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**Parks Canada – Banff National Park – ESL –**  
**Activity Fifteen: *Parks in the World Discussion***  
**(Core Activity)**

**CLB:** 4-7

**Topic:** Parks and Animals around the world

**Goal:** Develop discussion skills through discussion on national parks, zoos.

**Language Focus:** Speaking, Reading, Listening, Writing

**Material:** Handouts and activities on Rejoinders, Follow-up Questions, Interrupting, Summary Clarification, Stating an Opinion, Agreeing and Disagreeing with an Opinion, Asking for Opinions and Discussion Scenarios

**Grouping:** Whole group and small groups of 2-3

**Activity Outline:** Discussion skills will be built throughout this activity culminating in small group discussion where students will be given a position to explain and defend



Parks  
Canada

Parcs  
Canada



Canada

## ***Discussion Skill Building***

Discuss the culture of discussion. Start students off on a discussion in small groups. Try and mix cultural groups to facilitate good learning about how discussion is treated in different countries. Ask students to talk about “discussion” and the culture of discussion in their country. Display the following hints on the board to spur the discussion:

1. Is discussion common in their countries? Do they usually have discussion as a family, with parents, in the classroom, in school, at work? What are the rules of discussion in their culture? What must they be careful not to do? Can they disagree with a person that is older than them or with a boss or a teacher? Can they always say what they are truly feeling?
2. Discuss as a large group some of the answers (mainly to show that discussion is handled very differently in some countries).
3. Ask each group to come up with a list of rules for a good discussion. Discuss as a large group.
4. Explain the culture and rules of discussion in Canada highlighting the following: Talk about the situation/subject and not the person (“I can’t go along with that” rather than “I can’t go along with you”). It is never personal. We expect active participation even if it is only to ask questions or get more details without having to express our own opinion or views. Always be polite and respectful. There is no hierarchy in our discussions (we can disagree with an idea a superior has without repercussions; we don’t have to agree with classmates).
5. We have strategies to help us in discussions. Go through the discussion strategies one at a time and do the activities for each.

## **Discussion Strategy #1 *Rejoinders and Follow-Up Questions***

Tell students that follow-up questions show you're interested in the discussion and desire to get more information. When someone makes a statement, we use a rejoinder and then ask follow-up questions. Ask the group for possible rejoinders to Positive/Negative/Neutral statements (some can be in more than one category) and list them on the board.

Examples:

Positive Rejoinder: *That's great/wonderful.*

Negative Rejoinder: *That's too bad.*

Neutral Rejoinder: *Really?*

### **Activity A: *Rejoinder/Follow-up Questions***

Have student read strips in turn and another student use a rejoinder and asks a/some follow-up question(s). Do this as a group so that everyone gets the hang of it then split them into groups of two for more practice after the first few strips.

## **Discussion Strategy #2: *Answering With Details***

Have the students use **and**, **but**, **so** and **because** with every answer.

Do *Activity B: Answering with Details Question Sheet*. Make two copies, cut in half (part A and Part B) and hand out a copy to each pair. Have the students ask their partner the questions in turn and they will practice answering with **only one sentence** but using the above words to add details to the answer.

## **Discussion Strategy #3: *Interrupting***

Brainstorm with the students the expressions that they use to interrupt politely.

Give students **Phrase Sheet** with “Interrupting” phrases but ask them to fold over the 2 other strategies included on this sheet until they are discussed.

Do discussion Strategy #4 before the next activity (it incorporates 3 and 4 together)

### **Discussion Strategy #4: *Summary Clarification***

Brainstorm with the students the expressions that they use to get clarification or more details.

Have the student unfold the next section on the sheet that has “Clarifying” phrases (one section is still hidden!).

Do **Activity C: Interrupting and Summary Clarification** in pairs. Student A has a sheet and Student B has a different sheet

### **Discussion Strategy #5: *Expressing An Opinion***

Cut up the **Expressing an Opinion worksheet**, shuffle the strips and have the students, in pairs, place the expressions into 3 groups: Strong, Moderate, Weak.

Once they have done it, check the answers and meaning as a group. Give them the **Expressing an Opinion Expression Sheet** with all the phrases in order of strong to weak for use later. Point out that we often begin a discussion with a Weakly Stated opinion because it shows we are open to discussion and persuasion and desire to hear contrasting views.

### **Discussion Strategy #6: *Agreeing and Disagreeing With An Opinion***

Do the same as above: Cut up the **Agreeing and Disagreeing worksheet**, shuffle the strips and have the students, in pairs, place the expressions into 3 groups:  
100% Agree,

Somewhat Agree and Disagree.

Check the answers and meaning as a group. Then, give them the **Agreeing and Disagreeing Expression Sheet** with all the phrases in order of agreement to disagreement.

### **Discussion Strategy #7: Asking For Opinions**

Brainstorm with students ways to ask for others opinions.

Discuss additional phrases they may have missed.

Ask the students to unfold the last section on their phrase sheet.

### **Putting It All Together In Discussions**

Students will now have the chance to have group discussions. Each student will be given a card stating their position and they must act accordingly. In rotation, one student will always make an opening statement, to which, the others will respond.

See **Putting it all Together – Scenarios**

### **Animal Discussions Questions**

Hand out the **Animal Discussion Questions Sheet** and have the students in pairs or small groups discuss them keeping in mind all that they have learned about the culture, rules and protocol of what makes a good discussion.

**Activity A: Rejoinder and Follow-Up Questions:**

***(Copy and cut into strips)***

I SAW A DEAD ANIMAL ON THE ROAD TODAY.

MY CAR WAS HIT IN THE PARKING LOT AT SAFEWAY.

MY BIRTHDAY IS TOMORROW.

I JUST GOT A NEW TEACHER.

MY CAR IS REALLY DIRTY. I REALLY SHOULD WASH IT.

I FOUND \$20 AT THE LIBRARY THIS MORNING.

MY FATHER HAD AN ACCIDENT LAST WEEK.

I REALLY DON'T LIKE THIS KIND OF WEATHER.

**Activity: B: *Answering with Detail***

**Student A**

1. Do you like animals?
2. Did you have any pets when you were a child?
3. Have you ever seen a very scary animal?
4. Do you have a zoo in your hometown?
5. Can you see any wild animals in your hometown?

**Student B**

1. Do you like snakes?
2. Can you have pets where you live now?
3. If you could be any animal, what animal would you like to be?
4. Do you have an aquarium in your hometown?
5. Have you ever been involved in a scary situation with an animal?

## **Phrase Sheet** (for Discussion Strategy #3, #4 and #7)

### **Interrupting Phrases**

Excuse me. Could I just ask/say something?

Uhh, sorry for interrupting, but.....

Sorry, could I ask a question.

Yes, but.....

### **Clarification Phrases**

**Use the following phrases at the beginning of each clarification question.**

I'm sorry.

Excuse me.

I'm not sure I understand.

#### **Then add one of the following:**

You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_. Could you go back to that point?

Did you say ~?

You said ~, right?

In other words, ~ right?

What do you mean by ~ ? | You mean ~ ?

I'm interested in your comments on \_\_\_\_\_. Could you clarify/repeat that?

Could you give me an example of ~?

I'd like to know more about ~.

### **Asking For An Opinion Phrases**

What's your reaction to that?

What do you think?

What are your views on that?



**Activity: C:**  
**Discussion Strategy #3 and #4 – Student A**

**Interrupting and Clarifying**

1. Silently read your part of the story below and then answer your factual questions. Check the meaning of any words with other students who have the same part of the story as you or ask your teacher.
2. Once you and your partner are finished answering your individual questions, read your part to Student B. Expect your partner to interrupt you when he/she doesn't understand and be prepared to help. At the end of each paragraph, ask your partner the question in bold. Fill in any details that they may have missed and go on to the next part.
3. When you are finished your part of the story, listen to your partner finish the story and interrupt when you don't understand. When asked by your partner if you understand, use **Summary Clarification** phrases *even if you understand clearly*.

**Student A**

The Canadian Rocky Mountains are home to both grizzly and black bears. You can run into a bear anywhere. It might be on a busy trail close to town or in the remote backcountry. **Are you following me?**

Bears generally prefer to avoid people. However, encounters between bears and people do occur. Knowing how to avoid an encounter with a bear is the best way to stay safe and enjoy Banff National Park. **So far, so good?**

Bears are extremely sensitive to human activity. You can help protect these animals by avoiding encounters with them. There are a number of ways to avoid bears. **Did you get this last part?**

**Factual Questions about the Story**

1. Where might you run into a bear?

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2. What is the best way to stay safe in Banff National Park?

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3. How can you help protect bears in Banff National Park?

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## **Activity: C**

### **Discussion Strategy #3 and #4 – Student B**

#### **Interrupting and Clarifying**

1. Silently read your part of the story below and then answer your factual questions. Check the meaning of any words with other students that have the same part of the story as you or ask your teacher.
2. Once you and your partner are finished answering your individual questions, listen to your partner read the first part of the story. As you are listening, interrupt using your **Interrupting** phrases as soon as you don't understand something. When asked by your partner if you understand, use **Summary Clarification** phrases *even if you understand clearly*.
3. Read your part to Student B.

#### **Student B**

Here are some ways to avoid bears. To avoid an encounter, make noise! Let bears know you are there. Call out, clap your hands, sing or talk loudly especially near running water or where the forest is thick and near berry patches. Bear bells are good but bells alone are not enough. **Are you following me so far?**

Watch for fresh bear signs. Tracks, droppings, diggings, torn-up logs and turned-over rocks are all signs that a bear has been in the area. Leave the area if the signs are fresh. **Did you get all those details?**

If you have a dog, keep your dog on a leash at all times or leave it at home. Larger size groups are less likely to have a serious bear encounter. We recommend hiking in a tight group of four or more. Never let children wander off alone. **Got it?**

## **Factual Questions about the Story**

1. What are some ways to avoid bear when out in national parks?

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2. What are some signs that a bear has been in an area?

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3. What recommendations are given for hiking with dogs and children?

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**Expressing an Opinion Phrase Sheet**

EXPRESSING AN OPINION

I DON'T DOUBT THAT...

I FEEL CERTAIN THAT...

I'M CONVINCED THAT...

IT STRIKES ME THAT...

AS I SEE IT...

I BELIEVE...

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT...

I'M INCLINED TO THINK THAT...

MY IMPRESSION IS THAT...

I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT

**Agreeing and Disagreeing with An Opinion Phrase Sheet**

I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.

TOTALLY!

I COMPLETELY AGREE.

YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT.

I AGREE UP TO A POINT (BUT...)

YOU HAVE A POINT (BUT...)

I'M INCLINED TO AGREE (BUT...)

YOU COULD BE RIGHT (BUT...)

I SUPPOSE THAT'S TRUE.

THAT'S NOT HOW I SEE IT.

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T AGREE WITH THAT.

### **Situation #3**

#### **Student C**

Opening Statement: **Zoos are great places to see and learn about animals.**

#### **Student D**

You agree 100%

#### **Student A**

You disagree 100%

#### **Student B**

You're not sure. You need lots of Clarification and Interrupt to get more information.

### **Situation #4**

#### **Student D**

Opening Statement: **Banff National Park is a great place to pick flowers and collect fossils.**

#### **Student A**

You agree 100%

#### **Student B**

You disagree 100%

#### **Student C**

You are not sure yet. You need to interrupt to get more information and ask for Clarification.

**\*\*Use all of the Discussion Skills you have built to have a good discussion\*\***

## **Animal Discussion Question Sheet**

1. What kinds of animals can you see in your town/country?
2. Do you have any animals in your country that are protected or special in some way?
3. Do you have zoos, aquariums, national parks or other places to go and see animals or see them in their natural habitat? How do you feel about these places?
4. Are there any sports or events that you feel are cruel to animals? Example: bullfighting, rodeos, equestrian, dog shows, circus....
5. Have you ever had any frightening or interesting experiences with animals?
6. What kinds of pets are common in your country? What has been your experience with pets in your lifetime?
7. What is your least favorite animal/insect and why?