

Lesson description

The topic of this lesson is office problems. You'll:

- work as a group to solve some problems in an office
- focus on ways to describe different problems
- focus on phrases to offer, accept, and reject advice
- practise using suitable intonation when accepting or rejecting advice.

Aim

Describing an issue and investigate various solutions

Pronunciation

- to use correct intonation when accepting or rejecting someone's advice

Language

- phrases describing different types of problem
- phrases for offering, accepting and rejecting advice

Main task

The task for the lesson is for the learners to reach a decision in a group on how best to solve office problems.

Materials

Handout
Audio U018CEA-1.mp3, U018CEA-2.mp3,
U018CEA-3.mp3
PC1 – Cut ups
PC2 – Role cards
IWB

Self-study activities

(available on platform)
Listening
Vocabulary
Listening
Listening
Vocabulary

Handout activity number:

Listening, 2
Vocabulary, 3
Listening, 4, part 1
Listening, 4, part 2
Pronunciation, 5, part 1

Suggested running order

- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Lead-in – speaking - problems | Handout |
| 2 | Listening – office problems | Handout/U018CEA-1.mp3 |
| 3 | Vocabulary – collocations with <i>problem</i> | Handout |
| 4 | Listening - language – phrases for offering, accepting and rejecting advice. | Handout/U018CEA-2.mp3 |
| 5 | Pronunciation –intonation | Handout/U018CEA-3.mp3/Cut ups |
| 6 | Main task – role play | Role cards |
| 7 | Feedback | IWB |

Answers

Listening

1.	“How about changing the venue of the meeting to a restaurant or café in the local area?”	E
2.	“Why not hire the hourly paid staff with the aim of encouraging them to work full time later on?”	C
3.	“Have you ever thought of allowing the ladies to use the gents’ cubicles?”	B
4.	“Why don’t you try switching it off and then on again?”	A
5.	“What if we were to make each department’s lunch break at a different time?”	D

- Which speaker describes a problem that continues to happen? *B*
- Which speaker describes a problem that needs fixing now? *A (B is possible)*
- Which speaker describes a problem that could start in the future? *E*
- Which speaker describes a problem that could last a long time? *C*
- Which speaker describes a problem they think is silly? *D*

Vocabulary

- 1 d
- 2 e
- 3 c
- 4 g
- 5 b
- 6 h
- 7 f
- 8 a

Listening

- Maria doesn’t like sharing an office with Colin
- Tina first suggests talking to Colin and then suggests that Maria applies to move into Jerry’s office.
- Maria doesn’t like the first suggestion but accepts the second piece of advice.




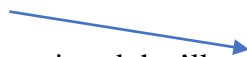


1. Well, **in my experience**, being honest and telling someone how you feel usually **works well**.
2. I'm **not sure about that** because when I told him to stop leaving his coffee cups on my desk he didn't talk to me for three days.
3. OK, **one thing you could do** is put on some ear phones and listen to some music when he starts singing.
4. Well, **to be honest** I feel a **better solution would be** for Colin to move out.
5. I've an idea! **Have you ever thought about** applying for Jerry's old office?
6. **That's not a bad** idea.
7. I'll see if it's possible.
8. Thanks. I really appreciate it. Just **make sure you don't** tell Colin it was my idea.

1,3,5 = Offering; 2,4 = Rejecting; 6,7,8 = Accepting

NB When we use the expressing 'make sure you don't tell' - we usually use it when are prepared to go ahead with an idea that someone might disagree with

Pronunciation

Play the sentences and students indicate if the intonation goes up or down. They also underline the words that are more strongly stressed. Don't spend too much time on this part. More important is that they have a chance to listen and repeat the sentences imitating the intonation as closely as possible. N.B. Intonation usually goes up and down when accepting. And down for rejection.

1. Let's give it a go. 
2. I'll have to think about that. 
3. That might just work. 
4. I'm just not convinced that'll work. 
5. I'm afraid I really don't like the idea. 
6. That's not a bad idea. 

- a) Ss work in groups of 3
- b) Divide the cards so each S has 5 cards.
- c) Ss look at each problem and must use the phrases on their cards.
- d) When Ss have used a phrase they can put it down.
- e) First to get rid of all their cards is the winner.

Model first. Ss must try and simulate a natural dialogue.

Audio script**Audio 1**

A

Ok, I've been trying to open this file for about ten minutes; it's an **urgent matter** that needs to be sorted out. I've double clicked on it, I've tried dragging it into the application directly but nothing seems to be working. These dreaded machines never seem to do what I want them to do; they are out of date and becoming useless! What should I do?

B

There has been this **on-going problem** with the ladies toilets! Two of the cubicle doors don't work and the locks have been broken! I know that this may sound minor and insignificant, but this must get sorted out as soon as possible. I had to wait for 15 minutes to use the toilet during my lunch break.

C

Hiring more hourly paid workers is a great strategy for now, but what about in the **long term**? Surely we should start to think about increasing our full time sales team from now, so we can meet the demand that hits during the end of the year.

D

It's a **trivial matter**, but some of the staff, seem to be eating their lunch in the office. I wouldn't usually complain but the smell after lunch is so strong! Is there anything we can do about it? Some of the staff have (sic) complained that the canteen is over-crowded and that there are (sic) a lack of places to eat outdoors.

E

At the moment we have a few **potential problems** regarding the Friday afternoon meeting. All of the meeting rooms are booked at the moment and the only one that is free is too small! Maybe squeezing more chairs in there would be a quick fix but I've got a feeling we may need to come up with another solution.

Audio 2

Maria: Tina. Can I have a word?

Tina: Sure. Are you OK? You look a little upset.

Maria: I would talk to Bill about this, but he seems a bit preoccupied these days with the Jakarta contract and something like this might sound really trivial or insignificant, so I was hoping I could talk to you.

Tina: Of course you can.

Maria: Well, I'm basically tired of sharing an office with Colin. All the other project managers have their own offices except me and to be honest, I find Colin rather irritating. He's always singing to himself when I'm trying to concentrate.

Tina: I see. Well, in my experience, being honest and telling someone how you feel usually works well.

Maria: Hmm I'm not sure about that because when I told him to stop leaving his coffee cups on my desk he didn't talk to me for three days.

Tina: OK, one thing you could do is put on some ear phones and listen to some music when he starts singing.

Maria: Well, to be honest I feel a better solution would be for Colin to move out.

Tina: I've an idea! Have you ever thought about applying for Jerry's old office?

Maria: That's not a bad idea.

Tina: I'll see if it's possible.

Maria: Thanks. I really appreciate it. Just make sure you don't tell Colin it was my idea.

Audio 3

1. Let's give it a go.
2. I'll have to think about that.
3. That might just work.
4. I'm just not convinced that'll work.
5. I'm afraid I really don't like the idea.
6. That's not a bad idea.