

Giving Advice

1 Before you begin What is an agony aunt? What kinds of letters do they get? Would you write to one? Why / why not?

2 Reading Read the four letters below, and match the title to the problem.



- Titles:**
- ◆ THE DIRTY RAT!**
 - ◆ I'M BORING**
 - ◆ CLASSROOM LOVE**
 - ◆ I'M GETTING FAT!**

A)

I'm 26, and I'm worried about my weight. Recently I've put on three kilos. I know I should eat healthy food, but salads are boring! I love fast food, such as hamburgers and pizza. Help me!

From Huge in Honolulu.

B)

Last night I was washing my husband's shirts, when I discovered bright red lipstick on a collar. It wasn't mine! I think he's seeing another woman. We have no children. Should I divorce him?

From Shocked in Seattle.

C)

Recently, I overheard some people who said that I was a boring old man. It's not true! But when I talk about my computer, and the apps on my phone, people run away. I'm 48 and single. Will I ever find a girlfriend?

From Single in Sydney

D)

I've recently started taking lessons with a beautiful English teacher. She's 28, single and has a wonderful smile. I'm in love with her, but I'm only 18, and I have really bad spots. I also have no confidence. Should I tell her how I feel?

From Shy in Seoul

3 Predicting What kind of advice do you think Aunt Jennifer gives? Work with a partner, and write some notes in the box below. Use your imagination!

4 Reading

Now read the Aunt Jennifer's replies. Which answer is for which problem? Write the name in the spaces.

A) Dear

Yes - divorce him today! You should also throw all his clothes into the trash, and put a virus on his computer. Why not get a good lawyer so you can take all his money?

B) Dear

No - you shouldn't date your teacher, even if she is beautiful. It's an awful idea. English teachers are poor and they drink too much. They also go back home after 18 months. Why not wait for your spots to go? You might meet someone much better.

C) Dear

I don't think you should worry about your weight so much. I think that lettuce and tomatoes are really boring as well. You should be fat and happy. Supermodels are really thin - but they all look miserable.

D) Dear

Yes, you are a very boring person indeed. Do you have any friends? You should change your life. Why don't you throw away your computer and get a better haircut? People might start liking you.

5 Your Reaction

Did you have the same advice as Aunt Jennifer? Do you think her advice is good? Ask your partner / group.

6 Your Turn

Write an agony-aunt style letter and answer in your group. Choose a problem which is different to those in the previous letters.

Giving Advice: Teaching Notes

Target Structure: Should, can, if I were you...

Vocabulary: General

Level: Elementary to Pre-intermediate

Time: 30 – 40 minutes

Preparation: None

Suggested Teaching Method

This is a light-hearted lesson dealing with giving advice. This lesson assumes that you have already taught the necessary structures, which may include:

- *You should*
- *You can*
- *If I were you I would*
- *Why don't you*

- 1 Follow the instructions. If students aren't sure, point out the picture of a newspaper.
- 2 You may wish to pre-teach some vocabulary: *See another woman, Overhear, Have bad spots*
Students should read the letters quickly and match the titles to the letters.
- 3 Follow the instructions. Students should work in pairs or small groups for five minutes or so. Hold a short feedback session afterwards.
- 4 Students should read the replies, and write the relevant name in the space for each reply.
- 5 You will find out here if you students have a sense of humour. After the students have discussed this in pairs / groups, hold a short feedback slot.
- 6 This could be done in the lesson, or set as homework.

Additional Idea : The Radio Show

Give students a few minutes to think of some problems. Ideas might include bad boyfriends, going bald, hating your job, hideous children etc. Students can perform a role-play with one person acting as a radio-show host, and the other students calling in with their problems.

Answers

- 2 A) I'm Getting Fat! B) The Dirty Rat!
C) I'm Boring D) Classroom Love
- 4 A) Shocked in Seattle B) Shy in Seoul
C) Huge in Honolulu D) Single in Sydney

How are we doing?

We'd be pleased to hear some feedback on our worksheets. Send your comments to the Editor at editor@handoutsonline.com.