

The Advice Exchange Game

Turn practice into play!

This engaging, interactive game gets students actively using advice-giving expressions they've learned—building confidence, reinforcing language skills, and having fun along the way.

Goal: To practice giving advice in English while listening carefully and responding to classmates' problems. Students will practice expressions such as: You should ..., You might consider ..., In my experience..., Would you be open to...?

Did you know? A pre-teaching lesson plan focused on expanding students' knowledge of expressions and giving advice without using "you should" is available on our website, www.esolwithtlc.com

Players: Students, in groups of four.

Materials: Each player receives 2 Problem Cards and 2 Advice Cards.

Rules: Players should not show their cards to other students.

How to Play:

- Ensure all of the game cards have been cut out and are ready to go - 16 "problem" cards and 16 "advice" cards.
- **To start the game:** Choose a player to begin.
- The first player reads one of their Problem Cards aloud to the group. Example: I have problems sleeping at night.
- **Matching Advice (1 Point):** Any player who has an Advice Card that matches the problem reads the advice aloud. Example: You should meditate before bed. If the advice matches the problem, the player places the card on the table and earns 1 point.
- **Creative Advice (2 Points – The Fun Part!):** Any player in the group can give their own advice using their own ideas (not a card). Example: Why don't you get comfortable and then do some deep breathing? If the player with the problem likes the advice, the student who offered it earns 2 points. The player with the problem can accept multiple pieces of advice. Each accepted piece of advice earns 2 points.
- **Next Player:** After everyone finishes giving advice, the next player reads one of their Problem Cards. When all of the problem cards have been used, the game is over.

Winning the Game:

At the end of the game, the player with the most points wins. 1 point = matching an advice card, 2 points = original advice that the player likes.

PROBLEM:

I have too many assignments. I'm overwhelmed and I will fail my class.

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PROBLEM:

A classmate says really mean things to me.

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PROBLEM:

I don't understand what my teacher is saying.

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PROBLEM:

I don't have any friends in class, and I don't feel like I belong in this class.

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PROBLEM:

I'm scared to speak in class.

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PROBLEM:

I have so many problems and no one to talk to.

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PROBLEM:

I'm fighting with one of my classmates about politics.

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PROBLEM:

I don't think I'll ever learn English. It's too difficult.

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PROBLEM:

I feel sad and lonely.

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PROBLEM:

I have no time for self care.

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PROBLEM:

I don't know why but I get angry so easily.

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PROBLEM:

I have problems sleeping at night.

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ADVICE:

You should just focus on one assignment at a time.

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ADVICE:

You should say mean things back. You don't deserve to be treated that way.

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ADVICE:

You should use your phone to translate everything your teacher is saying.

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ADVICE:

You should introduce yourself to one person in your class who looks friendly.

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ADVICE:

You should wait until you feel more comfortable to speak so just try to ignore the teacher.

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ADVICE:

You should ask your teacher if there is a councilor you can talk to at your school or tell your family doctor.

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ADVICE:

You should stop and observe your anger before you say or do anything.

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ADVICE:

You should encourage yourself like you might encourage a friend who is learning English.

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ADVICE:

You should reach out to a friend or family member to tell them you feel sad.

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ADVICE:

You should do one small thing for yourself, like sit outside for 5 minutes and enjoy a cup of tea.

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ADVICE:

You should stop and observe your anger before you say or do anything.

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ADVICE:

You should meditate before you go to bed.

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PROBLEM:

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ADVICE:

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The Advice Exchange: Sentence Starters

Try using some of these sentence starters when giving advice:

You could try ...

You might consider ...

Something that might work is ...

It could help to ...

One approach is to ...

Would you be open to ...?

How would you feel about ...?

In my experience ...



Transformational
Learning Communities

The Advice Exchange: Scoring Pad

_____ Name	_____ Name	_____ Name	_____ Name



The Advice Exchange: Teacher Tips!

1. Pre-Teach the Language:

Before starting the game, review several advice sentence starters so students feel confident speaking. Write them on the board or display them on a slide. For low-intermediate students, you may want to focus only on the expression “you should”. Examples: You should ..., You shouldn’t ..., Why don’t you ..., You could ..., If I were you, I would ..., and Maybe you should ... You may also want to model a few short problem–advice exchanges with the whole class before students begin playing.

Did you know? A pre-teaching lesson plan focused on expanding students’ knowledge of expressions and giving advice without using “you should” is available on our website, www.esolwithtcl.com

2. Support High-Beginner Learners or Lower-Intermediate Students:

Only provide the support sheet with the sentence starters if they are already familiar with “You should...”. Otherwise, only focus on giving advice with “You should...” Encourage short responses such as: “You should sleep earlier,” and “You could talk to your teacher.” The goal is participation and confidence, not perfect grammar.

3. Encourage Creative Speaking:

Remind students that the most interesting advice often comes from their own ideas. The extra points for creative advice motivate students to speak more and take risks with language. Students quickly discover that funny or thoughtful advice often earns the most points, which encourages spontaneous communication.

4. Circulate and Listen:

While students play, move around the room, and listen for: Good use of advice expressions, creative ideas, and students helping each other communicate. You can briefly pause the game to highlight excellent examples of language you hear.

5. Debrief the Activity:

After the game, ask students: What was the funniest advice you heard?, What was the best advice someone gave? Did you hear a new expression you liked? This short reflection helps students notice language and remember it.

6. Remember the Real Goal:

Although there is a point system, the real goal is communication and fluency. The game structure lowers pressure and gives every student a reason to speak. When students laugh, share ideas, and react to each other’s advice, they are practicing authentic communication—one of the most powerful ways to build confidence in English.