

Energy 3 Unit 7 Problems, problems

Teacher's Notes

Time	30–40 minutes
Interaction	Individual and Pairs
Preparation	Photocopy worksheets, bring in some teenage magazines
Aim	To practise use of second conditional, and give fluency practice of reading and responding to a letter

Procedure

- Introduce the topic of problem pages and 'agony aunts' (people who write answers to problem page letters). You might want to bring in some teenage magazines to show when setting the context.
- Tell students they are going to read a letter from a girl who has written to ask for help. Give out worksheet A and set gist reading task: What is Alex's problem? (She has moved to a new place and is finding it hard to make new friends.)
- Allow students to check their answers in pairs first then check answer. Ask class to suggest what they would do if they were Alex. You can remind the class of second conditional structure, for example,

If I were Alex, I would ...

If Alex did X, then she would ...

- Ask students to work in pairs for about 2 minutes and make some more suggestions. Whole class feedback: students share their suggestions and say if they think they are good or bad ideas.
- Give students worksheet B and tell them to read and see which of their suggestions are included in the letter from the agony aunt, Jenny.
- Put students in pairs and tell them they have 15 minutes to write a letter to Jenny about a problem. You can either ask students to think of a fictional teenage person or to write a problem from a celebrity. Note: Make sure students know they *shouldn't* write about problems that they or anyone else in the class have, to save embarrassment. Monitor and help students with any unknown words or language problems.
- When students have finished writing their letters, they swap their letter with another pair. They read the problem and say what they think the main problem is. Tell them to brainstorm three or four helpful bits of advice (using second conditional) *before* they start writing the reply. Give students about 10 minutes to write a reply from Jenny. As before, monitor and help with language problems.

When students have finished writing replies, they then pin their replies around the room. Set the reading task: students go round the room reading the replies and have to guess what the original letter said. Allow five minutes for this, then do a whole class check stage – the original letter writers can say if the students have guessed correctly or not.

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Worksheet A

Dear Jenny,

I'm really fed up at the moment and I don't know what to do. My dad has got a new job so three weeks ago we moved from London to Manchester. I don't know anyone at my new school and the teachers keep calling me by the wrong name! My friends back home said they would come and visit but they're too busy now and can't come until the school holidays start - that's not for another two months! I really want to go and visit them but I'm spending most of my money on my mobile! I'd really love to make some new friends here - I used to be in the school drama group and had lots of fun. But making friends seems so hard - what can I do?

Alex

Your turn

Write a letter to Jenny asking for help with a problem.

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Worksheet B

Dear Alex

It sounds like lots has changed for you recently. It can be frightening to move to a new place, but it can be exciting, too. It takes time to make a new start and to do things like make new friends, but you can do it! You could join a drama group at school, or find out about groups in your area at the local library. If you did that, I'm sure you'd soon start to make friends.

Try to talk to your new classmates more. If you asked them about places to go at the weekend, I'm sure some would ask you to go there with them. What about asking them to come to your house at the weekend, to do something like watch a DVD?!

You say you're spending most of your pocket money on your mobile. If you got a part time job, you would have enough money to go and visit your friends back in London. Don't worry so much! In a few months time things will look a lot different.

Jenny

Your turn

Write a letter from Jenny giving help with the problem.

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