

TEACHING NOTES

UNIT 1 Work

Discussion Skills: Giving your opinion

TO BE READ IN ADVANCE

The text for Discussion point 2 (Preparation 1) is intended to prompt reflection on the topic. If possible, ask the students to read it in advance of the lesson. However, if this material is to be used as the first lesson in a course, and it is not possible to set homework in advance, you can omit the reading and go straight to Preparation 2.

► Additional discussion points

Below are two suggestions for further discussion topics on the theme of work.

1 Do you know this word?

teleworking [/'telɪ,wɜːkɪŋ/ UK (US telecommuting)] noun [U] working at home, while communicating with your office by computer and telephone.

Cambridge Learner's Dictionary

In some countries, teleworking is becoming very common. Is it common in China? Would you prefer to work in this way? Discuss the reasons for your answers. Has anyone in your group had experience of this?

2 In many countries the population is ageing rapidly. The world median age is expected to rise from 26.5 years in 2000 to 36.2 in 2050. How is this likely to affect work?¹

1 UN Population Division. *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision*. New York: United Nations, 2000.

Presentation Skills: Structuring your presentation

See Page 8 of the Background notes for our suggestions for handling the introductory sections.

Being clear about your objective

If appropriate, ask the students about the objectives of presentations they have recently made or are likely to make (even if not in English).

Organising the information

Ask the students if they can think of any other ways of structuring a presentation, such as geographically.

Language signals

If you have time, you can ask students if they can think of any other language signals, and then look at Checklist 3 on Page 134 of the Student Book.

➤ Analysis

The transcript is on Pages 75–76, with the signposts and language signals highlighted. We suggest that if possible you refer the students to it only after they have completed the second listening task. But if necessary they can use the transcript from the start.

➤ Presentation practice

For general guidance see the Background notes. Make clear to the students the value of doing the presentation twice—the first time being a practice run that should help them to do it better the second time.

➤ Supplementary activities

If you have time, take longer on the Planning stage. Have students plan their talk individually, then show it to a partner and discuss. They can practise with a different partner, and then present to another pair.

You could also spend more time on planning talks. You could ask the students to suggest topics, which you compile on the board. Have them discuss in pairs how they would organise talks on these topics (introduction, three main points, and conclusion). Then collect ideas, or trouble-shoot, in plenary.

Scenarios: Language centre

See the Background notes section (Pages 1–18) for the alternative options for Scenarios. The basic procedure occupies 90 minutes, or two 45-minute lessons as shown below.

Preparation: 15 min

Performance: 30 min (parallel pairs 10 min; public performance by one or two pairs 5–10 min each)

Debriefing: 20–25 min (for example, proof-listening)

Follow-up performance: 20 min (in rotating pairs)

If you have recording facilities and more time at your disposal, you can get the students to transcribe their performances, as set out on Pages 17–18.

For each scenario we list some expressions that our students have found they needed. We normally provide them at the Debriefing stage, but with weaker groups it may be necessary to give them during Preparation.

Student

I'm sorry to bother you, but I wanted to ask about...

I'm a bit worried about...

Everyone else on my course is a native speaker, so...

I really don't feel that my... is good enough.

After all I only got just over 60.

Why can't I have a place?

Language course director

The problem is that...

Have you any reason to think you have serious language problems?

Instead of coming to classes, why not...?

I think you should...

We have to give priority to...

UNIT 2 Food

Discussion Skills: Agreeing and disagreeing

TO BE READ IN ADVANCE

We suggest that you allocate the reading texts for Discussion point 2 (Preparation 2) in advance, to be prepared before the Discussion session. (See below for details.)

An alternative way of introducing the materials would be to ask the students to discuss (in groups or plenary) the following question.

Do you agree with the statement: It is easier to agree than disagree in discussions?
Explain your answer.

► Useful language

The point to stress here is that expressing disagreement does not require elaborately polite formulae. Depending on the background and experience of your class, it may be helpful to point out that disagreeing is expected in discussion at all levels of anglophone academic culture, and is unlikely to cause offence unless it is angry or personal.

► Discussion point 2

Preparation 2

It will save lesson time if you set these texts to be read in advance. There are six texts altogether; their lengths vary, though none are very long. Texts 1, 3 and 4 are pro-GM; 2, 5 and 6 highlight anti-GM arguments. You could ask each student in a group of six to read and prepare to summarise one text, allocating the shorter texts, 2 and 6, to weaker students. With smaller groups you could set stronger students two texts.

With weaker groups, we suggest setting one text per student. As less confident students may tend to say little in larger groups, we suggest limiting the group size to a maximum of four, and selecting just four of the texts for use in this task, for example 2, 3, 4 and 6. (This

provides a balance of pro- and anti- arguments, and focuses on two aspects: the safety of GM food, and its capacity to feed the world's growing population.)

► Additional discussion point

If you need more group discussion material, you could use the questions below. The topic would also be suitable for Unit 4 (Health).

- Do you consider your personal eating habits to be “healthy”? Explain your answer.
- Do you avoid eating any types of food for reasons of health or for any other reason apart from your personal tastes?
- Is the typical diet in your country (or region) healthy, or do people tend to eat too little or too much of certain types of food? Are any common illnesses or other problems in your country related to dietary factors?
- Have the eating habits of people in your country changed in recent years? If so, in what ways? Why have these changes occurred? What effects—if any—do you think these changes are having, or will have in the future, on the nation's health? Are there likely to be any other consequences—for example, cultural, economic or political?

This topic would be suitable for a Debate (see note below). Traditionally, debating motions are expressed as statements rather than questions—a suitable wording might be “GM technology is necessary and beneficial”.

Notes on debates

Debating societies thrive in schools and universities in many parts of the world, and many students will be familiar with the idea of formal debating. Debates are chaired discussions which follow a conventional format involving a sequence of short prepared or extemporised speeches arguing for and against a controversial proposition (“the motion”), an opportunity for contributions from the audience (“the floor”), and then a vote.

The usual format is for a number of speakers—usually two or three for each side—to take turns to propose or oppose the motion. Comments are invited “from the floor”, and then a speaker from each side sums up, restating their side's arguments and rebutting those of the other side. Finally, the audience vote on the motion, which is either carried or defeated. Strict rules govern the length and type of contribution at each stage of the debate.

Once the students are confident about the rules you are using, ask a student to take on the role of chairperson (rehearse some formal chairing language with them, such as “I now call on sb. to oppose the motion”).

If time, numbers, your students' confidence or interests do not favour a full-blown formal debate, you could simplify the format. For example, one or two students could be chosen to prepare short—say, 2-minute—speeches for each side (if two, they need to work as a team and agree on the arguments each will use). Then there could be time for questions to the speakers and open, informal discussion by the whole group. Optionally, one speaker for each side sums up (and rebuts), and a vote is taken. If you have a very large class, you could divide it into smaller groups of, say, eight to ten, and have several simultaneous debates, to give more people the opportunity to give speeches and to create a less daunting audience.

Presentation Skills: Speaking in an appropriate style

See the Background notes (Page 8) for ways of handling the introductory sections. If you have time, you can do more on formal and informal language features such as those shown in the table below.

Formal	Informal
passive voice	abbreviated auxiliary verbs
complex sentences with subordinate clauses	simple sentences or coordinate clauses
abstract nouns and nominalisations	lexis with general meaning (<i>e.g. thing, nice, get</i>)
words of Latin origin (<i>e.g. sufficient</i>)	words of Anglo-Saxon origin (<i>e.g. enough</i>)

► Analysis

- 1 a) is more informal than b). b) is used in the recording.
- 2 a) is more informal than b). a) is used in the recording.
- 3 a) is more formal than b). a) is used in the recording.
- 4 a) is more informal than b). b) is used in the recording.

The transcript is on Pages 76–77. The speaker's style is quite formal.

Again, if necessary, the students can work with the transcript while they listen. The important point to make here is that they need to be aware of formality and informality, and to achieve a balance that is appropriate for the context.

► Presentation practice

This topic can be used even if your students come from the same country. They should listen for the ways in which similar content can be presented. They can imagine they are preparing the talk to present to other listeners.

A possible alternative topic: Healthy Eating.

Again, make sure the students recognise the value of doing the presentation twice, the first time being a practice run that should help them to do it better the second time.

Supplementary activities

If you have time, you could ask students to convert a short text in the active voice to the passive voice. For example:

We boiled the liquid for ten minutes and then we filtered it. We then froze the solids at -5 degrees Centigrade.

They could then compare the two versions for style, and discuss which would be more appropriate for each of the following:

- a) a lab report
- b) a conversation with a colleague in the lab
- c) an academic presentation

Opinions may vary! But it makes a useful talking point.

Scenarios: Finding accommodation

The blank rent “boxes” in the role materials should be completed with whatever you and the class think is a realistic rent in the appropriate currency.

For the task dynamics to work best, the figure in the Student’s information should be roughly midway between the two rents in the Accommodation Officer’s information. For example, current figures suitable for Edinburgh would be £500 for the Student’s budget, and £480 and £530 respectively for the two blank boxes in the Accommodation Officer’s information. This means that the students have to weigh up the advantages of the two flats— one available now with the higher but inclusive rent, against the cheaper one that will mean several weeks’ wait.

➤ Useful language

Student

I hope I'm not being a nuisance...

I really do need to find a flat nearer to...

How soon would I be able to move in?

That's more than I can afford.

Accommodation officer

Well, you have to realise that...

I'm afraid there's not really very much more I can do for you.

I could give you a list of agencies.

UNIT 3 Language

Discussion Skills: Explaining

TO BE READ IN ADVANCE

There is no reading text for this Unit, but students will need time to think about their individual responses to the Discussion points. We suggest that you set up the discussion groups and allocate Discussion point 2 topics before the session, and ask the students to do the individual Preparation tasks for Discussion points 1 and 2 as preparatory homework.

► Useful language

The language presented here is relatively informal. Some students may suggest more formal expressions such as "... is a factor in..." or "consequently", which would be appropriate in academic writing, but could sound rather stilted in natural speech.

Expressing certainty / uncertainty

Our answers to the questions are:

Expressions Levels of certainty

<i>I think</i>	4
<i>It's likely that</i>	6
<i>I'm certain</i>	1 / 2
<i>I'd say</i>	5
<i>It could be that</i>	8
<i>It could well be that</i>	7
<i>Possibly</i>	9
<i>I'm sure</i>	3
<i>There's no doubt</i>	1

The Practice exercise on expressing certainty / uncertainty should be kept very brief; it is not intended to prompt extended discussion, but simply to practise manipulating the forms. Students make their own selection of topics.

► Discussion points 1 and 2

The discussion tasks in this Unit have a secondary “learner-training” agenda, being designed to raise students’ awareness of aspects of the language learning process, and get them to reflect on their own learning strategies. We hope this will make a useful contribution to students’ development as learners of English.

If the available time permits only one discussion point, Discussion point 2 has the potential practical benefit to the students of increasing their awareness of the range of strategic options open to them.

► Additional discussion point

If you need further discussion material, this Additional discussion point develops one of the issues raised in Discussion point 1 (but could be done even if Discussion point 1 were omitted).

Preparation

Here again is the first statement in Discussion point 1.

It is easier for children than for adults to learn English as a non-native language.

- 1 Do you agree? Why (not)?
- 2 If you haven’t discussed this already, find out what the others in your group think.
- 3 Read the following text. Does the writer express the same opinion as you did?

Some people think that the best time to begin studying a foreign language is in childhood, and that the younger you are, the easier it is to learn another language. There is little evidence, however, that children in language classrooms learn foreign languages any better than adults (people over the age of 15) in similar classroom situations. In fact, adults have many advantages over children: better memories, more efficient ways of organising information, longer attention spans, better study habits, and greater ability to handle complex mental tasks. Adults are often better motivated than children: They see learning a foreign language as necessary for education or career. In addition, adults are particularly sensitive to correctness of grammar and appropriateness of vocabulary, two factors that receive attention in most language classrooms.

Rubin, Joan, and Irene Thompson. *How to be a Successful Language Learner*:
Boston: Heinle and Heinle, 1982: 4.

Discuss the following questions in your group.

- 1 Were you surprised by what you read?
- 2 How persuasive did you find the arguments? Have you changed your mind? Explain your answer to the others in the group.

Presentation Skills: Delivery: emphasis and phrasing

See the Background notes (Page 9) for suggestions on handling the introductory section.

Ask the students to think about listening to presentations. Ask them about the difference between reading and listening. When reading, they can look back and re-read if they did not understand. When listening to an informal seminar presentation, it may be possible to ask for clarification; but if the presentation is formal, it is not possible to interrupt.

Explain the origin of listener-friendly (by analogy with user-friendly).

► Phrasing

Read Text A monotonously, with as little phrasing and emphasis as you can. Do not vary your speed and intonation. It should sound very flat and unnatural.

► Analysis

You could ask the students to rewrite the text in the same format as Text B above. Alternatively, they can divide the text in their books into phrases using slash marks (/) and underlining those words with the most stress.

There is no single correct version. The text can be interpreted in slightly different ways, which should become evident as soon as the students start discussing which words they want to emphasise. This is in fact one of the main points to make about phrasing and emphasis. Because it helps to communicate meaning, you have to know what meaning you want to communicate, and individuals may make different choices with this text. On the whole, they will work with “idea units”.

As an example, you could write on the board: “you have to know what meaning you want to communicate” and then invite the students to divide it into phrases.

Accept or elicit the various possibilities.

you have to know / what meaning you want to communicate
you have to know / what meaning / you want to communicate
you have to know / what meaning / you want / to communicate

But point out that the following, for example, is unacceptable.

you have to / know what / meaning you want to communicate

If you like, have students start the Analysis task in pairs, rather than individually.

First listening

On the next page is a suggested answer. Accept slight differences of opinion, pointing out that some will hear very small changes of pitch as worth marking as stress while others may not consider it important enough. However, everyone should agree on the clearly marked phrases and stresses.

OK / well what I'm going to do is **briefly** / describe the main **differences** between English and **Outlandic** / you should have in front of you two sets of **sentences** / with the English on **top** / and the Outlandic **underneath** / and what I'm going to do is to explain which **bit** goes with which **bit** / in each **language** / and to try to make clear the main **DIFFERENCES** between the **two languages**

Afterwards, point out to the students that the main message is not that there is a single right way to do it, but that it must be done, and meaningfully. The most common weakness among those presenting in English as a foreign language is a monotonous unmarked delivery, with almost equal emphasis on each word. This is boring to listen to, and more difficult to understand.

Second listening

Return to the beginning of the presentation.

The talk is based on a comparison of two sentences in English and Outlandic (a fictitious language). Write up the two sentences (shown below)—in both languages—before playing the recording. The students should write them down with plenty of space between Sentences 1 and 2 for their notes.

Sentence 1

English: *I have never eaten such a bitter orange.*

Outlandic: *Commay aldri ooma laranja tow azeyda egu.*

Sentence 2

English: *She is going there tomorrow evening.*

Outlandic: *Vai imoron di noyt lah zee.*

As they hear the talk, the students take notes on the main differences between the two languages. These are indicated on the transcript on Pages 76–77.

Draw attention to the structure of “explaining” in the presentation. Each difference is first demonstrated and then summarised.

► Presentation practice

Alternative topic: two different approaches to an issue, or two possible solutions to a problem, in the students’ specialist area.

► Supplementary activities

You could do more listening and analysis of Emphasis and Phrasing, using short extracts from any of the other recorded talks. (See the Transcripts for phrasing.) The talk from Unit 2 would be a good choice, especially if the students have heard it recently. The speaker uses very marked phrase groups, so it is quite easy to analyse. His phrase groups are also quite short on the whole.

You might like to discuss with the students how this is a contributory factor to his relatively formal style of speaking. Longer phrase groups are more typical of fast informal conversation. This is not a rule, but a tendency: The larger the audience, the more formal the context, with slower speed of speaking and shorter phrase groups—but still groups, not word-by-word delivery.

Scenarios: Examination results

► Useful language

Student

*I had a feeling it wouldn't be very good.
I think there are probably a number of reasons why I didn't do very well.
I've probably spent too much time on...
I realise I'm going to have to...*

Director of Studies

*I'm afraid your result wasn't too good.
You seem to be having some problems with...
To be honest, we're worried about your work.
There's a real risk that you...
We feel that you should go to the English language classes.*