

## Improving education brainstorming phrases practice

### Brainstorming phrases and practice/ Education vocabulary and speaking

*In pairs or small groups, quickly choose one way in which education in your country could be improved and then prepare to justify your choice using the stages below.*

#### Stage 1 – Brainstorming

*Brainstorm reasons why the thing you have chosen might be the best way to improve education in your country.*

##### Useful phrases for brainstorming (initial) ideas

“Any more ideas?”

“I think we need three or four more”

“Let’s just get all our ideas down and discuss them later”

“That’s probably not true, but let’s write it down anyway”

#### Stage 2 – Organisation

*Try to group your ideas from above together, adding any more ideas that come up as you are doing so*

##### Useful phrases for organising your ideas

“I think these two are related.”

“These are both/ all kinds of...”

“Another example of that is...”

#### Stage 3 – Choose the best ideas/ Edit the ideas down

##### Useful phrases for editing down your ideas

“This one is a bit weak.”

“This one doesn’t fit in anywhere.”

#### Stage 4 - Add support

##### Useful phrases for adding support to your ideas

“An example of this is...”

“This is true/ important because...”

“We can support this one by saying...”

“Someone once said...”

#### Stage 5 - Anticipate the other side’s counterarguments

##### Useful phrases for preparing counterarguments

“They might say..., but we can argue that...”

*Change groups. Try to persuade your new partner(s) that the way of improving education that you choose would be more effective than their idea(s).*

*Without looking back at the previous page, brainstorm phrases to do these things when you brainstorming together in groups:*

**Brainstorming/ Asking for ideas**

**Organising the ideas/ Putting the ideas into order/ Putting the ideas into categories**

**Editing down the ideas/ Choosing the best ideas/ Getting rid of weak ideas**

**Adding support for your ideas**

**Anticipating the other side's counterarguments**

*Look above, then brainstorm more.*

*Compare your extra phrases as a class or with the suggested answers.*

## **Suggested answers**

### **Asking for ideas**

- “Do you have any more ideas (at all)?”
- “I think we need a couple more”
- “Let’s just write all our ideas down and discuss them later”
- “That’s probably not true, but let’s write it down anyway”
- “What about...?”
- “Can we write anything else here/ in this category?”

### **Organising the ideas/ Putting the ideas into order/ Putting the ideas into categories**

- “I think these two are related to each other/ linked by...”
- “These are both/ all kinds of...”
- “Another example of this is...”
- “We can put these together because...”
- “These are similar in terms of...”

### **Editing down the ideas/ Choosing the best ideas/ Getting rid of weak ideas**

- “This one doesn’t seem to link to any of the others”
- “This one isn’t very convincing”
- “This one doesn’t fit in with any of the others”
- “These two are too similar”
- “I think this is true, but I can’t explain why”
- “Can I cross this one off?”
- “I think we can eliminate this one because...”

### **Adding support for your ideas**

- “A good example of this is...”
- “This is true/ important because...”
- “We can support this one by saying...”
- “The best argument for this is...”
- “The proof for this is...”
- “If they are not convinced, we can say that...”
- “I read/ saw something about this which said...”

### **Anticipating the other side’s counterarguments**

- “They might say..., but we can argue that...”
- “If I was them, I’d say...”
- “If they say..., we can argue that...”
- “If they argue that..., the best counterargument is...”
- “If they notice the weakness in this argument, we can say...”

### Brainstorming ideas tasks

Choose at least one of the topics below and brainstorm ideas using language like that above

- Reasons why education should be free/ shouldn't be free
- Ways to improve English language education in schools
- Advantages and disadvantages of a gap year
- Advantages and disadvantages of starting English lessons very young
- Strengths and weaknesses of the education system in your country
- Ways educational institutions could respond to a falling birth-rate
- Things would should be taught (more) in schools
- Advantages and disadvantages of giving school children more choice
- Advantages and disadvantages of also having interviews to enter university
- Ways of stopping truancy/ students skipping school
- Ways of revising English vocabulary
- Advantages and disadvantages of living at home during university
- Advantages and disadvantages of co-ed (=coeducational/ mixed sex) schools
- Suitable punishments for school children
- Ways of really testing English ability
- Advantages and disadvantages of continuous assessment

### Brainstorming language tasks

Use similar phrases to help brainstorm vocabulary into the following categories. You will get one point for each correct word or phrase that isn't in the answer key.

Educational institutions

Qualifications

Punishments

Rooms and buildings

Things connected to money

People

Collocations with "test" and "exam"

Things which are different in British and American English (including because the educational systems are different)

Abbreviations (= short forms) of education vocabulary

Opposites

Words which have similar but different meanings

## **Suggested answers**

### **Educational institutions**

cram school, primary school, kindergarten/ nursery/ pre-school/ playschool, uni, grad school, (technical/ vocational/ junior/ two year/ 6<sup>th</sup> form) college

### **Qualifications**

school leaving certificate, BA/ BSc/ bachelor's degree/ first degree/ four year degree/ university degree/ undergraduate degree, junior college degree/ two year degree, master's degree/ master's/ MA/ MSc/ MPhil/ MBA, postgraduate degree, PhD/ doctorate, post-doc,

### **Punishments**

lines, detention, physical punishment/ corporal punishment (e.g. caning), extra homework

### **Rooms and buildings**

cafeteria, lab(oratory), students' union, dorm/ student halls

### **Things connected to money**

grant, scholarship, fees, living expenses

### **People**

pupil, professor, lecturer, lab assistant, student, mature student, postgrad student

### **Collocations with “test” and “exam”**

take, retake, fail/ flunk, pass with flying colours, scrape through, entrance, end of term, final, open book, multiple choice, national, school leaving, essay-based, oral

### **Different in British/ American English**

secondary school/ junior high school, grad school, term/ semester, revise/ review, junior/ second year student, sophomore – third/ final year student, senior, three year degree/ four year degree, fresher/ freshman, Oxbridge/ Ivy league, redbrick universities, the meaning of public school

### **Abbreviations**

BA, BSc, MA, MSc, MBA, PhD, post-doc, SAT, uni, finals, co-ed, PTA, Oxbridge, lab, postgrad, dorm, grad school

### **Opposites**

pass – fail, undergraduate – postgraduate, attend – skip, major – minor, co-ed – single sex, fresher/ first year student/ freshman – final year student/ senior

### **Words which have similar but different meanings**

pupil/ student, quiz/ test/ exam, essay/ dissertation, university/ college, freshman/ new recruit, lecture/ lesson, lecturer/ professor, grant/ scholarship, certificate/ qualification, academic year/ calendar year, hearing test/ listening test, BA/ BSc

*What are the differences between the things in the last category above?*

*What do the abbreviations mean/ stand for?*