

Student name: _____

Class: _____

Date: _____

TEAMS AND LEADERS

In an ideal situation, teams are carefully chosen to have a balance of skills and personalities. Sometimes, however, teams are put together without much thought and leaders emerge without being actually chosen. It is not always the best person for the role that ends up as the leader.

You learn the life skill of 'collaboration and leadership' in *C21 English for the 21st Century*, Level 5. Collaborating successfully and working well on projects in teams and in other group work is a key skill for students. Giving suggestions and responding positively to others is essential in sharing ideas and finding solutions the whole group can agree on. In academic settings, all students encounter problems during their studies. It is important to listen to advice from tutors and offer advice to other students with practical solutions to the issues they face.

Practice

1  In pairs, read the mini conversations from academic settings. Discuss the questions for each conversation.

- a** **A** That is an issue with your writing. If I were you, I'd plan it better, with a clear title and outline.
B That sounds like a good idea. So, spend five minutes preparing before I write?
- b** **A** To be honest, the audience lost interest because you were only looking at the slides. In this situation, I'd advise pointing and maintaining eye contact with the people.
B But I really need to look at the data to talk about it.
- c** **A** Running out of time is an issue for many students. It would be a good idea to read the questions first and decide how much time you are going to spend on each section.
B Yes, I'll do that, thanks. So, spending five minutes then will save time overall?
- d** **A** Currently, you're not doing enough prep for our discussions. What you ought to do is research the topic to get an overview before you come to our sessions.
B I don't have time to do this anymore. I've got so much to do.
- e** **A** Planning is everything for this type of coursework. I really think you'd better define your goals and think what type of research you're going to do. It's too vague at the moment.
B Yes, I'll get together with the group so we agree on what we're going to do first. Thank you.
- f** **A** There seems to be a lot of disagreement in the group. I strongly recommend that you sit down and agree how you can best work together, or it's a waste of time.
B But Mark is so difficult, and Sarah just wants to argue. I can't work with them.
- g** **A** You're not taking full advantage of the student services available to you. In my experience, what works well is doing an induction at the library or at least a tour.
B OK, so they'll show me around and tell me how to use it properly?
- h** **A** You look lost, to be honest, when I'm explaining topics. One thing you should do is ask questions if you're not sure about something. That's what others do in my lectures.
B Sorry, but I'd feel a bit awkward doing that. Perhaps I could ask a question after?

- 1 Who do you think is talking?
- 2 What is the issue or problem?
- 3 What is the advice?
- 4 Does the person accept or reject the advice?
- 5 Are they polite or rude?
- 6 What phrase or words are used to offer the advice?

2  **In pairs, write responses with advice to these students about their problems.**

- a **A** I can't see the slides from the back of the lecture hall.
B _____
- b **A** I'm really homesick. I want to go home.
B _____
- c **A** The people in my accommodation block are so noisy. I can't work.
B _____
- d **A** I get so nervous when I have to speak in front of people.
B _____
- e **A** I'm not sure what to do or say in tutorials.
B _____
- f **A** Some students are rude in our seminars.
B _____
- g **A** Revising for exams is hard. Where do I start?
B _____
- h **A** My tutor says my charts aren't clear.
B _____

3  **In pairs, role-play a tutor's advice to a student in a tutorial.**

TIP

Tutorials are a good time to ask for advice from tutors. Try being positive about advice and act on it.

4  **In pairs, read the tutorial conversation and discuss the questions.**

- Kay** I'll read the question again to remind us all of the project and then maybe we can brainstorm some ideas. It reads 'Design a project that will identify the main causes of students' stress at university through research and data'. Does anyone have any suggestions?
- Lee** Can I speak, please? Yes, it might be a good idea to do an online survey. You know, asking students what stresses them out.
- Kay** That's a good idea. Something like a questionnaire we can post on social media. Really like that idea. Anyone else?

- Chloe** I have an idea. What if we talk to medical staff at the university? They could tell us the reasons why students come to them with stress.
- Arianna** No, no. That's terrible. We need better ideas than that.
- Jack** If I may? One possibility is to conduct interviews with students that go a bit deeper into the reasons they feel stressed.
- Kay** That sounds great. It would give us more flexibility than just a questionnaire, I suppose. Thanks for that.
- Leah** I've had a thought. We could do a questionnaire first to identify stressed students, and then interview them to go deeper into the reasons.
- Harry** I really like the sound of that. We could really just focus on the stressed students then.
- Mia** Can I come in here? How about we follow a group of students through a term and observe all the issues they face and how they deal with them?
- Kay** Hmm. I'm not sure about that. We don't have a lot of time to do the project. That might take too long.

- What topic does the group need to brainstorm ideas for?
- What suggestions do the group members make?
- Which suggestions get a positive response?
- Which suggestions get an unsure response?
- Which suggestions get a negative response?
- Which suggestion do you like best?
- Identify the words and phrases for:
 - making suggestions
 - asking to speak
 - positive responses
 - negative responses
 - unsure responses

TIP

Avoid responding to suggestions too negatively. This will result in a less effective brainstorming session with fewer ideas generated.

5 Add suggestions and responses to the conversations. In pairs, check and discuss your answers.

- A** How are we going to show our results to the class?

B _____

A _____
- A** Where can we find information about alternative power technologies?

B _____

A _____
- A** We really need to improve our project poster for the seminar. Any ideas?


B _____

A _____

d A The tutor said we need to work better as a group. What shall we do?

B _____

A _____

6  Choose one of the group-work projects. Discuss the project, brainstorming ideas and responding appropriately in your groups. Record your discussion.

Project 1

Design a website to offer advice to stressed students.

Project 2

Conduct research into how to get the best results at university.

Project 3

Obtain and present data on what makes a university good or bad.

Project 4

Do research about what help new students need at university.

Reflect

7 Listen to your group discussion. Did you make suggestions? Did you respond positively to suggestions? What advice would you give other people in your group?