

 Academic  
English UK

# An Introduction to Seminars

EXAMPLE



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## Seminars **EXAMPLE**

### What is a seminar?

Generally, it is a small discussion [redacted]. At university it can be a [redacted] which is often connected to pre-reading texts or post-lecture discussions. Commonly, at university English language [redacted] conversational skills and ability to discuss complex subjects.

### Why have seminars?

- Explore topics in more depth.
- [redacted] your thinking.
- Learn from other people's experiences and background knowledge.
- [redacted].

### Speaking Practice

In small groups discuss these questions. Try to discuss [redacted]

#### **Key points**

- Listen [redacted] saying and then add to their point.
- Think about both sides of the argument (the pros and cons).
- Always [redacted]

#### Question 1

##### **Education**

What are the benefits of [redacted] the cultural experience and future employment benefits?

#### Question 2

##### **Family**

From the perspective of [redacted] of all three generations living together in one house?

#### Question 3

##### **Transport**

In terms of cost, comfort [redacted] train?

### Self-evaluation

How did you do in the speaking activity?

		Yes	No
i)	I managed to speak for 30 seconds continuously.		
ii)	I [redacted]		
iii)	I gave [redacted]		
iv)	I added [redacted] said.		
v)	What I need to do to improve is...		

## Academic Seminars EXAMPLE

### Pre-seminar procedures

Students are often given pre-texts [REDACTED]. Students are [REDACTED] carefully by making detailed notes and coming to the seminar fully prepared.

### 1. An overview of how a seminar works

- Students work together in groups of 4-6.
- [REDACTED]
- Students discuss for 25-30 minutes (approx. 5 mins per person).
- [REDACTED]
- Students CAN refer to the texts and their notes.
- [REDACTED]

### 2. Pre-seminar task

- Students:
  - i. [REDACTED]
  - ii. Predict question types and practice formulating answers.
  - iii. [REDACTED]

### 3. The seminar

- The group are called into a room, and they sit around a table.
- The questions [REDACTED] and prepare by taking notes.
- The seminar begins with an opening statement – *we're here today to discuss...*
- The [REDACTED] question.
- Each student should make a contribution by referring to their notes / texts.
- The seminar [REDACTED] previously said.
- Once everyone agrees the question has been addressed in full, then they move onto the next question.
- **Important:** Not all the questions [REDACTED] in order.
- Once the students begin to approach 25 minutes, [REDACTED] one summarising a main point raised.

### 4. Points to remember

- It should be a flowing conversation with everyone involved and contributing.
- The teacher / tutor should [REDACTED] manage the discussion.
- Students have to show confidence and demonstrate thorough awareness of the texts.
- [REDACTED] others.
- Students are penalised for just reading notes.
- Key debate phrases [REDACTED] - agreeing, disagreeing, interrupting, etc...

## Seminar Language Phrases

Here are a range of useful seminar phrases:

### **Giving Opinions**

In my opinion...

From my perspective/point of view...

\_\_\_\_\_

In my mind...

It seems to me/It appears to me...

\_\_\_\_\_

I strongly/firmly believe

\_\_\_\_\_

*Example: It's my understanding that adopting the Euro will benefit Europe's economies in numerous ways.*

### **Stating facts**

It's well known that....

\_\_\_\_\_

I'm positive that....

\_\_\_\_\_

*Example: It's a fact that the Euro will make prices across Europe more transparent.*

### **Interrupting**

Yes, but...

\_\_\_\_\_

*Example: Yes, but it has already lost value against the U.S. dollar.*

### **Pinpointing a problem**

\_\_\_\_\_

The real problem is...

\_\_\_\_\_

*Example: The real problem is that not all countries in Europe are necessarily in favour of the EURO which means that only some economies will benefit.*

### **Adding Information**

Yes, but...

\_\_\_\_\_

Let me just add to what was just said...

\_\_\_\_\_

Furthermore...

*Example: Furthermore, the EURO may not level the economic playing field between countries and different standards of living will continue to exist.*

### **Checking that you have understood**

\_\_\_\_\_

Could I ask a few questions to check my understanding of your position?

\_\_\_\_\_

*Example: Please correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the EURO supposed to raise the standards in the less affluent European countries to meet those in the richer countries?*

### Proposing a solution

[Redacted]

Supposing \_X\_ tried...

[Redacted]

*Example: Supposing all EU members adopted the Euro for a trial period with the option of abandoning the currency if economic matters failed to improve.*

### Demonstrating Understanding

[Redacted]

I appreciate your/that point of view...

[Redacted]

*Example: I appreciate your point of view and I agree completely.*

### Focusing on difficulties

[Redacted]

The main issue/problem as I see it...

[Redacted]

*Example: The main problem as I see it, is that not all European countries are starting from the same economic departure point.*

### Disagreeing

I disagree/ completely disagree...

[Redacted]

I can see your point, but...

[Redacted]

*Example: I disagree with your last point because the EURO will equalize commerce, trade and labour costs.*

### Seeing both sides

On the one hand...

[Redacted]

Yes, but the flip side is...

[Redacted]

*Example: On the one hand adopting the EURO will bolster competition among European nations while on the other hand it will combat U.S., global market domination.*

## **Seminar Practice** EXAMPLE

You have 30 minutes to prepare for a seminar on cruise ships. Read the text (below) and listen to the mini-lecture (on the next page) and make some notes. You will then be given a set of questions to discuss in a 10-minute seminar.

### **Reading text on cruise ships: discovery the world in luxury**

by C. Wilson (2021)

Cruises are among the fastest-growing sectors of the global travel industry. Over the past decade, the [redacted] \$23bn in 2009 to \$37.8bn in 2019 (Statistica, 2021), marking the most successful and perhaps most transformative period in the industry's history. Reinvention has played [redacted] become bigger with the current largest cruise ship in the world 'The Symphony of the Seas' being able [redacted] travel destinations by sailing to more exotic locations like the Bahamas, the Galápagos Islands and even some go to Antarctica. Most cruise ships have reinvented entertainment too by [redacted] rinks, swimming pools, climbing walls, high street shops and cafes and multi-award-winning [redacted]

According to Statistica (2021), the largest names in the business are Carnival Corporation & plc with an annual turnover of \$29.8bn, Royal [redacted] USD). Despite the global growth in the cruising industry, the Caribbean accounts for the most popular cruise [redacted] the industry's global ship deployment capacity. Interestingly, out of the 30 million cruise passengers in 2019, the highest number of these passengers came from North America. [redacted] Europe followed on the ranking with roughly 7.7 million passengers.

Cruise holidays are convenient, cost-effective, [redacted] to suit any passenger, no holiday will feel more individualized than a cruise. In fact, cruises are such [redacted] International Association (2018), more than 80% of cruisers return for repeat voyages.

#### **References**

Cruise Line Industry Association. 2018. *Global Passenger Report*. [online] Available at: <https://cruising.org/en-gb/news-and-research/research/2019/may/2018-global-passenger-report> [Accessed 3 February 2021].

Statistica, 2021. *Topic: Cruise industry*. [online] Statista. Available at: [https://www.statista.com/topics/1004/cruise-industry/#dossierSummary\\_chapter2](https://www.statista.com/topics/1004/cruise-industry/#dossierSummary_chapter2) [Accessed 3 February 2021].

#### **Reading notes:**

**Listening text on the biggest cruise ship in the world: The symphony of the Seas**

by C. Watts (2021)



**4-Minute Lecture**

MP4 Link:



**Listening notes:**

\*Lecture transcript on the last page.

## Speaking Worksheet

### 10-Minute Seminar

In small groups, use the two texts (reading and listening) to discuss these questions. You have 3 minutes to prepare for the 10-minute seminar. You can [redacted] to [redacted]. Try to refer to the texts by the author's names.

#### Key sources:

Reading: <b>Wilson (2021):</b> Cruise Line Industry Association. (2018), Statista, (2021)	Lecture: <b>Watts (2021)</b>
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### Seminar Questions

- 1) Define cruising.
- 2) Discuss similarities between the two texts.
- 3) Discuss [redacted] cruising.
- 4) What's your [redacted] cruising?
- 5) Summarise your discussion.  
(Each person summarises one main interesting point discussed).

### Self-evaluation

Fill this in after the seminar. How did you do in the seminar?

		Yes	No
i)	I managed to speak for 30 seconds continuously.		
ii)	[redacted]		
iii)	I gave examples from the texts to support my ideas.		
iv)	[redacted]		
v)	I added to what someone else said.		
vi)	[redacted]		
vii)	I summarised one key point made in the seminar.		
viii)	I'm happy with my overall performance in the seminar.		
ix)	What I need to do to improve is...		



## Symphony of the Seas Lecture Transcript

(C. Watts 2021)

*Hello and welcome to this mini lecture today on the world's largest cruise ship the 'Symphony of the Seas' owned and operated by Royal Caribbean International. She took three years to build at a cost of over £1bn and offered her first passenger cruise on 7 April 2018 through the Mediterranean. The ship is currently located in the Caribbean....*

**FULL TRANSCRIPT IN PAID VERSION...**