



Lesson 9: Communicate / Cooperate

This lesson goes deeper into the meanings of communication and cooperation, and suggests ways to make them more effective.

Level: Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

Time: 60-90 mins

How to use this lesson:

These exercises are best done in class but the final exercise can be done at home if you prefer to allow more time in class for discussion and role play.

Teacher's Notes

Worksheet A

1. Read the definitions below and answer the questions

This exercise introduces the subjects of communication and cooperation by giving students definitions. Allow up to five minutes for students to read the definitions and the questions. Students who finish earlier can write the answers. Check students' understanding of the words and make sure there are no problems. Elicit different suggestions for the answers.

Suggested answers

- 1 That it only involves getting your point across
- 2 Because they do not agree / When they have to reach a decision even though they don't agree
- 3 It doesn't involve doing something together, but being told what to do

2. Match these words to their definitions

This exercise introduces vocabulary that students can use when talking about communication. Some of the words are difficult and it might be hard for some students to grasp the finer meanings. Allow 3-4 minutes for students to complete the sentences alone. After this time, they can compare their answers with a partner. Elicit the answers and give guidance, explaining the meanings of any words that caused problems.

Answers: 1 d; 2 f; 3 h; 4 a; 5 b; 6 c; 7 g; 8 e

3. Look at the examples below and circle the correct word

Remind the class that, although some communication is very smooth and leads to perfect cooperation, it doesn't always happen like that. The following two exercises practise a way of making sure that the communication stays civilised. Remind the class of the meaning of the word **acknowledge**, which they met in the previous exercise. Point out that acknowledging the other person's point is usually more effective than simply confronting them with the opposite viewpoint. Allow 3-4 minutes for students to make their choices. Then check their answers.

Answers

- 1 recognise
- 2 feel
- 3 see
- 4 mean
- 5 right
- 6 sound



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4. Ways of acknowledging what people say

Make sure students understand that they are not expected to give their point of view here. They simply need to acknowledge what the other person has said and stop short of giving their own opinions. In other words, what they write down could end with *but ...*, *However ...* or *Nevertheless ...*. They will practise giving their opinions on Worksheet B.

Allow up to five minutes for them to write their ideas. Remind them to use phrases from exercise 3. Elicit answers from the class and correct any mistakes. A different way to check the answers would be to get pairs of students to read out the dialogues. That way, they could practise using a suitable tone of voice as well. Many different answers will be acceptable. Just make sure students acknowledge the first speaker's point.

Worksheet B

5. Five steps towards effective communication

For this exercise, students should work alone, at least initially. You may choose to tell them to compare notes with a partner after they have attempted the task by themselves. Point out that they are only being asked to produce one sentence, but that it should contain all five elements mentioned in the table (in fact, it doesn't have to be all in one sentence – this is spoken English so it wouldn't matter if students wrote two sentences, as in the second example below). If any students finish early, you could ask them to write a further example on a different theme. If students are having difficulty with the concept of the five steps, you could give further examples and ask the class to break them down into their constituent parts, e.g.

When I heard you were bringing Jane home ... I was a little angry ... because I don't think she's a very nice girl, ... so be careful ... because I don't want you to get hurt.

Whenever I hear Mitchell mentioned, ... I get anxious ... because of what happened last time. ... I want you to consider Anderson for the job ... so at least we have an alternative if we need one.

6. Role-play

For this role-play activity, put students in pairs and allow at least ten minutes for them to practise their dialogues. Remind them that they must use some of the techniques and language from this lesson. Where possible, they should try to include the ideas of acknowledging from exercise 3, and the five steps from exercise 5.

Ask a variety of pairs to perform their dialogues in front of the class.

7. Writing task

This exercise can be done at home if you prefer. If done in class, students will need 15-20 minutes. Allow students to choose one of the tasks. Point out that task 1 requires a dialogue using direct speech; task 2 will need past tenses and reported speech; and task 3 will be written using mainly present tenses in a discursive style. Above all, students should aim to practise some elements from the lesson.



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Worksheet A

1. Read the definitions below and answer the questions.

Effective **communication** is a two-way street. Many people make the mistake of thinking that communication is all about getting your point across. This is only half of the story. To be a good communicator, you also need to be a good listener. Otherwise, you are not respecting the other person's point of view.

Cooperation is the act of doing something together to achieve a single goal. This involves respecting the views of the other person, even when you do not agree. Sometimes, a compromise is necessary – when you don't agree with someone, you still need to find a solution, and that could be somewhere between what each of you wants to do. Cooperation is also used to mean 'doing what someone tells you to do'.

1 What misunderstanding exists about the meaning of communication?

2 Why do people sometimes need to reach a compromise?

3 What is different about the second meaning of cooperation?

2. Now match these words to their definitions. Be careful – some of the meanings are very similar.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1 acknowledge | a disagree strongly or loudly |
| 2 approve | b put your thoughts into words |
| 3 agree | c answer or reply |
| 4 argue | d admit that what the other person said is true or has value |
| 5 express | e make someone believe something |
| 6 respond | f support something or believe that it is a good thing |
| 7 persuade | g make someone do something |
| 8 convince | h share the same opinion with someone else |

3. Experts say that *acknowledging* what a person has said will help them feel good and make them more likely to listen to your viewpoint. Look at the examples below and circle the correct word.

- 1 I **recognise** / **approve** what you're saying and I understand your point. However, ...
- 2 I can see that you **believe** / **feel** strongly about this and it is important to you.
- 3 Of course you want to go and I can **see** / **look** how disappointed you are. Nevertheless, ...
- 4 I know what you **mean** / **say** when you express your concern about ...
- 5 You're **true** / **right** to be worried about this, as it is an important point. But ...
- 6 You **hear** / **sound** very dissatisfied with the situation, and I can imagine how you feel.



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4. Now suggest ways of acknowledging what the people say below.

1 "I would love to go to Paris this spring."

2 "You don't understand – I have no way of paying for this!"

3 "No. I don't like that idea. In fact, it would be disastrous if we did that."

4 "You're giving me 15 out of 20? Is that all? I think I deserve 18 at least."

5 "What do you mean you don't want to go? We've already paid for the tickets!"

6 "I think it's awful what we're doing to the planet. Those poor animals! They'll all be extinct soon."



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Worksheet B

5. Look at the information below. Then think of a situation that you can write about and add one sentence of your own, following the five steps.

Five steps towards effective communication		
1 Use your senses (say what you see/hear etc)	When I see you playing computer games ...	
2 Use your emotions (say how it makes you feel)	... I worry ...	
3 Explain why (say what the problem is)	... because I know you're wasting your time ...	
4 Say what you want to happen	... and I want you to do it less ...	
5 Explain why (mention a positive result of step 4)	... so that you get good marks in your next exam.	

6. In pairs, role-play the following situations. Remember to acknowledge the other person's points and try to make your point effectively.

	Student A	Student B
1	You went to London last year and you had a terrible time. Now your friend wants you to go again. Explain why you're against the idea.	You've got the opportunity to go to London and you want your friend, Student A, to come with you. Try to persuade your friend.
2	Someone has just suggested using ABC Printers to supply your office. You are impressed with what you have heard about them. Recommend them to your colleague, Student B.	You have heard that ABC Printers have got a terrible reputation for being late and overcharging. Suggest an alternative.
3	You are jointly responsible (with Student B) for deciding how to spend €5,000 on your college. You are 100% certain that the money should go on new desks. However, you must agree or the money will be taken from you.	You are jointly responsible (with Student A) for deciding how to spend €5,000 on your college. You are 100% certain that the money should go on painting and decorating. However, you must agree or the money will be taken from you.
4	You have just arranged a big party for Student B's birthday tomorrow. You went to a lot of trouble but you managed to do it all with a day to spare. Tell him/her the good news!	You hate parties and Student A's announcement is your worst nightmare. But he/she is such a good friend. Explain your point of view and decide what to do.
5	After many years of living somewhere you hate, you have finally found your dream home. Everything about it is perfect. The only problem is your teenage son/daughter (Student B), who absolutely hates it. Try to point out some of the benefits of moving.	Your mother/father (Student A) is trying to convince you that a new home he/she has found for all the family is perfect. You have seen it and you think it's the most boring house in the most boring place imaginable. Explain why you don't want to move there.

