

## **Conversation Task: Expressing Attitudes**

### **At a glance**

**Level:** ISE III

**Focus:** Conversation task

**Aims:** To prepare students for the Conversation task by practising debating techniques and giving examples of phrases they can use for this part

**Objectives:** Asking and answering questions, showing interest, engaging in discussion and challenging arguments and opinions

**Topic:** Generating interesting and engaging in authentic discussion

**Language functions:** Developing an argument, defending a point of view, expressing opinions tentatively and challenging arguments

**Grammar:** A broad range of complex structures, used flexibly

**Lexis:** The arts

**Materials needed:** Whiteboard and marker, worksheets cut up into cards, 1 set per group of 4, 8 or 12 students (depending on the class size) and ISE III specifications

**Timing:** 60 minutes

### **Procedure**

#### **Preparation**

Print off "*Expressing and finding out attitudes*" worksheet (1 per group) and cut up the statements.

#### **In class**

1. Explain to the class that today they are going to practise the Conversation task of the ISE III Speaking & Listening exam. Elicit what they know about the Conversation task and write it on the board. Let the students know that in this part of the exam, they have an interesting and engaging conversation with the examiner whilst demonstrating their ability to use the language of the level. It is important that they take responsibility for the maintenance of the conversation and that they evaluate and challenge statements made by the examiner

2. Explain to the class that the Conversation task consists of the examiner initiating a discussion of a subject area. Elicit the subject areas that the candidates may be asked. Write the subject areas on the board.
3. Choose one of the subject areas at random and elicit related questions. Write a few on the board, for example:  
**Subject area: The media** – *“does it have too much power and influence?”*  
**Subject area: Role models** – *“who are they important for? Can you think of a good/bad role model?”*
4. In groups of 4, ask students to write down some questions related to a particular subject area (about 4-6 questions each). You may want to give each group a different subject area. Once the students have thought of approximately 4-6 questions, they can practise answering them in their groups. This task could take approximately 10 minutes.
5. Bring the class back together again and go through some of the questions and answers. Write the more complex questions on the board under the appropriate subject area heading.
6. Now explain to the class that it is important that they express themselves clearly during the exam. They need to be able to justify themselves, defend a point of view, challenge arguments and opinions and express reservations. To help them, explain that you have some cards expressing and finding out attitudes to help develop a discussion.
7. Give out the cards, 1 per group, face down. Ask the students to deal out the cards so they have between 4-7 cards each.
8. Now explain to the class that in their small groups they are going to practise having different opinions about things. One person is “the chair”, one person agrees, one person disagrees, one person isn’t sure. The chair asks the questions and directs the discussion so that everyone gets a chance to speak and is encouraged to air their views. Students must use their *attitude* phrases. Give the students approximately 20 minutes to complete this task.
9. Monitor the groups, making sure everyone understands and is participating.
10. Bring the class back together and go through the most useful phrases, common errors and ask each group to give feedback on the task.
11. Ask the class to choose another topic, change roles and carry out the same activity as above.

12. Monitor the groups, making sure everyone understands and is participating.
13. After 20 minutes, bring the class back together and go through the most useful phrases, common errors and ask each group to give feedback on the task.
14. Review what the students have done in today's class, thinking of possible questions for topic areas and challenging a point of view.

**Extension activity**

More advanced students can write down questions on other topic areas.

**Further support activity**

1. Weaker students can be given easier portfolio questions, for example:  
*"You sound really interested in...tell me a little bit more about..."*.
2. They can be asked to answer only one of the arts questions each, and given easier expressions, for example:  
*"I don't agree; perhaps; please tell me more about..."*.

**Student Worksheet**

**Conversation Task:**  
**Expressing Attitudes**

**Instructions:** cut-up the phrases below and give one set out per group of 4, 8 or 12 students.

I think	I feel that
As far as I'm concerned	Do you think that.....?
What do you think about.....?	Are you sure that.....?
I think ..... Is right because.....	.....That's why I feel that.....
.....and so I feel that.....	Why?
Why do you think that.....?	What makes you feel that.....?
Yes, but what I really mean is.....	What I'm trying to say is.....
Yes, that's right	That's what I feel too
I don't think so	I don't agree
But surely.....	Absolutely not
There may be.....	Perhaps.....
I'm not at all sure if.....	That could / may/ might happen
.....is a much more important.....than.....	.....are less important than.....
Please tell me more about.....	I'd like to know more about.....
I can't say if.....	You may have a point there, but I'm still not sure...