Special Edition
C21 ENGLISH FOR THE 21st CENTURY
B1 Pre-intermediate / B1+ Intermediate

Worksheet

Express opinions (2)

Student name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

You learn about the importance of justifying your opinions in *C21 English for the 21st Century*, Level 4. Justifying or giving support for your opinions is also essential in academic discussions in seminars and tutorials. Giving support for your opinions, especially using material from sources, demonstrates critical thinking skills and an ability to link ideas together.

Practice

1 **Below are the opinions of three students on the topic of electric cars. Read the opinions and match them to the type of evidence used to support each one.**

a Objective evidence: statistics, research, etc.
b Expert opinion
c World knowledge and logical reasoning

1 Although electric cars have limitations at the moment, I think technological advances will probably overcome a lot of these. As Anderson points out, things like wireless charging could solve the problem we have at the moment with connecting up to a charging point. That would make it possible for a lot more people to use electric vehicles.

2 I'm still not convinced that electric cars will overtake conventional cars. There seem to be too many practical issues to overcome. I know there are already some charging points around, but I can't see how they can be installed everywhere, especially in less developed areas of the world. It would involve a huge investment in infrastructure.

3 It seems clear to me that electric cars are really increasing in popularity. Not very long ago, there were only a few electric cars on the road, but according to figures from the International Energy Agency, sales have increased dramatically in the past couple of years to over a million cars per year. Surely that trend's only going to continue.

2 **Look at the opinions again and answer the questions.**

a Underline the language students use to introduce their opinion.
b Which argument do you find most convincing? Why?

TIP

When expressing an opinion in an academic discussion, we often use tentative language to show that we cannot be 100% certain about what we are saying. This makes our argument stronger because it is less open to challenge. For example, compare:
'I think everyone will be driving electric cars by 2050.'
'I think that by 2050, the majority of cars could potentially be electric.'
Which view is easier to challenge?

Tentative language can include:

- modals like *could, would, may, might*
- tentative verbs like *seem, appear, tend*
- quantifiers like *some, many, the majority of*
- adverbs like *probably, potentially, perhaps, surely*

Find examples of tentative language in the opinions 1–3 above.

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3 **You are going to discuss how rising sea levels might affect the world's major coastal cities. Read the infographic and consider the following questions:**

- What are the views of the two experts?
- How are the statistics linked to the experts' arguments?
- Which evidence do you find most convincing? Why?
- Are there any major coastal cities in your country?
- Make notes about what you think.
- Ask your teacher questions about the information if necessary.

A With the signing of the Kyoto Protocol, I believe we are now moving in the right direction. If the targets set out for reducing emissions are met, I am confident that within the next 20 years, we will see a significant reduction, and possibly even a reversal, of global warming and sea level rises.

Anderson, Professor of Environmental Science, 1997

B Rising sea levels caused by climate change pose a serious risk to many of the world's major coastal cities. Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro and Miami could all be under water by the end of the century if sea levels continue to rise at their current rate. In order to protect these major centres of population and business, we need to take action now to move these cities further inland.

Knowles, Professor of Urban Planning, 2019

3.2 mm per year	52–98 cm	275 million
Current rate of sea level rise	Predicted sea level rise by 2100	Number of people who could be affected by coastal flooding based on current predictions
NASA, 2018	IPCC, 2018	Climate Central, 2017

4 **In groups, discuss the questions below. Take turns to put forward your opinions, supporting them with appropriate evidence. Respond to each other's opinions.**

- To what extent do you think coastal flooding is likely to become a serious global issue?
- Should major coastal cities be moved inland to avoid damage and loss of life?

5 **In your group, prepare a short summary of your discussion. Consider the following questions:**

- Did you mostly express similar opinions or were there different views?
- Which type of evidence did you draw on most in your discussion?
- Did you use any evidence from your own world knowledge?
- Did you question the validity or reliability of any of the evidence?
- Did you agree on any conclusions?

Present your summary to the class.

Reflect

6 **Reflect on the discussion task using the following questions. Did you:**

- make good use of the preparation time?
- think critically and ask questions about the evidence?
- express your opinions effectively?
- make good use of evidence to support your viewpoint?
- use appropriate tentative language?
- participate fully in the discussion?

7 **Complete an 'exit card'. Use your answers in Exercise 6 to write down:**

- one thing you achieved well in the discussion task
- one thing you could improve next time

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