Speaking: stories, opinions and discussions

English B1

What this topic teaches

B1 speaking holds the floor: you tell a story to the end, state an opinion with a reason, and join a discussion without shouting. The tools are connectors, opinion frames and **turn-taking** .

- Stories: past tenses plus connectors (then, suddenly, in the end).
- Opinions: a frame (I think... because...), softened edges, and one clear reason.
- Discussions: invite, respond, build: *That is a good point, and...*
- Memory hook: a discussion is a **fire**: everyone adds wood, nobody takes the fire home.

Telling a story to the end

A spoken story needs signposts for the listener's ear, not the eye.

Story beat	Say something like
opening	You will not believe what happened...
sequence	So then... / After that...
turn	Suddenly... / The funny thing is...
ending	In the end... / That is why I was late.

- Keep one storyline: side details can wait for questions.
- Past simple carries the events; past continuous paints the background: *I was waiting when he arrived.*

Stating an opinion with edges

Opinion frames keep you honest and soft at the same time.

- Frame: *I think / In my view / From my experience...*
- Reason: *...because...* or *...which is why...*
- Soften: *probably, maybe, I might be wrong, but...*
- One opinion, one reason, one example: three sentences is a full B1 turn.

■ A first try

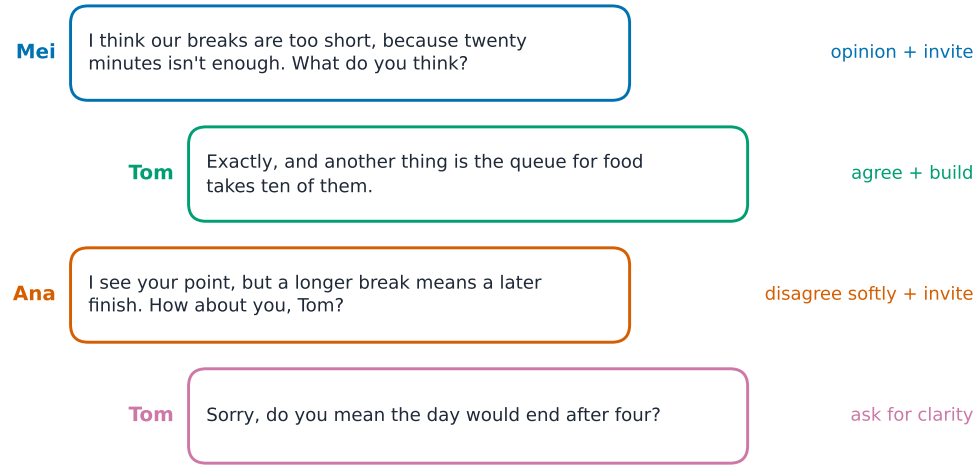
Build a three-sentence opinion: *I think our school breaks are too short, because twenty minutes is not enough to rest and eat. For example, I always finish my food in the last five minutes.*

Joining the discussion: the turn-taking kit

Discussions are governed by polite traffic lights.

Move	Phrases
invite	What do you think? / How about you?
agree + build	Exactly, and another thing is...
disagree softly	I see your point, but... / I am not so sure.
ask for clarity	Sorry, do you mean...?
close a point	So we agree on that part.

- The floor is shared: after two sentences of yours, pass the ball.
- Interruptions apologize first: *Sorry to interrupt, but...*



Two sentences each, then pass the ball: one discussion, four moves from the kit

Watch out: traps for Chinese speakers

- Do not memorize essays: a discussion listens; reuse three frames, not thirty.
- Silence is not respect in a discussion: an I agree with Mei, and... keeps you in the room.
- Keep tenses on the timeline: the event in the past, your opinion now in the present, the plan in the future. One sentence can mix them when the times differ (*I think it was great*); the error is a tense that jumps without a time change.

Check yourself

Answer first, then read the explanation.

1. Story signposts: give one phrase for the turn and one for the ending. – **Turn**: *Suddenly… / The funny thing is…* **Ending**: *In the end… / That is why…*
2. Build a three-sentence opinion now: frame, reason, example. – For example: ***In my view**, phones should be allowed at lunch, **because** students need a break from rules. **For example**, my friends and I use them to plan weekend football.*
3. Disagree softly with: *Homework should be banned.* – For example: ***I see your point, but** a little homework helps us remember the lesson. **Maybe** less homework would be better than none.*
4. After how many of your sentences do you pass the ball? – **About two.** Then invite: *What do you think?*

■ Practice: three speaking turns

Say each one aloud, then compare it with the model. Your own content can be completely different; check the **shape**.

Turn 1: tell a story (about 45 seconds). *Tell us about a time something went wrong on a trip.* Model: *"You won't believe what happened last summer. My family was driving to my grandmother's village, and we were singing in the car. Suddenly, the car made a terrible noise and stopped. We were on a small road, with no shops and no signal. Luckily, a farmer came past on his tractor, and he pulled us to the next village. In the end, we arrived five hours late – but my grandmother had kept the dumplings warm."* The shape: opening signpost, background in the past continuous (*were driving, were singing*), events in the past simple, a turn (*Suddenly*), an ending.

Turn 2: give an opinion. *Should students wear school uniforms?* Model: *"In my view, uniforms are a good idea, because nobody has to worry about expensive clothes. For example, at my school nobody knows whose family is rich. I might be wrong, but I think that makes friendships easier."* The shape: frame, reason, example, and a softener (*I might be wrong, but*).

Turn 3: join a discussion. Your partner says: *"I think we should have more online lessons. You can learn at home in your pyjamas!"* Model: *"Ha, that's true, and you save time on the bus. But I'm not so sure about every lesson. In science, for example, we need the lab. What do you think about having one online day a week?"* The shape: agree and build, disagree softly, give a reason, then pass the ball with a question.