

Warm up

Ask students whether they think it is appropriate to express agreement and disagreement in the following academic contexts: a discussion with other students about an academic topic in a seminar or tutorial; when planning a group assignment with other students; a Q&A session at the end of a lecture; a one-to-one meeting with a tutor. When it's appropriate for students to disagree, especially, will vary from culture to culture. Discuss these differences if they come up. Note that in a UK university, it would be appropriate in all these situations and encouraged as a sign of critical thinking. In the last two contexts, any disagreement would likely be more polite and tentative.

Using the Factsheet

There are three possible ways to use the Factsheet:

- 1 Give students the Factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the Worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the Factsheet and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with students.
- 3 Focus on the Worksheet in the lesson, then give students the Factsheet at the end of the lesson, so they can take it home and keep it as a reference or revision tool.

Theory to practice

- Ask students what they think of working from home (advantages and disadvantages, possible problems, etc.).
- Tell students to read the discussion and check if the ideas they mentioned are brought up.
- Refer students to questions 1–4. Allow them some time to answer them, and elicit correct answers.

Answers

- 1 Agree: *Yes, I agree. / That's a really good point. / I think Bethan's right. / I agree (with Charlie) that ...*
Disagree: *Yes, but ... / I'm not sure ...*
- 2 *Yes, that's true, but I'm not sure ...*
- 3 *I think Bethan's right. / I agree with Charlie that ...*
- 4 By giving additional arguments and examples.

Using the Worksheet

Practice

1 Read the discussion below and answer the questions, a–d.

- Briefly brainstorm some ways that technology has been introduced into the workplace.
- Encourage students to say in each case whether it helps workers or has replaced workers. Some examples might include word processing apps that have replaced traditional secretaries/typists. Self-checkouts in supermarkets which are replacing checkout staff.
- Point out that the dialogue is between a tutor and four students. On first reading, ask students to decide whether each student agrees or disagrees with the tutor's statement and mark the check boxes.
- Check the answers to question a and take the opportunity to answer any vocabulary questions.
- Ask students to read a second time and focus on the language to answer questions b–d. They can either underline/ circle agreeing/disagreeing expressions or use different coloured highlighters if they have them.
- Go through the questions and answers with the whole class.

Answers

- a Alice: agree; Ben: agree; Chloe: disagree; David: disagree
- b I agree; Yes, I think so, too; I agree with Chloe
- c I'm not sure that's completely true; I don't think it's that simple; I don't agree that ...
- d That's a good point, but ...

2 Match the sentence parts.

- This activity highlights the use of *agree/disagree* + *with*.
- Give students time to match the sentences individually or working in pairs.
- Go through the answers and elicit a general rule. We use *agree (that)* + clause but *agree with* + person.

Answers

- 1 a, c
2 b, d

3 Choose one of the topic areas below. In groups, discuss whether you agree or disagree with the statements.

- There are two broad topic areas for this discussion task, so that students can choose an area that interests them more and on which they're more likely to have opinions to express. Either ask individual students to choose a topic and then organize themselves into groups of 4–5 with other students who chose the same topic, or put students into groups and ask each group to choose a topic.
- Before they start, get them to put their names along the top of the chart to keep track of everyone's opinions. They could all fill in the chart or choose one person in the group as note-taker.
- Monitor and allow enough time for each group member to express their ideas on each point. Take note of groups in which one or two students dominated the discussion or groups who all participated more or less equally. Note any other problems, for example, students who just repeated the same point as another speaker without acknowledging they were doing so. Do not give feedback at this stage.

4 In your groups, prepare a short summary of your discussion. Use the chart to help you. Present your findings to the class.

- Allow students time to prepare a summary of their discussion. Remind them that not everyone looked at the same topics, so they will need to read out the statements before they explain how many people agreed or disagreed with each one.
- Groups can either present their summary informally or if you have more time, prepare a more formal presentation. For a more formal presentation, students could compile the results of their discussion in graphic form, for example, a graph or chart showing how many people agreed and disagreed with each point.

Reflect

5 Think about how successful your group's discussion was.

- Allow students time to reflect individually on how successful the discussion task was using the questions.
- After students have had time to reflect, alternately elicit points that were successful and problems that arose. Include your own observations framed as general points rather than mentioning individual students.