

## Teacher's Notes: Choose Your Own Adventure

**Time:** 60 minutes

**Age:** Teenagers / adults

**Level:** Intermediate +

**Aim:** Speaking, third conditional and persuasive language

**Materials:** Set of story cards

**Number of students:** Groups of 6-10 per set of cards

**Students work together to negotiate a route through a story with several different outcomes.**

**Step one / warmer:** Write the following questions on the board:

1. You find £30 in the street near a police station. Do you hand it in?
2. Your best friend's ex-girlfriend/boyfriend asks you on a date. Do you go?
3. You break a small ornament at a friend's house but nobody sees. Do you say anything?
4. You are looking after your neighbour's fish while he is on holiday, and it dies. Do you tell him, or replace it with one that looks similar and say nothing?
5. Somebody you don't like asks you to go out for a drink. Do you lie and say you have plans?
6. Your friend cooks you a disgusting meal. Do you pretend to like it?
7. Somebody tells you a very funny, true story, but says it's a secret. Do you tell anybody?
8. Would you tell a small lie on your C.V. to get a good job?

Students discuss these questions in pairs.

**Step two:** Give a point for each 'moral' answer (i.e. 1. yes; 2. no; 3. yes; 4. tell him; 5. no; 6. yes; 7. no; 8. no.) Draw a face on the board with a cartoon angel and devil over the shoulders. Suggest to the students that every time we make a moral decision, these characters try to persuade us to do what they want.

Split the class into three groups – those with the least moral points from the warmer play the devil (2-4 students), those with the most play the angel (2-4 students), and the two students in the middle are the decision makers. Rearrange the seating so that the decision makers are in the centre, with the devils on one side and the angels on the other.

Depending on the group, it could be useful to elicit or present persuasive language (e.g. *you should definitely, you'd be crazy to, you have to think about, it's important that you...*) and make a list on one side of the board.

**Step three:** Give the first story card to the decision makers. Ask them to read it and explain the situation and options to the others. The angels then have two minutes to convince them to do the 'right' thing, and the devils have two minutes to argue otherwise. The decision makers choose an option and take the corresponding numbered card.

This process continues until the students reach an ending to the story. There are several possible endings, including cards 6a, 6b and 6c.

**Step four:** If the story ends prematurely or badly, explain the word *regret*. Write a third conditional question for the situation e.g. *If I had met uncle John, what would have happened?* on the board. Highlight the structure *Had met... Would have happened* and elicit possible answers e.g. *I wouldn't have gone to work in McDonald's, I would have been happier...* Swap the decision makers and allow students to go back, change

their last decision and continue with the story. Repeat the same process until the story ends with card 6a, 6b or 6c (the 'wish' cards.)

**Note:** *All the endings are bad. The expression 'be careful what you wish for' may help to explain this!*

**Step five / follow up:** After this exercise, it may be worth giving some controlled practice with the third conditional. The simplest way to do this is to give key words to situations e.g. *Titanic / not sink / not hit iceberg; I / pass exam / work harder; JFK / survive / not go to Texas; England / beat Argentina / Maradona not cheat; I / go out last night / friend phone me* and ask the students to make sentences e.g. *England would have beaten Argentina if Maradona hadn't cheated.*

This lesson can also lead on to a discussion about regrets, for example using headings like *School, Childhood, Relationships, Family, Travel, Work, or Today* to practise the similar 'I wish I had / hadn't...' structure.

## Story cards: Choose Your Own Adventure

1. Everything has been difficult recently. You are single. You have a mortgage, but you have lost your job and don't have any money. You have already sold all your furniture, but now you have so much debt that you need to sell the house as well to make enough money to live for a month.

It's a rainy day, and you are sitting on the floor when the telephone rings. You answer. It's Uncle John, a distant relative who you have not seen for years. You really don't like him, and you think he has recently been in trouble with the police. He says he is in town this week and wants to see you. He asks if you can meet this afternoon.



Meet him - you have nothing better to do. (Go to 2)



Say that you are very busy and you can't make it this afternoon or any other time this week. (Go to 12)

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2. You meet, and although he is still slightly annoying, he is not as bad as you remember. He says he now sells diamond jewellery for a living. You talk for a while, and Uncle John asks if you can do him a favour. He explains that he is going away for a few weeks, and that he doesn't feel safe leaving diamonds and cash in his house. He says that if you look after them for him, he will give you twenty per cent of the money they are worth. You add this up, and realise you could make £80 000 just by having these diamonds in your house for two weeks.



Accept his offer. You are very poor at the moment, and if you don't get this money, you might have to sell your house. (Go to 15)



Say no - you have never trusted this man 100%. (Go to 10)

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3. You take the diamonds to the pawn shop and collect the money. The trouble is, you feel really bad. You are thinking about this on the way home, and not looking where you are going. You step on a banana skin and slide into the river, where you unfortunately drown.

THE END!

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4. Are you crazy?! People in banks are never nice! Think again...



Let him sign! (Go to 8)



Let him sign! (Go to 8)

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5. You apologise to the child and close the door. As it swings shut, he looks at you and says a strange rhyme in a language you don't understand. For the rest of your life, you have the most terrible luck.

THE END!

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6a. Money doesn't buy you happiness! You start to drink too much, waste your time with pretentious people and lose contact with your friends. When you reach old age, you have no achievements to remember and no real friends. You are depressed and lonely, and even your new Ferrari can't cheer you up.

THE END!

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6b. Being liked by everyone doesn't make you happy at all. You have no private life and nobody really cares about you. You realise that the proverb is true - it's better to be loved by one person than liked by a million.

THE END!

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6c. Your partner is great, but you always know that (s)he is only with you because of the wish. You tell him / her about the genie, but (s)he just says you're being stupid - you realise that whatever you do or say, (s)he will love you. This is ridiculous. You run away, and both you and your partner live unhappy, depressed lives.

THE END!

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7. You go to the bank and speak to the manager. Fortunately, he has just come back from the dentist, and he is acting a little bit strangely - it must be the effects of the anaesthetic! He thinks you are Father Christmas, and when you explain your situation, he looks very upset, and says you can have another 15 years to pay the money back. He is about to sign a new contract to confirm this agreement.



Let him sign! It's the bank's problem, not yours. (Go to 8)



Explain the situation to another member of staff, hoping they will be nice to you after you are so honest. (Go to 4)

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8. You let him sign, and leave the bank very happy. When you arrive home, Uncle John is waiting, and looks much happier. He takes the diamonds back and gives you the £80 000 that he promised. You now have loads of money. It has been your lucky day. Late in the evening a small child knocks on your door, and asks for your help. He says he is from another country, and has no visa. His parents have disappeared, and he has nowhere to go. He is afraid that if the police find him, they will throw him out of the country.



Decide to take this small child into your house for the night. (Go to 13)



Close the door - you can't trust anybody. (Go to 5)

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9. You go to the police station with the diamonds. The Chief Constable tells you they are not the stolen ones. To make things worse, Uncle John walks in while you are there - he volunteers for the police in his spare time! He is very upset with you, and takes the diamonds back immediately. You now have no money, you soon lose your house, and end up living under a bridge.

THE END!

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10. You turn down the offer. John goes crazy and starts shouting and swearing at you. You lose your temper and start shouting as well. Soon you are fighting. A neighbour calls the police, and you are both arrested. You go to prison for a week. After this, it is impossible to find a job - you lose your house and never work again. You are completely depressed and end up living on the streets.

THE END!

11. You don't meet Uncle John. You lose your house, and move into a tiny flat. The only job you can find is in a fast food restaurant, where you work for the rest of your life. You discover that Uncle John has become rich, and wanted to share his wealth with the rest of his family. You are utterly depressed and regret your decision for the rest of your life.

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12. You decide not to meet him. He doesn't sound like he believes your excuse, but you don't care. You forget all about it, but a week later he calls again. He seems desperate to meet.



Meet him - he's family, after all. (Go to 2)



Tell him the truth – you don't like or trust him. (Go to 11)

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13. You take the child into your home, and he is so happy he starts to cry. The next morning, you call social services, and they have good news - the boy's parents have been granted asylum in Britain and he can live with them. They come to collect him. His mother is a beautiful but poor lady. She is very unhappy because she can't pay you anything, but she says she has magical powers and can make wishes come true. She gives you a choice of three different wishes...

- a) You can wish for ten million pounds. (Go to 6a)
  - b) You can wish to be world famous and liked by everybody. (6b)
  - c) You can wish for a partner who will love you for the rest of your life. (6c)
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14. You decide to say nothing. A couple of days later, there is a story in the newspaper about the robbery. The police have recovered all the stolen goods, and arrested the robber. It was not Uncle John. You feel bad for being so suspicious.

However, six weeks pass and you have heard nothing from Uncle John. You are now desperate for the money, because your house is going to be repossessed tomorrow. If you took some of the smaller jewels to the pawnbroker, you know you could get £25000, and pay your most important debts.



Beg the bank to give you another week to find the money. (Go to 7)



Pawn the diamonds. Uncle John owes you more than that anyway, and he is being very unfair by not calling you. (Go to 3)

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15. You accept. Uncle John is very happy. Later the same day, he arrives at your house in a dirty old Ford Escort. You wonder why a man who has £400 000 worth of diamonds is driving such a terrible car, but you say nothing. He seems nervous, and gives you an old canvas bag, which he says contains the diamonds and money. Before you can say anything, he drives away.

Later, you are watching the news. The main story is about a robbery in a nearby jeweller's...



Call the police and tell them everything. (Go to 9)



Stay quiet - you don't know that John is guilty, and you are also afraid about what might happen to you. (Go to 14)

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