

## Debate skills for women in the workplace

**Level:** Intermediate–Upper intermediate (B1–B2)

**Time:** 60–90 minutes

**Business topics:** HR, Career planning, Coaching and mentoring, Leadership and management

**Business language focus:** Soft skills, workplace roles, gender

**Activities:** In this lesson, students will:

- read a business article and look at the language necessary to understand and talk about it;
- discuss aspects of the article in greater depth;
- discuss common soft skills and rank their importance.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student, internet access for Exercise 5b

**Group size:** All of the tasks can be completed in pairs or groups, so that as much communication as possible takes place in the class. However, this lesson plan can also be used in a one-to-one teaching situation.

This lesson is based on an authentic article, republished here with its full, original text.

The article talks about how debate training can improve women's confidence.

### 1. Warmer

Students discuss the questions in pairs.

### 2. Key words and expressions

Students complete the sentence with words and expressions in the text.

**Key:**

- |                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. commercial barrister | 5. predominantly |
| 2. foundation           | 6. empathetic    |
| 3. empowerment          | 7. internship    |
| 4. struggle with        | 8. temper        |

### 3. Understanding the article

Students read the article and decide if the statements are true or false. They then correct the statements they think are false.

**Key:**

1. *False. It was a problem in the past and still is a big problem.*
2. *True.*
3. *False. The confidence gap is a big issue but women also find it difficult to express themselves without being interrupted.*
4. *True.*
5. *False. People think you're born with confidence but it is a skill you can learn.*

### 4. Discussion

In small groups, students discuss the questions which pick up on and expand on topics and quotes from the article. Hold a short whole-group feedback session and compare and contrast each group's answers and input.

### 5. Wider business theme – Soft skills

- A** Learners discuss the questions in pairs. Then lead a short open class discussion to ensure everyone has the same definition of soft skills – *skills that are not central to core work (hard skills) but make doing work easier.*
- B** Divide the class into groups of two or three and ask each group to read the list of top soft skills. Ask them to rank the skills in order of importance.
- C** When each group has finished, ask them to compare their list with another group and discuss any differences.



#### One-to-one teaching

Ask the student to rank the skills and present their list to you. Ask them why they put each skill in that position.