



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hi, this is Finn. Now, as much as we all like to get along, it's important to know how to disagree in English. So in this programme we're going to tell you how to do it politely – of course - but firmly as well.

Now, as we'll see, in order to disagree well, you also need to know how to agree!

Confusing? Well, let's go straight in and listen to Neil and Rob disagreeing.

Neil thinks The Beatles are the best band ever. Rob is not so sure – he thinks their singer Paul McCartney is better than the whole band. Listen to their conversation. What happens at the end?

Neil

You know Rob, there is absolutely no doubt at all that The Beatles are the best group, the finest group, in the history of popular music.

Rob

I don't accept that Neil. I mean, you know, they've had some hits. But let's take the musicians individually. I mean Paul McCartney is obviously the one who's had the best career. As a solo singer, I think he's done best.

Neil

Well, I mean that's not true really is it. I mean, John Lennon died so young that you can't really, you can't really compare.

Rob

No, I don't agree. Definitely Paul McCartney, I mean he's stood the test of time, he writes his own songs.

Neil

I understand what you're saying, but even so, there's no way you can say that Paul McCartney is bigger than The Beatles. The Beatles were, and are, the biggest group.

Rob

I agree with that but I mean Paul McCartney went on to have a very long music career. Much longer than The Beatles. He's kind of covered all kinds of genres hasn't he? He's very talented. He's the most talented Beatle, basically.

Neil

Although you're right about that and his solo career being very long, I can't accept that Paul McCartney is more important, or bigger than The Beatles. I'm afraid we're going to have to agree to disagree.

Finn

So, interesting discussion, and at the end they – agreed to disagree. Now that's a really good phrase – to agree to disagree, and it's often used how Neil did it. So, after a long argument nobody has won, you can say - we'll agree to disagree, or let's agree to disagree. Or, you can use it with have to - we'll just have to agree to disagree.

OK, so let's look at other parts of that conversation again. What do they do at the start of each of these points that they make?

Neil

Although you're right about that...

Rob

I agree with that, but...

Neil

I understand what you're saying, but even so...

Finn

So what do they do? They agree with each other! They find something they agree about before moving on to the part they disagree about. It's a way of making your disagreement seem less aggressive. Listen again:

Neil

Although you're right about that...

Rob

I agree with that, but...

Neil

I understand what you're saying, but even so...

Finn

But sometimes, you can also use a phrase which shows quite clearly that you don't agree, for example:

Rob

No, I don't agree...

Finn

I don't agree. That's pretty direct! And if it's what you mean, then just say it! You can also use phrases like these:

Rob

I don't accept that Neil...

Neil

Well, I mean that's not true really is it....

Finn

I don't agree, I don't accept that, that's not true...

So there we go. I hope you've enjoyed listening to this – and no doubt you're hoping for your next chance to have an argument with someone, just to practise!

Anything, let's listen to the whole thing again. What about you – do you think The Beatles are the best pop band ever? Or do you disagree...? Bye.

Neil

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