

## The problem page: Teachers' notes and tips

### 1 Pre-writing tasks: personalising the topic and generating ideas

- a Write the word *teenager* on the board and ask students to define it.
- b Then ask students: *Who do teenagers have problems with?* Elicit: parents / brothers and sisters / teachers / boy or girlfriends / the police etc.
- c Then ask the students to tell each other what problems, if any, they had when they were teenagers and with who (or having if they are aged 13-19).

**Tip: beware of cultural differences**

Some cultures have better family relationships than others; if teenagers and older students have a good relationship with their parents see if they can explain why.

- d Meanwhile, monitor and help, and then get some open class feedback.
- e Now ask students, in pairs, to make a list of possible problems between parents and teenagers. See if they can find 5 each.
- f Board all ideas e.g. clothes / going out / pocket money / friends / music / free time v homework etc. Perhaps elicit *strict* and *mean*.

### 2 Pre-writing tasks: reading an example

- a If teenagers are having problems, who can they turn to for independent advice? Get ideas and if not suggested, mention writing to a magazine – has anyone written to a magazine for advice?!
- b Show a copy of the problem page, but don't let them read it, and explain that two teenagers have written in with their problems.
- c Hand out one copy of the page *folded in half as shown* to each pair and get students to read the problems – are they similar to the suggested ideas? (Or use an OHP and cover up the replies)

**Tip: always give a reason for reading**

Tasks are always more enjoyable if there is a good reason for doing them. Try to make it one that is similar to real life – it's natural to read an article and have an idea about what it will say.

- d What do the students think of the letters? Is it OK for a 14 year-old girl to go out all night? For 17 year-old boy to buy lots of CDs?
- e Now ask students, in pairs, to consider how Victoria may reply. Give them time for this and help with their ideas.

**Tip: encourage students to anticipate**

Giving students time to anticipate the content of what they will read promotes motivation and also makes it easier to understand the main points of the text.

- f Get open class feedback – do the students have the same ideas?
- g Now ask them to open up their sheets and read the replies – are they surprised? Do they agree with the suggestion she gives each teenager?

**Tip: get students to react to a text**

It's a natural response to agree or disagree with someone's advice. Is Victoria fair? Does she understand the teenagers or not? Does she support the parents more than the teenagers?

**3 Pre-writing tasks: focussing on structure**

- a Ask students to read the two problem letters again - can they find, and underline, similar ideas. (An OHP would be good for this too). Ask for feedback.
- b Students now do the same for the replies. Ask for feedback. Highlight use of *Why not (do this)?* as a natural way of giving a suggestion.

**4 Writing (and reading)**

- a The students now choose another problem (refer to ideas from the start of the lesson) and think about how they could write a letter.
- b **First draft:** Students, working in pairs still and looking at the example problem letters, make a rough copy. They should not be writing directly onto the worksheet but on another piece of paper.

**Tip: make it more challenging for stronger students**

Weaker students should be encouraged to keep to the same format; stronger ones can deviate but make sure they are still fairly accurate and not writing too much.

- c **Improving:** Students then swap their answers with another pair to look at and edit. Encourage helpful comments rather than criticisms.
- d **Final draft:** Students make any necessary changes with spelling, vocabulary or grammar and then write their letter onto the worksheet. Give each student a copy so that they can write the final draft individually.
- e Once everyone has finished the students give their worksheets to a different pair who read and decide how to answer the problem. Give them time to do this writing using 3 paragraphs *First,... Second,... and Why not...*

**Tip: give a reason for writing**

Students will be happy to write a reply to another pair's problem.

- f Letters are returned – are the students happy with Victoria's reply?

**5 Post-writing tasks: speaking**

- a Perhaps, using the problem and reply, students could pretend to be on a radio phone-in. One student is a DJ with professional advisors, and the other students take it in turns to phone in with their problems. Record it?

**Please note:**

This writing task is one of many that make up pages for *One World* magazine. When the students have finished this activity ask them to keep the page somewhere safe. In the future, when all the pages are written, the students will have an opportunity to design a front cover and put the pages together to make a complete magazine.