

# Conversation Styles

Discussion styles in different countries can be compared to sports. In the US, conversations can be like playing basketball.

## Bowling Style

* Speakers take longer turns based on hierarchy
* Slower pace, quieter column
* Higher status people speak first, lower status people wait for a pause
* Interruptions are rude
* Common in Japan, Northern China, Korea, Thailand, and Switzerland

## Basketball Style

* Speakers take short turns
* Faster pace
* Speakers “steal the ball” during hesitations and pauses
* Interruptions keep the discussion moving forward
* Common in Britain, Canada, and the United States

## Rugby Style

* Many speakers talk at the same time
* Very past pace, loud volume
* Speakers respond immediately and overlap each other
* Active involvement and interruptions are required
* Common in Middle East and Mediterranean regions, some African countries, Russia

For tips on how to “play basketball” in American discussions, visit esl.umn.edu.

*Sources:* <http://xucommunication.blogspot.com/2008/02/playing-game-of-communication.html> and <https://uminntilt.com/2011/11/14/play-ball-discussion-as-bowling-rugby-basketball/>