

Exercise walk-through

Opinions, attitudes and connections ■ 9.2

eXercise

You must be able to

- identify a speaker's opinion and distinguish it from a fact they report
- hear agreement and disagreement between two speakers
- follow a speaker who changes their mind

Method — Fact or opinion

“The new timetable adds twenty minutes to the day. Personally, I think that’s twenty minutes too many.”

The first sentence is a fact; the second is the opinion. A question asking what the speaker **thinks** must be answered from the second.

Method — Signals of attitude

- **Enthusiasm:** *absolutely, definitely, I'd jump at it*
- **Doubt:** *I suppose, in theory, up to a point, we'll see*
- **Disagreement, politely:** *I take your point, but... / That's true, although... / I'm not so sure*
- **Reluctant agreement:** *I suppose so, if we have to*

Note that *I take your point, but* is a **disagreement**. Students often hear the first half and record agreement.

Method — Changing position

“At first I thought it was a waste of money. Having seen it in use, though, I’ve changed my mind completely.”

If a question asks the speaker’s opinion, it wants the **final** position. Listen for *though*, *however*, *having said that*, *actually*, *in the end*.

Practice 2.1 ■ 1 mark

What is Ben's opinion at the start?

Solution 2.1

Worked steps

He thinks the cameras are a good thing, because of last year's bag thefts **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Does Amina agree with him? Quote the words that show it.

Solution 2.2

Worked steps

No, she does not fully agree **B1**. “I take your point about the thefts. I’m just not sure a camera stops anything” — the phrase “I take your point, but” concedes before disagreeing **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

How does Ben's position change, and which words show the change?

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

He becomes less certain **B1**; the words “That’s fair. I suppose I was assuming... and I don’t actually know that they do” show him giving up the assumption his opinion rested on **B1**.

Practice 2.4 ■ 1 mark

What does Amina think the money should be spent on?

Solution 2.4

Worked steps

Lockers **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 4 marks

For each phrase, say whether it signals agreement, disagreement or doubt.

- (a) “I take your point, but...”
- (b) “Absolutely — I’d jump at it.”
- (c) “In theory, I suppose.”
- (d) “That’s fair.”

Solution 3.1

Method: Signals of attitude

Worked steps

(a) disagreement **B1**. (b) agreement / enthusiasm **B1**. (c) doubt **B1**. (d) agreement, or at least concession **B1**.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 2 marks

A student answers “Ben thinks cameras are a good thing” to a question asking for Ben’s opinion at the end of the conversation. Explain why this is wrong.

Solution 3.2

Method: Fact or opinion

Worked steps

That was his opinion at the START **B1**. By the end he has accepted Amina's objection and admits he does not know whether cameras deter anything, so his final position is uncertain rather than positive — and a question about the end of a conversation wants the final position **B1**.