Sticky Situations

Tags: advanced, intermediate, second conditional

In the Sticky Situations ESL activity, students have to explain how they would deal with difficult/problematic situations.

**Setup**

Each student will need two or three small pieces of scrap paper. The papers should be big enough to write one or two sentences on.

**Activity**

1. Teach the meaning of the idiom ‘a sticky situation’.

2. Give the students one or two examples, e.g. *It’s the night before a big exam, and you haven’t studied at all,* or *You find out your boyfriend/girlfriend is cheating on you by reading their messages.*

3. Students write one sticky situation on each of their papers, in the present tense. Encourage students to be creative.

4. Students then either swap papers using the *Snowball Fight* technique, or draw folded papers at random out of a hat/box/bag, one at a time. If you have a large class, you could also divide into smaller groups at this point.

5. Students take turns reading a situation and explaining what they would do using in the second conditional. For example, *If my neighbour always played loud music, I would go and speak to them.*

6. Ask the class/group to say if they agree with each course of action. Encourage students to consider the consequences, e.g. *But if you wrote the answers on your arm, the teacher might see them!*
Target Language

The Sticky Situations ESL activity is a great way to practise the second conditional with higher intermediate levels, or even as a review for advanced students. Students should already be reasonably familiar with the grammar to facilitate conversation using this structure.