

Pairwork: *Should have/shouldn't have* by Jill Hadfield

Level: Upper intermediate

Target age: Secondary / Adult

Time needed: 20 minutes

Grammar objective: to practise using *should have* and *shouldn't have*

Materials: one set of cards per pair

Summary: a pairwork game to practise *should have* and *shouldn't have*

Procedure

- Put students in pairs. Give each pair a set of cards. Tell them to put the cards face down in a pile in the middle of the desk.
- Demonstrate how to play. Take a card from a pile and tell the class about the problem you have, as shown in the picture. Then, tell students to tell you how you could have avoided the problem by creating a sentence with *should have* or *shouldn't have*.

For example, pick up the card with the dirty cups on and say: 'Oh dear, I want a coffee but all the cups are dirty.'

A student responds by saying, for example, 'You should have put them in the dishwasher.' Make sure students understand that they must talk about the past so an answer such as 'You should do the washing up' is not acceptable.

Note: Example answers for all the cards are given at the end of the teacher's notes.

It does not matter if the students use their imagination to create different scenarios from the pictures, as long as they use the target grammar.

- If your students need a refresher of the grammar required to play the game, you may wish to go over the following before starting the game:
 - Elicit the meanings of *should have* and *shouldn't have* (answer: *should have* is used for saying what the right thing to

do was when you realize that someone did not do it; *shouldn't have* is used to express that someone was wrong to do something in the past).

- Elicit, too, how to form sentences with *should (not) have* and write the form on the board: subject + *should have / shouldn't have* + past participle.
- Point out the correct pronunciation of *should have* /ɪd(h)əv/ and *shouldn't have* /ɪd(ə)nt(h)əv/ and drill the pronunciation.

- Students now play the game. Student A takes a card from the pile and tells their partner about their problem. Student B forms a response using *should have* or *shouldn't have*. Then, it's student B's turn to take a card from the pile and tell student A about it.
- The game ends when all cards have been used.

Extension

Ask pairs to choose their favourite dialogue from the game or to agree on a problem from their own lives they can use instead. They should think of ways of extending the dialogue – for example, the first student could come up with an excuse for why they didn't do what their partner said they should have – before acting it out for the class.

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Key (example answers)

Picture of dirty cups and saucers
Oh dear, I want a coffee but all the cups are dirty. – You should have put them in the dishwasher.

Picture of someone running to work.
Oh no! I'm late for work! – You should have woken up earlier this morning!

Picture of wilted pot plant
My plant is dead. – You should have watered it!

Picture of a broken down car
I have a flat tyre! – You should have brought a spare tyre with you.

Picture of a burglar climbing in the window
Oh no! We've been burgled! – You shouldn't have left the window open!

Picture of someone hitting their finger with a hammer
Ouch! I hit my finger with a hammer! – You should have been more careful.

Picture of someone looking sick with an empty plate in front of them
Ugh, I feel sick. – You shouldn't have eaten so much!

Picture of a dentist with an inset showing lots of sweets
My dentist says I'm going to need loads of fillings. – You shouldn't have eaten so many sweets.

Picture of someone outside a locked front door
I can't get in to my house! – You should have given your neighbour a spare key for times like this!

Picture of a man looking into his empty wallet
I don't have any cash on me. – You should have gone to an ATM.

Picture of man with his head on his car
I can't find where I am on this map! I am completely lost. – You should have used your satnav.

Picture of a student with a test mark of F
I failed the exam. – You should have studied harder!

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FUN WITH GRAMMAR CARDS

