

**CRITICAL THINKING**

Inferring a speaker's attitude; Applying a theory to other situations

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Binomials; Modal verbs and levels of directness

PRONUNCIATION

Intonation and attitude

SPEAKING

Interrupting

Discussion point

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Think about the past week. Which groups of people have you been with? Check (✓) the categories below. Can you think of any other groups you spent time with? Compare with a partner.
 classmates fellow students close family extended family
 work colleagues teammates online friends volunteer group
- 2 Are you someone who participates a lot in a group, likes to be the leader, or prefers to watch and listen? What kinds of people do you like being in a group with?
- 3 What kinds of meetings have you attended (for example, school meeting, team meeting, club meeting, work meeting)? What were they for?

Vocabulary preview

Read the information about meetings, lectures, and seminars, and fill in the blanks with a word from the box.

audience handout interactive mute presenters professor slideshow track

Leading the lecture or seminar –

key tips

¹ The lecture or seminar is a key aspect of learning for almost all university students. Even in these days of high technology and online learning these real-time, face-to-face gatherings are still very common. While often it's the (1) _____ or tutor in charge of delivering the information, sometimes students are also given responsibility to lead a seminar or give a mini-lecture. Here are some tips on how to do this more effectively.

² If you have a lot to say, consider having a printed (2) _____ with extra notes that people can take home with them.

³ Keep it short. Anything longer than an hour and the (3) _____ might find it difficult to stay

focused. If there is no way to reduce the time, consider including multiple (4) _____ or (5) _____ elements to keep people engaged.

⁴ Avoid a huge (6) _____. Too much information can overload people. While a visual element is helpful, consider distributing it in advance of the lecture. Then use only the most important data. This allows the audience to prepare any questions in advance and focus on key information from the beginning.

⁵ Start on time, keep on (7) _____, and finish on time. If you are asking people to gather to hear you, and your ideas, then you must take responsibility for managing time effectively.

⁶ Avoid interruptions. Ask your participants to turn off their cell phones or to (8) _____ them. Provide a time for questions, and inform your listeners that you won't take questions until that stage.


LISTENING 1 Three meetings 

Before you listen

Look at the following pairs of words about meetings. How are they similar? How are they different? Think about speakers, purpose, interaction patterns, and technology.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 a lecture / a seminar | 3 an audio conference / a webinar |
| 2 a summit / a rally | 4 a get-together / an interview |

Listening

- 1  1.02 Listen to *Three meetings*. What kind of meeting is each one? Choose from the list above. What is the purpose of each meeting?



2  1.02 Listen again and answer the questions.

Meeting 1

- 1 What is the professor's course about?
- 2 How many do's and don't's does the professor cover?

Meeting 2

- 3 What three interruptions occur at the beginning of the second meeting?
- 4 How does the speaker suggest splitting the workload?

Meeting 3

- 5 What benefits to joining the society does the speaker talk about?
- 6 What does the "open door" policy mean?

ACADEMIC KEYWORDS


aspect	(n)	/'æspɛkt/
characterize	(v)	/'kɛrəktə,raɪz/
integrate	(v)	/'ɪntə,grɛɪt/

Critical thinking skill

INFERRING A SPEAKER'S ATTITUDE

We infer a speaker's attitude toward a topic from a range of factors. These might include: context, relationship between speakers, gender, age, setting, word choice, our knowledge of the speaker, the speaker's body language, and the speaker's intonation.

It is often the final element – intonation – that gives us most clues about a speaker's attitude. For example, a speaker may use very formal and polite language, but convey a different attitude, or even sound rude, due to his/her intonation (cf. p. 14).

1  1.02 Listen again. For each meeting, select the adjective that best describes the attitude of the main speaker. Think of context, word choice, and intonation.

- 1 The professor
apologetic / abrupt / passionate
- 2 The woman in charge of the meeting
enthusiastic / irritated / shy
- 3 The lead speaker from the debating society
insincere / impatient / afraid

2 Work with a partner. Compare your answers. What evidence can you give in support of each answer?

In exercise 1, I think the best adjective to describe the professor is "passionate." I think he's passionate because of the expressions he uses, such as "the most important." His intonation also shows his attitude because his voice rises when he describes the various elements of the course.

Developing critical thinking

Discuss these questions in a group.


- 1 Have you been in situations like those presented in the listening? How did you feel when interruptions took place?
- 2 How is technology changing the way we interact? Do you think everyone will eventually only have meetings, classes, and lectures remotely?
- 3 Have you ever taken an online course? What did you think of it? Can you think of one advantage and one disadvantage of replacing face-to-face lectures with online lectures?

LISTENING 2 Getting from *you* and *me*, to *we*

Before you listen

- 1 Have you heard the expression “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”? What does it mean? Is there a similar expression in your language?
- 2 Think of a time when you were part of a successful or unsuccessful group. For example, an athletic team, club meeting, or class. What made the group successful / unsuccessful – the people, the venue, the timing ...?

Listening

- 1  1.03 Listen to some people talking and answer the questions.
 - 1 What kind of meeting is this?
 - 2 Who are the speakers and what is their relationship?
 - 3 What is group dynamics?
- 2 What is the best description for the talk?
 - a A presentation on online study methods.
 - b A discussion on the stages of working together.
 - c An example of poor group dynamics.

ACADEMIC KEYWORDS


conform (v) /kən'fɔrm/
 originally (adv) /ə'ɹɪdʒən(ə)li/
 relevance (n) /'reləvəns/

Critical thinking skill

APPLYING A THEORY TO OTHER SITUATIONS

A theory is a set of ideas that helps to explain why something happens in a particular way. In academia, a theory can be an idea or a set of ideas that we feel to be true, but might not have been proven.

When a theory is introduced, for example in a lecture, usually an example is given to show how the theory works. However, to show our understanding of a theory, it is important that we are able to apply it to other situations as well.

- 1  1.03 Listen again. Identify which stage of the theory of group dynamics in the box is being referred to in each sentence. Some stages are used more than once.

storming forming adjourning norming performing

- 1 It's important that there is clear leadership and direction. _____
 - 2 Individual members begin to voice their differences. _____
 - 3 The team leader takes more of a back seat. _____
 - 4 This may result in open conflict within the group. _____
 - 5 A bit like the calm after the storm. _____
 - 6 The members of the group can move forward. _____
 - 7 A lot is achieved during this stage. _____
 - 8 It's about moving on. _____
- 2 Read sentences from people's experiences with groups. Applying group dynamics theory, which stage of group development are they going through?
- 1 "I think we're all a bit nervous about talking to each other after what happened last week. But at least we can get some work done this time."
 - 2 "Our team has been playing together really well, and I just don't know what I'm going to do when the season finishes in two days."
 - 3 "I was happy to see a friend here, so I sat next to her. Nobody really talks to each other and we're all a bit shy."
 - 4 "Today was a great class. I felt as if the students really pulled together and we got through a tremendous amount of material. They had lots of questions and everyone felt great."

Developing critical thinking

- 1 Discuss these questions in a group.
- 1 Do you think Bruce Tuckman's theory of group dynamics is a good description of how people work together? Have you been in a group that has been through the various stages in the theory? Think back to the experiences you talked about in the Before you listen section.
 - 2 Imagine you were in a group that was in the storming stage. Describe two specific things that could happen. Then make two suggestions on how to get beyond that stage.
- 2 Think about the ideas from Listening 1 and Listening 2, and discuss these questions in a group.
- 1 "Knowledge about how groups work is vital for people who want to be leaders." Think of one argument for and one argument against this statement.
 - 2 In what situations do you think people work better alone than with a group? Think of three examples and tell a partner.

References:

Forsyth, D. *Group Dynamics 5th edition*. Cengage Learning, 2009.
 Tuckman, B. (1965) "Developmental sequence in small groups" *Psychological Bulletin* 63 (6): 384–99. The article was reprinted in *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal*—Number 3, Spring 2001, and is available as a Word document: <http://dennislearningcenter.osu.edu/references/GROUP%20DEV%20ARTICLE.doc>. Accessed February 14, 2013.

Language development

BINOMIALS

A binomial is a pair of words that are joined by a conjunction and always go in the same order. For example: *bread and butter* (not *butter and bread*).

Binomials can be pairs of nouns (*bread and butter*), verbs (*see and do*), or adjectives (*sad, but true*).

1. Match the words in A with words in B to make binomials.

A		B
all	and or	clear
cut		downs
give		dried
loud		effort
pure		nothing
show		simple
time		take
ups		tell

2. Look at the following extracts from meetings or classes. Fill in the blanks with binomials, using the pairs of words in brackets. Use the correct word order and conjunction.

- We'd like to thank you for all your _____ with the company.
We really appreciate all you've done.
- Next week we are going to have a _____ activity.
Everyone has to bring a typical item from his or her country.
- Well, I think the message is getting across _____ . We all understand.
- The deadline for this project is tomorrow, so we have to make a special effort. It's really an _____ affair right now.
- The company has been through its _____ but the directors think we will emerge from this even stronger.
- I know we said we would solve this problem in one meeting, but I don't think it's as _____ as that.
- Our main aim is to make student life as good as possible on campus, _____ .
- Our next meeting will be in two months, _____ a day or two.



MODAL VERBS AND LEVELS OF DIRECTNESS

The choice of modal verb to express a function can change depending on the situation and also the meaning the speaker wishes to convey. For example, some modals can sound very direct, but changing the modal form (*could* instead of *can*, *would* instead of *will*, *might* instead of *may*) can soften a statement and make it less direct. In more formal situations, or to sound less direct, speakers may also change the sentence structure, or modify a modal verb with adverbs, such as *possibly*, *probably*, *ideally*, and *please*.

For example, compare these sentences:

We **must** start the meeting now. (very direct)

Could we start the meeting now? (a request)

Shall we start the meeting now? (a suggestion)

Might we **possibly** start the meeting now? (indirect, almost tentative)

1 What function best describes each sentence below? Some answers can be used more than once.

asking permission complaining offering promising
refusing requesting suggesting

- 1 We may as well get started then.
 - 2 See if he's online.
 - 3 Shall we take a break?
 - 4 Can I add something here?
 - 5 Listen everybody!
 - 6 Would you take notes, Peter?
 - 7 You mustn't use that word in class.
 - 8 We won't leave until we get an answer.
- 2 In what settings might you hear each of the above expressions?
- 3 Work with a partner. Change each sentence in exercise 1 to alter the level of directness of the sentence.
- 4 Look at the following situations. For each situation, think of two different ways, direct and indirect, that you could express yourself.
- 1 You are in a meeting. You need to leave early.
Direct: Excuse me, can I go early? I have another appointment.
Indirect: Excuse me, might it be possible for me to leave early? I have another appointment.
 - 2 You want to ask a question in class.
 - 3 A new student looks a bit lost.
 - 4 You and some classmates want to meet after class and do something.
 - 5 A phone keeps ringing during class.

SPEAKING Planning a study group

You are going to learn about how intonation can be used to show the speaker's attitude. You will also learn how to interrupt another person politely. Then you are going to use these skills to participate in a meeting about planning a study group.

Pronunciation skill

INTONATION AND ATTITUDE

Intonation is the way the voice rises and falls when we speak; it is *how* we say something, not *what* we say. Understanding intonation is an important skill for establishing the emotions, thoughts, and intentions of the speaker.

Depending on a speaker's intonation, various positive and negative attitudes can be conveyed, such as boredom, interest, enthusiasm, surprise, irritation, anger, sarcasm, etc.

I'm really looking forward to the meeting. (normal intonation)

I'm really looking forward to the meeting. (stress on *really* and downward intonation at end – sarcasm)

Don't forget that intonation doesn't operate alone in suggesting attitude. Pauses, pitch, tone, and speed all play a rôle, too.

- 1  1.04 Listen to three different versions of the dialogue below. For each version, choose the words that best describe each speaker's attitude.

A: *I'm sorry, but I can't come to the meeting today.*

B: *Oh, OK. We'll have the meeting next week then.*

indifference surprise sarcasm anger worry suspicion

- 2  1.04 Listen again to the three versions of the dialogue. Then practice the dialogues with a partner. Copy the intonation in each version.

Speaking skill

INTERRUPTING

In a situation where many people are speaking and you want to say something, you may have to interrupt the other speaker(s). It is important to know when and how to interrupt another person appropriately and politely. In formal situations, you can use *Excuse me*, or *Sorry*, and we would usually add another phrase to ask for permission to speak.

Excuse me, do you mind if I interrupt?

Sorry (to interrupt), but would you mind if I said something (at this point)?

May I say something, please?

In informal situations, you can be more abrupt.

Hang on. Wait a minute/second/moment. Can I say something?

Complete the interrupting phrases with the missing words.

- 1 _____ to _____, but ...
 2 _____ I _____ something here?
 3 _____ you _____ if I say _____ here?

SPEAKING TASK

BRAINSTORM

Work with a partner. What is a study group?

Look at these ways of studying together outside of class. Which ones have you tried? Which ones would you like to try? Are there other ways you can think of?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Meeting to practice talking in English | Setting up an online webpage to study |
| Exchanging useful websites | Reviewing past lessons together |
| Writing emails to each other in English | Studying together for exams |
| Participating in an online discussion forum | |



PLAN

- 1 **1.05** Listen to some American college students planning a study group. Answer the questions.
 - 1 How many people will be in the study group?
 - 2 Where will they meet?
 - 3 How long will they meet for, and how often will they meet?
- 2 **1.05** Listen again. Take notes on the use of modals in various functions, the intonation of the speakers, and the language they used when they interrupted each other. Discuss your notes with a partner, and say whether you think their study group will be successful.
- 3 Imagine you want to start a study group. Think about:
 - What is the purpose of your study group?
 - What is the best mode of interaction for your study group? Online, face-to-face ...
 - Should your study group have a leader? How will you nominate the leader?
 - How will you monitor if the study group is effective or not?

SPEAK

Work with another pair. Have an initial meeting about forming a study group. Share your ideas about the best way for a study group to work. Take turns speaking. Interrupt other speakers appropriately to make suggestions, offers, or requests.

SHARE

Tell the class what plans you have for a study group. Make a strategy and set a schedule to put your plans into practice!

STUDY SKILLS Speaking in groups

Getting started

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 In your previous English classes, how much speaking in groups did you have to do?
- 2 Did you find it easy or difficult?
- 3 Why do so many English learners say speaking is the most difficult skill? Think of three reasons.

Scenario

Read about Jemal's experience as an advanced student speaking in a university seminar, and think about how he could participate more.

Consider it

Read these tips about speaking in tutorials, seminars, and small groups. Which tips do you think would be most useful for Jemal? Which have you tried?

- 1 **Agree with the last speaker.** The easiest way of getting into a conversation and keeping it going is to agree with the last speaker. Say something such as *That's right*, *Yes*, *OK*, or even just *Uhuh*. Even if you don't know what to add you can say something like: *I was thinking that myself* or *That's a very good point*.
- 2 **Add information.** If everyone just said *That's right* the tutorial would stop. Try adding to the last speaker's remark as well. Phrases like *Yes, that reminds me ...* or *I have another example of this ...*
- 3 **Ask for information.** If you really don't have anything to add, but you have heard something interesting, ask another speaker for information. Ask *What do you mean by ...?* or *Can you tell me another example ...?*
- 4 **Give your opinion.** Giving your opinion helps keep a discussion going. Opinions are usually introduced with phrases such as *I think ... It seems to me ... In my opinion ...* Many people use language to show they are not sure, for example, *I was wondering if Do you think that perhaps ...*, *Just supposing that ...*
- 5 **Disagree with something.** Part of academic tutorial or seminar discussions is disagreeing with a point someone has just made. Putting doubts into words is one way of finding out what you think yourself and thinking of new ideas as a group.
- 6 **Show interest.** You can keep the conversation going by showing interest and using phrases such as *Really? Is that true?*
- 7 **Learn from others.** When you are in a small group discussion or tutorial, pay attention to ways that other students join in. How do they get a turn to talk? How do they show that they are listening to each other? What words do they use to question other people's ideas? What words show they are not sure if their own ideas are right? Paying attention to this will help you adapt to the style of the group.

Over to you

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 Do you think you participate enough in group discussions?
- 2 Which of these tips do you think are most useful?
- 3 Do you have any other suggestions on how you can participate more actively in discussions?



Jemal has reached an advanced level of English and really knows his grammar and vocabulary. He has always received high grades in English and can do very well on written exams. In his previous English classes he didn't have to speak that much, but he was always able to communicate his ideas where necessary and was very careful not to make mistakes.

However, his new teacher this year expects the students to do a lot of small group discussions. Jemal has been quiet week after week. He's not accustomed to the teacher not lecturing. One time he did participate, but the others in his group didn't really understand what he was saying, so he gave up.

In addition, for the first time, he feels shy and worried about his language level. There are others in the group who are very confident in their speaking. He worries that he will make a mistake and people will laugh. Sometimes Jemal is about to say something, but someone else in the group always gets there first. Sometimes he's not sure if it's his turn to speak.

Finally, Jemal has noticed that the teacher is very happy when his group is talking, even if he isn't saying anything. As a result, Jemal has decided the best thing to do is listen and avoid attention.