Making suggestions
by Rosemary Richey

Teacher's notes

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Solutions for English Teaching

BUSINESS BASICS TEACHER'S NOTES

LEVEL: Pre-intermediate / A2

TIME: 50 minutes

SKILLS: writing, speaking

AIM: to practise describing a colleague's difficult behaviour and making suggestions on how to deal with it

MATERIALS: one copy of the worksheet per student; one set of cut-out job problem cards per pair of students

Useful words and phrases

discuss
complaining (to complain)
qualities
to deal with
to take care of
come up with
suggestions

He should ...
Maybe we should …
I recommend / suggest …
Why don't you …?
How / What about …? (+ *-ing* form)

Quality / character antonyms

cooperative / uncooperative
bored / interested
friendly / unfriendly
helpful / unhelpful
polite / impolite (rude)
patient / impatient
lazy / hard-working
reliable (dependable) / unreliable

Before the lesson

Cut out the job problem cards and add your own topics on the blank cards.

Procedure

On a flipchart or white board, write *Dealing with difficult people*. Ask students if they've ever dealt with a difficult person. Ask for examples of problems and write them up on the chart or board.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE
Problems
1. My colleague doesn't want to be part of the team.
2. My colleague doesn't listen to other people's ideas.
3.
4.
5.

A

Tell students to read the email in Activity A in the worksheet about the problem colleague.

Focus on their understanding by asking these questions.

1. What is Jon's working relationship to the other people?

2. What kind of personality do you think Tom has?

3. What do you think are the reasons for him being difficult?

4. What are your first impressions from the email?

Students will come up with a variety of answers. Accept all that are plausible.

Teaching tip:

With stronger students, you might want to encourage them to use speculative language, e.g.

He could be ...
It might be because ...

B

Get students to complete Activity B. Elicit words from the *quality / character antonyms* list. You could do this by giving them the initial and then the final letters of each word, e.g.:

f_____y *friendly*

h_____l *helpful*

p____e *polite*

Encourage stronger students to come up with suggestions of their own.

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Ask them to compare their answers with a partner. Then review answers with the whole class by asking each pair to give their examples.

Make a chart on the flipchart or whiteboard to go over the antonym formation. (Refer to the *Useful words and phrases* section in the Teacher's notes.) Show them the opposite forms like *un-, im-, ir-.* Write an incorrect form, such as *unpolite*, or *irreliable*, and ask the students if they think the forms are correct. Write up the correct opposites as you work them through the right forms. Also, explain to them that certain words take completely new words or phrases to make them opposite: *lazy ≠ hard-working*.

> Qualities of a team player
>
> Positive (+)   Negative (-)
> 1. friendly   unfriendly
> 2. helpful   unhelpful
> 3. cooperative   uncooperative
> 4.
> 5.
> 6.

C

Have students write their suggestions in Activity C for ways to handle Tom Watson. Check their language by writing their examples on the whiteboard or flipchart. Write up these examples and highlight the key phrases and verb forms.

> a. <u>Maybe we should</u> all talk to Tom privately.
> b. <u>He should</u> take part in a team building seminar.
> c. <u>Why don't you</u> find out why Tom seems bored?
> d. <u>What/How about telling</u> him to take time off from work?

Teaching tip:

Explain that it's better to use *should*, not *must* for giving suggestions. Also explain that *What about ...?* and *How about ...?* are followed by the gerund (*-ing*) form.

On a flipchart page or whiteboard, elicit other suggestions to deal with Tom. Write them in boxes on the flipchart or whiteboard like this:

> Change Tom's work tasks.
> Move Tom to another team.

Tell the students to practise each idea in a suggestion phrase.

Also elicit from, or present to, the students a few typical verbs to use for problem-solving: *deal with, take care of* and *handle*.

Have the students in pairs decide which two suggestions they think are best to take care of the problem colleague. Ask each pair to report what they've decided. Encourage them to use the verbs you looked at, e.g.:

One way to deal with the problem is to …
Another way we could take care of the problem is to ...

Contrast two or three examples of impolite, undiplomatic suggestion language on the flipchart or whiteboard. With stronger students, try to elicit the 'diplomatic' alternatives before you write them down.

> Undiplomatic
> 1. I want you to move to another team.
> 2. You must go on holiday.
> 3. You must go to a team building seminar.
> 4. Meet with Tom privately.
>
> Diplomatic
> 1. I suggest/recommend that you move to another team.
> 2. I think you should go on holiday.
> 3. How about going to a team building seminar?
> 4. Why don't you meet with Tom privately?

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BUSINESS BASICS TEACHER'S NOTES

D

Get students do Activity D individually, then check answers in pairs and/or with the whole class.

> **Teaching tip:**
> Encourage stronger students to try to fill in the gaps **before** they listen to the dialogue.

Key:
1. friendly; 2. helpful; 3. lazy; 4. rude; 5. deal; 6. bored; 7. move; 8. go

Ask the students to read through the meeting again in Activity D. Have them write up the important points discussed in the meeting to deal with Tom Watson. Write these headings for them on a flip chart or whiteboard.

> 1. Team player expectations
> 2. Tom's behaviour
> 3. The working atmosphere
> 4. Possible solutions

Encourage them to add other solutions of their own.

Follow-up

1. Give the cut-out job problem cards to the students. In pairs, the students say the problem and give suggestions to each other. Listen to each pair to check language like *Why don't you ...? I think you should …*

2. Get the students to organize a team player workshop. Ask them if they've ever attended a team building skills seminar. (If so, which activities did they do? If not, what sort of activities do they think take place?) Then, in pairs, get them to write up a flyer for the workshop. Give each pair a flipchart page to work with. Write the following example format on the flipchart or whiteboard to help them get started.

> <u>Better team building skills</u>
> Are you … enough?
> • cooperative
> • helpful
> •
> •
> •
> Improve your team playing skills by:
> •
> •
> •
> When:
> Where:

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BUSINESS BASICS WORKSHEET

A

Read the email about a difficult colleague.

From: Jon@email.com

To: Mike@email.com; Susan@email.com

Subject: Difficult colleague

Hello Mike and Susan,

I've received your emails this week about our new colleague, Tom Watson. You are complaining he's just not a team player. You say he's uncooperative and seems bored with our project work.

I'd like to have a meeting tomorrow at 2pm to discuss how we can take care of this problem. First, write up a list of five qualities you think are important for a good team player. Then come up with three action points on how we can deal with Tom.

Look forward to seeing you tomorrow.

Best wishes

Jon

B

Complete the chart with words to describe a good team player.

Qualities for a good team player

Positive (+)

1. cooperative

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Negative (-)

uncooperative

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Worksheet

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BUSINESS BASICS WORKSHEET

C

Write up your action points to deal with Tom Watson.

> **Action points to deal with Tom Watson**
>
> 1. *I think we should* _____
> _____ .
>
> 2. _____
> _____ .
>
> 3. _____
> _____ .
>
> 4. _____
> _____ .

D

Listen to the dialogue and fill in the gaps.

Jon: Thanks for coming to the meeting today. I know we can come up with some solutions about Tom Watson. First, let's talk in general about what we expect from a team player. Er, Susan, what do you think?

Susan: It's important for me that a team player is cooperative and _____ [1].

Jon: What about you, Mike?

Mike: Yes, I agree. I think a good team player should also be _____ [2] and reliable.

Jon: Well, it seems that Tom Watson is not being a very good team player, right?

Susan: Yes, he really makes our project work difficult. He's _____ [3], uncooperative and _____ [4] all the time. What do you think, Mike?

Mike: You're right, Susan. He's creating a really negative working atmosphere.

Jon: So, what are your suggestions for how to _____ [5] with Tom?

Susan: I think you should have a private meeting with him. Please find out why he's so unfriendly and so _____ [6] with his job.

Jon: That's a possibility. Mike, do you have another idea?

Mike: Why don't you _____ [7] him to a different job? Maybe he just needs to work in another department.

Jon: That's something to think about.

Susan: And I think you should tell him to _____ [8] on a team-building course.

Jon: Ok, thanks, these are really good ideas for us to try. Let's meet again next week to talk about this more.

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Job problem cards

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BUSINESS BASICS

JOB PROBLEM CARDS

■ **Follow-up**

It takes me too long to get to work.

I feel stressed at work.

I always need to tidy up my desk.

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Transcript

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BUSINESS BASICS TRANSCRIPT

Jon:	Thanks for coming to the meeting today. I know we can come up with some solutions about Tom Watson. First, let's talk in general about what we expect from a team player. Er, Susan, what do you think?
Susan:	It's important for me that a team player is cooperative and friendly.
Jon:	What about you, Mike?
Mike:	Yes, I agree. I think a good team player should also be helpful and reliable.
Jon:	Well, it seems that Tom Watson is not being a very good team player, right?
Susan:	Yes, he really makes our project work difficult. He is lazy, uncooperative and rude all the time. What do you think, Mike?
Mike:	You're right, Susan. He is creating a really negative working atmosphere.
Jon:	So, what are your suggestions for how to deal with Tom?
Susan:	I think you should have a private meeting with him. Please find out why he is so unfriendly and so bored with his job.
Jon:	That's a possibility. Mike, do you have another idea?
Mike:	Why don't you move him to a different job? Maybe he just needs to work in another department.
Jon:	That's something to think about.
Susan:	And I think you should tell him to go on a team-building course.
Jon:	Ok, thanks, these are really good ideas for us to try. Let's meet again next week to talk about this more.