

Upper Intermediate – Adapt to Changing Situations

Aim: To help students adapt to and cope with changing situations.

Lead-in: Introduce the concept of change to students. Write on the board in large numbers 1920–2020 and draw a line and an arrow to the word TV. Ask students: *Can you imagine living without a TV?* (Most students will probably say no). Explain to students that when TV was invented some people first thought that there was actually a person inside the box talking.

Get students to work in pairs and think of at least three life-changing events or inventions from the last 100 years. Elicit students' suggestions and write some of their ideas up on the board (e.g., *radio, cinema, mobile phone, computer, internet, plane, travel, discovery of penicillin, telephone, the first moon landing, etc.*).

Discuss with students how they think people reacted to some of these changes to their everyday lives. (*People were frightened, suspicious, didn't want to use the things even though they made life better, they accepted change rapidly, etc.*)

Extend the discussion by asking, *if things never changed, what would life be like?* Elicit students' answers and play a little 'devil's advocate' to encourage them to defend their ideas.

Choose A Scenario: Put students in pairs. Ask them to read the *situations* – not the *reactions* – in order to choose their scenarios from (A–C). Once they've chosen, explain to students that the first part of their task is to look at the situation and think about how this might make them feel and think of their possible reactions to the situation.

Get students to note these down. They should speculate about how different people could react. Then ask students to read through the reactions of the people in the situations and compare them to their suggested reactions.

Encourage students to judge the reactions. They should decide which reaction showed who adapted either best or worst to a changing situation. Remind students to refer to the Reflection Point as they are discussing their scenario.

Reflection Point: Point out to students that change is not always something they can control. However, they can control the way they deal with change. Make clear that change can sometimes be negative, but there is usually a way to make it positive. They can do this by staying calm, thinking about alternatives, and being ready to adapt.

Draw students' attention to the fact that all the new inventions they mentioned in the lead-in were the result of change. Explain that being annoyed or fearful of change makes people unable to obtain any benefits from it.

Class discussion: Put pairs who chose the same scenario together. Ask each pair to compare their suggestions first and how they speculated on possible reactions before actually reading the given reactions. Then get them to compare their answers to questions (A–C). Ask, *did you have the same suggestions? Did you categorise the reactions in the same way?* Discuss the following questions with the class:

- *Could any of the sudden changes in the scenarios you approached have been avoided? How?*
- *Do you think any of the reactions to your scenarios were silly or pointless? What and why?*
- *Why do you think some of the reactions were so negative?*
- *When you read the reactions, what was your opinion of the person who reacted most negatively?*

Work alone: Ask students to choose a second scenario (A–C) and follow the steps suggested in section 2. When students have finished, ask them to discuss their suggestions and answers with a student who approached the same scenario.

When they have finished, discuss with students whether they feel they need to be more flexible in their approach to changes or if they feel they are quite good at adapting to change. If appropriate, ask students to give an example of a positive or negative reaction they had to a sudden change in their life.

Extension: Ask students in pairs to discuss one very small change they could make to their lives. Set students a task to make this change for a week and to keep a short diary of the positive and/or negative things that occurred as a result. Suggest any one of the following changes:

- *wake up every day ten minutes earlier*
- *avoid watching videos online for a day*
- *try playing a different position in a team sport or a different sport*
- *offer to help your mom or dad without being asked*
- *do one small, kind thing every day for someone else*

Get students to talk about the changes that they made – how the changes made them feel and how they felt trying the changes out.

* Boy Scouts, an organization that encourages both boys and girls to learn practical skills and help other people