

Five minutes out

by Claire Treleaven

Teacher's notes

Objective: To present grammatical structures (conditionals, in particular) through reading a short interview.

Skills: Reading and speaking.

Grammar: Conditionals.

Age: Teenagers / adults

Level: Pre-intermediate to intermediate

Materials: A copy of the *Five minutes out* interview and worksheet (for each student or pair of students).

Procedure:

Warmer

Dictate any new vocabulary, for example:

hectic (adj), crumble (vb), nudge (vb), flip out (coll.), modicum (n), nap (n)

Once spelling has been corrected, either give more contextual examples (e.g. *I had a **hectic** weekend! First I went to the gym, then a birthday party, then the next day I went swimming and after that to the cinema.*), or encourage students to use a monolingual dictionary to check meaning and pronunciation. Focus on the part of speech as well as formation of new words. For example, *verb/adj – crumble/crumbly*, as well as asking the students to form new, personalized sentences.

Text

Focus only on the questions and analyze the grammar used. You can do as much as you like in terms of exploiting the variety of grammar presented, or purely focus on conditionals.

Grammar presented for each question number:

1. 2nd conditional – hypothetical situation.
2. *Wish /would + sub. + infinitive*. Annoying habits and desires. (e.g. *I wish he would stop talking*).
3. Present simple – habits.
4. Superlative – *most + long adjective*.
5. *Good at + verb + ing*
6. *Bad at + verb + ing*
7. Opinions
8. Superlatives – (irregular) *good, better, best*.
9. 2nd conditional – hypothetical situation.
10. Present simple – beliefs/personal truths.

Speaking

The student(s) then ask you the questions to extend their understanding of the structures used in the replies and to really get a feeling for the questions. It's also a good way to take the focus off them for a while and gives a nice bit of listening practice. Depending on the student(s), you may want them to take notes and produce a piece based on your answers as a writing exercise in class or at home.

Reading

There are different options here:

- Read the answers randomly and the student matches them to the questions. (Intermediate)
- The student reads quietly as a comprehension. (Pre-intermediate)
- You read the answers in order and the student makes notes. (Strong pre-intermediate / intermediate)

Once you have cleared up all the queries the student has, you can dissect the text in terms of the target grammar: conditionals. It's up to you whether you present only the first conditional or mixed conditionals as well.

Type 1: Real/likely outcome (*If + present, will/won't + infinitive*)

e.g. *If you miss, you'll land among the stars.*

Type 2: Hypothetical/unreal situations (*If + past simple, would/n't + infinitive*)

e.g. *If I weren't speaking to you right now I'd be having a nap.*

Type 3: Hypothetical past situations (*If + past perfect, would have + past participle*)

e.g. *If I had been good at Science and Maths at school, I would have seriously considered it.*

Go over the form and usage with extra, personalized examples and any remedial work that arises. If the student is having problems, use a worksheet for more controlled practice or as homework, if they are more confident.

Speaking

Freer practice – interview the student / students interview each other.

Allow the student a few minutes to think about their answers – although it's inevitable that they'll already have formulated ideas whilst doing the exercise. Make sure that you set the scene of an interview and take notes of any good points or errors in usage and pronunciation so you can give lots of feedback.

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Interview



Five Minutes Out talks to...

Helen Rogers, Paramedic.

Helen's hectic working hours make it difficult for her to find time for leisure activities, but she always manages to fit in a sky dive whenever she feels stressed. "Some people find meditation relaxing, I prefer adrenalin."

If I weren't speaking to you right now, I'd be...

Having a nap! It's my favourite thing to do if I have five minutes to myself.

I wish people would...

Drive more carefully. It would cut down my workload, apart from the obvious, positive repercussions it would have on the roads.

A phrase I use too often...

That's the way the cookie crumbles. It helps me deal with the senselessness of some of the things I see, as well as serving as a dry joke when we get broken biscuits at work.

The most surprising thing that has happened to me is...

Becoming a paramedic. I was an accountant before and

something just nudged me one day and here I am.

I'm good at...

Calming myself down when I'm in a chaotic situation. I often have the feeling of a sort of out of body experience when I'm defibrillating someone and there are worried faces around me. At first I thought I was going to just flip out, but now I'm able to keep a clear focus on what I'm doing.

I'm bad at...

Cooking. I can cook basic things, but anything too extravagant is guaranteed to flop. I think I need about four trial runs before I can be sure of a modicum of success.

The perfect night out is...

Relaxing in a bar by the sea,

with good friends, good wine and good food.

The best age to be is...

Every year keeps getting better, although I guess the years when you have independence but no real responsibilities are great for the novelty of everything.

If I had to change jobs, I'd be a ...

Oh no, I don't know. I can't imagine being anything else. Maybe an astronaut. If I had been good at science and maths at school, I would have seriously considered it; but I wasn't, so I didn't.

In a nutshell, my philosophy of life is...

Aim for the moon because, even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.

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Worksheet

Vocabulary

Grammar points

Expressions