

Meetings 4: agreement and disagreement

A

Discussion without argument?

Hilary Rhodes is talking about the importance of keeping calm in meetings:

'In a meeting, you **discuss** things. In the **discussion**, some people may **agree** with you. Others may **disagree**. They may have **differences of opinion** with you, but the important thing is to **keep calm** and remain **courteous**. It's OK to disagree, but it's not OK to be **impolite** or **rude** or to **lose your temper**.

An **argument** is when people disagree about something, perhaps becoming **angry**. **Your argument** is also the set of ideas that you use to **prove your point**: to show that what you are saying is true.'

Note: Agree and disagree are verbs (e.g. I agree with you, She disagrees with him, etc.). You cannot say ~~I am agree with you, She is disagree with him, etc.~~

B

Agreeing

Strong agreement:

- a **You're perfectly right**. The costs involved must be incredible.
- b **I couldn't agree more**. We got our latest recruits after we won the industry award for best advertisement.
- c **Precisely**. Creativity comes to some of our people in the middle of the night.
- d **Exactly**. We have to look at the company as one unit.
- e **Absolutely**. It's the output, not the input, that counts.

Mild agreement:

- f **You may be right there**. We're already ten per cent over budget.
- g **That's true, I suppose**. There must be some limits on when they work.
- h **I suppose so**. They seem to arrive and then go straight out again to eat.

C

Disagreeing

Mild disagreement:

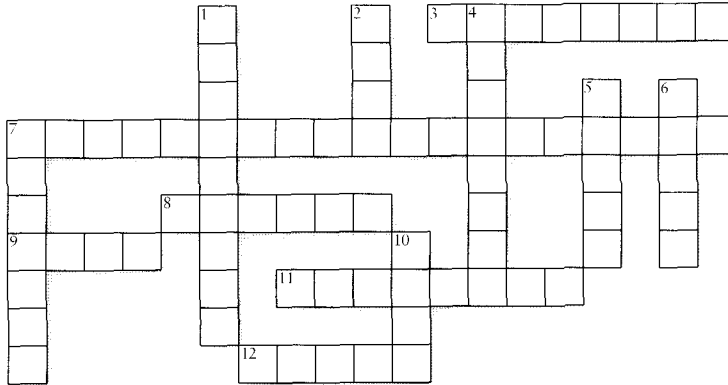
- a **That's not really how I see it**. Everyone should be allowed to work in the way that's best for them.
- b **I don't really agree**. The prizes are important, but people would come to work for us anyway.
- c **I can't really go along with you there**. I think we need to see people at their desks actually working.
- d **I think you're mistaken**. If the designers get to work late, they don't go out for lunch.
- e **I'm afraid I can't agree with you there**. All you financial people do is worry about costs.

Strong disagreement:

- f **I'm sorry, but that's out of the question**. You can't expect people to go home at ten and come back at nine in the morning.
- g **I think you're wrong**. The design department's costs are justified because of our high quality work. The costs of the other departments are not justified.
- h **Of course not**. The latest figures I've seen show that the project is within budget.
- i **That's absurd**. There must be some sort of control on when people work.
- j **That's ridiculous**. Each department has very specific needs.

Note: Be careful with **That's absurd** and **That's ridiculous**. These expressions are very strong and can be offensive.

57.1 Complete the crossword using the correct form of words from A opposite.



Across

- 3 The opposite of 'agree'. (8)
- 7 What you have if you do not agree with someone. (10,2,7)
- 8 See 2 down.
- 9 Whatever you do, keep (4)
- 11 When people disagree, they have an (8)
- 12 and 6 down If you want to show you are right, you try to your (5,5)


Down

- 1 If you are pleasant and unaggressive, you are (9)
- 2 and 8 across If you become angry, you your (4,6)
- 4 The opposite of 'polite'. (8)
- 5 The noun corresponding to 'angry'. (5)
- 6 See 12 across.
- 7 If you talk about something, you it. (7)
- 10 Another word for 4 down. (4)

57.2 Match each statement (1–8) to an appropriate reaction (a–h) from B opposite.

- 1 And another thing: you should be looking at what we produce, not at the time of day we produce it.
- 2 Apart from that, if you try to control our working time, we'll lose our creativity.
- 3 Besides that, the prizes help us to attract and keep the best designers.
- 4 Even so, I agree that some limits should be set, even if my designers are very different from the accounts people.
- 5 Not only do we have these very high costs, but it also sets a very bad example to the other departments and they start going over budget too.
- 6 On the one hand, we have to think of the needs of each department. On the other hand, we have to think of the company as a whole.
- 7 In addition, our biggest current project looks as though it will be over budget too.
- 8 What's more, they leave for lunch two hours later.

57.3 Now match the statements (1–8) above with the reactions (a–j) in C opposite.

Over to you 

What are you like in meetings? Do you often disagree with other people? Or do you prefer to avoid arguments?