

B2.5 Hypothetical Situations - Handout

1 This topic sheet practises what is a difficult area of grammar for learners of a foreign language: Conditionals/Unreal Tenses/ "if..." clauses. This first set of questions (on blue) are called the 'First Conditional' in most grammar books because they are used when we are talking about situations that may really occur (e.g. "If I see Cathy, I'll tell her."). However, it is difficult for the author of these materials to know which situations are likely to occur without knowing you and your partner's contexts. For example, a rainy day is always likely in the U.K., but may seem extraordinary in July in Madrid! Nonetheless, hopefully, these situations are in the main, quite likely to occur in most contexts – if not, please adapt them accordingly.

2 These questions (on yellow) are designed to practise what grammar books refer to as the 'Second Conditional'. They refer to situations which are less likely to occur and the tenses used reflect this: The Past Simple and "would" (e.g. "If I won the lottery, I would buy a yacht."). Key vocabulary includes: *stuck* (the Past of *stick*), *traffic jam*, *colleagues*, *queue*, *spat* (the Past of *spit*), *swore* (the Past of *swear*), *ornament* and *put on weight*.

The second set of situations here (on the red background), while all equally 'unreal', focus on the words it would be most appropriate to use. This is a perfect opportunity for the learner to hear what 'social English' expressions would most naturally occur to a native speaker. 'Saying the wrong thing' always causes anxiety, and even more so in a foreign language. Key vocabulary includes: *to be accused of sth.*, *to be made redundant*, and *spilt* (the Past of *spill*). "U.F.O." is quite international, but is pronounced as one word in many European languages rather than said as its individual letters, as an acronym, as it is in English.

3 These situations (on green) practise what is called the 'Third Conditional' and refer to unreal *past* situations (e.g. "If I had felt ill this morning, I wouldn't have come to work."). They use the Past Perfect ("If I had felt") and "would" and "have" and the Past Participle (e.g. "come", "eaten", "written", etc.). The last example in the box is quite complex as "had been born" is also in Passive Voice (but it should stimulate interesting discussion).

4 "Wishes" are grammatically like Conditionals in English in that they move back one tense to indicate that the situation is imagined/unreal (e.g. "I wish I hadn't got drunk last night" = I did!).

5 These 'difficult decisions' should stimulate plenty of discussion, again practising the 'Second Conditional'.

6 Please 'brainstorm' possible laws together to facilitate the writing task to follow.