ACADEMIC SKILLS

Teacher's notes
💬 Express agreement and disagreement (2)

Warm up

Brainstorm why it is important for students to express agreement and disagreement as part of academic discussions. They might mention that questioning arguments and others' views shows critical thinking skills, it shows that they are following the thread of the discussion, it shows that they can link ideas together logically, and it helps students to develop their knowledge and opinions collaboratively.

Using the Factsheet

The Factsheet focuses especially on preparing for an academic discussion and developing strategies to deal with possible challenges. Get students to work through the Factsheet first before they go on to practise expressing agreement and disagreement using the Worksheet.

There are two 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.

Theory to practice

• Write *The observer's paradox* on the board, eliciting students' ideas about what it is. Ask students to read the paragraph and check their ideas.

• Elicit first opinions on the question, then ask students to read the notes. Which side do they relate to the most?

• Ask students to read the three opinions and answer questions 1–3. Elicit answers and discuss any issues that arise.

Suggested answers

1   They raise potential problems, but essentially disagree with the statement (i.e. they think it is possible to collect data on people's natural behaviour).

2   Jack probably suggested collecting data for a longer period so that the subjects get used to it and act naturally. The student agrees with Jack and gives an example to clarify his point.

3   No. They don't mention the need for ethical methods in order to get funding / be published, nor the dependence on context. There might not have been time for these points to be put forward, or the points might not have been relevant to the way the discussion took place.

Using the Worksheet

Practice

Exercises 1 and 2 introduce examples of appropriate language to express agreement and disagreement in an academic discussion. Exercises 3–5 give students practice in preparing for and then participating in a discussion.

1   **Read the statement below, then match the beginnings and endings of the comments expressing agreement or disagreement in the discussion that follows.**

• Ask a student to read the discussion question aloud. Check that students understand what an opinion poll is. Elicit examples of the types of questions asked in opinion polls, e.g. *Which candidate/party is going to win an election?*

• Students work individually to match the parts of the comments. Remind them to think about both meaning and language.

• Go through the answers as a whole class. Highlight any language points that come up.

Answers

Zoe	b
Alex	d
Tom	c
Emily	a

2 👥 **In pairs, discuss what you know about opinion polls. Do you agree or disagree with the opinions in Exercise 1?**

- Put students in pairs. Give them time to briefly discuss their opinions.
- This question is a warm-up to get them thinking and talking before the main discussion task to follow.

> **TIP**
> Read the tip box as a whole class and elicit the answer to the question.
> **Suggested answer**
> Emily: … although opinion polls may not be perfect, they're still …

3 **A group of students are planning to research how people use social media. They are discussing which method they should use to collect data. Read the three different proposed methods.**

- This is preparation for the main discussion task.
- Explain the context and give students time to read the three proposals. Answer any language questions.

Suggested answers

a possible to collect a lot of data, but
- the sample might be skewed / not represent the general population
- the sample will be self-selecting (i.e. only people who use social media a lot will reply)
- the questions will have to be simple/quantitative

b possible to collect a lot of data, but
- time-consuming so will only be a small sample
- more difficult to compare/analyze qualitative data

c possible to plan a more balanced sample, but
- may be difficult to find enough people in each group
- not everyone might reply
- you can't take into account all possible factors (e.g. education, social class, access to technology, etc.)

4 👥 **In pairs, discuss possible *yes, but …* responses to the three proposals above. Try to use a variety of language and structures.**

- This task refers back to the Tip box. It aims to help students develop ideas in preparation for the discussion task. It also allows them to rehearse some appropriate language and structures.
- Go through the examples as a whole class and ensure that students understand that it is possible to use different language and constructions to express the basic *yes, but …* idea.
- Students work in the same pairs and try to come up with *yes, but …* arguments against the three proposals.
- Walk around and monitor. Give hints and suggestions if students are struggling for ideas. Make note of any language issues.

5 👥 **In groups, discuss the best method for collecting data about how people use social media.**

- Combine pairs into groups of 4 or 6.
- Briefly go through the instructions as a whole class. Stress that they should not just rely on the ideas they discussed in pairs, but broaden out the discussion.
- Monitor and remind groups to come to a conclusion when they have worked through the three options.

6 👥 **In your group, create a poster setting out your chosen research method.**

- Explain that students are going to design a poster to summarize their discussion. Tell them that the research question will act as the title of the poster. Elicit ideas and formulate a possible question as a whole class, e.g. *What is the most appropriate/effective research method for collecting data about social media usage?*

- Depending on the time and resources you have available, each group could make a simple handwritten poster on a large sheet of paper or they could create a poster in electronic form either to be printed out or displayed on screen.
- Alternatively, this could be set as a homework task.
- Allow time once the posters are complete for students to mingle and look at each others' designs.

Reflect

7 **Complete the quiz. You can choose more than one answer to each question.**

- Students work through the quiz questions individually.

Suggested answers

1 a and c
2 All of these. b and c are clearly relevant, but showing respect for other people's opinions is also important.
3 Students' own reflections – can be shared or kept private.