Coming to agreements.

1) Choose words from list below to fit into each sentence. Only one final solution should be attempted. Note: these sentences are useful for email or oral debate.

concerned / much / with / couldn't / reached / How / to / fully / what / agreed / agree / As / terms / differ / issues

a) I (1.) agree with you more about the hopelessness of this situation.

b) I know exactly (2.) you mean when you say Mr. Jones is a difficult client.

c) As far as I'm (3.), that's fine.

d) Don't you (4.) that we need to increase our market share?

e) Do you agree (5.) the purchase conditions we discussed last week?

f) (6.) you'll agree, our position is not sustainable at the moment.

g) At least we agree on the main (7.).

h) I'm not sure if I agree (8.) you when you say relocating the plant would be a good idea.

i) Let's agree to (9.) on this, shall we?

j) As (10.) as I agree with you about reducing costs, we cannot allow the sale of shoddy goods.

k) (11.) far would you agree with the statement that we need to ban smoking in the parking area?

l) Once we agree (12.), we can begin to go ahead with the project.

m) We have (13.) to meet in the hotel reception area at 10am.

n) I (14.) agree with you on the matter of salaries.

o) I'm happy that we have (15.) an agreement on this issue.

2) Analysis. General questions and activities for discussion and practice.

a) Meanings. Look at the sentences again. Which sentences express total agreement. Discuss your answers.

b) Look at sentences e), g) and k). We see the use of "agree to", "agree on" and "agree with". Is there a difference in meaning? If so, can you decide what the meanings are?

c) Your teacher will now ask you to discuss an issue and come to an agreement.
Teacher’s notes.
(Time for activity: 45 mins approx. Level: intermediate.)

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Correct answers to question 1.

1. couldn't
2. what
3. concerned
4. agree
5. to
6. As
7. issues
8. with
9. differ
10. much
11. How
12. terms
13. agreed
14. fully
15. Reached

Answers to question 2.

a) Students can work in pairs or small groups. Tell them to write down only the sentences where there is complete agreement. Ask groups to report their ideas to the class and discuss any discrepancies between answers and confusing meanings eg. "to agree to differ".

Answers: a), b), c), g), m), n), o).

b) To be done in pairs or groups. This may be a hard question but dealing with prepositions is important (and students may ask you anyway). To "agree to" something is to say yes to something, eg. "they agreed to the proposals" (at least one party said yes to them). To "agree on" something is to share an opinion, eg. "they agreed on that point" (both parties shared the same opinion). To "agree with" something is where your opinions coincide with some statement (also, where figures are the same etc. eg. "my figures agreed with hers"). The prepositions may sometimes be interchangeable but students should see that the meanings are slightly different. Discuss this with the class.

c) The topic is open. Choose one which is close to your students' hearts. Perhaps an issue at their work. Make it simple and not too controversial eg. "Due to corporate cutbacks, employees should pay double the price for the contents of the vending machine." Work in a couple of groups or as a whole class. Elect a chairperson and hold a company-style meeting. Tell students they can individually voice their opinions but have 15 minutes to reach an agreement.

Enjoy your class!