

## Mistakes and regrets by Matt Done and Roksana Krzyzanowska

<b>Age:</b>	Teenagers / Adults
<b>Level:</b>	Intermediate
<b>Time:</b>	120 minutes (longer if you use the optional activities)
<b>Objectives:</b>	To improve students' ability to talk about mistakes made in the past using the structure <i>should have</i> + past participle
<b>Key skills:</b>	Speaking
<b>Materials:</b>	One copy of the worksheet per student; the audio file, downloaded from onestopenglish; one set of role cards per pair of students, cut up; one copy of the quotes cut outs per class; one copy of the quotes discussion handout per student

### Preparation

Before the lesson, cut up the role cards and the quotes cut outs. Each student in your class should have at least one quotes cut out. If you have more than 12 students, print out two copies of the cut outs and double up on some of the quotes..

### Procedure

#### Lead-in

**Aim:** to warm students up to the topic of blind dates

1. Ask students to tell you the word in English for when two people, who are more than friends, go out to the cinema or to a restaurant together (*a date*).
2. Elicit the verb and preposition that go before it (**go on a date**).
3. Then, elicit the term we use for when you go on a date with someone who you have never met before (*a blind date*).
4. Hand out the worksheets. Get the students to discuss the questions in activity 1 in pairs. Set a time limit of about three to five minutes, then take some feedback.

#### Role play

**Aim:** to create both a context and a need for the target language

1. Divide students into A and B pairs. If there is an odd number of students, put two weaker students together to share the role of Helen.
2. Introduce the characters – Chris and Helen. Tell the students that Chris and Helen are friends and that they are going to discuss a 'bad' blind date that Chris has just been on. Give out the role cards and give students about three to five minutes to read them and prepare what they are going to say.
3. Give the students about five minutes to do the role play. You may wish to provide them with an opening sentence, such as: 'So how was your blind date?'
4. Once the students have finished, ask them whether they think Chris made any mistakes (they'll probably say something along the lines of 'Yes, a lot!')

#### Optional activity

Have some of the more confident students perform their role play to the class.

#### Listening 1

**Aim:** to give students some gist listening practice

1. Tell students that they are going to listen to the real dialogue between Chris and Helen and that they have to decide whether it is similar to their own. Play the audio.
2. Briefly take some feedback on how similar or different the real dialogue is.

#### Listening 2

**Aim:** to give the students some practice in listening for detail

1. Tell the students that they are going to listen to the dialogue again and that they should fill in the gaps as they do so in activity 4 on the worksheet.
2. After playing the dialogue, get students to compare their answers and, if necessary, play it a second time.
3. Get students to check in pairs, then elicit the answers and write them on the board.

**Key:** 1. *how did it go*; 2. *into me*; 3. *ended up*; 4. *I'm*; 5. *low on cash*; 6. *made a fool of myself*; 7. *common sense*; 8. *hang on*

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### Vocabulary matching

**Aim:** to consolidate the meaning of the new language from the dialogue by matching it to phrases with a similar meaning

1. Direct students to activity 5. Do the first question together as a class and then give the students two to three minutes to complete the rest of the activity alone.
2. Get students to compare their answers in pairs before doing a class correction.

**Key:** 1. *common sense*; 2. *ended up*; 3. *into me*; 4. *hang on*; 5. *how did it go?*; 6. *made a fool of myself*; 7. *low on cash*

### Optional activity

Get the students to read out the real dialogue together in pairs. Encourage them to read it expressively rather than just in a flat tone.

### Language focus – *should have* + past participle

**Aim:** to present the structure *should have* + past participle

1. Tell students to cover the dialogue in activity 4.
2. Write the following on the board, complete with the gap:  
H: What did you wear?  
C: My new Adidas tracksuit.  
H: A tracksuit? You \_\_\_\_\_ a shirt!
3. Ask the students if they can remember exactly what Helen told Chris about his clothes (*should have worn*).
4. Ask the following concept questions:
  - What did Chris wear? (*a tracksuit*)
  - Was this a good idea or a mistake? (*a mistake*)
  - When did Chris make the mistake – now or in the past? (*in the past*)
  - How does Helen feel about it – happy or a little angry? (*angry*)
5. Explain that we use this structure when we feel annoyed about mistakes made in the past.
6. Elicit the structure:  
*should/shouldn't have* + past participle

7. Tell students to find more examples of the structure from the dialogue.

**Key:** *You should have gone somewhere nicer!; You should have talked about something you both like.; you shouldn't have just talked about yourself the whole time!*

**Note:** You may wish to point out that this structure is quite direct and it should not be used when talking to a boss or in a situation where it is important to be diplomatic.

### Controlled practice

**Aim:** to consolidate the new language and provide students with some controlled practice

1. Do the first question together as a class, before letting the students do the rest of the activity alone.
2. Have students compare their answers in pairs before doing a class correction.

**Key:** 1. *should have watched*; 2. *shouldn't have worn*; 3. *should have studied*; 4. *should have tried it on*; 5. *shouldn't have told*; 6. *should have booked/chosen*; 7. *should have left*; 8. *should have chosen/studied*

3. Using some of the sentences from this activity, model and drill the pronunciation of the structure:

*should have* /ʃʊd əv/

*shouldn't have* /ʃʊd(ə)nt əv/

Point out that, while the full form of *have* is /hæv/, native speakers tend to pronounce the auxiliary form as /(h)əv/.

They quite often abbreviate the pronunciation even further by pronouncing the structures as /ʃʊd ə/ (*should have*) and /ʃʊd(ə)n ə/ (*shouldn't have*). Students should be aware of this last set of pronunciations so they can successfully understand native speakers but it's probably best if they avoid using the heavily abbreviated forms themselves, at least in any but the most casual of conversations.

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### Controlled oral practice

**Aim:** to give students further practice in producing the target language

1. Demonstrate activity 7 as an open pair with a confident student. You say *This romantic film is awful*, then prompt the student to say *We should have watched a comedy*. Correct the student's pronunciation of *should have* if necessary.
2. The students will now continue in their pairs, swapping roles halfway through. Make clear that they can read out the answers (they don't have to complete the activity from memory) and remind the B students to focus on their pronunciation.

### Optional activity

Keep students in their pairs. Student A holds the handout and, from activity 6, reads the first parts. Student B covers the handout and replies with the *should have* parts from memory. After a minute or so, get the students to swap roles.

### Personalization and fluency practice

**Aims:** to consolidate the new language by personalizing it; fluency practice

1. Demonstrate activity 8 by sharing your own personal sentence and inviting questions.
2. Give students three to four minutes to come up with some true sentences about themselves using the structure.
3. They should then share their sentences with a partner and discuss them (point out the example conversation on the worksheet). Allow five to ten minutes, then take some feedback.

### Role play

**Aims:** to give students an opportunity to use the new language in a freer communicative context; to assess the extent to which they have internalized it

1. Put students in pairs and give them five minutes to prepare for the role play.
2. While students do the role play, monitor to check whether students are successfully using the new language. Take notes on what the students are saying for use during a delayed feedback slot after the role play or at the start of the next lesson.

3. Let the more confident students act out their dialogue to the class.

### Optional activity – Quotes

**Aims:** to allow students further fluency practice by getting them to discuss quotes by famous people on the topic of mistakes and regrets; to give students the opportunity to talk about mistakes in their own lives

1. Give each student at least one slip of paper from the quotes cut outs handout. Tell students that they have half a quote and that they have to mingle and find the student with the other half of their quote.
2. Once the students have found their partner, read out the correct answers.

**Key:** *Forgive yourself for your faults and your mistakes and move on.; Success does not mean never making mistakes but never making the same mistake a second time.; I'm proud of my life. Although I've made many mistakes, I have no regrets.; Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes.; Do not fear mistakes. You will know failure.; There are no mistakes, only lessons.*

3. Give each student a quotes discussion handout and have pairs discuss the questions.
4. Take some class feedback.

### Optional homework – I should/shouldn't have ...

**Aim:** to use another skill (writing) to practise the target language in a personalized context

Ask students to write a short account of something they regret in their past. Suggest a few possible topics (education, career, romance, travel, etc) and set a word limit.

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In this lesson, you will learn ...

- ... how to talk about past mistakes and regrets;
- ... vocabulary for informal conversation.

### 1. Discuss these questions with a partner.

a. Have you ever been on a blind date?

If so, how did it go?

If not, would you ever go on a blind date? Why? Why not?

b. Which of the following activities do you think would be best for a blind date? Why?

- an expensive dinner
- the cinema
- a walk on the beach
- a picnic
- an extreme sport activity

### 2. Look at your role card and prepare to have a role play with your partner.

### 3. Listen to the real dialogue between Chris and Helen. Is it similar to yours?

### 4. Now, listen to the dialogue again and fill in the gaps.

**Helen:** So \_\_\_\_\_(1)?

**Chris:** Well, you know ... It wasn't exactly the *best* date I've ever had.

**Helen:** How come? What happened?

**Chris:** Nothing, really. I just don't think she was that \_\_\_\_\_(2).

**Helen:** Hmm. Well, let's see ... Where did you go?

**Chris:** I really couldn't think of a good place to go so we \_\_\_\_\_(3) at McDonald's.

**Helen:** Seriously? McDonald's for a first date? Come on! You should have gone somewhere nicer!

**Chris:** I guess so. But \_\_\_\_\_(4) really \_\_\_\_\_(5).

**Helen:** (*Sigh*) What did you wear?

**Chris:** My new Adidas tracksuit – the green one!

**Helen:** Are you serious? A tracksuit, on a date? You should have worn a shirt! You don't wear a tracksuit on a first date!

**Chris:** Why? I wanted to be comfortable! I hate wearing shirts.

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**Helen:** You have a lot to learn. Anyway ... What did you talk about?

**Chris:** Well, you know ... normal stuff – video games, mainly.

**Helen:** Does she like video games?

**Chris:** I don't know. I don't think so.

**Helen:** Then, why did you talk about video games? You should have talked about something you both like, not only what *you're* interested in!

**Chris:** Couldn't you have said all this *before* I \_\_\_\_\_(6)?

**Helen:** I thought all this was \_\_\_\_\_(7)! Anyway ... what about her? What does she do? What does she like?

**Chris:** I don't know.

**Helen:** You didn't ask her about herself? Come on, Chris, this is a disaster!

**Chris:** I didn't want it to seem like a job interview, asking her questions every five minutes!

**Helen:** Fine but you shouldn't have just talked about yourself the whole time! At least ask her something!

**Chris:** (*Phone rings*) It's Rachel! She's calling me! \_\_\_\_\_(8) (*Cough*) ... Hello? Hi Rachel ... Tomorrow? Yeah, that's fine! See you tomorrow, then! ... Ha, she wants to meet tomorrow!

### 5. Match the answers from activity 4 to the phrases with similar meanings below.

1. the ability to use good judgment and make sensible decisions
2. were in a particular place after doing something or because of doing it
3. interested in me
4. wait
5. how was it?
6. made myself look stupid
7. without a lot of money

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### 6. Complete the gaps using *should/shouldn't have* and the past participles of the following verbs.

wear	book	leave	watch	try (it) on	tell	study	choose
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- This romantic film is awful. We \_\_\_\_\_ a comedy.
- I'm freezing cold. I \_\_\_\_\_ shorts.
- She didn't do very well in the test. She \_\_\_\_\_ harder.
- That jacket is too small for you. You \_\_\_\_\_ before you bought it.
- I'm so angry with Michael. I told him a secret and now everyone knows. I \_\_\_\_\_ him.
- This hotel is too far from the centre. We \_\_\_\_\_ one with a better location.
- This traffic is terrible. I'm definitely going to be late for work. I \_\_\_\_\_ earlier.
- I'm not really enjoying studying business at university. I \_\_\_\_\_ psychology instead.

### 7. Work in pairs. Student A reads the first part of questions 1 to 8 in the last activity. Student B replies with the correct *should have* part. Swap roles halfway through.

e.g. **Student A:** This romantic film is awful. **Student B:** We should've watched a comedy.

### 8. Write a couple of *should/shouldn't have* sentences that are true for you. Then, read your sentences out to your partner and talk about them.

A: *I should have studied medicine at university.*

B: *Why didn't you?*

A: *Well, the main reason was my parents. They were both lawyers and wanted me to do the same as them. Then, another reason was ...*

### 9. Read the information in the box and spend five minutes planning a dialogue with your partner. Then, act it out to the class.

Maria has just come back from her holidays but she didn't have a good time. She is feeling quite disappointed. Her friend, Debbie, wants to find out what happened.

Maria was quite disorganized before and during her trip so Debbie is not surprised that she didn't enjoy it. Write a dialogue between Maria and Debbie, where Debbie asks Maria what went wrong and points out all her mistakes.

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### Student A – Chris

You've just been on a blind date. You don't think the girl liked you but you don't understand why. Obviously, you're not feeling great.

Your friend will ask you how your date was. Tell him/her that you don't think the girl liked you and tell him/her how you feel.

Then, your friend will ask you some more questions about the date. You will need the following information to answer his/her questions. Give reasons for what you did on the date.

- You took the girl to McDonald's.
- You wore your green Adidas tracksuit.
- You talked about your favourite video games during dinner.
- You didn't ask the girl any questions about herself.



### Student B – Helen

You are about to meet your friend, who has just been on a blind date. Ask him how the date was overall.

Then, ask him some questions to find out more about the date. Ask him:

- where he took her;
- what clothes he wore;
- what he talked about;
- if he asked the girl questions about herself.

If you think your friend made any mistakes on his date, tell him. For example, if he wore dirty clothes, was this a good idea? If not, suggest an alternative.

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Forgive yourself for your faults ...

... and your mistakes and move on.



Success does not mean never  
making mistakes ...

... but never making the same  
mistake a second time.

I'm proud of my life. Although I've  
made many mistakes, ...

... I have no regrets.

Experience is simply the name ...

... we give our mistakes.

Do not fear mistakes. ...

... You will know failure.

There are no mistakes, ...

... only lessons.



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1. Forgive yourself for your faults and your mistakes and move on.  
— Les Brown (American motivational speaker)
2. Success does not mean never making mistakes but never making the same mistake a second time.  
— George Bernard Shaw (Irish playwright)
3. I'm proud of my life. Although I've made many mistakes, I have no regrets.  
— Carly Fiorina (American businesswoman)
4. Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes.  
— Oscar Wilde (Irish writer)
5. Do not fear mistakes. You will know failure.  
— Benjamin Franklin (one of the Founding Fathers of the United States)
6. There are no mistakes, only lessons.  
— Denis Waitley (American motivational speaker)

- Which of the quotes do you like most? Why?
- Do you disagree with any of them?
- Have you ever learnt an important life lesson from a mistake you made?