

Conspiracy Theory Conversation Questions

Warm-up Tasks:

Can we believe what we read in newspapers or see online?

Discussion Questions:

1. Which of the following words describes your personality best? *Naïve*, *trusting*, *skeptical*, *cynical*.
2. A *conspiracy theory* is an explanation of an event or situation that suggests it was caused by people working together in secret. What famous conspiracy theories do you know of? List as many as you can.
3. Are you good at keeping secrets? If someone tells you something secret, how important is it to keep it secret?
4. Is it possible for a large group of people to keep their activities secret? Will a secret *inevitably* get out?
5. One aspect of many conspiracy theories is secret government activity. How much can we trust our governments? Do governments hide what they are doing from their citizens? If so, why?
6. One of the most famous conspiracy theories is about the death of JFK, the American president. What do you know about his death? What do you think happened?
7. Some people prefer to believe a conspiracy theory rather than accept that something is unclear. How about you? Do you feel okay with not knowing or understanding something? Or do you prefer to have some kind of explanation?
8. Do you believe aliens have visited earth? Some people believe governments hide information about alien visits. Why would governments do this? Do you think governments are keeping this information from ordinary citizens?
9. Another famous conspiracy theory suggests that the moon landing was faked. What do you know about this theory? Do you have doubts that humans landed on the moon in 1969?
10. A *conspiracy*, as opposed to a conspiracy theory, is a secret plan between people to do something illegal or harmful. Can you think of any famous conspiracies from history?
11. Vaccination to prevent diseases is common in many countries, but some people think it is actually dangerous and a way for pharmaceutical companies to make money? What's your opinion?
12. Christopher Hitchens described conspiracy theories as the "exhaust fumes of democracy." What do you think he meant?
13. Some people suggest secret societies such as the Freemasons or the Illuminati are powerful and responsible for major world events. What do you think about this? Who are the members of these groups?
14. On September 11, 2001, airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center buildings in New York City. Some believe it was an *inside job*. What do you think?

