

Modern Technologies

Aim: to prepare students to write a comment on a blog

Level: Upper intermediate / B2

Language: opinions – giving and responding to opinions / agreeing and disagreeing

Time: 60 minutes + 30 minutes for exam task

Materials: one copy of the worksheet and exam question per student; one copy of the warm-up questions (cut up) per group of students

Warmer

1. Divide the class into small groups. Distribute the warmer questions to each group.
2. Check student comprehension of the questions, then explain the activity aim. Students should shuffle the questions and then take it in turns to pick a question to discuss.
3. Set a time limit of about 20 minutes for the activity.
4. Monitor and help where necessary.
5. When students have finished their discussions or reached the time limit you set, ask them which question(s) generated most discussion and why.

Reading

1. Hand out the worksheet.
2. Ask the students to read through the blog and comments quickly and answer the first question.
3. Check the answer together. (**Key:** *The answer is b. Option c is indirectly mentioned as it talks about online but there is no direct reference to it.*)
4. Next, ask students to read the blog and comments again and choose the correct person for each statement.
5. Give students a time limit of five minutes to do this. Then, put the students in pairs and get them to compare and discuss their answers together.

6. Monitor and help where necessary.
7. Check the answers as a class.

Key: 1. *Techie1*; 2. *Andrea*; 3. *JonasB*; 4. *JonasB*; 5. *Techie1*; 6. *Andrea*; 7. *JonasB*

Language focus

Note: The first activity focuses on understanding words from context. Although this isn't a specific task students will need to do for the writing exam, it is still a skill they will need to have as there may be words in the text they are asked to respond to that they do not know. So, the main aim of this task is not necessarily to get the correct answers but to practise the skill.

1. Ask the students to read through the blog and the comments again and try to find words that match definitions a – h.
2. Put the students in pairs and get them to compare and discuss their answers together.
3. Monitor and help where necessary (**Note:** The words appear in the same order as the definitions, so if the students have found a and c then the word for b must be between those two words or expressions).
4. Check the answers as a class.

Key: *a. out of touch; b. a dinosaur; c. antisocial; d. addicted; e. in a bubble; f. kidding; g. missing the point; h. not on*

5. In the comments there are expressions / phrases that show whether the writer agrees or disagrees with the opinions expressed in the blog or in other comments.
6. Ask the students to look at the ten expressions in the box and put them in the correct column in the table (two of those used in the reading have already been put in the correct column).
7. Put the students in pairs and get them to compare and discuss their answers together.
8. Monitor and help where necessary.
9. Check the answers as a class.

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Key:

Agreeing	Disagreeing
I totally agree with you on ...	You've got to be kidding!
I think you've hit the nail on the head.	Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but ...
I was going to say the same thing.	I don't think there's any basis in what you say.
That's a very valid point, and I feel ...	I think you're missing the point.
That's exactly what I think.	I wouldn't say that at all.

10. Sometimes we partly agree with what someone says or writes and this activity focuses on a few expressions used for this purpose.

11. Ask the students to complete the five phrases by choosing the correct answer, *a*, *b* or *c*.

12. Put the students in pairs and get them to compare and discuss their answers together.

13. Monitor and help where necessary.

14. Check the answers as a class.

Key: 1. *c*; 2. *b*; 3. *c*; 4. *b*; 5. *a*

Writing preparation

Note: This activity is designed to be a controlled writing activity. The focus is on trying to get the students to use some of the key expressions introduced in the Language focus activity. There is also a secondary aim, which is to expose the students to a few other comments / opinions.

1. Ask the students to complete the gaps in the comments using the agreeing or disagreeing expressions from the Language focus section.

2. Put the students in pairs and get them to compare and discuss their answers together.

3. Monitor and help where necessary.

4. Check the answers as a class.

Extension Activity

If you have time, ask the students to write their own responses to Andrea's blog. You could get the students to post their comments around the room and then read what other students in the class have written.

Practice exam question

Note: This can either be done in the class (preferable) or set for homework.

- The students should read the task rubric telling them what they need to do.
- Then they should read the text and comment before writing their answer.
- They may want to make notes before they start writing.
- Give the students a time limit of 30 minutes for this activity.

Suggested marking scheme:

Total mark out of 20 with each criteria worth up to 5 marks

Content – answering the question

- 5 – answers the question and all the information included
- 4 – answers the question but one or two things missing
- 3 – answers the question but a number of things missing
- 2 – tried to answer the question, but quite a lot missing
- 1 – failed to answer the question

Range of vocabulary and grammar

- 5 – uses a wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task
- 4 – uses a wide range of vocabulary and grammar but not always appropriate to the task
- 3 – uses a fairly wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task
- 2 – uses a limited range of vocabulary and grammar
- 1 – uses a very limited range of vocabulary and grammar

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Accuracy of language (i.e. spelling, tenses etc)

5 – minimal errors, well-developed control of language

4 – errors occur when attempting more complex language

3 – a number of errors but they do not impede communication

2 – a lot of errors, distract the reader, difficult understanding

1 – frequent errors, difficult understanding

Organization and appropriacy

5 – effectively organized and appropriate

4 – clearly organized, on the whole appropriate

3 – adequately organized, reasonable but not always appropriate

2 – inadequate organization, attempt to use appropriate format and register but unsuccessful, inadequate

1 – lack of organization, little or no awareness of appropriate format

Teacher's notes

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1. Do you think playing computer games is a bad thing? Why or why not?	2. Do you think that using a lot of electronic gadgets at home and at school makes us lazy? Why or why not?	3. Do you think that online transactions and credit cards will ever completely replace the need for cash? Why or why not?
4. Do you think children should be discouraged from spending too much time on their computers? Why or why not?	5. Which websites are most popular with teenagers today? Why?	6. What invention would you like to see in the future? Why?
7. If you were to create an avatar, what would he or she be like?	8. Do you think social networking sites are the best way to communicate with friends? Why or why not?	9. Do you think that the Internet will ever be properly policed? Why or why not?
10. Which technological development has had the most impact on society recently? Why?	11. Which piece of technology do you think will become unnecessary in the near future? Why?	12. Which mobile phone applications are most frequently used by teenagers? Why?

Warmer activity cut-outs



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1 Comprehension

Read the blog and the comments. Which of these technologies is mentioned?

- a. Computers
- b. Mobile phones
- c. The internet

Modern Technology – a personal view

by Andrea Buchner

July 23

I know I'm going to come across as out of touch and a bit of a dinosaur, but I really think the way most young people use modern technology so much is almost antisocial. Let me give you an example. Last week my niece came over for dinner, she's seventeen and addicted to her mobile phone. The whole way through dinner she was on her phone, sending messages, tweeting and chatting online with friends. It was crazy! We were all there having a conversation, but she was in her own little bubble – it was quite annoying, really. When I asked her about it her reply was "Well, I need to stay in touch with my friends". But, I'm really not convinced that this kind of use of technology really does this. After all, there were lots of us there together and she wasn't in touch with us at all! What do you think? Is modern technology taking over our lives?



ADD A COMMENT



Posted: July 25, 11:05 AM by **Techie1**

You've got to be kidding! Do you want to take us back in time? I really think you're missing the point of using your mobile to keep in touch with friends. I have friends from around the world which would be impossible without technology. My life is far more interesting than when my parents were teenagers. I'm definitely with your niece on this one. 😊



Posted: July 25, 13:47 PM by **JonasB**

Andrea, I totally agree with you on technology making teenagers antisocial. While I can see what Techie1 is saying, ignoring the people you're with because you're texting all the time is just not on. There's a time and a place for technology and having dinner with family or friends is not one of them.

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Read the blog and comments again. Choose the correct person for each of these statements.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | thinks technology is essential. |
| 2. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | was annoyed with the person using their phone. |
| 3. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | thinks that you shouldn't always use your phone. |
| 4. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | doesn't want people to think he / she doesn't like technology. |
| 5. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | doesn't think Andrea's niece was doing anything wrong. |
| 6. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | wants to know other people's opinions. |
| 7. Andrea / Techie1 / JonasB | has the same opinion as the person who wrote the blog. |

2 Language focus

Find words or expressions in the blog and comments that match these definitions.

- _____ to no longer have recent knowledge or information about something
- _____ someone who is old-fashioned and not very modern
- _____ not interested in meeting other people and not very friendly
- _____ enjoying a particular activity a lot and spending too much time doing it
- _____ not aware of other people, in their own world
- _____ making a joke about something, used when you don't agree or believe something a person says
- _____ to fail to understand something
- _____ something which is not acceptable

In the comments, one person agrees with the blogger and the other disagrees. They use phrases to show whether they agree or not. Put the expression below in the correct column.

I think you've hit the nail on the head.

Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but ...

That's exactly what I think.

I think you're missing the point.

~~I totally agree with you on ...~~

I was going to say the same thing.

I wouldn't say that at all.

That's a very valid point and I feel ...

I don't think there's any basis in what you say.

~~You've got to be kidding!~~

Agreeing	Disagreeing
<p>I totally agree with you on ...</p>	<p>You've got to be kidding!</p>

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Sometimes we don't completely agree or disagree with someone's opinion. Choose the correct word(s) to complete these phrases.

1. I agree _____ a point, but ...
a. about b. see c. up to
2. I _____ your point, but ...
a. know b. see c. up to
3. That's _____ true, but ...
a. about b. both c. partly
4. I'm not so _____ about that.
a. know b. sure c. true
5. I can see _____ sides of the argument. On the one hand ...
a. both b. either c. the

3 Writing preparation

Complete these comments with a suitable phrase from the last two exercises.



Posted: July 25, 18:01 PM by Alex

I can _____. It's important to stay in touch with your friends, but it's also rude to ignore people you are with.



Posted: July 26, 7:25 AM by Samanth@

I'm not so _____. It's also important to remember that there are times when you will need to answer a text or check something on your phone. So, it's not always so simple.



Posted: July 26, 9:45 PM by Matt

I think you're _____. Maybe your niece was sending you a message – I'm not always interested in the same topics you are. She might really prefer to be with her friends rather than having dinner with you!

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You have come across Marcus Weinmann's blog 'The bad side of technology' and the comment below:

Practice exam question



The bad side of technology

by Marcus Weinmann
July 15

As the head teacher of a high school I am often quite worried about the welfare of my students. I do realize that things have changed since I was a teenager, and that the kind of behaviour I see is nothing unusual, but it doesn't prevent me from being concerned. A good example of this is the number of students who come into school in the morning already completely exhausted. I'm almost certain that the cause of this is staying up late at night playing computer games and chatting with their friends online. I'm absolutely convinced that most of them don't realize just how detrimental to their health this is, let alone the effect it has on their grades. I recently read an article about the damage that gaming is doing to kids. The article claimed that lots of the games they play are extremely harmful. It said that at best they were turning teens into zombies and at worst into potential killers! I'm not sure if I'd go that far but I am certain that most teenagers spend too much time on computers.



Posted June 16 23:20 PM by RednBlack

Everyone's entitled to their opinion but I think some of the statements in this blog are silly and give a completely false picture. First of all, to say all teenagers are spending too much time online is just not right. Of course, a lot of teenagers do enjoy playing computer games. But, there are a lot of teenagers who enjoy a much more active life, playing sports and spending time being with their friends. It's true that many teenagers are tired when they arrive at school but I think Mr Weinmann is missing the point. This is nothing new and has to do with the fact that most teenagers find getting up early in the morning difficult – this is a biological thing and nothing to do with staying up late at night playing computer games.



Posted _____ by _____

You have decided to comment on this blog post.

In your blog comment you should:

- comment on RednBlack's point of view
- state your own opinion
- suggest what can be done to stop teenagers spending too much time online