

Unit 6 Discussions

Task 1 Speaking

Which of the following learning situations are most effective for you?

- being a part of a large group and listening to a lecturer or teacher talking
- being part of a smaller group and actively participating in the class
- being in one-to-one situation and discussing your work with your teacher

Which three of the following factors are most important for you in selecting a university for undergraduate or postgraduate study? Include any other factors you think are important.

- The location of the university
- Course fees and living costs
- The reputation of the university
- Class sizes
- Facilities (technology, sports...)
- Language of instruction
- Language courses offered
- The number of international students

Task 2 Listening

Listen to a group discussion between three students about the education system in their countries.

- **Where are the students from?**
- **What is the main point each student makes about their education system?**

The speakers ask eight questions during the discussion, two of which are given below. Listen again and make a note of the other six questions.

How are the private schools different?

Is it expensive?

-?
-?
-?
-?
-?
-?

Task 3 Question forms

Write full sentences using the prompts.

1. you / prefer / studying / in groups or individually
..... ?
2. what courses / you / planning / take / next semester
..... ?
3. how / the university application system / work
..... ?
4. who / manage / the departments
..... ?
5. with / what / supervisors of diploma theses / help
..... ?

Prepare some more questions related to education and learning. Work in groups and ask and answer the questions.

Task 4 Do you agree with the statement? Note down two points to support your view.

Education should be a priority for government spending, even more than health, transport and defence.

Listen to a discussion in which the speakers are talking about the statement above.

- Do the speakers agree or disagree with the statement?
- Did any of the speakers make the same point that you made?

Task 5 Functions in discussions

Giving your opinion

Agreeing

Asking for opinions

Disagreeing

Recognising an opinion

Match the phrases with one of the five functions above:

I'm afraid I disagree.

I see what you mean.

I would say that...

But what about... ?

Yes, absolutely.

That is not always the case.

Not necessarily.

Do you agree?

I beg to differ.

I couldn't agree more.

In my opinion...

What do you think?

Task 6 You are going to take part in a discussion on the following topic:

Subjects related to science, technology and medicine are more important than humanities subjects such as history or arts.

Work alone and prepare for the discussion. Note down your views on the statement using the following headings:

- Topic and focus
- Your view
- Main arguments for
- Main arguments against
- Examples and reasons
- Conclusion

Think of some questions to ask other students.

Discuss the statement in groups. Allow others to make their points, listen and respond.

Task 7 Writing

Read the summary of the discussion you listened to in Task 4. What tenses are used? Underline words that you could use to write a summary of your own discussion.

The discussion focused on education as a priority for government spending. Some of the participants think that education is the most important priority. Others believe that issues such as health and transport are equally important. One view is that the government should cut university courses such as media studies or history because these do not help the economy. The main reasons for not cutting education are that you need education to produce important professionals. One participant argues that if the government cut education there would be problems in the future. Overall, there was no final agreement.

Write a short summary of your discussion.

Task 8 Reporting words. Complete the gaps with the correct form of the word in brackets.

1. The report makes the that no individual government will be able to control the internet. (IMPLY)
2. Phillipson challenges the of Malwar's figures. (ACCURATE)
3. Grey puts forward a theory to explain climate change. (CONTROVERSY)
4. Leonard's that women use some language structures more than men is an interesting one. (OBSERVE)
5. Wilson gives a of the ancient alphabet of the Guelcoga people. (DESCRIBE)
6. Trakov puts an on pilot testing before carrying out a survey. (EMPHASISE)
7. Our latest results cast on our original hypothesis. (DOUBTFUL)
8. Patel's of the link between obesity and genes is of considerable interest. (PROVE)

(Tasks 1-7 adapted from Chazal, E., McCarter, S. *Oxford EAP*. OUP, 2012.

Task 8 adapted from McCarthy, M., O'Dell, F. *Academic Vocabulary in Use*. CUP, 2011.)