

Discussion statements – Teacher’s notes

Level: Upper Intermediate (equivalent to CEF level B2)

Introduction & aim

This activity provides an opportunity to recycle vocabulary from Unit 10, by playing a word game. It also gives students the opportunity to practise expressing their opinions on the issues raised in the unit. The activity should last about 30 minutes.

Preparation

- 1 Copy one set of word cards (Worksheet 1) for each group of three and one set of discussion statements (Worksheet 2) for the class.
- 2 Cut up the word cards and the discussion statements.
- 3 If necessary, revise the functional language for expressing opinions that was covered in Unit 2B.

Procedure

- 1 Divide your class into groups of three and set a five-minute time limit for the game. To play the word game, students mustn’t look at the cards in advance.
- 2 You should give four cards to each member of the group. The students take it in turns to try and define the key word (at the top of the card) *without* using any of the three words below. If they succeed, and someone guesses the word correctly, the group wins a point. If the word isn’t guessed, the group should move on and not waste too much time on one word as each group only has five minutes to see how many words they can guess. At the end of the five minutes, ask all the groups how many words they succeeded in guessing to find the winning group.
- 3 Now, having revised some useful vocabulary you can move on to the discussion statements activity. Give each group one discussion statement and ask them to talk about it for a set time. Set the time according to the ability and energy levels of your class, between two and four minutes should be appropriate. If a group runs out of steam and has nothing left to say, encourage them to try and keep going until the time limit is up. This is good practice for any formal speaking exams where students may have to speak for a set time.
- 4 The students should discuss each statement and express their own opinion.
- 5 When the time limit is up, rotate the statements around the groups systematically so all the groups get a new statement to discuss.
- 6 Keep the rotations of the statements snappy. It’s almost better to take the statement away from a group who are still talking than to let the groups run out of things to say. Don’t be tempted to give the groups more time than the time you set at the beginning. You can always go back to the statements later and discuss them in more detail.
- 7 As your students are discussing the statements you can easily monitor and listen in on their conversation. This is a perfect opportunity for you to make a note of good language they used and of any mistakes they made, which you could use afterwards in a feedback and error correction session. Try to be as unobtrusive as possible as you monitor and take notes.

Variations

- Use one statement for the whole class to discuss. You could divide the group into 'Agree' and 'Disagree' and give the two groups time to gather their ideas before going head to head, in pairs, with a student from the other group.
- Following this activity, ask students to write an essay which discusses the statement they found the most interesting.
- Give each student a blank strip of paper and ask students to write a discussion statement each based on another topic you have covered in class. Collect the statements in and then redistribute them to the groups to discuss. Rotate the statements in the same way for students to thoroughly revise the topic.
- Rather than monitoring and taking notes as your students discuss the statements, join in with their discussions. As you go around the groups you could deliberately provoke discussion by disagreeing with them!