

Conceding and counter-arguing card games

Instructions for teachers

Conceding and counter-arguing presentation

Cut up one set of cards per group of two to four students, including the big “but” card in the middle.

Perhaps after asking students to brainstorm their own ideas for things that could go before and after “..., but...” for polite disagreement/ weak disagreement, ask students to put the cut-up cards before and after the big “but” card.

If students need help, you can tell them that there should be the same number of each kind (i.e. the same number of cards before and after “but”), and/ or that the ones which need continuation (...) go on the right, perhaps giving out the “...” card to help explain that.

When they think they have finished, either give out a un-cut-up version of the worksheet for students to check their answers or read the answers out.

Conceding and counter-arguing controlled practice

After the jigsaw tasks, students can test each other in pairs by:

- Reading out a phrase either the right way round or with the parts before and after “but” mixed up for their partner to repeat back in the right order
- Reading out the bit up to “but” for their partner to repeat back and complete (in any acceptable way, preferably using a phrase that no one has said yet during this activity)
- Reading the bit after “but” for their partner to repeat back with something suitable before “but”
- Reading out either half of the phrase for the students to repeat back in the right place with something else in the other half
- Reading a phrase with one word missing for their partner to complete
- Reading out a key word and helping their partner make a phrase from it

Conceding and counter-arguing controlled speaking

For controlled speaking practice, in each pair one student takes the “before but cards” and the other takes the “after but cards”. Ask them to use as many of the cards as they can during a speaking activity, e.g. the business opinions one below. They can complete the phrases in their own way. They aren’t allowed to repeat any phrases that they or their partner have already said during that speaking activity, but even small variations on what has been said before is fine.

Then do the same thing with the “but” cards, this time with students being allowed to use any suitable sentence but again not being allowed to repeat (exactly) what has been said before during this game.

Conceding and counter-arguing controlled writing practice

The brainstorming stage can also be done before or after any of the stages above, including before the first stage if you want to do a Test Teach Test lesson.

Cards to cut up/ Suggested answers

you could be right	but	I'd say	...
I used to feel the same way		I read an article which said	
I'm almost convinced		in my own experience	
that is one point of view		it seems to me that	
I have almost the same opinion		to the best of my knowledge	
I've heard that too		it's difficult to accept the idea that	
I can't argue with that		my point of view is	
I can see why you'd think that		my own experience of this is	
I'll have to take your word on that		in my personal opinion	
that is a good point		my professor said	
I partially agree		in this (particular) case	
I could be persuaded		I don't really agree that	
I agree with your first point		I don't really see why	
that kind of makes sense		it could also be said that	
many people have that opinion		according to what I've read	
you know more about it than me		I have found that	
that seems to make sense		I'm still convinced that	
I feel more or less the same way		in my humble opinion	
I can see your point		I'm not sure that I agree with	
I mostly agree		I personally feel that	
you are probably right		my own thoughts on this are	

But cards

Deal out the cards below between you. You can discard a card if you use "but" in a polite disagreeing sentence, as long as you don't repeat exactly what someone has said before.

but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but
but	but	but	but

Brainstorming conceding and counter-arguing phrases

Without looking at the cards for now, brainstorm suitable things to go before and after “but” below to make polite/ weak disagreeing phrases. Many phrases not on the cards are also possible.

	but	
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Use the cards to help with the task above, first of all with pens down/ and or looking at the mixed-up cards.

Business English giving opinions practice

Take turns giving your opinions on the topics below and responding to what your partner says. Your teacher will tell if you should use soft/ polite language and/ or disagree with what your partner says, or if you can just give your own real opinions each time.

As a class, ask about any topics below which you don't understand, each time sharing opinions on it and discussing it if you like.

- Audits/ Being audited
- Autonomy
- Borrowing/ Debt
- Business travel
- Career paths/ Career planning
- Competitiveness
- Compliance
- Conglomerates/ Large companies
- Cutting costs
- Dealing with incompetent employees/ managers
- Deregulation
- Downsizing
- Economic growth/ Increasing GDP
- Efficiency – Inefficiency
- Entertaining/ Socialising with business contacts
- Exchange rates
- Foreign employees
- Free trade/ Globalisation
- Goals
- Government economic policy/ support for companies
- Improving work-life balance
- Inflation/ Deflation
- Infrastructure
- Innovation
- Interest rates
- Investment
- IT
- (Long-term/ Short-term) planning
- M&A/ Integrating merged companies
- Management/ Being a good manager
- Marketing
- Meetings
- Millennials at work
- Negotiating skills
- Outsourcing
- Overtime
- Quality (control)
- Retirement/ Pensions
- SMEs
- Social security
- Staff turnover
- Standardisation
- Stress
- Taxation
- The (present or future) state of the economy
- The future of a particular sector of the economy
- Training/ Staff development