

Mobile phone debate by Kat Robb

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| Age: | Teenagers / Adults |
| Level: | Upper intermediate (B2) |
| Time: | 60 minutes |
| Objective: | to be able to carry out an effective debate and consider all points of view, using functional language for expressing opinions |
| Key skills: | speaking |
| Materials: | students' mobile phones |

Procedure

1. Warmer (10 minutes)

Put students in small groups or pairs. Students use their mobile phones as a form of realia. They discuss the functions the phone has and interview each other about what they use their phones for, showing and explaining with the phone. They also talk about the apps they have installed: why they have downloaded them, what they use them for and how frequently. Monitor and help with vocabulary. Write any relevant or emergent language up on the board.

2. Speaking (10 minutes)

Ask students to discuss in their groups how they could use their mobile phones to help them learn English. Monitor to encourage the students but not to offer ideas – the thinking comes from the learners.

3. Speaking and writing (10 minutes)

The students make a list of advantages and disadvantages of using mobile phones in class. Give the following examples: advantage – using phones will motivate students; disadvantage – students may start using their phones for non-lesson-related activities. Monitor to ensure groups have at least ten things in both lists.

4. Speaking and writing (10–15 minutes)

In their groups, students brainstorm phrases for giving opinions. Once finished, write the phrases up on the board in four columns – agreeing; expressing your own opinion; partial agreement / expressing reservations; disagreeing. Add the language to the relevant columns.

The language could include:

Agreeing

I think so, too.
You're right.
That's a good point.
Yes, absolutely.
Yes, definitely.
I completely/entirely agree.

Expressing your own opinion

The way I look at it is that ...
My position on this is that ...
To me, ...
It seems/appears to me that ...
Isn't it possible that ...?
As far as I'm concerned, ...

Partial agreement / Expressing reservations

I agree with you up to a point but ...
That's true to some extent but ...
That's one way of looking at it but ...
I can see your point but ...
I appreciate what you're saying, but ...

Disagreeing

But surely ...
But there's no evidence for that.
I'm afraid I disagree.
Well, I don't quite see it like that.
I'm afraid I'm not convinced.

5. Speaking (15-20 mins)

Divide the class into three groups - students (for), teachers (50/50) and parents (against) - and tell them that they need to participate in a full class discussion expressing their group's opinion. Tell them to try to include some of the new phrases they have learned. Act as the mediator, ensuring all groups are participating actively in the debate. Set a time limit and take a final vote at the end.