this a little bit later, but in my experience, I haven't really done many formal debates, like academic contexts or debating societies or things like that.

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But I have done quite a lot of debating in my life, mainly with my close friends and family. And I'll just be with my friends in the pub or wherever. And we just start talking about something, and there'll be a point of disagreement.

And then I start arguing with my friends, with my brother or something. And I'm definitely using a lot of debating techniques in my argument. But it's all in good faith.

It's all good natured disagreement. So sometimes debating is a friendly thing and something you do with your friends and your close family and stuff like that. And my third point is that, yes, learning how to debate and practising it and practising arguing and responding to other people's arguments and disagreeing is good for confidence.

Sorry, go ahead. I was going to say, I think I get the impression that that's something that you've picked up, is that, you know, where previously you weren't someone who disagreed that much, these days as you've become more and more confident, you've discovered that you can actually express your opinion, disagree, back up your arguments and so on. It's quite empowering.

Yeah. I mean, the only thing I can create a link between that maybe some people have experienced is with boxing. Because see, if you've never done some sparring before, you might think that you're made of glass and you're really scared to get hit.

But then you go to a boxing club and you put on the pads and then you give a punch and you take a punch and you're like, oh, I didn't break it. And then you actually get enjoyment out of it. And then you get to a point where you just want to fight with everyone.

There's something similar with debating because at first you may be scared and you may be thinking, oh, it's going to turn into an argument. Everyone's going to look at me. It's going to be very awkward.

But then you learn some of these techniques and you try applying it. And then you win debates and you're like, oh, well, and then you just want to debate with everyone. Yeah.

Yes. So what are your personal experiences with debating? Are you an experienced debater? Have you done formal debates? Are you a combative person? Not at all. I'm actually naturally very introverted and quite shy.

Like if you told me 10 years ago, I'd be on podcasts teaching people how to debate. It's, it's, it's doesn't seem like something that would ever have happened, but I'll tell you a story about a debate, which, uh, you know, has stuck with me. So before I was a teacher, I worked in retail and customer services and I had this one colleague and whenever he and I were on a shift together, a shift that was eight hours long, it would feel like it was barely 30 minutes.

And we would have not debates, not arguments, but discussions. We would talk about anything. We would talk about life, about things in the news, about laws, about things that we read.

It could be anything. But on this one occasion we're talking about, does God exist? Now I'm a Muslim. So yeah, I was on the affirmative and he was more agnostic.

Now it was a kind of conversation where I would say something, then there'd be a pause, there'd be some thinking, then he would say something and there'd be a pause and then there'd be some thinking. No one was trying to win. We were just having a discussion.

And this is a conversational topic that I quite enjoy. Now I, and I felt like I had some amount of knowledge to contribute to that discussion and it felt like a very edifying, profound and enjoyable discussion. Now, as this was going on, a colleague overhears us and he decides to interject.

He walks up from behind me, so I didn't see him coming. And he said something like, believing in God, so stupid. How can anyone believe in God? It's 2016.

I think it was like 2016 back then, right? It's 2016. How can anyone believe in God in 2016? I think it's so stupid. It's for people who don't understand things.

Now I turn from the person I'm talking to and I look at this colleague who's interrupted our conversation. And I was like, I was trying to generate a response, but I just couldn't get something fast enough. And then he said a few more comments.

He said, oh, I think we should just not be silly and we should just, you know, believe in things that we can see. And that's it. And then he walked away.

And now other colleagues saw this happen. So what it looked like was I was having a discussion about something that I was knowledgeable on. He came in, he beat me in a debate.

I had nothing to say and he walked out. So it looked like he just completely destroyed me. But here's a third conditional for any of the listeners, right? If he had come in peacefully, if he had said something like, guys, this is a really interesting conversation, but I just feel like it doesn't make sense to believe in God.

What do you guys think? See if he had spoken to me like that, it would have been much easier for me to think of a response. It would have been much easier for me to have a conversation, but that's not how debates start. You'll be in a discussion or you'll be in a meeting or you'll be with your friends a lot of the time.

And then someone will suddenly say something that you find to be highly disagreeable and see if you do not challenge it immediately. Because you only have a couple of seconds to respond. And if you don't challenge it in

that couple of seconds and create a dialogue, then the moment's gone and they have basically won the conversation.

So I guess a question I'd ask to the audience and to yourself, Luke, is say you're in my position at that time, what would you have done? You've got a couple of seconds, they've come in, they've said your idea is stupid, and you've got a couple of seconds to respond before the conversation moves forward. What would you say? Well, it's very difficult to counter that argument in that situation. You're at work, there's a gap between customers, it's just a quiet moment and you've been having this conversation.

And this person comes in, in a fairly, let's say, bad faith kind of way, where they quite rudely dismiss what you're saying. Now, it's quite hard to immediately construct some sort of perfect counter argument to that in that situation. In my experience, when this sort of thing happens, I tend to just sort of go, okay.

Fair enough. Because for me, I kind of think, well, what's important in this situation? Do I really need to win the argument in this moment? Or do I at least need to show that I've understood what the person has said, but I'm not particularly bothered by it? I hear what you're saying. And okay, you can have that opinion.

I'm not necessarily going to try and counter it right now. So I'll just say, okay, all right, fine. Here's another question.

So you do stand up comedy. Have you ever dealt with hecklers before? Yeah, but I rarely get aggressive hecklers for some reason. But yeah, when a heckler heckles you, so listeners, that's where as a comedian, you're on stage trying to make everyone laugh.

And one person decides to make a comment, to shout a comment from the audience. And as a comedian, you're probably supposed to deal with it somehow. You know, you're supposed to put them down or something like that.

In my experience, the best way to deal with a heckler is just to let them, just give them the opportunity to say what they're saying. And normally they will, the expression is, do you give them enough rope to hang themselves, which is not a very nice expression really. But you know, the idea is that you let them say what they've got to say, and often they will do the damage themselves, you know? And ultimately in a standup situation, you're standing up, everyone else is sitting down.

You're the high status person. You've got the microphone and you just let them say what they've got to say. And normally they will destroy themselves in the process, you know, because they're interrupting the show and stuff.

But obviously that does give you a chance to then think of some witty put down. I heard a comedian once say that he'll ask them to repeat it. And the benefit of asking them to repeat it is that it gives you some time to think of a response.

And for example, see when people are talking, and this is one of the things I coach some of my students on, especially ones who need to do public speaking or presentations, they'll regularly use these filler sounds. So why are these filler sounds happening? The reason, it's like when you have a computer and you open up too many tabs, and then you get that little spinning icon before it loads the page, that's basically your computer saying, give me a second. Okay, here you go.

So whenever you see, um, and then you respond, it's really just that your brain was processing the next thing to say. It's not like for English learners, it's quite often, it's a little bit more regular because there's more processing power involved in speaking English because it's their second language. But even for natives, when they're under high pressure situations, like in an interview or on a podcast with English with Luke, you know, the umming and ahing might come out a little bit more.

But what's one thing, there's different ways to hide it. One of the techniques is just to take a pause, or one of the techniques is to use repetition, or one of the techniques is to start speaking a little bit slower, and then you can hide

these gaps to give yourself more thinking time. But all you actually really needed was more time to think.

And like that comedian that was talking about how to handle hecklers, he said that he'll ask them to repeat it because that gives him more time to think. So with, in the debates, right, I'm not going to, that guy who came in, I'm not going to say to him, sorry, I didn't hear you. Can you say that again? Because obviously everyone heard him.

It was very clear. But the point I'm trying to make is I need to buy myself more time so I can think of a response because you mentioned it very well. See the perfect counter argument, the perfect rebuttal.

You might have it, but it takes time to process it from a thought to language to then expressing it. And when you only have one second to respond, it's really difficult to do that. And under the pressure of the situation, it might come out like, Oh, right.

So that this is where this first technique comes. So this first technique is called Socratic questioning. So Socratic is the adjective of the Greek philosopher from the fifth century BCE, Socrates.

Now Socrates used this technique, not for debating. He actually used it as an intellectual exercise. He, whenever like his colleagues, theologians, academics, and philosophers would present ideas, he would question them a lot to find weak points in their arguments.

He wanted to find weak points because that would challenge them to strengthen their ideas and to produce something which is better and stronger. Now there was a book I was reading recently. It's called the diary of a CEO by Steve Bartlett.

And in the fourth chapter, he's talking about beliefs. And he asked a sample of people to what percentage do you understand the working of your toilet? And many people said, I understand how my toilet works. 100%, 90%, 100%.

I know how it works. Anyone who said that they understood it 90 or a hundred percent, he gave them a piece of paper and a pen. And he said, I want you to explain exactly how your toilet works.

He then came to them several minutes later. And he said, okay, do you still maintain that you understand how the toilet works? 100%. And he said, without exception, every single person said, actually, I probably only understand it 10% or 20%.

So people have very strong beliefs. People have very confident voices, but underneath it, they actually don't have strong reasons. You know, a lot of people have strong beliefs, but they don't have strong reasons to back them up.

People have become so accustomed and so used to confidently saying their opinions and not being challenged. But see when you challenge them and you say, oh, why do you believe that? Then you'll see that a lot of people's opinions are not as strong as you thought. Albert Einstein said that you don't fully understand something unless you can explain it to a six-year-old.

Because the six-year-old's going to ask you lots of questions. And if you cannot answer those questions with simple language, you probably don't understand it very well yourself. So when someone challenges you or challenges your ideas or says something that you find to be disagreeable, you can use this technique called Socratic questioning.

And the way to formulate it is sometimes as simple as just saying, oh, why do you say that? Now, it's hard. It takes time to formulate a response. You can't, have you ever had these times you're in a debate or an argument and later on you're lying in bed or you're in the shower, you're like, damn, I should have said this, I should have said that.

But you didn't have time to think. But if you had time to think, you could have said something. But if you just say, oh, what brought you to that conclusion? Can you explain to me the thought process that brought you to that? Do you

believe that's always true or just sometimes? Or why do you say that? Now they need to, because saying, believing in God is stupid, that's an emotional argument.

But when you ask them, oh, can you explain that? Can you explain why you think that? Now they need to give you some logic. And one, it's very quick and easy to just ask why. You don't need to think too much.

Two, when they present their argument, there's usually a lot of weaknesses in it. And then three, and the following techniques we can talk about, how to dismantle and break down their arguments. So you go, oh, that's interesting.

Why do you say that? What makes you say that? Why do you think that? And yeah, it gives you time. But also it starts to open up their argument, which then gives you a lot more things that you can respond to. So they start to then go into some detail about, you know, some specific part of their argument.

Then it's much easier to then counter argument, to counter argue against something much more specific. Yeah, I mean, that's kind of like the basis, to an extent, of modern debating, right? Is that you take the Socratic approach of asking questions as a way of challenging what someone has said and drilling down into their argument, right? I mean, we could give some examples of this sort of thing. You've got what leads you to that conclusion? Why do you say that? How do you know that's true? Yeah, exactly.

Exactly. Let's try a couple of examples. I will make an argument, and then you try and follow up with some Socratic questioning.

Okay. Children under 16 should not be allowed to use smartphones. Children under 16 should not be allowed to use smartphones.

That's certainly an interesting statement. What makes you say that? Well, because I think that there's a lot of children are wasting their time on social media. And because they're wasting their time on social media, they're probably not studying as much.

And there's so many things online that they could be reading anything which could be quite negative for them. Okay, such as what? Good, right? You're in a good place, right? Now you're getting me to keep speaking. So see there, I gave a couple of things like, what did I say again? I mentioned that they could be exposed to bad things.

I mentioned that they could be wasting their time. Like, see if you wanted, you could then go on to other debating techniques, which we'll talk about shortly, to attack those ideas to say, oh, so you think that students are only wasting their time and there's nothing beneficial on it. What about this? What about this? But see, if you're not ready with an argument yet, if you still need more time to process it, you can keep asking questions.

And you'll notice that the emotional arguments are very strong, but then the reasons behind it get weaker and weaker as you go. And see emotional arguments, they're very difficult to deal with because someone's emotions are technically never wrong, because I feel that way. And I'm correct that that's how I feel.

But the reasons why I feel that way can quite often be wrong. It's kind of like if I said, destroy this building, you know, it's huge, it's massive. It's, it's almost impossible.

If you start at the top of the building and you start working your way down, destroying it, it'll take you the rest of your life. But if you go inside the building and you find something foundational that the whole building is resting on, you know, if you find the reason why they believe this thing, it's a lot easier to deal with that. Yeah.

And also, by taking that approach, you do take your own emotions out of the equation. And I think that having an emotional argument, although many arguments are driven by emotion, being emotional in an argument isn't necessarily helpful. It turns into a shouting contest and it gets emotional and it just becomes terrible.

And it doesn't look professional. It doesn't look like you handled the argument well at all. Yeah.

So if you look at like televised debates, and there's so many fascinating debates that you can see on YouTube on a variety of different subjects, they're so entertaining and interesting. You kind of wonder, how is this debate being won or lost? And one of the ways that people lose debates in front of the audience, in the eyes of the audience, and it's a lot of it's about the feeling in the room, you know, you start to get a sense of the, just the room collectively knows when someone is winning or losing a debate. A lot of that's about losing control, becoming emotional, shouting, and, you know, basically showing emotion.

It's the person who stays in control and doesn't get easily, doesn't get easily sort of, what's the word for it? Doesn't start to flap or get emotional or upset. That's normally the person who's in a stronger position. Yeah.

Also some of these subjects, for example, believing in God or religion, these are quite emotional subjects for many people. And you might be feeling emotional on the inside, but where most people go wrong is they let the outside of their body represent their inside feelings, which you cannot do because it doesn't, you need to separate how you're feeling and how you're acting. So when I talk to some students who say they want to be more confident, well, first you need to learn how to act confidently.

Like if you sit at a coffee shop at the window and you watch the people walk past, you can look at people and say, he's confident. He's feeling sad today. He's angry.

He's got a lot on his mind because a lot of people, the way that they're feeling inside their body, it dictates what they do with their body. And although you cannot control your feelings, you can control what you do with your body. So we need to learn what calmness and confidence looks like on the outside, you know, with the chin up and the chest out and the shoulders back and, you know, the breathing being slow and controlled.

And regardless of how you're feeling, you need to come because you'll notice when you get emotional, you start acting in some way, but you need to become aware of that and then come back to this position of acting confidently, regardless of how you're feeling. The more that your feelings are dictating the way that you're acting, the more that you're being controlled by them instead of them controlling you. And this is so important, not only for debating, but for example, if you're going to a job interview or if I'm appearing on your podcast, you know, there's definitely anxiety prior to coming on or going on the interview or public speaking or giving the presentation, but you start to lose when those feelings dictate how you act instead of remembering what confidence actions look like and behaving calmly, regardless of how you're feeling on the inside.

So yeah, with the debating, you definitely want to maintain that calm demeanour. I also think that there's something to be said for maintaining a certain attitude of good faith as well, in a discussion, argument, debate, whatever you want to call it, where if we go back to the example you gave of the person interrupting you and challenging what you were saying in a direct and rude way, you gave an example of another way they could have done it, which is much more respectful. Having that respectful approach, I think it can be a lot more effective because it just keeps things sweet.

In a way, you're kind of saying, look, I'm just challenging your ideas. I'm not necessarily challenging you personally. And if you conduct yourself in a respectful manner with good faith, where you're not actually trying to humiliate someone or just trying to destroy someone, but you're just having a good faith argument with their ideas, then I think that reflects much, much better on you.

Well, as I mentioned earlier, that these techniques, they're kind of like the jab, cross, hook, and uppercut of debating. And you can use jab, cross, hook, and uppercut to defend yourself. You can use it to spar with your friends and to grow stronger, or you can use it to be a tyrant and to just attack people.

And with these techniques, some people are going to be tyrants. It's like, is the knife good or is it bad? Well, it depends if you're cutting the crust off your

bread or it depends if you're robbing people. So with these techniques, people use it in different ways.

And I mean, Socratic questioning is fairly innocuous, but certainly some of the techniques as we progress forward are going to be a lot more brutal and ruthless, shall we say. For example, what are some of the other techniques that we could talk about? Well, we'll keep the kind of more negative ones, I think, closer to the end and we'll cover them. We'll cover like, for example, where we go after the Socratic questioning.

But before I get to that, there's something important that I actually forgot. I was talking to a student recently, and she was in a situation where she was at work and one of her colleagues said something she found to be completely disagreeable and everyone else agreed with it. But she felt, one, because, you know, there was more of them and it was only her.

Two, they were mostly guys and she was a female, so she felt a little bit shy around them. Three, they had really confident voices. And four, you know, she was really passionate about the subject, but she didn't say anything back because she was feeling so nervous.

Now, in your life, you've probably, as an English teacher, students have come to you and said something like, I need to learn more vocabulary so I can be confident. I'm not confident. I'm so shy.

I need to learn more vocabulary. Or I'm really shy. I need to learn more phrasal verbs.

I'm not confident, so I need to learn more grammar. And what's happened in these situations is the student has correctly identified the problem, but they're prescribing the wrong solution to fix the problem. Because you can learn vocabulary until the cows come home, but that doesn't mean it's going to make you more confident.

And for any of the learners, until the cows come home means you can do it forever, but it's not going to make you more confident. So it's the same with

debating. Like that student, she said to me something like she wants to learn more about the topic so she can feel confident to debate it.

Now, debating is not about being right or wrong. Sometimes the person who is wrong can win the debate. It's not about how much you know.

And I'm not saying that it's not helpful. I'm not saying like, don't learn vocabulary, don't learn grammar. I'm not saying don't learn phrasal verbs.

And I'm certainly not saying don't learn the subjects that you want to debate. But what I'm saying is when you put all of your eggs in that basket, which is another idiom, which means when you think that's the most important thing, it's actually not correct. Learning techniques of how to defend your ideas can actually be sufficient for helping you in debates in many cases, as opposed to, as opposed to just learning about the subject or learning more vocabulary.

And yeah, that's all I wanted to add. Yeah. Yeah.

There's, there's, there's many ways of, you know, confidence. If we talk about confidence, just talking about your example. Yeah, there's many aspects to it.

It's not just about like putting all your eggs in one basket and just thinking it's all just about vocabulary or all about grammar. That's, you know, the way you apply yourself and so on as well. All right.

So let's have a look at some other debating techniques then. We've talked about Socratic questioning, which is basically sort of like exposing contradictions or gaps in logic, just simply by asking someone to be more specific about what they're saying. But there are all sorts of other common ways that we conduct ourselves in debates.

So the next one, I would say it's, it's called *reductio ad absurdum*, which is the Latin term for reduction to absurdity. Now this is, there's actually a couple of different techniques you can use here, but this is one of the ways that you can respond to their logic. Now, for example, we'll start with the God one, just cause we started with that.

The person says, believing in God is so stupid. I don't know why anyone thinks like this. Then I'll respond with Socratic questioning and say, Oh, why do you say that? And then he'll give me his logic.

He might say something else emotional, but I'll keep doing prodding him with Socratic questioning until I can get something that I can attack. And I remember that he mentioned, he only believes in things that he can see. Now see that that's his logic.

He only believes in things that he can see. So using reduction to the absurd, I can then take that logic and I can apply it to other things and see if it still works and see if it doesn't work. That shows that his logic is weak and it's not applicable.

And if the reason why he believes this thing is weak, then his whole argument crumbles. So for example, he says, I only believe in things that I can see. Can you think of a time that might not be true? Yeah.

I mean, you know, there's plenty of things that we assume are true, even though we haven't had firsthand experience of them. Yeah. I mean, what? I mean, there's plenty of scientific things that follow that.

Yeah. Well, I was thinking, have you seen your brain? Thankfully, no, I haven't. I've seen scans of it.

I've seen MRI scans of my brain, but I've never actually seen the thing itself. But in his case, he said he only believes in things that he can see. But you have to say to him, have you ever seen your brain? He goes, well, no.

And he's like, well, that's because you don't have one. Thank you. Good night.

Bye. Checkmate. Mic drop.

Walk out. He has been defeated. No, but more seriously, what were you saying? You were, you were mentioning.

So have you ever seen your brain as an example? So that's an example. I took his logic and I've applied it to something else that shows his logic doesn't work. Now, what's not going to happen is he is not going to say I have been defeated.

You are the winner. What will normally happen at this point is they'll start backtracking or they'll start trying to think of new reasons or they'll change the parameters of their argument. But all of this is him retreating and retreating is seen as weakness in the debate.

And a lot of the arguments that he might present after that will not, well, in many cases, not be as strong and you can keep recycling the same techniques until, you know, hopefully the fourth of the debate. But if you get, especially in social situations, if you get a good checkmate, if you get a good line on him, then that actually, because when people think back to the conversation, they don't think back to the, they don't have the transcript, but they do think back to these gotcha moments, you know, so it's a good way of immediately, you know, attacking his credibility. Mason So it's like, oh, you guys are talking about this so stupid, like people who believe in God, I can't believe people still believe in God.

It's so stupid. You know, like, personally, I believe in things I can see. After you said, oh, what makes you say, well, I believe in things I can see.

And then you say, oh, well, interesting. Have you ever seen your brain? And then, but what's a good way to respond to that? How would, how should he respond to that? Oh, that's a good question. Well, he's actually, to a degree, shot himself in the foot.

And that's an idiom for any of the learners, which means he's, you know, he's made a mistake. He's made an emotional argument without an immediate plan to back up without expecting to be challenged. And, and then he was challenged.

And the best thing he was able to produce was, you know, a very feeble logic for it, which was then attacked. So yeah, at this point, he would need to redefine his parameters or think or make a new logic or, or, or he could go on the offensive and then need to attack me in some way. I reckon one thing he could do is he could show that he's identified exactly what you're doing, which is you're using this what's it called reducto ad absurdum? Yeah.

So in a way, he challenges what you're saying by kind of saying, oh, I see what you're doing. You're trying to, you know, you'd have to say, you'd have to challenge what you're doing with that is you're exactly reducing his logic to a conclusion, which is absurd. You know, it's like, okay, you only believe in things you can see.

Have you ever seen this? You haven't. So why do you believe in that? And you could challenge the logical steps that the person is taking. So it could be something like, well, okay, sure.

I have never seen my brain, but I have it on good evidence that the brain exists, you know, and... Well, then I can progress my argument and say, well, on good evidence, I can make a case for believing in God. The way that you believe in things without seeing them, I can believe in things also. And then you can start to have a discussion about it, about who's got the better reasons and who can win the debate.

Yeah. It's a really good way of progressing, moving the debate forwards into something, a much more tangible, much more solid ground for discussion and argument. One problem with that approach is that you do have to be careful of where you are dragging their argument.

So it can become a straw man argument, you know, which is, I think, one of the techniques that's often sort of used or misused in debating, which is where you kind of take someone's argument to a certain conclusion, which is not actually the argument that they're making. And you build a straw man, and then you destroy that straw man. And it looks like you're winning the

argument, but actually you're debating against a different point that they're not making.

You know, it always depends on where you are, right? Because you're going to meet people in your life who are bullies, and they're combative. And sometimes you just want to, you know, teach them a lesson. But that's not the status quo with debating.

Like, you know, I don't know how people are going to use these techniques when they apply them in their lives, and they get into real situations. But for example, in my life, I've met a fair number of bullies. And sometimes in these cases, you do want to just teach them a lesson publicly in a debate.

But yeah, this is definitely not the, like, it's not ethical debating, making straw mans and ad hominem and techniques we can talk about. Ad hominem. That's another one.

So a straw man is a sort of a weakness. That's, you can point out that someone is making a straw man argument where you say to them, well, that's not actually the point I'm making. You're now arguing with something I'm not saying.

That's not what I'm saying. That's where you point out a straw man argument. The ad hominem is also a sort of bad faith form of arguing.

And if it's called out, it can count against you. So what is an ad hominem attack? Well, an ad hominem is attacking the person instead of attacking the argument. But if you like, shall we do a couple more examples of reductio ad absurdum? We can move forward.

Let's do it. Yeah, go for it. I'll hit you with a couple of, like, arguments and then just try your best to give me a reduction to the absurdity.

Okay. All right. I believe in complete freedom of speech.

I think you should be allowed to say anything you want anytime. There should be no restrictions. You should be able to voice all of your opinions.

Okay, sure. I see what you mean. So you believe that people should be allowed to incite racial hatred in a public forum? Oh, no, no.

You think someone should be allowed to go on television and directly tell people to go out and commit acts of racial hatred, do you? Perfect. Great response. That's a perfect response.

I would have no idea how to respond to that. The only thing I would be able to do is say, oh, actually, but not in every case, not in these cases. And then you could respond and say, so you don't believe in complete freedom of speech, you believe in freedom of speech within certain parameters, you know, which I think is the case for most people.

Yeah, perfect, perfect example. Let's try another one. Okay.

I think that violent video games creates violence. Violent video games create violence. Yeah, it makes violent people, people who play violent video games, it makes them violent people.

Before the invention of video games, there was no violence. Perfect. Good.

That's a good response. Another one is, okay, so if you play racing games, do you become a Formula One driver? If you play chess, do you become a war general? Yeah, yeah, I see. Yeah.

So basically, if computer games make you do things, why is it that... Other things, put that logic in other places, it doesn't work anymore. If you play a lot of Super Mario, you become a plumber, do you? Yeah. All right.

If you become a mushroom consumer, if you play Super Mario, you just eat mushrooms all the time. Start shooting fireballs at the end of your hand. All right.

And that's maybe a little, it's certainly absurd, that one, the mushroom one. Okay, this is fun. I'm enjoying this.

You got any more? Let's do one more. People should always tell the truth, no matter what. This is good, because my daughter said this to me the other day.

People should always tell the truth, no matter what. Okay. That's actually a bit more difficult.

So you think that lying is never... ..lying then is never actually useful or important? I think it's always wrong. Always? Always wrong, always immortal. So even if your mum comes in and she's bought a new dress, and she says, how do I look? Tell me how you'd respond.

If she's had a haircut that would take six months to grow out, and she comes in and says, how do I look? They're all... And it doesn't look good. Are you genuinely going to say, oh, it looks terrible? Are you really going to say that? Well, from one man to another, we know there's only one correct answer to that question, especially when it's your wife. Honey, how does the food taste? Oh, it's great.

It's the best thing I've ever tasted. It was delicious. Thank you, honey.

Thank you for making me dinner. If you ever want your wife to cook your food again, there's only one correct answer. It's a tricky one though, isn't it? Because some people would say, oh, it's important to tell the truth, because ultimately, you know, the truth will set you free.

And the person's only going to learn if they are told the truth. You know, if they serve you some food, which is not good, they should know, oh, it's actually not good. And then they'll learn to cook better.

Exactly. Well, there's in teaching, I don't know if you ever heard this one about the compliment sandwich. Start with a compliment, give a criticism and then another compliment.

So there's like the criticism is in between two compliments. For example, you mentioned mom coming in and her dress with her funny haircut. Mom, you always look beautiful.

You're the most beautiful person in my eyes. To be honest, although this haircut's nice, I actually think the previous one highlighted your features a lot better and it suit you. However, you look great whatever you do and I love you no matter what.

So then you've got the criticism in the compliments. And this is something like I tried doing with students and maybe I shouldn't be telling this here because some of my students may be listening. They hand me a piece of writing.

They're like, teacher, how is it? And I'm like, well, you put in a great effort. You certainly put your pen on the paper. But the grammar, the syntax, the vocabulary, the spelling is awful, but I really appreciate that you tried your best.

Yeah. Or maybe not even using awful. There's degrees of this.

The whole argument, people should always tell the truth all the time. It's like, well, actually, what does that actually mean? What does telling the truth really mean? Because if someone does a piece of writing for you and it's not good enough, let's say for IELTS 6.5, you might not say this is awful. You might say, oh, well, this is not quite good enough.

I mean, but that's not a debate, but let's say you're in a debate, right? Yeah. And that someone says that you should tell the truth all the time, no matter what. Well, a response that comes to my mind is, have you ever heard of that? I think it's like one of these questions that they ask in religious and moral education in schools here.

They give the example of the Holocaust and you have some Jews hiding in your basement. And then a Nazi officer opens the door and says, are there

any Jews hiding in here? I mean, if you tell the truth, then people are going to die. And if you lie, then you get to live.

So is, you know, or your friend is hiding from a murderer or hiding from a psycho ex-girlfriend. And she says, where is he? You know, are you going to say he's there? He's right there. Yes.

No, that's good. Yeah. I hadn't thought of that.

Sometimes lying is obviously the right thing to do. You just need to be able to prove it. I was thinking more like, well, lying is always wrong.

Well, you know, define lying, I suppose. I don't know what approach or technique that is, but it's kind of like asking the person to, and maybe it's Socratic questioning. Yeah.

What do you actually mean by lying? Let me just understand what you mean by lying exactly, because I think that there are shades of grey here. So tell me what lying is. Great.

That is Socratic questioning. Another thing you can do is ask them for evidence. Like there's a burden of evidence.

So you can say, you know, this thing is always stupid. This thing is always wrong. This politician is completely evil and is always terrible.

Or, you know, whatever their emotional argument is, you can Socratic question and say, oh, why do you say that? What's led you to that conclusion? Is that always true or sometimes true? But you can also ask them, oh, what's your source for that? Or what's your evidence? And then if their evidence is, oh, it was this thing that I read. This thing I read where? Oh, I don't know. Okay.

So you believe in this thing, but you don't know where you read it from. Fair enough. Yeah.

Burden of proof. Yeah. That's it.

Burden of proof is a massive principle in this kind of thing. And, you know, in debating, but also in legal proceedings, you know, but certainly it applies to debating. Like if someone makes a big claim, they also need to provide big evidence to back it up.

Right. Which is, what is it? The extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. And it's always worth remembering that.

But someone comes at you and says the earth is flat. Then it's very tempting to try to prove that the earth is round. But what perhaps you should be doing is trying to get them to explain why the earth is flat.

You know? Very good. Because it's an extraordinary claim. And you need to, you need to, they need to provide you with extraordinary evidence to back it up.

By the way, I've spoken to flat earthers, and they come up with some really funny arguments, which are quite difficult. Like here's one, they said, like, look at your glass of water. Is it a straight line? Or is it curved? And they say, well, that's because of gravity, because the earth is flat.

And I'm kind of like, I don't know how gravity works totally, but I'm sure that's not how it works. Right. So they're saying that because when you look at a glass of water, the line of the water is completely horizontal.

Yeah, I mean, that's, that's, that's an argument that's not really based on good foundations, because the idea, they're arguing that that line of water should be curved. Yeah, you know, the fact is that the curvature of the earth is, you know, the, I don't know how to describe it, but that curve is so slight, that wherever you're for the human eye, it will look completely flat. But, you know, you need to be much further away and have, you know, just looking at a few centimetres in a glass, the curvature is not going to be visible.

Well, yeah, also there's, this is what we call an evidence-based argument that this is, you've used some type of science or some type of study or some type of, you know, you know, there was a study done at Harvard University, which found that if the earth was actually round, then we should see that represented in our glasses. And because the scientists who conducted it saw that the water is straight, that is indicative of a flat earth. That's something I just totally made up.

It's completely fake, but it sounds legitimate. So that's an evidence. Again, like students can do with this what they will.

I hope and I trust that they'll use these techniques responsibly and ethically and morally, but some of them might just make, you know, say something and then they'll say, oh, this was found by Harvard. It was done in a recent research and then people are quite, you know, a little bit dumbfounded in those moments because like, oh really? And they just trust you even though it's complete BS. That's a really good point.

So I've talked to flat earthers as well and have encountered these too. But that technique of providing a source, providing evidence, what was it? What's the term for that? Burden of evidence, but also an evidence-based argument, appealing to authority. That's what it's called, right? Where you say, well, there was a Harvard study that did this, this and this, and it proved this, this and that.

So that appealing to authority is obviously a very powerful technique, but obviously it's got to be done in good faith. And I guess the way to counter it, it's difficult to counter that because you need to say, well, provide me with the sources. I'd love to see the sources of that.

I'd love to see the study. Please let me show you, let's bring that up. Let me see.

Well, see if you want, maybe we can have a tag team debate, you and me, we'll find two flat earthers. Well, I was going to say it's difficult to debate with flat earthers because I think that I would say that often they're not good faith

in their arguments because they will do things that I've noticed. For example, they'll take evidence, they'll try to apply all these methods, but they're not particularly good faith in the way they do it.

So they'll take evidence and for them, this counts as a serious piece of evidence, but they're really misrepresenting it. So one of the classic arguments used by flat earthers is they will say, well, look at this extract from this NASA interview where this NASA photographer was talking about this photograph of the earth. Here is a classic photograph of the earth, which was published by NASA.

It's the round earth. And here is an extract from this interview where the photographer admits that this is a composite photograph, that this is a fake photograph. And that's true.

The extract of the interview with the photographer, he clearly says, well, we've composed this photograph using lots of other photos, and we made this picture of the earth from space. And that is true. But the fact is, that's still not an argument.

It's still not a valid argument because that doesn't prove their point. Because all that proves is that NASA had to compose or make a picture of the earth from space. But it's not because the earth is flat, it's because it's incredibly difficult to get a good picture of the earth.

And you have to take lots of pictures of the earth from space and then put those pictures together to create something that just looks good. But they'll take that and present that evidence as being evidence for this, when in fact it's evidence for that. So it's like faulty logic, I guess.

But people do that all the time in debates. They'll take tidbits from here, from there, and then they'll apply that to their belief. But it doesn't actually add up properly.

So for example, questions I would then ask is what year was this in? And who was it? Because, for example, in modernity, we now have satellite live images

of earth. But for me, there's two things which make it impossible for me to believe in the flat earth. And I don't think a flat earther can respond to these arguments.

The first one is what is possibly the motive? For example, we can talk about the assassination of JFK. We can talk about 9-11. And we can see that what happened next, there was a motivation for why these things occurred.

The most contemporary example is Epstein, killing himself in that prison. The guard fell asleep and the camera stopped working. Then in that five-minute window, whatever it was, he managed to conveniently kill himself.

Now, it makes sense that he was killed because he had blackmail on the most powerful people on earth. You can clearly see the motivation for that lie. For example, in most of these good conspiracy theories, you can understand why they lied because the person behind it got some huge incentive, a lot of money or oil or whatever.

See, in the case of the flat earth, that would be such a ridiculously humongous lie. But for what benefit? What possible benefit? Where's the money? Who's the person that's benefiting from this huge conspiracy is the first question. And then the second question is how many people would need to be a part of it? Every pilot of every airport would need to be in on this.

NASA would need to be lying. Any compasses would be wrong. Google Maps would be wrong.

So many people would need to be a part of it that it's just unfathomable. For what incentive? For nothing? If the earth is flat or spherical or whatever, if it's a square, who's benefiting from it being one way or the other? Follow the money. There's no benefit.

So for me, it just doesn't make any sense. Mason. Speculation feeds directly into their arguments.

It's so obvious, it's so transparent where they start to speculate, and their speculations are then presented as actual arguments. Speculations could include things like, well, because there's all this extra land beyond the ice wall. There's all this extra land.

Maybe we live on a huge plane, you know, a huge flat surface, and our earth is just one small pool of water in the middle of it. And the people keeping the flat earth, the round earth myth alive, because they access all this other lands that they don't want us to know about. But there's no evidence for that.

And that's just pure speculation. Sure. But also, so again, it depends how you want to conduct the, like, see if you want to do it.

It depends on whether you want to have a respectful discussion or if you want to win. Because see if you want to win in a debate, like, part of it is making your own argument heard, or part of it is destroying the argument of the other person. And another technique you can use is just appealing to the consensus.

For example, I live in Glasgow. Glasgow is fairly left-wing. For anyone who doesn't know what left-wing means, it's like we're a lot more liberal compared to cities which are far more conservative.

Like, we're quite, you know, pro-immigration, as well as other ideas. So see if there's someone at work or in our social circle, and they're quite conservative. A way that we can beat them is just by appealing to the feelings that everyone else already has.

Like, everyone already believes that the earth is spherical. So because everyone already believes that, you don't need to go that far to discredit their argument. Like, you can use that to your advantage if you just want.

Because debating, sometimes it might be about trying to change their opinion. But again, like, what your intention is is up to you when you go into the debate, if you're trying to change. But if you're just trying to win, you can just appeal to the consensus.

Like, everybody knows the earth is round. What are you talking about? And this is then something which will be quite difficult for them to respond to. Yeah, yeah.

And then you can foster them with ad hominem attacks. If you really want to, yeah. You want to stick the knife in.

Okay, so we're talking about appeals to authority and the reducto ad absurdum. What else have we got? Okay, appeal to consequences. So grammatically, if we're going to use it either as a first conditional or as a second conditional, so you're going to take what they have said, and then you're going to think about what could be a negative consequence of what they have said.

And that's another way of discrediting their... That then makes them need to defend themselves. And whenever you're on the defensive, it looks like you're retreating. So it's good.

You want to be assuming... You don't want... Because see, with Socratic questioning, it's good to buy you some time to think of a response. But you cannot win a debate just by Socratic questioning, Socratic going to be the one giving ideas. But you actually want to attack sometimes with reduction to the absurd or with appealing to consequences.

So yeah, you're going to say what the consequences of their belief are. And we can either use the first conditional for it with present simple and future simple. Or we can use the second conditional with past simple and would, could, or might.

It doesn't take too much explanation. We can just go into some examples. So for example, if like, let's say I said something like schools should ban homeworks, there should be no more homework given by schools.

Mason I would just point out this particular method is quite good for real situations about decisions, change, social policies, and things rather than,

let's say, a philosophical argument about whether or not God exists or if the earth is flat or round. This is more like schools should do this, you know, cars should be banned in city centres, you know, like, like specific policy decisions that could be made. So this, when you talk about the specific consequences, that's quite a good way of, you know, of dealing with that, like talking about real world consequences of if we do this, if we did this.

Remind me again, what was the argument you just gave? So I think we should ban homework from schools, there should be no more homework. So then I have to say something like, well, if we ban homework, or if we banned homework, it's tempting for me to put that into a question. So like, you know, I'd say something like, if we banned homework, don't you think that children would underperform at school? Don't you think that homework is a vital part of the studying programme? It can, yeah, it can be a question or it can be a statement, both are totally fine.

But see what you're doing by asking a question, that's more in good faith, because you want them to respond and to think of something. So again, it depends on whether you want to have more of a dialogue, or it depends on whether you want to win the debate and you want to attack them, and you want to make them feel on the spot. Right, so if we, but okay, that's ridiculous, because if we ban homework, then children will do less reading, less writing.

Perfect. And obviously, this is going to result in lower levels of education. Perfect.

Now you're debating like a warrior, you know, now you're debating to win, you know, not just have a discussion. So again, it depends on what your intention is when you go into the debate. But that's perfect.

What's the difference between saying if we ban homework, and if we banned homework, in tone? So, in tone, that's a good question. I think one's more direct than the other. I'd say the first conditional is more direct than the second conditional, because second conditionals are hypotheticals.

So it's a little bit less direct. Yeah. Yeah, exactly.

So if we banned homework, yes, it's just less direct, because as you say, it's hypothetical. But if we ban homework, it's much more direct. It's probably a bit more aggressive.

Yeah, let's try another one. Children shouldn't learn foreign languages. Children shouldn't learn foreign languages? Is that really, is that, you're really saying that children shouldn't learn foreign languages? I mean, obviously, if children don't learn foreign languages, that will, well, there are many terrible consequences of that.

First of all, it will drastically reduce their opportunities later in life. Because without foreign languages, they won't be able to communicate effectively with people from different countries. And more broadly, that will result in them having a much more narrow worldview.

And we could go into the reasons why that's bad. Perfect. Perfect.

What you said is perfect. Let's do one last one, right? Universities should be completely free for everyone. Universities should completely... All right, certainly an interesting idea in principle.

But if we actually look at the reality of that, then making universities free for everyone would surely result in a huge burden on the taxpayer, because where's the money going to come from? Good, good job. Perfect. Perfect.

All perfect examples. Also, there's the other technique about appealing to authority. So with appealing to authority, there's, you can see, as a person, of experience in this field, or as a, you know, like, for example, I don't have kids, but you do have kids.

So let's say we're talking about something related to children, you can say, as a father, I know that, whatever the argument is, and that's something I can't match you on because I'm not a father, that's an authority that you have. Or as a person from this community, you know, like, you know, whatever it is, or

like those three that we just did, banning homework, children shouldn't learn foreign languages, making university free, we could actually say, as a teacher, I know that children need to learn foreign language, or as a teacher, I understand that banning homework will be detrimental for students. And see when you have that authority, even though it's not fully applicable, even though like, you know, like being a teacher doesn't make you an expert on whether universities should be free or not.

But it's still something people might be reluctant to challenge on the spot in a debate, unless they have some debate techniques, and they've practised them. Because I've heard people say stuff like, you know, people are debating about the should we take the Coronavirus vaccine, or should we not take it? And someone says, my uncle is a pharmacist. So I know that these vaccines are good or bad.

So like, a way that I would respond to that is also your uncle, does that make you a pharmacist as well? You know, Well, people say, you know, Coronavirus vaccine, everyone should take it and someone arguing against that. So well, as a mother, I think that exposing our children to these potentially harmful vaccines without proper due diligence is extremely dangerous. You know, that adding as a mother, sometimes that is used very effectively, normally, when it's directly relevant to what's being said, but often it's used in a quite irrelevant way.

How much credence does that lend to your position? I don't know. Sometimes it's relevant. Sometimes it's not.

We've gone through, I think quite a lot of different things. So we mentioned before we go forward, another couple that you could use there, as you can see, instead of saying as a mother, you can say everyone knows that da da da da as well, or according to the top doctors in the world, vaccines are da da da da da da. You know, so you can make an evidence based argument, you can appeal to the consensus, or you can appeal to authority to strengthen the argument.

And a lot of people are too reluctant on the spot to challenge that. Sorry to interrupt. Now, that's good.

So we've had reductio ad absurdum, taking an argument to its logical or extreme conclusion, and then showing how that is quite absurd. Socratic questioning, as you said, which is a great way of buying time drilling down into someone's argument. Appeal to consequences, using those conditional forms as a way of essentially talking about what impacts this could have.

Appeal to authority, that's other people's authority. Experts say or as a teacher, that kind of thing. Evidence based arguments, burden of proof that someone who comes with an extraordinary claim has to have extraordinary evidence to back it up.

And, you know, just simply requesting proof. What's your proof? Where's your evidence? Can you tell me how you know that? Straw man arguments, which are worth pointing out when you feel that they're being made. That's when someone misrepresents another person's argument in order to make it easier to attack.

You know, that's not my argument. You're arguing against that thing. That's not actually what I'm saying.

Ad hominem attacks, which are generally in bad faith. That's attacking the person, making personal attacks rather than attacking the ideas that they're giving. The loaded question, which is quite a good one.

Well, I don't think we mentioned that. We've mentioned a few others. The loaded question.

What is a loaded question? Maybe we can talk about straw man and loaded question together because they're quite, because it's more or less the same thing, just changes a little bit depending on how you formulate it. So let's say I say something like, um, we should ban remote work. We should ban remote work. So my opinion is that remote work should no longer be used.

So a way of the straw man is you don't attack their argument. The straw man is you make a fake version of their argument and you attack that. So you're not attacking their argument.

You're attacking something that they haven't actually said. So for example, I'll give an example of it, right? Why are you against people having a comfortable working environments? So you want everyone to be chained to their desk and be miserable in a cubicle all day. So, or here's one, right? I heard someone, uh, debate online.

They're debating about abortion. I know we said we'd stay away from the controversial ones, but I just think this is a good example. Well, we've had the existence of gods and, uh, you know, the flatter that's not that controversial, but, uh, okay.

Abortion. Yeah. Go on.

Why not? I was going to make a terrible joke, but maybe I'll text it to you later. I want to get on the podcast. Uh, so abortion, right? Someone says, you know, a guy says maybe I'm against abortion.

Then someone could respond to that and say, so you want to decide what women do with their bodies. That would be a straw man because they didn't actually say they want to control what women do with their bodies. They said that they're against abortion and there could be other reasons why they're against abortion, but they, but the straw man is to then say, you want to control what women do with their bodies or someone says, I want to ban.

I think remote work is a bad idea. You want people to be, uh, you know, tight at their desk all day and miserable, or, you know, we should ban cars from city centres. You know, uh, oh, so you want people to walk a hundred miles or 10 miles just to get their groceries.

So that's not their argument, but you're attacking like a phantom argument, which makes it seem like they support it. And then see if the person doesn't

address the straw man. If they don't deal with that, then it looks like they actually support it.

Yeah. Yeah. So, so this is, you know, like in debating and real formal debates, whenever a straw man is made, they always acknowledge it and say, that was a straw man.

That's not what I said, but see in real life, when you're in the office or you're up, you know, with friends or something, people don't realise that these techniques are being used and people are a lot more susceptible to falling victim to these straw man attacks without knowing how to respond. And it reminds me of a book. Have you ever read the 48 laws of power by Robert green? No.

So the 48 laws of power is, I don't even know what genre you would put this book. When I first bought it, I thought it was a personal development book, but it's not at all. It's probably more history, but he's talking about how to obtain power in all situations, how to be a more powerful person and see the stuff he talks about in this book is a lot of it is extremely immoral.

Not all of it, but a lot of it is in how he talks about how to become more powerful and work situations. And he gives example from historical examples. So that's what like these techniques are.

It's not the fact that you should use them. It's more that you should be aware of them and you should know how to respond to them. Because if you're not aware of this stuff, then people will use it against you.

Yes. So when someone makes a straw man, you say, well, that's not what I'm saying. You know, you have to, you have to say that you have to address the straw man, because if you don't address the straw man, then people may start to think that that is your opinion.

Yeah. And the same with ad hominem attacks is someone attacks you personally. Now, sometimes that can be relevant.

So if you're attacking, attacking the character of a person, especially if they're someone in a public position, if they're in a public position and they have a duty to be honest, or they have a duty to be a certain type of person. So let's say, uh, you know, someone in a position of authority or a public servant, you know, like a prime minister, personal attacks to an extent can be important because you're attacking their honesty or their integrity or something like that. But otherwise, um, someone attacks you personally, you can just sort of say things like, I'd rather you debated my ideas rather than attempted to, you know, disparage my character.

And, you know, by drawing attention to it, you can kind of, it makes the person look bad, you know, that they're making personal attacks and the straw man, you say, well, that's not what I'm saying. That's not my point. That's not what I'm arguing.

You know, as you say, you have to do that. Let's try and add homonym attack fun ones. Oh, okay.

So I'll say, I believe that the summer holiday should be longer. So now you need to attack me. Why would I say that? Oh God.

Well, I mean, this is just, uh, okay. Not all of us are just lazy people who don't want to do anything with our lives. Ray, you know, some of us actually like work, see the importance of work and get a lot of work and we're not just lazy, good for nothing people.

Good. Perfect. Uh, I think that the government should consider legalising marijuana.

Well, we're not all drug addicts. Like some people, Ray. Perfect.

Good job. Yeah. Those were slightly indirect ad hominem attacks.

I have to say, you know, they were direct enough. Don't worry. Yeah.

All right. Um, um, so in terms of loaded questions, I mean, there was a funny one from the world of comedy, which I remember. Loaded questions are often quite amusing.

So a loaded question listeners is where you ask someone a question, but in the question, you also include a value judgement or a statement about the person it's embedded within the question or, or about their argument. And there was a comedian called Carolina Hearn. She used to do a character called Mrs. Merton.

And she, the character was like, she was like an old granny and she interviewed celebrities on her show. And so she was in character and she had a guest, Debbie McGee, who was the wife of this very famous magician called Paul Daniels. Very, very, very famous magician.

She was his famous wife and assistant as a magician. But anyway, Mrs. Merton, her first question for Debbie McGee was, so Debbie, what was it that first attracted you to the millionaire Paul Daniels? Let me say that again. What was it that first attracted you to the millionaire Paul Daniels? Which is a funny loaded question.

But in that she's only interested because he's a millionaire. Right. What was it that first attracted you to the millionaire Paul Daniels? But loaded questions are, you know, like that essentially adding in a judgement into the question itself, you know.

So another one could be like, if someone said they think that weed should be legal. So the straw man would be, oh, you just want everyone to be a drug addict or the ad hominem is you're only saying that because you are a drug addict or the loaded question. So you're loading the question with misinformation.

Why do you believe that it's okay for everyone to be addicted to drugs? So it's basically the same thing, but you're just formulating a little bit differently for the different causes. Yes, yes, absolutely. Yeah.

Yeah. So for example, another one, like we should ban remote work, you know, oh, you're saying that because you're lazy ad hominem or, or you want everyone to just be chained to their desks and to be miserable at work all day. That's a straw man or to make a loaded question.

It's why are you against people being comfortable working from their homes with their families? Or why do you want to take people away from their families who have responsibilities to their kids? That would be the loaded question variant. So it's, it's all kind of, it's dishonesty just with different packagings. Yeah.

They're difficult to respond to. They're definitely difficult to respond to those. But in any of them, you would need to stop and address the dishonesty and say, I think you've represented me incorrectly by saying that because that's not my position.

And then you can go forward. But if you are saying that you think that, you know, and then respond to the argument in a way that you think is befitting, but it's always important first to acknowledge the, the misinformation within the accusation. Really good.

There's a lot more probably that we could go into, but I think there's probably plenty, but do you want to, do you want to have a few mini debates on some things? I'd love to, yeah. Let's do it. So.

You can choose the topic, anything's fine. You can also choose the side, you can choose whether you're on the affirmative or the counter, anything's fine for me. Okay.

Let's see. We should ban cars. Let's have, we should ban cars from all city centres.

So this is the statement that's up for debate. Okay. We should ban cars from all city centres.

I believe, Ray, that we should ban cars from all city centres. Oh, why did you say that? Well, because air pollution is a huge killer. Air pollution is responsible for the, for, for many deaths each year.

And not just deaths, deaths, health problems in children. It's the, the, the costs to the NHS of treating respiratory conditions caused by air pollution are vast. And I think it's time we moved on from, from, from this system, which is bad for everyone involved.

So considering that we have, you know, cars, which are being driven for many years ago, which are producing a lot more carbon dioxide in the environment, considering we have aeroplanes and we have, you know, huge companies which are producing, having production in unethical ways, which is causing a huge amount of carbon dioxide and pollution into the environment. And the government has actually said formally, and also this is backed by Harvard research, that the pollution caused by cars just in city centres actually doesn't really amount to much at all in comparative to these other ones. So I guess my question to you is why do you want to burden people who are just trying to get to work on time and contribute to the economy instead of dealing with much bigger problems? Well, I think it's a lot to unpack in that question.

Like, first of all, the assumption that I think that I know the Harvard study you're talking about, and that's talking about global CO2 emissions. And if you take all of the CO2 emissions, including ones produced by industry and even by natural things like, you know, volcanic CO2 emissions and things like that, obviously, if you take all of it, then emissions from cars are only a small portion. But if you look at that data from a local perspective, in the city, the car pollution is concentrated.

So globally, it might be spread, but in the city, it's very concentrated. And that's where so many people live. That's where so many cars are moving about every day.

Now, this doesn't mean that people shouldn't be able to travel in the city. It also does not mean that we shouldn't be limiting carbon emissions from all

sorts of other sources. But I'm saying locally, specifically in the city, it is proven that cars and the emissions from cars are very, very damaging to people's health.

And there are clear ways that we can try to stop this. And I think we need a bold step. And that bold step is to outlaw cars from city centres.

It's worked. It's worked in other cities and countries. There's no reason why it can't work for us.

Well, I think people need to make the decision of whether they want to follow the research and do what's actually proven for protecting the environment, or whether people just want to listen to a podcaster and make decisions on. Sure. Okay, sure.

I mean, you know, yeah, you could you could say that just because I'm a podcaster, that my argument is invalid. But I would suggest that you should argue with the points I'm making rather than, you know, my job position, I think that everyone's opinion is valid. Regardless of whether I'm a podcaster, or a nurse, or a politician, or a street cleaner, I think we all are capable of presenting the facts as they are.

Don't you think? Bravo. Bravo. Okay, that's the end of that.

Yeah. Okay. Bravo.

Bravo. Very good debate. Very good debate.

I think we use more or less all of the techniques just in that little segment, and you pull them off perfectly. You perform them really, really well. And I hope listeners took some notes on that.

Because I could see each of the techniques being used, and they were used very, very, very well. You too. You package them up very neatly in your in each response.

That was good. Yeah. What else have we got? Should we have something really ridiculous? As you like.

Anything's fine. Okay. So my, my next point, very important point here, I'd like to discuss with you is that, is about socks.

Okay. And my opinion is that socks should no longer be sold in pairs. They should now on, from now on, socks should be sold individually.

Right? So you get a left sock, you get a right sock, you buy socks in ones, not in pairs anymore. Seems like a big drastic change, but I think it would be a change for the better. We should start selling socks individually.

Why? Many reasons. I mean, I understand that not many people think about these things, but I've got a whole list of reasons why I think this would be a great idea. So first of all, I mean, you must have experienced this yourself.

You get a pair of socks and almost instantly after you've washed them, that's those pairs get separated and you end up with individual socks. You just get a drawer full of individual socks and not in pairs. I don't know why we continue with this ridiculous waste of time of attempting to keep socks in pairs when clearly they don't want to be in pairs.

They want to be separate. Let nature take its course. So you think that if people buy them individually, they'll also wash them individually and they'll not get separated.

Do you not think that there's a more productive way of solving this problem? I think it'll save a lot of time. I think we need to stop living some sort of fallacy, some lie, living in a dream world where socks are in pairs. I think that we should just accept the truth, which is that socks exist individually on an individual basis.

And that's not the only thing. That's the basic idea, but there's a lot more to it than that. So part of it is, first of all, manufacturing.

It'll be much easier for manufacturing companies to produce, package and sell socks individually, rather than having to spend a lot of money on attaching the socks together. There's a lot of plastic that's used. You know those annoying plastic little attachments that you have to break? And then you get these two little bits of plastic that invariably end up on the floor, or you put them in the bin, they end up in the ocean.

There would be no need for those little plastic attachments anymore. Companies putting socks together won't need to worry about putting them in pairs. They can just sell them off individually.

So I think for everyone throughout the whole production process is going to benefit from this. Plus, I think that there's probably an argument for, I would say there's probably a more profitable. Because if you think about it, if you're selling socks individually, you're going to sell twice as many, aren't you? Instead of someone going in and buying one pair, they're going to buy two individual socks.

You've doubled your sales in one shot. So you're supposing that people will pay the same price for an individual sock, as opposed to buying them on their own? Obviously, it would have to be up to the companies themselves, you know, how they would work out the price point for this. But I think there may be an argument for businesses to look into this.

I was in Tesco's recently, and I was actually looking at socks. And you know how much it costs to get like three or four pairs of socks? It was like £10. And I thought for three pairs of socks, £10 was quite expensive.

Six socks. Yeah, for six socks. So what you're telling me is people would now need to pay £20.

Talking about the cost of living crisis. Well, let's not get carried away. I mean, £20, that's a 100% markup.

You know, I think that's obviously anyone could agree that would be ridiculous. But I think that it is in moments like these, disruptive moments like

this, that industries are able to capitalise to an extent. And I think a slight rise in return for the convenience of buying socks individually, rather than the sheer inconvenience of buying them in pairs, and expecting them to stay together.

I think people would, I think, you know, customers would be prepared to pay a little bit more for the simple convenience of buying socks individually from now on. But I don't think it's convenient at all. Because we all know that we want to spend as little time in the shops as possible, we want to go in, buy them and leave.

However, as everybody knows, again, that whenever things are being brought from the manufacturer from the warehouse to the shops, things get lost, things go missing, there's always discrepancies. So inevitably, without a doubt, there are going to be mix ups of where the socks are placed. And you're going to need to look for two different pairs.

What if you accidentally buy two left socks or two right socks? It's a very good point. Oh my god, I think I need to go home and question my life decisions. What if you've got one sock missing that got lost in the production, and then you get down to the last one, and there's just one left sock, but you need two? What will you do then? Oh god, I hadn't thought about that.

Jesus. Oh god, you're right. You're right.

I've been so stupid. Yeah, okay. I think you had so many reasons for backing up this one sock idea.

I was like, oh my god, this is going to be quite challenging. I've never struggled so much in a debate. No, that was fun.

What else have we got? We've got a list of different debating topics here, right? I'm just trying to pick another one that could be good. So what do you think about this, Ray? Schools should ban AI tools like ChatGPT in classrooms. I think ChatGPT is damaging in the educational environment, and it's been seen to be a problem, especially in schools.

I think we need to make a drastic decision about this before it affects the education of our children any further. I think that schools should ban the use of AI like ChatGPT in classrooms. What's your evidence that it's negatively affecting students in classrooms? Teachers.

I've spoken to many teachers. As a teacher myself, I know I've seen this firsthand, but I've attended conferences, I'm part of newsletters. Just the number one subject that teachers are worried about today is the impact of ChatGPT on their students' performance, and students use it basically to replace their own work.

We all know that it is through doing tasks, doing writing, that's how our students learn and develop, and they don't. If ChatGPT is there, they will use it and they won't learn. It's very simple.

Well, the same argument was once made for students not to use the internet and not to use Google because that would take away their thinking and instead they would depend on using technology. Instead of this having a negative impact on children, it's helped modernise them and it's helped them become a lot more productive in society because they know how to use technology. Inevitably, workplaces all around the world are using AI to improve efficiency and to work faster.

Sure, there will be students who slack and who try to copy their work from something else, but with teaching technologies, there's more and more technologies available to identify when a student is cheating by using something they found online or by using AI. Nonetheless, the students who are going to work hard and use it productively, they shouldn't be penalised for using technology to produce better work because in the end, they'll be more productive. For you, Luke, why do you want to inhabit students who are being so productive? As a teacher, why would you want to stop that? Before I answer that question, I just want to respond to some of the things you said.

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The first thing is about the point about the internet. Those arguments were made, similar arguments were made when the internet was introduced into classrooms and so on. I think those arguments were settled.

Those arguments were settled by the fact that, yes, we see that the internet access to search engines and other research possibilities on the internet did allow students to become more productive. I agree with that point, but I think that ChatGPT is a radically different thing. The second point, I actually forget now, which is not good.

I forgot what the second point was. To be honest with you, it's not just used as a research tool. It's not just used as something that will assist learners in writing in the same way that doing a Google search on the subject does.

Instead, it's clearly a direct replacement for actual skills-based, productive work. It's a different beast entirely to all the other technologies we've seen before. We need to be smart about this, and we need to be clear about this.

We need to be strong on this, and we need to make clear limits and distinctions to protect our children's future. There are two classifications of people. There are people who love progress, and there are people who hate progress.

The people who hated progress were against the Industrial Revolution. The people who hate progress were against the use of computers and internet technology. There's now, in modernity, the people who are against the using of AI technologies to improve work.

At every cornerstone of human existence, improvement has been impossible without change. Now, this has been a change. As a teacher, I have seen in my own life how it's improved my productivity, as well as the productivity of my in helping them with self-learning.

See the example of just a few couple of people using it in an ineffective or improper way, using it to cheat and to cut corners. Why penalise everyone? When you're looking at one small group, and you're using that to paint a

picture of such a bigger audience, this is where discrimination comes from. This is where anti-progress comes from.

You're not one of those people, are you, Luke? Are you into discrimination? Luke Simon Yeah, I think that I'm fully prejudiced. No, I'm joking. I'm joking.

That was good. That was good. That was good.

Well done. I think we need to stop now. We could keep going for ages, but I think we should probably stop here.

But that was really good, Ray. I really enjoyed that. I'm sure that my listeners are going to agree that this has been a very useful episode with so many interesting points made.

Maybe if this video gets enough likes, you can name the like count. We can arrange a debate with you and me against some flat earthers. I think that would be fun.

How many likes does the video need to get for that? I don't know. I don't know. I'm trying to think what's the normal number of likes that one of my videos get? I don't really know.

But I think it's a good idea. Maybe what we could do is I'll say, I'll appeal to people in the comment section rather than the number of likes. Let's see.

Commenters, would you like to see Ray and me having an argument with flat earthers? I don't know if it's a good idea because, as I said before, I find that they don't always argue in good faith. We can play dirty. I'm not afraid to get dirty.

I can't remember what the word for this is, but the assumption that the two positions are somehow equal and valid and presenting them in a is actually very unfavourable to the position that the earth is round. I personally didn't believe in Brexit. I thought it was nonsense.

I don't know what you think about it, but that's what I thought. The problem with the Brexit situation was that there were these debates on television, and the BBC, whenever they have a discussion about a subject, they feel that they have to be balanced. So you would have the people there arguing that Brexit was a bad idea, and then for balance, they had to have someone arguing that Brexit was a good idea.

But that suggests that those two things are of equal weight, equal value, and equally valid. But in my opinion, they were absolutely not. One side was really an argument based on no evidence or dishonest evidence and bad motivations, and the other side was a much more reasonable, rational debate.

But the problem was that the BBC felt they had to show both. It gave more legitimacy to the Brexit argument than I thought it should have been given. But we live in a society where freedom of speech, where everyone has an opinion.

Are you anti-freedom of speech? No, of course not. No, of course I'm not. But you see what I mean.

I think having a debate with two flat-earthers perhaps would give them a bit more credibility than they should be given, is my point. Your platform is pretty big as well. Maybe you don't want to give them a voice.

Yeah, exactly. Although it could be good fun. I did have a conversation with some flat-earthers.

I don't know if it was a debate as such, because I wasn't really prepared. But I did have a conversation on the Flat Earth podcast, which is interesting. They call it the Flat Earth podcast.

They actually invited me on because they'd heard me talking about Flat Earth in a fairly disparaging way on my podcast. They heard that. I think they have Google Alerts for anyone ever talking about Flat Earth.

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They contacted me and said, we'd like to talk to you. Then they just fired so many random arguments why the Earth was flat at me. I just thought that it wasn't that productive.

But anyway, having them on the podcast, I don't know if that would be a good idea. But it could be fun. It could be interesting.

But anyway, listeners in the comments section, if you would genuinely like to see Ray and me have a debate with some flat-earthers, for good or bad, I don't know what the result would be, let us know in the comments section. That could be interesting. Some democracy.

That's good. I love it. Democracy and freedom of speech.

Yes. Yes. Yes, indeed.

Okay, great. Thanks so much. Oh, by the way, just to finish, how can people, if they want to, for example, access your course about debating, about the other things you talked about, how can people find you and find your courses and things? So I've been teaching for six years now on Preply, giving one-to-one sessions.

So if people are looking for a one-to-one tutor to speak fluently, confidently, with a wide vocabulary for general English or business English settings, or even for passing the IELTS exam quickly with a high score, you can send me a message for one-on-one training. However, I've also got group sessions where I'm working with groups of intermediate to advanced level learners on school. Our school programme's called Elevate English.

You can find me on Instagram at learnenglishwithray. And in my bio, there's the link to the school. Right now, the weekly sessions are at Tuesday, 6 p.m. UK time, but I'm willing to open up more sessions if there's a demand for it.

So once you join the school, my WhatsApp number's there. We have a WhatsApp community where all the students talk and we share resources and we communicate. And on the school, you've got access to all of my

programmes that I've made on job interviews, on how to be funny in English, which was made with a very popular comedian, as well as debating and some other skills.

So people can find me there and I'd love to network with your audience and help them with their English if they're interested. Okay, I'll put a link in the description for those things you mentioned, Preply and Elevate English on school. Awesome.

Okay, great. I love this. This was really good.

Thanks a lot, Ray. Have a lovely day. Likewise.

So that's the end of my conversation with Ray about debating. And come on, that was brilliant, wasn't it? That was a brilliant conversation. I said at the beginning that the episode would be brilliant.

And come on, it is brilliant, isn't it? I mean, if you've got any sense, then you will agree with me on, well, pretty much anything, but especially, particularly, specifically the fact that this episode has been brilliant and continues to be brilliant, in fact, because it's not finished yet. Thank you very much to Ray, because he prepared a lot of stuff for this one. And I think that really made a big difference.

It meant that we had some, you know, robust things to talk about and specific debating techniques to explore, explain and demonstrate. The question, again, that I mentioned at the beginning was, would you like to listen to Ray and me debating with a couple of Flat Earthers? Now, that's just theoretical, really, because I'm not sure I'm really, I don't know. I mean, I know a couple of Flat Earth conspiracy theory guys, because I was on their podcast a long time ago now.

The full story of that is that once on the podcast, I talked about Flat Earth conspiracy theories. It was when I was doing my holiday diary after travelling in the United States, and there was a lot of stuff about the Earth and the history of the Earth and things like that. And I ended up sort of wandering into

discussing Flat Earth conspiracy theories, and I was quite disparaging about them.

And in the title of the episode, there was the word Flat Earth. And when I published it, I got messages from these guys who run this podcast called the Flat Earth podcast. And they said, you know, we disagree with what you said.

We want to prove to you that we're reasonable people. And we'd love to have you on our podcast called the Flat Earth podcast to discuss all this. And I thought, OK, this is fine.

This is OK. But I know that they're probably setting a trap for me because they're going to just try to they're just going to spend several hours bombarding me with their arguments as to why the Earth is flat. And as a kind of normie round Earth believer who hasn't really done his research is probably what they thought about me.

Just a normal person who just assumes that the Earth is round because that's what the powers that be have told me to believe. That once I'm faced with the evidence that they're going to prepare for me and the deftness of their arguments, that I will have no choice but to agree with them by the end of the episode that the Earth is in fact flat. And I think this was definitely a sort of a conquest for them.

And I went in to the conversation thinking of myself as being like Louis Theroux. I thought I'm going to be Louis Theroux. If you don't know who Louis Theroux is, he's a British slash American TV presenter, documentary maker who goes to, he kind of joins these groups of people who have strange views or strange behaviour.

For example, he'll spend time with some conspiracy theorists or he'll spend time with a bunch of white nationalists in the United States, neo-Nazis or something, or he'll spend time with like these all these fringe groups. And the way he does it is that he acts like a normal, reasonable person. He's fairly disarming in his manner.

He's not very aggressive. He's very friendly. And he gives these people a platform where they can just talk about themselves and what they do.

But Louis is very clever because he uses a certain kind of pretend naivety. He pretends to be naive and maybe a bit slow, but actually he's very clever because he asks very specific little questions, lets these people reveal themselves to be strange. And then he kind of gives them time to kind of, in a way, dig their own graves.

Anyway, I thought I'll be Louis Theroux. I'll just go into this sort of a bit like as if I'm unprepared, but I'll do my best to try to kind of respond to their specific arguments. It was really interesting.

They were friendly enough. They were friendly enough, but they invited someone else onto the show. Someone who appears to be an expert on this.

And they just, as I expected, they bombarded me with all these different arguments. Many of them contradicted themselves. It's very hard to find in the flat earth community, a unified specific theory that they all believe.

They'll believe the earth is flat, but there's all these various versions of what a flat earth could look like. Anyway, I mentioned in my conversation with Ray, this is a point I didn't end up describing or discussing, was that they, one of the things they were saying was that, okay, we don't necessarily believe the earth is flat. We just want to believe the truth.

And so they claimed to be all about finding the truth and exploring the truth and uncovering the truth. And it's the truth that they really believed in and that they weren't necessarily there to, they hadn't necessarily decided in advance that the earth was flat. This was my argument.

I was saying to them, look, I think you're putting the cart before the horse, which is an expression in English, which means that they've decided that the earth is flat. And that is what's driving everything else they're doing. They've basically made that decision.

And then they're just scrambling around trying to find various types of evidence or theories that will support that opinion. They've got it all the wrong way round. And that's what I was saying to them.

I was saying, I think you've got the cart before the horse. I think you've just decided that the earth is flat and now you're desperately trying to find reasonable evidence, which supports that. And you're not really doing a very good job because a lot of the time the evidence that you're providing isn't really substantial or is not really a clear sign of causality or whatever.

And their response to that was to say, well, you know, we don't necessarily, we're not married to the idea that the earth is flat, but what we are married to is a pursuit for truth, which was interesting. And I wish I had said, you know, those moments where, I think Ray mentioned this, those moments where you've had a discussion or an argument or disagreement, and later on you come up with all the right responses that you should have said. And one of the things I should have said to these guys was, OK, so you believe in truth.

You don't necessarily believe that the earth is flat. You just are on a mission to find the truth. OK, and that's your guiding light.

And if that's the case, then why is your podcast called the Flat Earth Podcast? Right, because I think that would have proven that actually they have decided that the earth is flat and they're just trying to make the evidence fit the theory. Anyway, I did speak to these guys on their podcast. I don't think I did a fantastic job of dealing with every argument they had because some of it was just confusing, sort of, I suspect, faulty physics, like bad physics, bad mathematics.

I could go into more detail about that, about the mad, way out, wacky stuff that they really believe. Like they started to, as I listened to them more and more on their podcast, some of the theories they were coming up with, like the idea that when the sun goes down, so what is the sun in their version of a flat earth world? What is the sun and what happens when it sets? Because obviously in our, in most people's version of the world, I'm getting carried away by flat earth stuff, I'll stop in a moment. Most people's sort of

understanding of the world is that it's generally sort of like a sphere, it's round, and that when the sun goes down, it's actually the earth turning away from the sun and the sun disappears over the horizon.

But people, you know, to the west of us, actually get more sun, you know, and that's the idea that this is the way that the sun, the earth spins and the sun goes down in the evening and comes up in the morning. But what they believed, what they believed, one of the random theories was that the sun and the moon are actually like, kind of like lamps floating above this flat area called the earth, where there's like an ice wall around the edge and beyond the ice wall, there's just more land. I don't really understand where that goes or what that is in their minds.

But anyway, but the sun and the moon are like these lamps, you know, like a lamp in the ceiling, which shines light downwards. And instead of going around or instead of the earth turning and those things essentially going around, they move, they like hover above the earth and night time is when they basically sort of move out of the way. And so the sunset that you're seeing is not the sun disappearing over the horizon, but it's one of these lights kind of going further and further away.

And am I mad or is that completely insane? Because you've seen the sunset, it's like the sun looks like a more or less like a circle, which slowly disappears over the horizon. And in their version, if it is a lamp, you know, like a ceiling lamp, getting further and further away, what's going to happen there is that the light, that circular disc of light is going to get slowly thinner and thinner and thinner, isn't it? As it disappears away from your vision. Anyway, I mean, you get into some pretty mad stuff when you talk to these guys.

So I did speak to them on their podcast sometime ago. Maybe I could get back in touch with them and invite them on. But if otherwise, I don't know, maybe we could find some somewhere.

I mean, there are plenty of sort of flat earth conspiracy theory, YouTube channels and podcasts and things. So if you really want to hear Ray and me debating some people like this, I don't know how fruitful that debate would

be. I think it's almost impossible to have a debate with flat earth conspiracy theorists because the way they present evidence isn't entirely sort of fair, I feel like, because they present evidence in a fairly false way.

But they they're very sort of strident and strong minded in their views. It can get a little bit heated. Anyway, let me know if that's interesting for you.

Now, what I've got now here is a section which I'm calling that's a good word. So this section is called Oh, that's a good word. And basically what I'm going to do is I've just picked out some bits of vocab that came up in the conversation because I think there were quite a lot of nice words, good words.

I mean, talking about big, substantial words. Often I focus on phrasal verbs and multi part expressions and things like that. But here we've just got some nice, solid, probably multisyllable words, big words, good words.

So the first word is egregious, egregious, e-g-r-e-g-i-o-u-s. This is an adjective. You may have heard Ray saying this.

I think he said people are going to say things which you find to be offensive, egregious or disagreeable. Offensive, egregious, disagreeable. These are all sort of synonyms.

But if something is egregious, egregious, it means it's extremely bad, very shocking, outstandingly wrong or very offensive. Right. So, for example, the company made an egregious mistake when it leaked customers' personal data.

So you have things like an egregious error, an egregious mistake, egregious behaviour, like very bad, very shocking, very unacceptable, an egregious example and an egregious violation, like an egregious violation of your human rights, for example. So outrageous, shocking, appalling, disgraceful, flagrant. This is a strong formal word often used in journalism, in politics, in law, in academic writing to describe behaviour that is obviously and exceptionally bad, egregious behaviour or egregious opinions.

I'm going to go on quickly. I've got about 10 of these good words, big words, and I'm going to fly through them quite quickly. The point of this is to show you, hey, did you notice these words? These are some nice words, aren't they, that you heard in that conversation.

Next word is contentious, contentious, c-o-n-t-e-n-t-i-o-u-s, contentious. Another adjective, for example, your opinions can, of course, be the classics, like religion and politics, the more contentious ones. So opinions about religion, opinions about politics can be quite contentious.

That just means that they are likely to cause disagreement or to cause argument. Okay. Immigration, for example, immigration remains a highly contentious issue in many countries.

It's the sort of issue that people will disagree on very strongly. It's going to cause an argument. Okay.

Opinions about religion or politics are often contentious, and therefore things that we normally will avoid in sort of polite social company. It's very useful, though, for discussing politics, social issues, ethics, and current affairs. A contentious issue, a contentious topic, contentious debate, a contentious subject, a contentious proposal.

So anything that's going to cause a lot of controversy, something that is likely to divide people, something like Brexit is a contentious issue. Third word is combative, combative. Now, maybe you know the word combat, which is like fighting.

Well, the adjective combative means ready to fight, eager to fight, happy to fight, always willing or ready to challenge other people. Okay. So on the subject of debating, I think it was me who said it doesn't have to be combative.

It doesn't have to be disagreeable. It doesn't have to be an argument or disagreement, right? So it doesn't have to be combative. It can still be polite

and respectful, right? Whereas combative means more like a fight, more like a strong disagreement, like combat.

The journalist adopted a combative style during the interview. So you can imagine that interview would be very hard, quite aggressive, very difficult, challenging questions. Combative attitude, combative style, a combative approach, combative personality and combative tone.

Aggressive, basically. And it's verbal. It refers to the way that someone communicates.

Number four is dismantle. Dismantle. It's a verb to take something apart piece by piece, right? So a bit like if you have a piece of furniture in your living room and you don't want it anymore, but it's too big to fit it out of the front door, you need to dismantle it, take it apart, take the legs off, take the sides off, take the doors off, dismantle it.

But you can also dismantle someone's argument, take it apart piece by piece to show why the argument they're making is wrong or weak. If you're a good debater, I think Ray said, you'll be able to dismantle your opponent's arguments and put your own arguments forward in a productive way. Okay.

Dismantle an argument, dismantle a case, dismantle a theory and so on. Right. Deconstruct, disprove.

That's a good word, isn't it? Dismantle. Combative. That's a nice word.

Contentious. Oh, that's a good word. Egregious.

Oh, that's a nice word, isn't it? Right. Let's move on to the next one, which is transformative. Oh, that's a good word, isn't it? It's an adjective meaning causing a major change in something.

I think Ray was, I can't remember what he said. Was it working with Ukrainian refugees? He said that the experience has been very transformative, very

beneficial for him, meaning that it's changed him. Maybe it's made him a better teacher.

It's transformed him. It was a transformative experience. Beneficial.

A transformative experience, a transformative effect, transformative power, transformative change, transformative impact. Learning English was a transformative experience for many of the students. Is that true for you? Has learning English been a transformative experience? Has it changed your life? Life-changing, revolutionary, powerful, influential are synonyms.

Yes. Transformative. Number six is the word demeanour.

Oh, that's a good word, isn't it? This is a noun. His demeanour, your demeanour, a calm demeanour, professional demeanour, confident demeanour, relaxed demeanour, or a friendly demeanour. A person's behaviour, the way that they behave, the manner that they use when they talk to people or do things, the way they appear.

So when you look at someone, like the way that they behave, the way they look, the way they carry themselves, this is their demeanour. You can have a cool demeanour. You can have a calm demeanour, right? And with debating, you definitely want to maintain a calm demeanour, right? Calm behaviour.

But demeanour is kind of like when compared to behaviour. Behaviour is the things you do, but your demeanour is like the way you do things, the way you carry yourself. So you can imagine someone with a calm, relaxed demeanour is someone who's kind of cool, basically.

Detrimental, there's a good word. Detrimental. It's another adjective and it's negative, isn't it? If something is detrimental, it means it causes damage or it causes harm to something.

For example, I think in our mini, one of our mini debates, was it? Did Ray say this? As a teacher, I understand that banning homework will be detrimental for students, detrimental to their English. Another example, lack of sleep can

be detrimental to your health. Notice it's detrimental to, detrimental for someone, but detrimental to specifically the thing that's affected.

Detrimental to your health, detrimental to your English. A detrimental effect, detrimental impact, harmful, damaging, negative, adverse, followed by two. Smoking is detrimental to your health.

Number eight, credibility. What a nice word. Credibility.

The adjective is credible, right? Which means believable. That's where the things you're saying are believable, they sound true. Credibility, then, is the noun.

Credibility. C-r-e-d-i-b-i-l-i-t-y. Credibility.

The third syllable is the stressed one. The quality of being believable, trustworthy, or convincing, right? You can attack someone's credibility. For example, using, I don't know, Socratic questioning.

Someone makes a statement, oh, religion's all a load of nonsense, isn't it? Why do you think that? Even just asking basic questions like that can start to chip away at someone's credibility, where they sort of start to say, well, I don't know, it's obvious, isn't it? The scientist's years of research gave her enormous credibility. So a scientist with lots of research and experience has a lot of credibility. You can lose credibility, you can gain credibility, establish your credibility, you can damage your credibility, you can have professional credibility.

One of the things I think is important for an English teacher to do is to, in the first lesson, tell the students how much experience you have, the fact you went to university, all your qualifications and professional experience. You need to let them know those things. Not in an obvious way, not in a kind of, I'm going to tell you my CV, I'm going to sell myself to you, but you do need to somehow let the students know that you are a university graduate with these qualifications and this amount of experience of teaching this kind of English.

Why? Because it's really important to establish your credibility in the eyes of the students. I think it's really important. I've failed to do that.

One of the things I did earlier in my career when I started teaching is that I didn't do that and I didn't realise that you needed to do that. And as a result, especially when I was younger and less professional, I think I found it harder later to establish my credibility and I got the sense that some of the students didn't necessarily believe me or trust my word, but you learn how to come across as a credible teacher. Yeah.

Okay. Next is in good faith and also in bad faith. If you do something in good faith, it means you do it with honest intentions.

You do it sincerely. You're open. You're not trying to trick anyone or deceive anyone.

You're doing things openly with good intentions. So for example, if you take part in a debate, you do it in good faith. You do it sincerely.

You're not trying to deceive someone. You're not trying to use underhanded techniques. The opposite of that is in bad faith.

And you can also have a bad faith argument. An example is two sides entered negotiations in good faith, hoping to reach an agreement, right? Or, you know, it's all in good faith or this is a bad faith argument or this is a bad faith position. They did that in bad faith, meaning they did it sort of with a level of dishonesty.

We use these sorts of phrases to talk about debates, negotiations, disagreements, the way that people conduct themselves in business. What you want is people to do things in good faith, meaning honestly, but sometimes people do things in bad faith. They do things dishonestly in order to, I don't know, trick you for whatever reason.

So good faith, bad faith. Number 10 is rewarding. Rewarding, which is a word that I often find myself teaching.

Whenever it comes up, I find my students don't know it and I have to teach it all the time. Rewarding. I have covered this on the podcast recently.

When did I do that? I can't remember what the episode was, but I did talk about things being rewarding, a reward. No, it was demanding. That's it.

Demanding was the word I'm talking about. But rewarding is another really, really common one. It's an adjective.

If something is rewarding, it means it rewards you. A reward is something you get when you've done something well. For example, I mean like dogs, for example, when you're training dogs, you give the dog a reward when it's done something, like when it's rolled over on the floor, you give it a little snack as a reward.

If you do something very good at work, for example, if you make a lot of sales at work, if you hit all of your targets, you might be given a reward. It might be a bonus or something like that. But a thing can be rewarding, especially a job or something you do can be rewarding when it gives you a lot of satisfaction.

It gives you a sense of fulfilment. It gives you a feeling that your efforts have been worthwhile. So a rewarding job.

OK, Ray said, I got a job with the local government helping to teach English as a second language to the refugees who were arriving in the country. And that was a really rewarding job, a really rewarding job. I wonder how many of you noticed that word, a really rewarding job.

So, you know, you can imagine why that would be rewarding when you've got refugees and they're, I don't know, they're new in the country and they desperately want to learn English to try to improve their chances. And, you know, you work with them and that I can understand how that would be a very rewarding job. You would feel like you were doing something good, a

rewarding experience, rewarding career, rewarding challenge, personally rewarding.

Synonyms would be fulfilling, satisfying, worthwhile, enriching. In my experience, teaching is a very rewarding job. I mean, it's not always the most highly paid job, but just simply the experience of working closely with people, observing their progress, getting to know them, getting into their minds and sort of helping them to put words together and express themselves and to grow.

That's a very rewarding thing. And often students are very grateful as well, which makes a big difference when people, you know, students come to you and say, thank you so much. I really enjoyed your lessons and it really helped.

You feel a real sense of reward from that. Number 11, how many of these have I got? Two more? Yeah, two more. Number 11 is to interject, which is a verb that we use to talk about conversations, arguments, debates, discussions.

To interject is to interrupt, basically interrupt a conversation by making a comment or remark. Sorry to interject. If I can just interject.

We also say, can I just say something? If I can just say something. Interject, interrupt. It's slightly more formal than the word interrupt and often suggests a brief comment rather than taking over the conversation.

Can I just interject for a moment? Okay. As this was going on, a colleague overhears us and he decides to interject. That's what Ray said when he was describing that situation at work, when he was having a conversation with his colleague about believing in God and his other colleague overheard and he decided to interject and he said, what, you believe in God? That's a bit stupid, isn't it? Something like that.

Another example, she interjected with a question before the speaker could continue. So again, a nice word, good word, because it sounds quite

substantial and is a little bit on the formal side. Interrupt is just standard general English word for, you know, interrupting.

I think you know what that means. But interject just has a little bit more, I don't know, what, class to it or something? To interject suddenly, to interject with a comment. Interrupt, but in, yes.

Number 12 is innocuous. That's a good word, isn't it? Innocuous, it's an adjective. And if something is innocuous, it means it's harmless, unlikely to offend, unlikely to cause problems or upset anyone.

And that is different to what was the other word that we had earlier? Egregious would be directly opposite. Contentious is opposite. So if something is egregious, it's, I can't believe he said that, such an egregious comment or such egregious behaviour.

What was the other one? Something that's controversial, contentious, that's it, contentious, very contentious issue to discuss on the podcast. But innocuous is the opposite. It means it's unlikely to offend, it's kind of harmless.

Ray said Socratic questioning is fairly innocuous, meaning it's not particularly poisonous as a form of debating, right? Just simply asking why. But certainly some of the techniques as we progress forward are going to be a lot more brutal and ruthless. Ruthless is another one.

That's basically where you do things, but you don't really care about the emotional impact that they have. So James Bond is ruthless, because he will just, he'll just kill someone and, and, you know, and then order a vodka martini shaken, not stirred. I'll have a vodka martini shaken, not stirred.

You know, he's just, he's a psychopath, isn't he? Basically. Anyway, innocuous. For example, what seemed like an innocuous comment ended up causing a lot of controversy.

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So that's where someone just said something they thought wasn't particularly offensive, but oh dear, people still found it offensive. I don't know what that could be. I don't know.

Like I hate, I hate hamsters. I think they should all get killed. It's not really a very innocuous thing to say.

Cats are much better than dogs, aren't they? Cats are better than dogs. Why? Because they're smaller, generally smaller. Sounds like a fairly innocuous comment, but someone's like, how dare you accuse cats of being smaller than dogs? I didn't accuse cats of being smaller.

I suggested that they were smaller and that was a, that was a positive argument. How dare you compare cats to dogs in terms of size? I thought it was a fairly innocuous comment myself, but no, apparently some people on the find that sort of thing highly contentious and egregious. Innocuous, an innocuous remark, innocuous question.

Harmless, inoffensive. Yes. Okay.

So that's, that concludes that section, which was called, oh, that was a good word, wasn't it? Oh, that's a nice word. That was the end of that section. Maybe I'll bring that section back or maybe I won't.

We will see. But that is the end of the episode and you'll find in, but that is the end of the episode and you will find links in the episode description for Ray, if you want to check out his courses and learn English with him. Yes, indeed he do.

Okay. All right. How's it going with you? I'm recording this mid June, 2026.

This is probably going to be published a few weeks later than this. So I don't know what's going on in the world cup. We're just in the beginning, the first week of the world cup at this point.

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I probably shouldn't say anything about it because you already know what's happened and I don't. So I wonder what's going on. What's happened to England? Have we been knocked out in the first round? Any penalties? We'll see.

Anyway, right. That's, I better stop this episode. Otherwise it will go on forever and people will look at it and go, I can't possibly listen to that.

Um, so I better quit while I'm ahead. I better cut my losses. I think we better call it a day.

Yes. Okay. Then speak to you next time.

But for now it's time to say goodbye. Bye. Bye.

Bye. As someone calls me on my phone, a number I don't recognise. Oh dear.

The tension. No. Okay.

I didn't pick up and they call. I just feel like if someone calls me and I don't know who it is these days, I'm just like, well, if you really need to speak to me, you can leave a voicemail and they often don't. Anyway, I wonder who that was.

Maybe it was the postal service because they've got a package for me. Something like that. Um, okay.

It's time to end the episode. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you very much.

If you've been watching the video version, don't forget to like, and subscribe. Tell your friends about Luke's English podcast and consider signing up to Luke's English podcast premium for special vocab review episodes. I give you, I gave you a little flavour, a little taste of it in that section called, Oh, that's a good word, isn't it? If you want more stuff like that with a bit more

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Uh, all right. Until next time then I will now wish you farewell and say goodbye. Bye. Bye.

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