

<i>900 exercises for Vocational Communication</i>	Notes for teachers	E2 / 31
<i>General aim</i>	E: Evaluate a message	
<i>Level of difficulty</i>	2	
<i>Intermediate aim</i>	3: Distinguish a plan of argumentation in a message	
<i>Operational aim</i>	1: Find the arguments, list them, organise them, classify them and put them into order of importance (from a simple message).	
<i>Pre-requirements</i>	None	
<i>Number of exercises</i>	5	
<i>Summing-up exercise</i>	E2-31/1.5	
<i>Applications (examples)</i>		
<i>Comments</i>	These exercises can be done as role-play. As an extension, the students can imagine and role-play the follow-up to the dialogues.	

A slight misunderstanding

The situation as seen by Vivian Saunders

You are very pleased to have settled this problem with Madeleine Heysham. Yesterday evening you had a short talk, and you both managed to explain your points of view openly and honestly. She understood that you were not to blame for her present problems.

The whole misunderstanding came about because you were in the boss's office when he scolded her for her negligence. But you were completely unconnected with it all. It had nothing to do with you. You left the office at the beginning of their argument.

Then again, if she were a little bit more conscientious in her work, it would be better for everyone. What's more, she can be really nasty. And she doesn't get on with many people. So for the last two months, ever since the problem began, she's been making life unpleasant for you.

It's a good thing it's over, as you are beginning to get rather annoyed.

Ah, here she is. She's coming into the office. For once, she looks as if she's in a good mood. You intend to take advantage of the fact to ask her a small favour: You're on duty next Saturday and you really can't make it. Might it be possible for her to replace you?

Go to the next page.

The situation as seen by Madeleine Heysham

What with your son sulking because of this stupid moped, your absent husband, your car in the garage and your father, the poor old man, not getting any better, as is quite normal for his age, especially as he lives on his own... Life feels just a little difficult at times.

And then the boss keeps going on about this file you lost. If that Vivian Saunders had kept her cool instead of making such a fuss, things would have calmed down. If anyone ever manages to shut her up, it'll be a miracle.

So now she's always trying to get into your good books. Yesterday she kept you hanging on for three quarters of an hour knocking all the other people in the office. Just to show she's on your side, no doubt.

Anyway, with any luck it will all pass over. And it's nearly the weekend.

This morning, when you get to the office, you meet Vivian with her sad little smile. Surely she's not going to start it all over again? She's a real pain in the neck.

Go to the next page.

It is obvious that there's a problem between the two women. They have different views. And they think the other one understands perfectly.

What are the contradictory opinions in the text about the two women?

Try to make a list. Fill in the table below.

Arguments for Mrs Saunders	Arguments for Mrs Heysham
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

It is obvious that there's a problem between the two women. They have different views. And they think the other one understands perfectly.

What are the contradictory opinions in the text about the two women?

Try to make a list. Fill in the table below.

Arguments for Mrs Saunders	Arguments for Mrs Heysham
- She had nothing to do with the boss telling off Mrs Heysham	- She has problems with her family
- She thinks Mrs Heysham can be difficult to get on with	- The boss is stressing her out
- She needs to ask her a favour, so she'd better make an effort to get on with her	- She suspects that Mrs Saunders is trying to suck up to her. So she's a bit fed up with her.
-	- She's tired and is looking forward to the weekend
-	-

Johnson is being laid off

The situation as seen by the delegate.

The board governing the local crèche is planning to lay off the caretaker.

You work for the local authority and you represent the employees. You know that Johnson is over 53 years old. If he loses his job, he will probably not be able to find another one. He'll be on the dole until retirement age.

He has a wife and children at home. He also has grandchildren to look after, as his children are unemployed. Just the idea of his being laid off has made his wife ill. She cries all the time and doesn't even look after the house any more.

What's more, Johnson lives on the crèche premises. So he will lose his flat at the same time as his job. So he'll have that to worry about too.

Basically, it is out of the question to lay him off. You have decided to tell the director of the crèche.

The situation as seen by the director

You work for the local authority as director of the crèche. You will probably have to lay off Mr. Johnson, who has been the caretaker for the last 7 years.

This year, grants have been cut in half. The association is overdrawn, and the bank is refusing payments. The local authority refuses to increase the costs paid by the parents.

Costs must be cut. It's impossible to reduce the number of childcare workers. Apart from the caretaker, all the other jobs are done by volunteer workers. Even you are a volunteer. You have had enough! If the association hadn't insisted, you would have resigned too.

The caretaker doesn't exactly prevent any break-ins or thefts. So laying him off won't disturb the running of the crèche.

You realise that at his age, Johnson won't be able to find another job. What's more, he lives in a flat on the premises, and has a large family, including grandchildren.

You would have liked to lay off someone younger, but that's not possible. All the other employees are carers. In fact, another childcare nurse will have to be hired. There are more children arriving in the crèche.

It's 6pm. You are about to leave to pick up your little girl – from her crèche!

Your office door opens. It's Mr and Mrs Johnson and the employees' representative...

What are the contradictory opinions in the text about laying off Mr Johnson?

Fill in the table below.

Arguments for laying off Johnson	Arguments against laying off Johnson
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-
-	-

<i>900 exercises for Vocational Communication</i>	Suggested answer	E2 / 31 – 1.2
		Eval.:

What are the contradictory opinions in the text about laying off Mr Johnson?

Fill in the table below.

Arguments for laying off Johnson	Arguments against laying off Johnson
- They must reduce costs	- He's been at the crèche for 7 years
- His job doesn't seem very important	- He'll find it difficult to get another job
- He seems to be the only one possible	- If he loses this job he'll lose his home
-	- He has a lot of dependents
-	-
-	-
-	-

Three people are talking while waiting at the bus stop. Read the discussion, then write down the opinions of each of the three people.

Usman: Hey, for my birthday, my grandparents are paying for me to have driving lessons.

Phil: Oh wow! That's amazing. You're so lucky. Your grandparents must be really nice. Driving lessons are expensive.

Elaine: Lucky? Are you joking? Not my kind of present!

Usman: Wait a minute. Do you realise how much they cost? Presents like that, I'll take any day!

Phil: Me too. I'm going to have to work all summer to pay for my driving lessons.

Elaine: Yeah, but what you two don't seem to realise is that the lessons cost nothing compared to all the rest.

Usman and Phil: What do you mean, all the rest?

Elaine: All the rest! I mean there's the car to pay for, the insurance, petrol, not to mention parking the thing! Do you realise, you even have to pay when you're not using it!

Phil: Yeah, and repairs, road tax, that sort of thing. I hadn't thought.

Elaine: And parking fines. If you go wrong, they'll make you pay for it.

Usman: Nah, you only see the negative side of things. At the moment, I have to get up at six to start at nine. If I had a car, I could sleep an extra hour every day. And I could do without the twenty minute run to get the connection. As for when it rains...

Phil: When it rains traffic is awful. You can't move.

Elaine: Yes, that's true. Public transport isn't great either. You have to get to the station, wait for the train, and it doesn't always take you where you want to go.

Usman: And think how great it would be to drive your own car, to go exactly where you want, when you want. Fantastic.

Phil: Yeah, you're right. Especially in the country. But even so, it's expensive. The price of a small car is about what a factory worker earns in a whole year, without buying anything else.

Elaine: And think of the cost of looking after a car.

Usman: OK, it's a lot of money, but you think like that because you live in a town. Where I live, there are no shops, and the nearest supermarket is three miles away. Shopping for a family is no joke.

Phil: Yes, trains or buses are difficult if you've got kids or luggage. But it's less expensive and less dangerous.

Elaine: And if you take the bus, you can have really interesting conversations with your best mates!

Usman: Yeah, sure. Just remind me when it's pouring with rain and I pick you up in my car!

Go to the next page.

Here you have three people discussing driving lessons.

List their arguments. Try to find the most important each time.

Usman's opinion	Elaine's opinion	Phil's opinion
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

Here you have three people discussing driving lessons.

List their arguments. Try to find the most important each time.

Usman's opinion	Elaine's opinion	Phil's opinion
- He thinks driving lessons are great.	- She thinks that driving lessons are the beginning of all your problems.	- He agrees with Usman that driving lessons are a great present.
- Driving a car saves time, so he'd have more time to sleep in the mornings.	- She sees the cost of owning and running a car.	- But he also agrees with Elaine that repairs and insurance would be expensive.
- He thinks that sometimes, and in certain places, a car is a necessity rather than a luxury.	- She's also concerned about the fines you might have to pay.	- He's not too keen on public transport, as it's not very convenient.
-	- She also sees the disadvantages of traffic jams.	-
-	- She prefers public transport.	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

He's leaving home

Mum, Dad and Gary are in the kitchen.

Gary: Mum, Dad, I've got something to tell you. I want to leave home. I want to live on my own.

Mum: What? Why? You can't do that!

Dad: Where will you go? What will you live on? We can't afford to pay your rent. And you certainly can't.

Gary: I'll find something. I can move in with a few mates. We can share the rent.

Mum: What mates? Where?

Gary: Just a few friends from college. We're doing our work experience in the same company.

Dad: Why this sudden decision?

Gary: It's not sudden. I've been thinking it over for a long time.

Mum: What's wrong with living here? Don't you love us any more?

Gary: 'Course I do. It's nothing to do with that. I just need some independence. I want to come and go as I please. And play my music as loud as I want.

Dad: Well, you can't do that if you share. And if you live in a flat.

Mum: And you don't know how to cook, or use a washing machine. How will you manage?

Gary: That's because you never taught me!

Mum: What? You rely on me to do all that! You've never even offered to help.

Dad: Yes, and you come and go as you please. You treat this place like a hotel. We never know if you're going to be home or not. And when you are here, you're always up in your room, sleeping or listening to music.

Gary: Well that's because you're always getting at me. About my room, my music, my friends, my dirty washing. Can't you hear what I'm saying? I need my independence!!

Dad: So that's all the thanks we get for looking after you all these years.

Mum: What will you eat? Rubbish? Fast food all the time? It's so unhealthy! You'll get ill.

Dad: And then you'll come running back home.

Gary: No I won't. I'll manage by myself. You have no faith in me, do you? Well, I'm not your little boy any more. I'm eighteen years old. I'm leaving!

Mum: Please don't go! Don't leave me, Gary!

Go to the next page.

Here you have a family discussing their son's future.

List their arguments. Try to find the most important each time.

Gary's opinion	Mum's opinion	Dad's opinion
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

Who do you agree with? Is 18 too young to live away from your parents? Tell the other people in the group how you feel.

Here you have a family discussing their son's future.

List their opinions or arguments. Try to find the most important each time.

Gary's opinion	Mum's opinion	Dad's opinion
- He wants to leave home to be independent.	- She doesn't want her son to leave home.	- He thinks Gary won't be able to afford to live alone.
- He feels his parents are always on at him.	- She's worried Gary doesn't love her any more.	- He's angry with Gary for treating the house like a hotel and never helping his mother.
- He thinks he's old enough to live by himself.	- She doesn't think he can look after himself.	- He doesn't trust his son to be able to manage by himself.
- He wants to be able to do what he wants when he wants.	- She's sad as well as worried.	-
-	-	-
-	-	-
-	-	-

Plump, cuddly, chubby, tubby, corpulent or just plain overweight!

On the bus. A fat woman has just got up to get off. People have to move to let her pass.

Rashid – Did you see that? She took up two seats! How can you let yourself get so fat?

Kirsty – Do you really think she’s happy like that? It’s probably not her fault, you know.

Adrian – Well, she should take some exercise, go for a walk from time to time. If she walked everywhere it would leave some room on the bus.

Rashid – Yeah, and eat more vegetables. Lettuce, for example! With no dressing!

Kirsty – That’s horrible!

Adrian – Exactly. Then she’d eat less. Come on, fat people take up space. They’re always ill, they waste the taxpayer’s money, with the National Health bills. And now we have to feel sorry for them?

Ed – I know an overweight person who’s tried everything to lose weight. Diets, exercise, the lot. But nothing works.

Adrian – Rubbish! During the war, no one was fat. My grandmother told me. In Africa people aren’t fat.

Kirsty – Oh right, so the solution is to starve to death!

Rashid – Fat people aren’t fashionable. In catalogues, in films, you don’t see fat people. Only skinny models. Except on the swimsuit pages!!

Adrian – Yeah, and underwear!

They nudge each other and laugh.

Kirsty, shrugging her shoulders – Anyway, if you’re fat or skinny, it’s really difficult to change. Last year my mother went on a diet so she could get into a dress she liked. She lost a bit of weight, but she was always grumpy. Now she’s put the weight back on, but she’s back to her normal happy self. She’s more fun, and so is Dad.

Ed – Anyway, these days, if you’re skinny, people wonder if you’ve got AIDS.

Adrian – You’re right. Hey everyone, ice cream and coke all round!

Here you have four people discussing overweight people.

List their arguments. Try to find the most important one each time.

Rashid's opinion	Kirsty's opinion	Adrian's opinion	Ed's opinion
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-

Which opinions do you agree with? Which do you disagree with? Discuss with your teacher or with the group.