

## Types of conversation: the 6 Ds

People talk with each other a lot, but not all conversations are the same. Below are examples of six different strategies we can choose when speaking to someone.



When we **dictate**, we don't just read a text out loud for others to write down. It is a one-way speech in which we tell others what to do. This is the easiest form of communication, because we do not have to think about the other side. Dictating can be made softer with words such as "please" or "Can you", which signal our desires and requests. It can also be useful at a lecture in which we need to learn something, or when there is an emergency. However, we should avoid it in everyday conversations.

A **diatribe** is similar to dictation in that no other side is involved. We give our own opinion without giving a chance to the other side to react. For example, we use diatribe when we complain about someone who is not present, or about how events have unfolded. The main point is to express our own emotions, while the other side is less important.

**Debates** include two or more people, though they are still not too concerned about each other. In the debate, the main point is to state our opinion and win. Fights and arguments are also a type of a debate, in which we try not to be the "losing" side. It is a little bit like a war, so it usually does not help relationships. However, it is highly

valued in the public sphere, especially in politics. Political debates can be a powerful way to express strong opinions in a polite way.



A lot of our conversations are **discussions** in which we exchange information. The main goal of a discussion is to have an open talk about a subject that is relevant to us. People will usually not fight, because we want to be understood and share what we know. It is a very important element of any relationship, especially the one in which both sides are equal. The main problem in discussions is usually truthfulness.

**Deliberating** is just a difficult word for making decisions with another person. Our own decisions are usually done quietly, either in our heads or by writing things down. However, when we need to agree on something with another person, we need to have a different type of a conversation. When we deliberate, we explore options, look at the pros and cons, and finally make a choice.

When we have a **dialogue** with someone, we try to understand the other person. We usually ask questions to make everything clear and listen with a lot of care. The basis of a good dialogue is respect and trust. We can only have this deep type of conversation with someone who we consider our equal, and who we want to understand. In such conversations, we can lose the sense of time, but we don't mind because they connect us to others more closely.

**Task:**

Here are examples of each type of conversation.

Can you match the example with the type of conversation?

Then write examples from your own life.

Read them out loud, and let your classmates guess who said it, when and why.

- a) The most important things in my life right now are friends and school. I don't have time for hobbies. How about you?
- b) I'm so tired. Could you bring me a glass of water and something to eat?
- c) Did you like the film last night? I thought it was brilliant, but only if you like horrors.
- d) I know you want to spend the weekend at home, but I would really love to visit my parents. We need to make a plan.
- e) How could she give me an F? I knew answers to more questions than Monica or Brad, and they passed!
- f) You are being very rude, and I don't like it. If you don't use more polite language, I won't talk to you.