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# Level: Intermediate

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**What Bad Luck – Teacher’s Notes**

Age: Adult

Level: Intermediate

Time: 90 minutes

Language Area or Skill: Grammar. Reading. Vocabulary. Writing. Speaking.

Objective: By the end of the lesson, students will be able to read and understand sentences in the third conditional as well as accurately and appropriately use them correctly themselves.

Materials: One copy of the student worksheet per student.

Procedure

1) Warmer: superstitions

Begin by inviting the class to discuss the topic of superstition. Establish whether the students have an understanding of the word and if so, ask them to give an example of a superstition. If not, provide an example from the student worksheet.

Hand out page one of the student worksheet. Have the students discuss the superstitions in pairs, deciding where they think the superstitions originate from and whether they believe they actually bring good or back luck. Once they have finished, ask them to discuss the superstitions from their own cultures or countries.

For more advanced students, share with them the origins of some of these superstitions.

*Key:*

*Things that bring bad luck:*

* *Walking under a ladder: Originates from the medieval times. People used to think that a ladder leaning against a wall looked like the gallows. People avoided walking underneath it because they thought if they did, they too would die at the gallows.*
* *Seeing one magpie: Magpies have long been associated with death, since in medieval times they were seen scavenging near hospitals, battlefields and the gallows in search of carrion. Over time, this morphed into the idea that seeing a magpie will bring you bad luck (seeing two, however, will bring good luck!).*
* *Putting new shoes on a table: This originates from the North of England and is related to coal mining. When a miner died, their family would place their shoes on a table as a tribute. Thus, placing shoes on a table was seen as a harbinger of death.*
* *Opening an umbrella inside: This dates back to the Victorian times, when umbrellas were made out of rigid steel spokes and opening one in doors could cause serious injury.*

*Things that bring good luck:*

* *Getting pooed on by a bird: Even though there are a lot of seagulls in the UK, you’re apparently more likely to win the lottery than be pooed on by a bird. It is therefore seen as lucky when it does happen!*
* *Coming across a black cat: It is not completely clear where this particularly British superstition comes from, but it is known that sailors used to opt for black cats on their ships as they were thought to bring luck. Likewise their wives would keep black cats at home too, in the hopes that they would protect their husbands at sea.*
* *Finding a four-leafed clover: Again, it is very rare to find a four-leafed clover, so coming across one is a very lucky treat! What’s more, according to Irish tradition, each leaf represents the omens for faith, hope, love and luck for whoever finds it.*

2) Vocabulary

Hand out page two of the student worksheet. You are going to read an article with the students but before you begin, have students complete exercise two, in preparation for the upcoming new vocabulary.

Get students to check their answers in pairs, then feed back as a group.

*Key: 1. d), 2. f), 3. a), 4. g), 5. b), 6. c), 7. e)*

3) Reading and comprehension check

Before the students read the article, give them two minutes to read the true/false statements in exercise three.

Now hand out the article “EuroMillions Player ‘Heartbroken’ after Finding Error Cost Her £182m Lottery Jackpot” and ask the students to read it by themselves.

Once they have finished, have students answer the true/false questions.

Get students to check their answers in pairs, then feed back as a group.

*Key: a) false, b) true, c) false, d) true, e) true, f) false*

4) Grammar practice

Write the following sentence on the board: “If the payment had gone through, they would have won the lottery”. Check students’ understanding of this third conditional sentence. Explain to the students that in using this grammatical construction, we are describing a hypothetical, unreal thing in the past that did not really happen.

Explain how to form the third conditional (i.e. if + past perfect, would + present perfect), including contractions and the negative form. For stronger students, add that “would” can be replaced with “could” and “might”.

Hand out page three. Put students into pairs and have them complete exercise four, writing down as many third conditional sentences about the article as possible.

For stronger students and to make it a bit more fun, you can turn this into a little competition to see which pair can think of the most sentences. Encourage students to be as creative as possible. If they are stuck, suggest they break away from the details of the article and add some details about the couple of their own!

Have students check their answers with another pair, then feed back as a group.

*Key: Students’ answers will vary.*

*Suggested answers:*

* *If Rachel had had money in her bank account, the ticket sale would have gone through.*
* *If Liam had bought the ticket, they wouldn’t have had problems with buying the ticket.*
* *If Rachel had bought the ticket with cash in a shop, they would/might have won the lottery.*
* *If Rachel and Liam hadn’t used their regular numbers, they wouldn’t have experienced this whole ordeal.*
* *If Rachel hadn’t called the lottery phone number, she wouldn’t have found out about not winning the lottery.*
* *If Rachel and Liam had won the lottery, they wouldn’t have given a penny to Rachel’s mum.*
* *If Rachel had won the lottery, she would/could/might have quit studying and moved to Barbados.*
* *If Rachel and Liam hadn’t bought so many lottery tickets, they would have saved a lot of money.*

5) Student game

Put the students into groups of two or three and ask them to think of a name for their team. Write the team names on the board.

Tell them you are going to complain about some problems you have had recently (see list below) and you would like some advice. You will read one of the problems out and each team has two minutes to write as many pieces of advice for you as possible. Demonstrate the activity with one of the stronger students in the class.

After the two minutes are up, students can swap their papers with another pair/group for their answers to be checked. One point is awarded for each correct answer. Write the points on the board and whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins!

If students make any mistakes using the third conditional sentences at this stage, be sure to correct them.

Teacher’s problems:

1. When I was on holiday two weeks ago I got sunburnt.
2. On Monday I missed the train to work and I arrived late.
3. This morning I spilt coffee all down my front.
4. I got a nosebleed this morning.
5. Last Wednesday I found rats in my flat.
6. Last week I accidentally smashed my brand new iPhone on the floor.
7. Wow, look at this picture of me at the wedding! I had really big bags under my eyes.

*Key: Students’ answers will vary.*

*Suggested answers:*

1. *If you hadn’t spent all day in the sun, you wouldn’t have gotten sunburnt. If you had worn sun cream, you wouldn’t have gotten sunburnt.*
2. *If you had set your alarm, you wouldn’t have missed the train to work and arrived late. If you hadn’t gone to that party on Sunday evening, you wouldn’t have arrived late to work.*
3. *If you had been more careful, you wouldn’t have spilt coffee all down your front. If you hadn’t been running around the office with your coffee in your hand, you wouldn’t have spilt it all down your front.*
4. *If you hadn’t gotten into a fight with that boxer, you wouldn’t have had a nosebleed. If you hadn’t had the radiators turned on all night, you wouldn’t have had a nosebleed.*
5. *If you had cleaned your flat more thoroughly, you wouldn’t have found rats there. If you had not left food lying around your kitchen, you wouldn’t have found rats in your flat.*
6. *­If you had been more careful, you wouldn’t have smashed your iPhone on the floor. If you had bought an iPhone case, you wouldn’t have smashed your iPhone on the floor.*
7. *If you had worn more make-up, you wouldn’t have had those really big bags under your eyes. If you hadn’t been so stressed out about the wedding, you wouldn’t have had big bags under your eyes.*

6) Homework/extension exercise – writing

Either as homework or as an extension exercise for more advanced students, have the class write about their “biggest regret”. Ask them to write up to 500 words about something that they really regret. They must include some third conditional sentences in their texts.

*Key: Students’ answers will vary.*