

Activity Type

Grammar and Speaking
Activity: asking and
answering questions,
writing sentences from
prompts

Focus

Third conditional

Aim

To practice writing third
conditional sentences
about hypothetical past
situations.

Preparation

Make one copy of the
role cards for every 14
students.

Also, copy one worksheet
for each pair of students
and cut as indicated.

If there are more than
14 students in the class,
duplicate some cards.

For large classes, have
the students work in
groups.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

30 minutes

Introduction

In this third conditional activity, students find out what happened to their classmates last week and write third conditional sentences about how things could have been different.

Procedure

Give each student a role card and a copy of the worksheet. Tell the students not to show their role cards to anyone.

Ask the students to read their role cards and imagine that this is what happened to them last week. The students then go around finding out what happened to their classmates. After speaking to a classmate, students find out the number on their role card and write a third conditional sentence about how things could have been different next to the corresponding number on the worksheet.

The number of sentences that the students need to write will depend on the number of role cards distributed. When the students have finished, go through each role card and elicit possible third conditional sentences from the students.

Possible answers

1. If ... hadn't lost his/her passport at the airport, he/she would have been able to board the plane and go on holiday.
2. If ... had worn a seatbelt, he/she wouldn't have injured his/her neck in a car accident.
3. If ... had read the bill more carefully at the restaurant, he/she wouldn't have been overcharged.
4. If ... had taken an umbrella, he/she wouldn't have become sick.
5. If ... hadn't had a good idea for a new product, he/she wouldn't have got/gotten promoted.
6. If ... had made an appointment with the dentist, he/she wouldn't have had a terrible toothache.
7. If ... hadn't found \$200 on the street, he/she wouldn't have bought a new mobile phone.
8. If ... had seen the 'No parking' sign, he/she wouldn't have received a parking fine.
9. If ... had taken the bus, he/she would have saved money and arrived at the city centre quicker.
10. If ... hadn't forgotten to water his/her plants, they wouldn't have died.
11. If ... hadn't had a fight, he/she wouldn't have gotten a black eye.
12. If ... hadn't been invited to a party, he/she wouldn't have met his/her favourite actor.
13. If ... hadn't fallen asleep in class, he/she wouldn't have gotten detention.
14. If ... hadn't eaten undercooked chicken, he/she wouldn't have had food poisoning.

If Things Were Different



1. Last week, you lost your passport at the airport and couldn't board the plane to go on holiday.

8. Last week, you parked your car on the high street but didn't see the 'No parking' sign and received a parking fine.

2. Last week, you injured your neck in a car accident because you weren't wearing a seatbelt.

9. Last week, you took a taxi from the airport to the city centre. You found out later that the bus was a lot quicker and cheaper.

3. Last week, you quickly paid the bill at a restaurant and later discovered the restaurant had overcharged you.

10. Last week, you didn't make an appointment with the dentist and later you had a terrible toothache.

4. Last week, you became sick because you didn't take an umbrella when it was raining outside.

11. Last week, you had a fight and got a black eye.

5. Last week, you had a good idea for a new product and got promoted.

12. Last week, you were invited to a party. At the party, you met your favourite actor.

6. Last week, you forgot to water your plants and they died.

13. Last week, you fell asleep in class and got detention.

7. Last week, you found \$200 on the street and bought a new mobile phone.

14. Last week, you ate some undercooked chicken and had food poisoning.

If Things Were Different

1. If had(n't), he/she would (n't)
2. If
3. If
4. If
5. If
6. If
7. If
8. If
9. If
10. If
11. If
12. If
13. If
14. If



1. If had(n't), he/she would (n't)
2. If
3. If
4. If
5. If
6. If
7. If
8. If
9. If
10. If
11. If
12. If
13. If
14. If