

Select Readings, Second Edition
Intermediate, Chapter 9 Test

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

The Art of Arguing

It's a fact that most people don't like to fight. It is just human nature to want to avoid a confrontation. However, throughout our lifetime, there will inevitably be situations where we are called upon to defend our opinion on a topic against someone else's.

Argue Skillfully

The ability to take a stand, and skillfully present your point of view is a fundamental skill that will help you in business, as well as other aspects of life. You may win some arguments, you may lose—more often than not, you will come up with a negotiated agreement. But how you present your case and yourself, regardless of the outcome, will leave a lasting impression of who you are as a person and a leader.

Be Prepared

The first thing to remember is to be prepared. If you feel strongly about a topic, know it well. Take special measures to get the relevant facts and find out as much about the topic as you possibly can. Preparation is the only aspect of an argument or negotiation over which you have total control. You can never control what actually happens during an argument, but being prepared can help you stand on firm ground.

Know Your Opponent

In any serious discussion, it is not enough to simply understand your own point of view. It is equally, if not more important, to understand and never underestimate your opponent. It is important to understand that your opponent feels about his opinion as strongly as you feel about yours. Do not put down your opponent's ideas. Show politely that you understand, but that your opinion is different.

Listen Closely

Throughout an argument, it is important to listen. Listening carefully and asking relevant questions, shows that you are truly involved in the discussion and allows you to receive important information that will eventually lead to an outcome. Be sure to listen with an open mind, even if you believe the other side is taking a ridiculous position.

Keep Cool

Always keep your emotions under control. When arguments get emotionally heated, both sides tend to lose control and the discussion process breaks down. No matter how intensely you feel about a topic, keep a calm voice. Sometimes it may even help to take a deep breath and count to ten.

Know When to Stop

Finally, accept the fact that some arguments do not have a clear-cut outcome. Know when enough is enough, and simply agree to disagree.

Remember these simple tips the next time you are confronted with an argument, and you may just come out on top.

1. The reading is primarily about _____.
 - A. how to stay calm in an argument
 - B. how to avoid arguments
 - C. how to argue effectively
 - D. why people don't like to argue

2. Which heading is about knowing about your topic before you begin?
 - A. Be Prepared
 - B. Know Your Opponent
 - C. Listen Closely
 - D. Keep Cool

3. Which heading is about keeping your emotions under control?
 - A. Be Prepared
 - B. Know Your Opponent
 - C. Listen Closely
 - D. Keep Cool

4. Which heading is about understanding the other side of the argument?
 - A. Be Prepared
 - B. Know Your Opponent
 - C. Listen Closely
 - D. Keep Cool

5. Which aspect of arguing is the only one over which you have total control, according to the reading?
 - A. Your emotions
 - B. Your opponent
 - C. Negotiation
 - D. Preparation

6. What is one thing you should not do in an argument, according to the reading?
 - A. Stand on firm ground
 - B. Put down your opponent's ideas
 - C. Avoid becoming emotional
 - D. Agree to disagree

7. Each of the following is mentioned as a good way to keep cool except _____.
 - A. take a deep breath
 - B. count to ten
 - C. keep a calm voice
 - D. feel strongly about your position

8. According to the reading, why is it important to listen carefully?
 - A. So you can keep an open mind
 - B. Because your opponent may say something ridiculous
 - C. So you don't lose control of the argument
 - D. Because you may get some useful information

9. Which of the following is not listed as an advantage of learning to argue well?
 - A. It could help you in business.
 - B. Others can get a chance to see you as a leader.
 - C. You can learn to win every negotiation you attempt.
 - D. It is a fundamental skill that can help you in other parts of your life.

10. The overall tone of the reading is _____.
- A. serious and practical
 - B. light and silly
 - C. informative and humorous
 - D. entertaining and childish