

Pre-Intermediate – Work with others in a team

Aim: to help students learn what makes a good leader and to work well in a team

Lead-in: Elicit from students which sports they consider to be typical team sports and write them on the board. Ask students to suggest what happens when the team members don't work well together: they lose the game, don't play very well, the other team members get angry, people think something is wrong.

Now get students to suggest some individual sports where there are also teams and elicit who might be members of these teams: players, athletes, coach, gym physiotherapist, etc. Give them the example of the Olympics and all the other people who support the competitors.

Put students in pairs and get them to think of other situations (apart from sport) in which they have to work as a team. Point out that a team can be anything from two people upwards and it can be when they do school work, play board games, or computer games, or in social situations. Students might suggest some or all of the following: project work, playing board games, organising excursions or special events.

Explain to students that you are going to write some sentences on the board which describe working in a team. Encourage students to judge whether the sentences describe team work in a positive way (P), a negative way (N) or both (B). Ask students to write down their own classification first. Then elicit answers from the class, write them on the board and discuss them.

In a team, you:

- share the work.
- discuss ideas.
- are always the leader.
- have to listen to other people.
- feel more confident.
- can't work alone.

- have to decide together.
- have to show respect.
- can create competition.
- must trust the other members of the team.
- can ask for help

After the discussion, put students in pairs and encourage them to think of one more positive aspect of working in a team.

Choose A Scenario: Ask students to work in groups of four or five. They should choose one of the three scenarios A–C and try to create a strong team.

First, encourage students to discuss what they need to do and what team members are needed. Then, they should decide what they can do well. Lastly, they should give a role or a job to each team member.

Draw students' attention to the kind of language they can use for each stage of their discussion:

- I think the team needs a ...
- What can you do well? ... I can
- Somebody can be/start/make ... I can ...
Who can ... ?

Refer students to the Reflection point.

Reflection Point: Remind students that for a team to work well, you have to make decisions together. Also everybody must try to do their job. Make clear that it doesn't matter if one person seems to be leading because the leader is a bit like a guide. Point out that it's important for everybody to listen to their teammates and also to share their own thoughts and ideas. This is the way to make good team decisions together.

Class discussion: Put groups together who chose the same scenario. Get them to compare how their team worked: What jobs does everyone in their team have? What can they do well? What can they do better in future? Find out from students if they were pleased with the way their team worked.

Discuss the following questions with the class:

- Is having a team leader a good thing? Why (not)?
- How does a leader help?
- Is it fun to work in a team? Why (not)?
- What things can you do in your team that you can't do alone?

For example, students who are good at maths can help with school work in exchange for tennis lessons from students who are good at tennis.

Get students to try this for a week and report back in the following lesson about how it affected their daily lives.

Work alone: Ask students to choose a second scenario from A–C and approach it on their own. Point out to them that this time they should imagine they are working with the group they worked with in the last part of the lesson. Explain that they should follow the steps they followed in section 2 but they should make the decisions alone. They should still assign each team member a job (*Martinos can make the food; Conchi can be the tennis player; Fran can be the trainer; Magda can organise Conchi's matches; etc.*)

When students have finished the task, group them with their former team members and ask them to compare what they did. Ask: Are your decisions and jobs the same?

Invite an example group for each scenario to present their team to the class, explaining what each person can do.

Extension: Encourage students to think of ways in which creating a team of helpers could make life easier for:

- a) giving fashion and styling advice
- b) helping with homework or school work
- c) improving sports skills
- d) helping with IT problems

Suggest students form a 'helpers' club for support in some of these areas. Encourage students to decide on something they know they can do well and how they can help another group of students.