

SOFTENING DISAGREEMENT

B2-C1 | Conversation practice examples for challenging ideas tactfully

Conversation: Interpreting a quiet shop

Tom	Sales fell again this week. I think the higher prices are driving customers away.
Leila	I take your point, but the roadworks started on Monday. People can't park outside at the moment.
Tom	The prices went up a month ago, though. That must be part of it.
Leila	Possibly. I'm hesitant to agree because sales were steady for the first three weeks after the increase.
Tom	So you'd leave the prices as they are?
Leila	For now. I wonder whether better signs to the rear entrance would help more than a discount.
Tom	We could try that, although it won't solve every problem.
Leila	No, but we'd learn something. Let's compare the figures once access improves before we decide what the prices tell us.

Key phrases: I take your point, but / I'm hesitant to agree because / I wonder whether

Conversation: Choosing the cheapest contractor

Ruth	This quote is nearly twenty per cent lower. I don't see why we'd pay more for the same work.
Malik	I would look at it differently. The cheaper quote excludes removal of the old fittings.
Ruth	Even with that added, they might still come out cheaper.
Malik	That may be true to an extent, but we'd also have to arrange the removal ourselves.
Ruth	We have a maintenance team. Surely they could handle it.
Malik	I'm not sure that follows. They're already committed to the school repairs that week.
Ruth	Then we need to compare the full cost, including someone else's time.
Malik	Exactly. I'm not ruling this contractor out; I'd just like both quotes to cover the same responsibilities.

Key phrases: I would look at it differently. / That may be true to an extent, but / I'm not sure that follows.

Create your own conversation

Choose one prompt. Use at least two key phrases and include a natural response and follow-up.

Prompt 1: Challenge an explanation for falling sales. Acknowledge the concern and offer another interpretation.

Prompt 2: Disagree with a decision based only on price. Identify what the comparison leaves out.