

**Free Practice  
Activity**

# Agree or Disagree?

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# Talk a Lot

## How to Use

### Agree or Disagree? – Instructions

This is a free practice pair-work activity, which is similar to the Discussion Questions activity in that the aim is to give students time to practise their English speaking and listening skills without having to conform to rigid structures (e.g. making the sentence blocks). Students have to read each statement aloud and ask their partner whether they agree or disagree with it, and why. The “why” part is really important because it is here that students will have to produce spoken English to justify their opinions. At the same time, students have to give their own opinion – agree or disagree – and state the reasons why they believe this. Students have to put a tick on the handout for “agree” and a cross for “disagree”. The statements are designed to be deliberately provocative, broad sweeping statements, for example this from the “Money” topic in Book 3:

*You're nothing unless you've got cash.*

Most students will have an opinion on this kind of statement – either agree or disagree. The aim is, of course, the same as that of all Talk a Lot activities – to get students talking. Some students will need more coaxing than others to produce a coherent reason why they feel as they do, whilst others will gush forth their views. The teacher should help the weaker students to participate and the stronger students not to dominate.

It may be a good idea for the teacher to pre-teach some of the more difficult words on the handout at the beginning of the activity, for example the following words from the “Money” Agree or Disagree? handout:

<u>nouns:</u>	<u>verbs:</u>
cash	earn
success	share
charity	spend
waste	save
stress	lend
salary	steal

You could, of course, explore the sounds and word stress of the words, as well as the spellings. The vocabulary will be on the same topic as the rest of the activities in the lesson, which means that this activity will expand and reinforce what the students are learning about the topic.

Depending on the level of your group, there may be more statements on the handout than you need for the time that you have allotted for the activity, so you could choose a selection of statements for the activity, whether it be five, ten, twelve, whatever.

### Extension Activities

- You could hold a class survey on each statement and compile a list of the whole group's answers.
- Students could survey other people – e.g. their family, friends, or other classes within the school.
- The teacher could devise their own Agree or Disagree? statements which are more relevant to their group and teaching situation, using the blank template on p.9.3.

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# Talk a Lot

## How to Use

### Agree or Disagree? – Instructions

- The students could write their own Agree or Disagree? statements in pairs, using the same blank template, and then swap handouts with another pair.
- You could use an individual statement from the handout as the starting point for a class debate between two competing groups – those who agree and those who disagree. (See p.9.4 for more on how to hold a class debate.)
- Students could do some written work for homework, based on the activity, for example, writing why they agree or disagree with some (or all, if they are really keen!) of the statements.

### Assessment

Assessment is performed by the teacher checking and correcting during the task, listening for errors that can be dissected later on in a group feedback session, giving individual as well as group feedback, and referring students back to:

- a) the grammar they are learning from forming the sentence blocks, and building sentences
- b) the pronunciation work they are doing using the techniques of connected speech and the IPA

Each student's achievement in this activity is also recorded as part of their overall lesson score (for both accuracy and effort) by the teacher on their course report.

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# Talk a Lot

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Agree or Disagree?

*Do you agree or disagree with these statements? Say why. Find out what your partner thinks, and mark the boxes with ✓ for agree and x for disagree:*

	Me:	My Partner:
1. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Talk a Lot

## How to Use

### How to Give a Small Group or Individual Presentation (Example and Notes)

*Disclaimer: we at English Banana.com neither endorse nor support the death penalty in any country for any crime. We have used this question as an example to show how it is possible to build an argument when preparing a short presentation. It's a lively subject for a classroom debate because you can almost guarantee that the whole class will have an opinion about it.*

**Question:** Do you think that the death penalty is justified for some crimes?

**Introduction:** "We agree with the question..."

Short summary of your entire presentation, i.e. your main points with examples, your drawbacks (what critics of your argument would say) and how you would answer your critics.

"We agree with the question because..."

"We will argue that..."

"We will show that..."

"We will discuss..."

**Main Point 1:** "We want to discourage serious violent crime."

Examples:

1. Terrorism.
2. Serial killers.

Both are examples of serious violent crime for which the threat of the death penalty could be used as a deterrent.

**Main Point 2:** "It will lead to a reduction in crime, so our streets will be safer."

Examples:

1. Statistical evidence, e.g. from the internet, library, etc.
2. "People have the right to live their lives without the fear of crime." Give examples using "real" people and situations, e.g. a 76 year-old grandmother, a single mum who lives on a council estate, an asylum seeker, etc.

**Main Point 3:** "It makes economic sense. Fewer people in prisons = money saved."

Examples:

1. "Tax money can be used for other more constructive things, e.g. schools and hospitals."
2. Statistical evidence, e.g. "More and more money is being wasted on building prisons." Describe how the money could be spent more effectively on other public services.

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# Talk a Lot

## How to Use

How to Give a Small Group or Individual Presentation (Example and Notes)

**Drawback 1:** "Some would say that..." e.g. "The state has no moral right to kill."

Your answer to this:

1. e.g. "Judges have wisdom to decide which serious offenders should be killed."
2. e.g. "The state is responsible for protecting its citizens from serious violent crime."
3. e.g. "We have to do *something* about serious violent crime. The reintroduction of the death penalty would send a powerful message to criminals."

**Drawback 2:** "Others would argue..." e.g. "Prison must rehabilitate as well as punish."

Your answer to this:

1. e.g. "Some serious criminals do not want to change and cannot be rehabilitated..." Show evidence, e.g. statistics showing repeat offender rates, etc.
2. e.g. Briefly restate your main points again: discourage serious violent crime, make streets safer, redistribute tax money more effectively, and so on.

*Note: the "drawbacks" section means drawbacks to your argument, i.e. the case against your argument. It should be included to show that you are one step ahead of your opponents in the debate, because you have thought about their side of the argument from the outset. However, although in this section you are stating the other side of the argument, you should use this time to expose the weaknesses in their argument and to restate your main points to show that, by comparison, your argument is by far the most sensible one. In fact, your argument is the only rational choice! If both sides do this you should have a really excellent debate!*

**Conclusion:** "We agree with the question..."

Repeat the short summary of your entire presentation that you used for the introduction, i.e. your main points with examples, your drawbacks (what critics of your argument would say) and how you would answer your critics. The deliberate repetition of your main points with examples during the presentation, as well as at the end, should ensure that your carefully thought-out message will be recalled by both your opponents in the debate and your audience.

"We agree with the question because..."

"As you have heard..." "We have argued that..." "We have demonstrated that..."

Finish with a memorable quote or statistic that will reinforce your main points.

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# Talk a Lot

## How to Use

How to Give a Small Group or Individual Presentation (Blank Outline)

Question: \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:**

**Main Point 1:**

Examples:

- 1.
- 2.

**Main Point 2:**

Examples:

- 1.
- 2.

**Main Point 3:**

Examples:

- 1.
- 2.

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# Talk a Lot

## How to Use

How to Give a Small Group or Individual Presentation (Blank Outline)

<b>Drawback 1:</b>
Your answer to this:  1.  2.  3.
<b>Drawback 2:</b>
Your answer to this:  1.  2.  3.
<b>Conclusion:</b>

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