

eslactive

Worst Day Ever

Tags: [advanced](#), [future in the past](#), [intermediate](#), [modal verbs \(regret\)](#), [narrative tenses](#), [past simple](#), [third conditional](#)

In the Worst Day Ever ESL activity, students imagine a day when everything goes wrong, then describe what happened to a friend.

 2+  10-20 mins  None

Setup

Students will each need their notebooks or a piece of paper each.

Activity

1. Students imagine their worst possible day; if everything that could go wrong, went wrong. They write about what happened that day, using the target language.
2. Lower intermediate students could simply write a list of events. Higher intermediate students however should aim for a more continuous piece of writing. Advanced students could simply make a few notes and improvise the next part.
3. When they have finished, assign each student a partner. Students describe to each other what happened on their worst day ever.
4. One option is for the partner to be sympathetic. In this case they should interject with exclamations and questions like *Oh no! What happened next? What did you do?*
5. However, if your target language is modal verbs of past possibility/regret or the third conditional, the partner should be very unsympathetic. They should interject with judgements/past advice such as *Well it's your fault, if you hadn't woken up late you wouldn't have... and you should have...*

Target Language

The Worst Day Ever ESL activity works well with all intermediate level students, and could work as a review for advanced students too.

When the students describe what happened, they will need the [narrative tenses](#). At lower levels, you could just focus on the [past simple](#). But it is also great for incorporating the [past continuous](#), [past perfect simple](#) and [past perfect continuous](#) with higher levels too. You could even ask students to focus on how their plans were ruined, and write their descriptions using the [future in the past](#), e.g. *I was going to meet a friend for lunch, but...*

The students listening may interject with the past simple as well. However, you can also practise [modal verbs of regret](#) by telling the students to focus on what their partner could have or should have done differently (e.g. *you should have woken up earlier*).

Another option is to focus on the [third conditional](#). Students could list the events of the day as consequences, e.g. *If I hadn't woken up late, I wouldn't have arrived at work late.* Or the student listening could give 'helpful' advice in this form.