

Things to do when you interrupt

Without looking below, put the cards you are given into three categories.

Hint 1: The three categories are:

- 1) Interrupting and giving opinions
- 2) Interrupting and checking/ clarifying
- 3) Interrupting and controlling the topic

Hint 2: The three categories should each have the same number of cards each.

Try to split each of those categories into two sub-categories.

Try to split each of those sub-categories into two, so that the original three categories now have four sub-categories each (i.e. the cards are split into 12 categories in total).

Hint 3: Each of the sub-categories should have three phrases.

Hint 4: The 12 categories should be:

- 1ai) Interrupting and disagreeing directly/ strongly
- 1aii) Interrupting and disagreeing politely/ indirectly
- 1bi) Interrupting and adding to what your partner said
- 1bii) Agreeing and ending discussion of that point
- 2ai) Interrupting and checking what you think you heard/ understood
- 2aii) Interrupting and showing that you didn't understand
- 2bi) Interrupting and telling your partner that they misheard/ misunderstood
- 2bii) Interrupting and explaining yourself more/ better
- 3ai) Interrupting and going off topic/ digressing
- 3aii) Interrupting and moving onto the next (main) topic
- 3bi) Requests to get back on topic/ Questions to get back on topic
- 3bii) More direct ways to get back on topic/ Statements to get back on topic

Check your answers as a class or with the answer key.

Use similar phrases as you do the speaking activities below. If you use the cards while you are doing the speaking activity, you can discard a card if you use the word on it (with the sorry cards) or if you use a phrase with that function that no one has used yet (with the function cards).

Cards to cut up

Sorry but do you really mean (to say that)...?

Sorry but I can't believe my ears.

Sorry but I don't understand how you can say that.

Probably, but my own experience of this is...

Sure, I understand what you are saying, but I'd say that...

Yeah, I see what you mean, but isn't it also true that...

Undoubtedly. In fact, I'd say that...

Absolutely. What's more,...

Quite right. In fact, I'd go further and say...

Yeah, sure. I think we all agree on this.

Okay (*name*), I think you've about covered that.

Well, I think that about says it all.

So, (if I understand you correctly), what you're saying is...(?)

Sorry, just to (double) check that I get what you are saying, do you mean...?

Sorry, did you say...?

Sorry, I'm not quite clear about...

Sorry, could you run that by me again? I'm not quite sure that I understand...

Sorry, could you clarify (exactly)...?

Sorry, I think you've got the wrong end of the stick. What I mean is...

Sorry, I think you misunderstood my point. To put it another way,...

(Sorry), actually that's not quite what I said. (It's not that..., it's that...)

Sorry, I don't think I explained myself very well.

Sorry, (I didn't mean to say...,) what I should have said was...

Sorry, (that was a slip of the tongue). What I meant (to say) was...

By the way, that reminds me. I should have mentioned that...

Sorry, this might be off topic, but...

Sorry, going off topic for just a second, I need to say...

Sorry, we'll have to deal with that another time. The next thing we need to discuss is...

Sorry, we don't seem to be getting anywhere with that point. Shall we move onto...?

Well, we seem to be going round in circles with that, so let's have a look at...

Sorry, can you mention that again in AOB at the end? Now, where were we?

Sorry, can we get back to...?

Sorry, can we come back to that later? We were supposed to be discussing...

Sorry, we seem to be getting a bit off track. As I was saying...

Sorry, getting back to the matter at hand,...

Anyway, we need to get back to the main issue.

Suggested answers

1) Interrupting and giving opinions

1a) Interrupting and disagreeing

1ai) Interrupting and disagreeing directly/ strongly

Sorry but do you really mean (to say that)...?

Sorry but I can't believe my ears.

Sorry but I don't understand how you can say that.

1aii) Interrupting and disagreeing politely/ indirectly

Probably, but my own experience of this is...

Sure, I understand what you are saying, but I'd say that...

Yeah, I see what you mean, but isn't it also true that...

1b) Interrupting and agreeing**1bi) Interrupting and adding to what your partner said**

Undoubtedly. In fact, I'd say that...

Absolutely. What's more,...

Quite right. In fact, I'd go further and say...

1bii) Agreeing and ending discussion of that point

Yeah, sure. I think we all agree on this.

Okay (*name*), I think you've about covered that.

Well, I think that about says it all.

2) Interrupting and checking/ clarifying**2a) Interrupting and checking something about what the other person said****2ai) Interrupting and checking what you think you heard/ understood**

So, (if I understand you correctly), what you're saying is...(?)

Sorry, just to (double) check that I get what you are saying, do you mean...?

Sorry, did you say...?

2aii) Interrupting and showing that you didn't understand

Sorry, I'm not quite clear about...

Sorry, could you run that by me again? I'm not quite sure that I understand...

Sorry, could you clarify (exactly)...?

2b) Interrupting and confirming something about what you said**2bi) Interrupting and telling your partner that they misheard/ misunderstood**

Sorry, I think you've got the wrong end of the stick. What I mean is...

Sorry, I think you misunderstood my point. To put it another way,...

(Sorry), actually that's not quite what I said. (It's not that..., it's that...)

2bii) Interrupting and explaining yourself more/ better

Sorry, I don't think I explained myself very well.

Sorry, (I didn't mean to say...,) what I should have said was...

Sorry, (that was a slip of the tongue). What I meant (to say) was...

3) Interrupting and controlling the topic

3a) Interrupting and changing topic

3ai) Interrupting and going off topic/ digressing

By the way, that reminds me. I should have mentioned that...

Sorry, this might be off topic, but...

Sorry, going off topic for just a second, I need to say...

3aii) Interrupting and moving onto the next (main) topic

Sorry, we'll have to deal with that another time. The next thing we need to discuss is...

Sorry, we don't seem to be getting anywhere with that point. Shall we move onto...?

Well, we seem to be going round in circles with that, so let's have a look at...

3b) Interrupting and getting back on topic**3bi) Requests to get back on topic/ Questions to get back on topic**

Sorry, can you mention that again in AOB at the end? Now, where were we?

Sorry, can we get back to...?

Sorry, can we come back to that later? We were supposed to be discussing...

3bii) More direct ways to get back on topic/ Statements to get back on topic

Sorry, we seem to be getting a bit off track. As I was saying...

Sorry, getting back to the matter at hand,...

Anyway, we need to get back to the main issue.

Roleplay a telephone call, teleconference or face-to-face conversation where you interrupt each other a lot. There are suggestions below for things to discuss and things to confirm. You can use things there for different purposes (e.g. using different main topics as minor topics) or use your own ideas if you like.

Main topic/ function	Minor topics	Things to check/ confirm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apology ● Asking for payment ● Audit ● Bad news ● Booking ● Budget ● Complaint ● Conference/ Trade fair ● Enquiry ● Finances ● Ideas for new products ● Job interview ● Making arrangements/ Scheduling ● Marketing ● Negotiating ● Permission ● Placing an order ● Policies ● Products ● Progress ● Purchasing ● R&D ● Staff training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advice/ Feedback ● AOB ● Cultural differences ● Delivery ● Directions on how to get somewhere ● Food and drink ● Gifts ● How things used to be done ● How to celebrate when a project is finished ● Meeting minutes ● Mutual acquaintances/ Message from or for someone else ● Next conversation ● Offer ● Other things you are working on ● People not there ● Possible political changes ● Socialising ● Something you forgot to mention last time you spoke ● Something you read online/ on social media ● Stationery ● Technology problems ● Thanking ● The news ● Who made a decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Addresses ● Amounts/ Quantities ● Dimensions ● Getting in somewhere ● How to get more information ● How you heard about something ● Internet addresses ● Lengths of time ● Names ● Numbers ● Password ● Phone numbers ● Places ● Prices ● Pronunciation ● Reasons for an opinion ● Reasons for something ● Reference number ● Spelling ● Times and dates ● What order something should be done it ● Where that info/ data came from ● Which part of a document



Saying sorry when you interrupt card game

Roleplay a conversation like one of those above. Each time you say sorry plus a phrase that no one has used in this round you can discard one sorry card. The person who has got rid of most by the end of the game is the winner.

sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry
sorry	sorry	sorry

Functions when you interrupt card game

Choose one version of the packs of cards below. Deal out the cards between you. You can discard the cards if you use a phrase with that function that no one has used yet.

Very general functions version

1) Interrupting and giving opinions
2) Interrupting and checking/ clarifying
3) Interrupting and controlling the topic
1) Interrupting and giving opinions
2) Interrupting and checking/ clarifying
3) Interrupting and controlling the topic
1) Interrupting and giving opinions
2) Interrupting and checking/ clarifying
3) Interrupting and controlling the topic
1) Interrupting and giving opinions
2) Interrupting and checking/ clarifying
3) Interrupting and controlling the topic

More specific functions version

1a) Interrupting and disagreeing
1b) Interrupting and agreeing
2a) Interrupting and checking something about what the other person said
2b) Interrupting and confirming something about what you said
3a) Interrupting and changing topic
3b) Interrupting and getting back on topic
1a) Interrupting and disagreeing
1b) Interrupting and agreeing
2a) Interrupting and checking something about what the other person said
2b) Interrupting and confirming something about what you said
3a) Interrupting and changing topic
3b) Interrupting and getting back on topic

Very specific functions version

1ai) Interrupting and disagreeing directly/ strongly
1aii) Interrupting and disagreeing politely/ indirectly
1bi) Interrupting and adding to what your partner said
1bii) Agreeing and ending discussion of that point
2ai) Interrupting and checking what you think you heard/ understood
2aii) Interrupting and showing that you didn't understand
2bi) Interrupting and telling your partner that they misheard/ misunderstood
2bii) Interrupting and explaining yourself more/ better
3ai) Interrupting and going off topic/ digressing
3aii) Interrupting and moving onto the next (main) topic
3bi) Requests to get back on topic/ Questions to get back on topic
3bii) More direct ways to get back on topic/ Statements to get back on topic