

Cambridge English for  
**Scientists**

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

**UNIT 10** Question  
and answer sessions

- 1 a** You are going to practise useful phrases for question-and-answer sessions following a talk or for during a poster presentation. In pairs, decide whether you think the following statements are true (T) or false (F) for you.
- 1 University students and junior researchers should not ask questions to professors or more senior researchers in your field.
  - 2 A speaker does not have to answer every question he/she is asked.
  - 3 We usually use more informal language during the question-and-answer session of a poster presentation.
  - 4 We usually use more informal language in the question-and-answer session following the presentation of research.
- b** Your teacher is going to give you twelve useful phrases. In pairs, read the phrases and decide what the function for each one might be. Try to identify six different functions (there should be two phrases for each one). For example, which phrases could be used to invite an audience to ask you questions?
- c** Your teacher is going to suggest six functions for the phrases. Match two phrases with each function.
- d** Work in pairs. Practise saying the phrases. Then use the cards to test each other.
- 2 a** Role play the following question-and-answer situations. Try to use the phrases you have learnt in Exercise 1d.

**Situation 1: A poster presentation**

Work in groups of 2 or 3

**Student A:** Summarise some research you are working on, or some research that you know well. Then invite Student B to ask you questions.

**Student B and C:** Ask Student A to give you more details about his/her research.

**Situation 2: A research presentation**

The whole class should work together.

**Student A:** Summarise some research you are working on, or some research that you know well. Then invite the audience to ask you questions.

**Audience:** Ask Student A to give you more details about his/her research.

- b** Make a record of the phrases you learned in Exercise 1d. Your teacher will give you a worksheet to complete.

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**UNIT 10** Teacher's Notes*Notes begin on page 36.***Phrase and function cards**

Put another way, this means <i>that we may have a real result</i> .	If there are any questions, I would be pleased to answer them.
Hi! Did you have any questions for me?	I hope that answers your question.
Does that answer your question?	Perhaps I should rephrase that.
Sorry, was your question about <i>the method we used</i> ?	That's an interesting question.
I'm glad you asked me that.	Sorry, are you asking about <i>what method we used</i> ?
Sorry, I'm not the best person to answer that.	I'm afraid the research didn't look into that.
<b>giving an opportunity to ask questions</b>	<b>acknowledging a person's question</b>
<b>checking that you understood the question</b>	<b>clarifying something you have said</b>
<b>checking that you have answered the question</b>	<b>showing that you are unable to answer a question</b>

## Worksheet

### giving an opportunity to ask questions

If there are any questions, I would be \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ them.

Hi! \_\_\_\_\_ you have any \_\_\_\_\_ for me?

### acknowledging a person's question

\_\_\_\_\_ 's \_\_\_\_\_ interesting question.

I'm \_\_\_\_\_ you asked me \_\_\_\_\_.

### checking that you understood the question

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ you asking \_\_\_\_\_ *what method we used?*

Sorry, \_\_\_\_\_ your question \_\_\_\_\_ *the method we used?*

### clarifying something you have said

Perhaps I should \_\_\_\_\_ that.

\_\_\_\_\_ another \_\_\_\_\_, this means *that we may have a real result.*

### checking that you have answered the question

\_\_\_\_\_ that answer \_\_\_\_\_ question?

I \_\_\_\_\_ that answers \_\_\_\_\_ question.

### showing that you are unable to answer a question

\_\_\_\_\_, I'm not \_\_\_\_\_ best person \_\_\_\_\_ answer \_\_\_\_\_.

I' \_\_\_\_\_ afraid \_\_\_\_\_ research didn't look \_\_\_\_\_ that.

### Before you begin ...

You will need to photocopy and cut out a set of cards for each pair of students and one worksheet for each student in the class (see below).

You may find it useful to make an enlarged copy of the set of word cards before you cut them up. This avoids the problem of having (or losing!) too many 'fiddly' bits of paper. You may also find it useful to laminate the cards for future use on other courses (by yourself or your colleagues).

- 1 a Students discuss the four statements. Make it clear that there are no absolutely right or wrong answers and that the statements may be true or false in their opinion.

### Suggested answers



- 1 F – though note that in some cultures, students or more junior scientists may feel uncomfortable about asking questions (especially critical questions) of professors or other more senior staff
- 2 T – there is usually a time limit to all sessions (though further questions could be followed up by email)
- 3 T – this tends to be true as the conversation is face-to-face rather than a formal presentation. English-speakers tend to be more informal in personal situations (e.g. *Hi!* is acceptable and more usual than *Good day!*)
- 4 F – although this depends on speaker preference, answers to questions following talks tend to be more formal because even though the question may have come from one individual, the answer is usually given to the whole audience. However, the speaker's acknowledgement of the question (e.g. *That's a great question!*) and confirmation that the question has been answered (e.g. *Does that answer your question?*) may be more informal, as these statements are addressed personally to the questioner.

- b** Students work in pairs. Give each pair of students a cut out set of phrase cards (the cards in white, not the cards in grey). Make sure that you ask one student in each pair to shuffle the cards thoroughly *before* they begin the activity (you don't want the students to find that the cards are already grouped into a useful set). Students try to identify six functional categories for the phrases. Italics indicate parts of the phrase that would need to change depending on the context in which they are used.

You could also ask students to say if any of the phrases seem more formal (Put another way, this means *that we may have a real result.*) or more informal (Hi! Did you have any questions for me?).

- c** Distribute the functional category cards (the grey cards) to each pair of students. Note that this activity may not take long if they successfully managed to identify the correct pairs in Exercise 1b.
- d** Ask students to lay out each pair of phrases on a flat surface under the correct category headings (if they have not already done so). For example:

acknowledging a person's question

That's an interesting question

I'm glad you asked me that.

Give students 2–3 minutes to try to memorise as many of the phrases as they can.

Then ask one student in each pair to pick up 4 or 5 of the white phrase cards at random and then hold them so that the other student cannot see. The other student then tries to remember the missing phrases. For each phrase they remember correctly, one phrase card is replaced on the flat surface in the correct place. Students then change roles.

- 2 a** Students role play one or both of the situations. Encourage them to use the phrases they have been practising during the role play.
- b** Make sure you collect up all the cards from the students before handing out the worksheet. Students then complete the gaps in the phrases on the worksheet from memory. Feed back the answers with the whole class.

#### Answers

See white phrase cards

