

TEACHER'S NOTES

A Very Bad Day
by Lucia Walliams

Skills: Reading and speaking

Grammar focus: Third conditional

Level: Upper intermediate

Age: Teenagers/adults

Time: 60 minutes +

Materials: One copy of the reading text and worksheet per student.

Warmer

Tell students about your day to introduce the topic of good/bad days and to establish the students' interest. Exaggerate either a really good or bad day. Then put the students into pairs and tell them to talk to each other about their days and to say whether they've had a particularly good day or a bad day. Give students two minutes to do this and then get open class feedback from the students about their days.

Procedure

1. Tell students that they are going to read a story from a magazine where a lady called Emma Wyatt talks about a very bad day, but first they are going to look at some difficult words from the text. Hand out the worksheet and tell students to match the four words with the correct definitions. Students do this alone. Monitor and, after a few minutes, tell the students to check their answers in pairs. Go through the correct answers, highlighting the stress and pronunciation of the words.

Answers: a) covering letter; b) escalator; c) puddle; d) bruise

If you have a very strong group of students, you could elicit the words rather than getting them to match the words in exercise 1. For example, try asking *When you apply for a job, what do you write?* to elicit *covering letter*.

2. Tell students to read the questions in exercise 2. Tell them they are going to read the magazine article and mark if the sentences are true or false. Hand out the reading text and monitor while students read the text and complete the task. Get students to check their answers in pairs and then elicit the answers from the students on the board. With *false* answers, get the students to give a reason why they are false.

Answers:

a) *False. She really hated it.*

b) *False. She overslept because she didn't set her alarm.*

c) *True*

d) *False. She took the tube because she thought it would be quicker. She was late, not the bus.*

e) *True*

f) *True*

g) *False. It was a huge truck, not a taxi.*

h) *True.*

3. Write *If I'd set my alarm, I would've been on time.* on the board. Go through the meaning and form of the third conditional with the students, highlighting the negative form and contractions. Point out that *would*, *could* and *might* are interchangeable, but with varying degrees of certainty. At this stage, you may also want to briefly review the first and second conditionals to compare.

<i>Third conditional:</i>	+ve	<i>If I'd set my alarm,</i>	<i>I would've been on time.</i>
		<i>if + past perfect</i>	<i>would/could/might have + past participle</i>
	-ve	<i>If I hadn't set my alarm,</i>	<i>I wouldn't have been on time.</i>
		<i>if + past perfect</i>	<i>would/could/might not have + past participle</i>

NB: Negative and positive clauses can also be mixed:

+ve, -ve *If I'd set my alarm, I wouldn't have been late.*

-ve, +ve *If I hadn't set my alarm, I would've been late.*

4. Highlight the fact that there were lots of other things that went wrong in the story, not just Emma forgetting to set her alarm. Put the students into pairs and tell them to make sentences in the third conditional about what things went wrong and what could have been done to stop them. Students write their sentences in the box provided in exercise 3. Monitor the students, helping out where necessary. Get open class feedback from students.

Answers:

There are many examples of third conditional sentences in the text - see what your students can come up with. Some possible examples are:

If she'd set her alarm, she would've taken the bus.

If she hadn't overslept, she would've remembered to put her shoes on.

If she'd liked her job, she wouldn't have gone to the interview.

If she'd set her alarm, she wouldn't have broken her leg!

5. Put students into groups of three or four and give instructions for exercise 4. Monitor unobtrusively while students are talking and note down examples of good and bad sentences, any pronunciation problems and examples of new vocabulary. Allow at least 15 minutes for this part of the lesson. Conduct open class feedback on the task and go over the examples observed during monitoring.

A VERY BAD DAY

The winner of our competition, **Emma Wyatt from London**, tells us about her bad day...

I'd been looking for a new job for a while, as I really hated my present one. I didn't get on very well with my boss and I found the job really boring, so it was definitely time for a change. I had seen an advert in the local paper for a job that sounded absolutely perfect for me. I had to have it! I spent a long time on my CV and wrote a really convincing covering letter.

You can guess what happened...

On the day of the interview I overslept! I must have forgotten to set my alarm the night before. I jumped out of bed, quickly put some clothes on and rushed out the door but I was never going to make it in time. If only I'd set my alarm, I would've been on time!

I would normally take the bus but, as I was running late, I decided the tube might be quicker. I ran down the escalators and jumped onto the train, just as the doors were

closing. I breathed a sigh of relief – I might just make it after all. After a couple of minutes I noticed that other people on the train were looking at me strangely. Suddenly, I had a dreadful feeling. I looked down at my feet. I still had my slippers on! I must have been in such a rush to leave the house



that I forgot to put my smart black shoes on. This was a disaster! What would the interviewer think of me?

I still really wanted the job so I decided to carry on. I got off the train and rushed outside. It had started to rain and I had forgotten my umbrella. It was only a short walk to my destination but I decided to take a taxi so I wouldn't get too wet. I stood at the edge of the road waiting for a taxi when a huge truck drove past. I had been standing right next to a big puddle and I was now completely covered in dirty water!

I couldn't go to the interview looking like this. I decided to turn back and go home. Feeling very upset, I crossed the road to the tube station. I obviously wasn't looking because the next thing I knew, I was waking up in a hospital bed with lots of cuts and bruises and a broken leg! I wish I'd never got out of bed that morning!

Worksheet

Vocabulary

1. Match the words below with the definitions.

covering letter puddle bruise escalator

- a) You write one of these when you apply for a job. _____
- b) A moving staircase that takes you up and down in a station or a shopping centre. _____
- c) A small pool of water, especially on a road after rain. _____
- d) A mark that you get on your body after you are hit or if you knock against something. _____

Reading

2. Read the sentences and answer *True (T)* or *False (F)* to the questions.

- a) Emma liked her present job.
- b) On the day of the interview, Emma overslept because she was tired.
- c) Emma was just in time to catch her train.
- d) Emma took the tube because the bus was late.
- e) People on the train were staring at Emma.
- f) Emma was worried what the interviewer would think of her.
- g) The taxi drove through a puddle and covered Emma in water.
- h) Emma can't remember anything after crossing the road to go back to the tube station.

3. Make sentences in the third conditional about everything that went wrong in Emma's day.

Example: *If she'd set her alarm, she would've been on time.*

Speaking

4. In your groups, talk about the following:

a) A bad day that you've had in the past. Think about:

- What went wrong and why
- What you could have done to prevent it

b) Any regrets you have.