

## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

AGE: Adult

LEVEL: Upper Intermediate

TIME: 90 minutes

LANGUAGE FOCUS: functional language for giving opinions

SKILLS: listening and speaking

MATERIALS: one copy of the worksheet and transcript per student; the audio recording from onestopenglish

OVERVIEW: to encourage students to express their opinions using fixed phrases to discuss controversial topics

STUDENTS WILL:

- listen to a conversation about the 2013 UK horsemeat scandal
- discuss a variety of controversial topics using fixed expressions
- learn and practise some idioms to use in everyday conversation



### ACTIVITY 1

Students read a short introductory paragraph and discuss a controversial topic

Write *food fraud* on the board. Give students a minute to discuss what they think it means (it means when food is presented as one thing but is, in fact, another). Hand out the worksheet and ask the students to look at the photos and discuss what they think happened in the UK horsemeat scandal in 2013. Then ask them to read what actually happened and discuss the questions in pairs, opening out the discussion to the group after a few minutes.

### ACTIVITY 2

Students listen to an authentic conversation between two native speakers and take notes

Tell students they are going to listen to a discussion between two people, Lizzie and Andrew, on the topic of horsemeat. They should decide whether they agree with Andrew or with Lizzie, and why. Play the recording then give them a few minutes to discuss their opinions in pairs.

### ACTIVITY 3

Students listen to the recording again and focus on common phrases used for agreeing, disagreeing and offering opinions

Focus students' attention on the list of phrases for agreeing, disagreeing and giving opinions. Tell them they are going to listen to the recording again and they should tick the phrases they hear Lizzie and Andrew use.

Key:

- You could be right.

- That's a very good point, but ...
- The way I see it, ...
- But what about ...?
- Yes, but ...
- I'd say that ...
- Well, some people probably think that, but ...
- I'm not so sure about that.
- That's true, but ...
- In my opinion, ...
- I know what you mean.
- I'm afraid I have to disagree with you there.
- As far as I'm concerned ...
- I'd suggest that ...
- Personally, I think ...
- That's ridiculous!
- If you ask me, ...
- That may be so, but ...
- OK, you have a point there.
- That's a good point.
- I see what your point is.
- The thing is, ...

### ACTIVITY 4

Students listen and follow the transcript, and categorize the new chunks of language according to meaning and register

Hand out the transcript. Ask students to listen another time and this time follow the transcript, marking down any unknown words and underlining the stressed words in each sentence. Play the recording more than once if necessary.




**TEACHING TIP:** When doing authentic listening practice with your students, try to provide a transcript of the conversation and ask them to mark the stressed words in each sentence while they are listening. They can practise the conversation afterwards, paying attention to sentence stress in fixed expressions.

## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

Next, ask students to categorize the phrases from activity 3 by writing each one into the correct column of the table provided. When they have finished, let them compare answers in pairs. Do a whole class check to make sure that students have categorized the language chunks correctly.

Tell students that the phrases are a mixture of formal, informal and neutral registers. Ask them to put F next to formal phrases, I next to informal phrases, and N next to neutral phrases. Ask students to check their answers with a partner and conduct whole class feedback.

 **TEACHING TIP:** When conducting whole class feedback, try not to offer the correct answers too quickly: elicit answers from multiple students, and if there are any disagreements, encourage discussion. This is a good opportunity to drill the correct pronunciation of these chunks of language. Ensure that students use correct stress and intonation, including connected speech.

Giving an opinion	Agreeing	Disagreeing
The way I see it, ... (N)	You could be right. (F)	But what about ...? (N)
I'd say that ... (N)	That's a good point. (N)	Yes, but ... (N)
As far as I'm concerned ... (N)	I see what your point is. (I)	That may be so, but ... (F)
I'd suggest that ... (F)	I know what you mean. (N)	I'm not so sure about that. (N)
Personally, I think ... (N)	OK, you have a point there. (I)	I'm afraid I have to disagree with you there. (F)
If you ask me, ... (I)		That's a very good point, but ... (N)
In my opinion, ... (F)		That's ridiculous! (I)
		The thing is, ... (I)
		That's true, but ... (N)
		Well, some people probably think that, but ... (F)

### ACTIVITY 5


*Students practise using the phrases within the context of a discussion*

Focus students' attention on the 10 statements in activity 5. These statements are designed to promote discussion and debate, but also to provide the opportunity for students to use the new chunks of language they have learned. Ask the

students to work in small groups and choose two or three statements that they would like to discuss. Ask them to first write down a discussion, trying to use the new phrases. When they have finished, check their transcripts and make any corrections necessary.

While the students are discussing, monitor the groups and offer feedback and correction, making sure they are using the new language chunks correctly. When all the groups have finished their discussions, bring the class together and conduct full class feedback on the most popular or controversial topics.

If you have time, put students back into their pairs and ask them to come up with their own statements for the class to discuss.

 **TEACHING TIP:** It is important to provide time for the students to practise new expressions and phrases shortly after they have learned them as this aids automatization of new language.

### ACTIVITY 6

*Students study and practise some common cultural idioms to use in everyday discussion*


Ask students to look at the idioms and discuss what they mean:

'When in Rome, do as the Romans do' – *when you visit a place, you should respect the customs there*

'Rome wasn't built in a day' – *important work takes time*

'All roads lead to Rome' – *there are many different ways to reach the same goal*

Explain that with the first idiom, it is normal that they will only hear the first half – 'When in Rome ...' because it is a fixed phrase so the second half can be inferred from the first. Other idioms follow this pattern so it is worth teaching one or two more here, for example 'Time flies ... (when you're having fun)' or 'Don't count your chickens ... (before they hatch)'.

 **TEACHING TIP:** When teaching complex language areas such as idiomatic expressions, it is a good idea to group them together in a way that will help students record and revise them more easily (e.g. by topic or by a shared word).

## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

### REFLECTION AND HOMEWORK PREPARATION

Ask students to work in small groups and look at the list of topics and agree on a topic they are interested in. Tell them to then choose an English-speaking country from the list whose culture they would like to know more about.

Each group should then make a list of four things which relate to their topic and decide on the differences in this topic between the English speaking country they have chosen and their country. If they do not know any, tell them they are going to research their topic/country and should prepare themselves using the following questions:

- a. What do you want to know about it?
- b. How can you find out more about it?
- c. What problems might you have in finding out more about it?

Each group should then choose one of the things on their list to research for homework - the one they most want to know more about. (If they are a group of three, only three out of the four questions will be discussed) In the next lesson each group will share their findings with each other, then share their combined findings with members of other groups so it is important that they do their homework. To make sure they are clear about this, show them on the handouts where it tells them this and highlight the importance of doing the homework.



**TEACHING TIP:** Remind students that not everything they read on the internet is true. They should cross-check information using a variety of well-known websites/sources. You could brainstorm a list of these together as a whole class. Encourage students to search in English.

Tell students that they have the option of printing information off the internet or making notes or a mixture. If they make notes (from any source), they should also write down where they found the information. E.g. a website title and link; a book title and author's name; a TV programme title etc.

## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

### ACTIVITY 1

Did you hear about the UK supermarket horsemeat scandal of January 2013? Look at the pictures below and tell your partner what you think happened.



Read the following paragraph and discuss the questions below with your partner:

In January 2013, horsemeat was found by Irish food inspectors in frozen beefburgers sold by UK supermarkets such as Tesco, Iceland, Aldi and Lidl. This led to the removal from shelves of beef ready meals by numerous other European companies and stores, following positive test results for horse DNA in these products. Horse DNA has also been found in products supplied by catering companies providing food for schools, hospitals and hotels. Health experts describe the issue as a case of 'food fraud' but claim that food safety was not threatened by it. Fast forward to 2015, and there are similar stories of food fraud. Tourists in Egypt have eaten donkey meat, thinking they were eating beef – while in China, meat advertised in a supermarket as donkey turned out to be fox. This is, then, an on-going ethical dilemma.

Do people eat horsemeat in your country?

Have you ever eaten something without knowing exactly what was in it?

Do you think catering companies have a social and ethical responsibility to be transparent about what they put in their food?

### ACTIVITY 2

Listen to Lizzie and Andrew have a discussion about the 2013 scandal. In the box, note down any arguments for and against eating horsemeat they make. Who do you agree with? Why?

For	Against

### ACTIVITY 3

Here are some phrases you can use for giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing. Listen to the recording again and tick the phrases you hear.

- You could be right.
- That's a very good point, but ...
- The way I see it, ...
- But what about ...?
- Yes, but ...
- I'd say that ...
- Well, some people probably think that, but ...
- I'm not so sure about that.
- That's true, but ...
- In my opinion, ...
- I know what you mean.
- I'm afraid I have to disagree with you there.
- As far as I'm concerned ...
- I'd suggest that ...
- Personally, I think ...
- That's ridiculous!
- If you ask me, ...
- That may be so, but ...
- OK, you have a point there.
- That's a good point.
- I see what your point is.
- The thing is, ...

## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

### ACTIVITY 4

Put each phrase from activity 3 into the correct column of the table below:

Giving an opinion	Agreeing	Disagreeing

When you have finished, compare your table with a partner. Do you have the same answers? Look at your completed table.

- \* Write F next to phrases you think are for use in a FORMAL situation, e.g. talking to your boss at work.
- \* Write I next to phrases you think are for use in an INFORMAL situation, e.g. talking with your friends.
- \* Write N next to phrases you think are NEUTRAL, e.g. talking with people you don't know very well.

When you have finished, compare your table with a partner. Are they the same?

### ACTIVITY 5

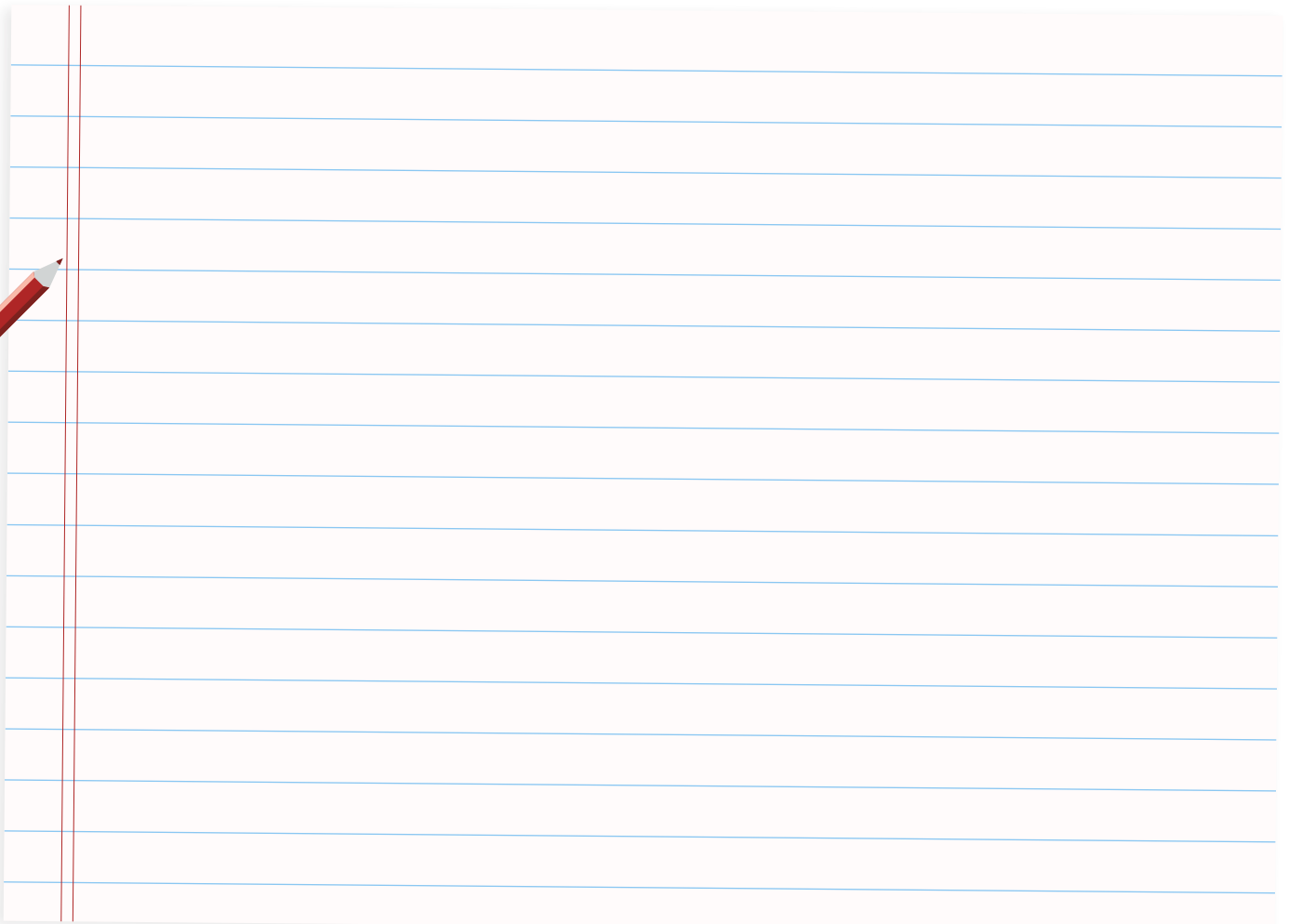
Look at the following statements. In your pairs, choose some topics that are interesting to you and write down a discussion with your partner using some of the new phrases from exercise 3.

- \* Marriage is outdated
- \* The death penalty is acceptable in some cases
- \* Foreigners shouldn't be allowed to vote

- \* Military service should be obligatory
- \* Curfews keep teens out of trouble
- \* We are becoming too dependent on computers
- \* Smoking should be banned worldwide
- \* We do not really need religion
- \* Obesity is a disease
- \* Video games contribute to youth violence

When you have finished writing, ask your teacher to check your work then practise reading the full discussion together.

## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS



### ACTIVITY 6

In the listening, Andrew says: 'When in Rome ...'  
Can you complete this sentence, and what do you think this means?

Do you agree with it? Why/why not?

What do these other idioms mean?

'Rome wasn't built in a day'

'All roads lead to Rome'

Are there any similar idioms in your language that you can share with your class?



## LESSON 4: EXPRESSING OPINIONS

### REFLECTION AND HOMEWORK PREPARATION

For homework you are going to research a topic and a country that interests you. Choose one of the topics and countries from the lists below:

#### TOPICS

- \* Sport
- \* Socialising
- \* Stereotypes
- \* Family
- \* Travel habits
- \* Education
- \* The environment
- \* Diet
- \* Politics
- \* Animal rights
- \* Celebrations
- \* Social behaviours
- \* Gender roles
- \* Religion

#### COUNTRIES

- \* UK
- \* Ireland
- \* US
- \* Canada
- \* Australia
- \* New Zealand
- \* Jamaica
- \* Singapore
- \* South Africa
- \* Nigeria

Make a list of three things that you would like to know more about in relation to:

- \* the chosen topic and English-speaking country
- \* the similarities and differences in that topic between the English-speaking country and your country

For each item on your list, answer the following questions:

- a. What do you want to know about it?
- b. How can you find out more about it?
- c. What problems might you have in finding out more about it?

This homework forms the basis of Compass Lesson 5 so make sure to bring your notes and research with you. Try to look at more than one source, not just Wikipedia!