

COMMUNICATION

Dealing with a dilemma

LEVEL

Intermediate (B1)

NUMBER


EN_B1_3081X

LANGUAGE

English



Learning outcomes

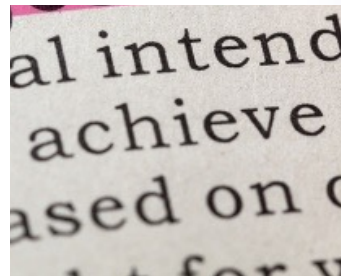
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- I can recognise and recall a range of vocabulary to describe a dilemma.
 - I can explain how I'd respond to a dilemma using the second conditional.



Warm-up

1. **Write** your own definition of *a dilemma*.
2. **Share** definitions in breakout rooms or as a class.
3. **Agree on** one definition together.

- *For me, a dilemma is when...*
- *If someone is in a dilemma, they...*





Reading

1. **Read** Tim's forum post.
2. **Explain** his dilemma in one or two sentences.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "www.askusanything.com". The page title is "Forum: Ask us anything!". The main content area contains a forum post by a user named Tim. The post is divided into two columns of text. The left column describes Tim's friend Martin's financial difficulties, including losing his job and being threatened with eviction. The right column describes Martin's dilemma about whether to tell the police about a robbery or keep the money to pay rent, and asks for advice.

Forum: Ask us anything!

My best friend (let's call him Martin) is going through a tough time at the moment. Three months ago, his old company had to let him go due to budget cuts and he's been out of work ever since. Now his landlord is threatening to evict him if he keeps falling behind on his rent.

Two days ago, he told me he'd broken into his old office and stolen a lot of expensive equipment that wasn't being used. He said he'd run out of savings and desperately

needed the money to pay his rent.

We've known each other for 25 years and he made me promise not to tell anyone about it. Martin has no family and said I'm the only person he's told about it.

The police have started investigating the robbery. They've offered a £10,000 reward for information. What should I do? Keep quiet or tell the police?

- Tim



Reading comprehension

- 1. **Read** the statements about the text.
- 2. **Decide** if they are true or false.

		True	False
1	Martin lost his job because his employer moved to a different country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Martin is currently at risk of losing his home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Martin took a pile of money from a safe at the office.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Tim promised to keep Martin's crime a secret.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Tim could earn £10,000 by sharing Martin's secret with the police.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





Find the definition

Match the vocabulary from the text (1-5) with the definition (a-e).

1 **out of work**

2 **to threaten**

3 **robbery**

4 **reward**

5 **to break into**

a to enter a building illegally, usually to steal something

b the crime of stealing from someone or somewhere

c an amount of money given to someone for helping the police

d without a job

e to warn that something unpleasant or unwanted will happen



Re-tell the story

1. **Choose** one of the words below. Which part of the story does it relate to?
2. **Work** as a class. **Re-tell** the story together.



out of work



to threaten



to break into



robbery



reward

Martin lost his job a few months ago and ever since then...

One night, Martin decided to...



Responding to a dilemma

1. **Read** the comments under Tim's post.
2. **Answer** the questions in the red box.



Who thinks Tim
should keep it a secret?

Who thinks Tim
should tell the police?

@michaelp95

Gosh! If I were in your shoes, I wouldn't know what to do either. Having said that, one thing I do know is that you made a promise, and not to just anyone... He's your best friend of 25 years! You could end up losing Martin as a friend if he ever found out that you'd broken his promise.

@complicateddreamer

That's a tough one! On the one hand, he was in a really tricky situation and did what he had to do. On the other hand, he committed a crime and deserves to be punished for it. If I found myself in your position, I'd probably choose honesty over friendship.



On the one hand,
Martin was in a really
tricky situation and did
what he had to do.

On the other hand,
he committed a crime
and deserves to be
punished for it.

We use these two phrases together to
show **we see two different sides** to a
story.



**Having said that, one thing
I do know is that you made
a promise...**



This phrase means ***despite what I just said***. We use it to add an opposite opinion.



Reviewing the second conditional

1. **Read** the example from the text.
2. **Review** the formula and grammar explanation below.

**If I found myself in your position,
I'd probably choose honesty over friendship.**

Second conditional

If + past simple,



would / wouldn't



infinitive
without 'to'

- We use the second conditional to talk about **imaginary situations**, present or future.
- We use it to say how we think we **would** or **would not** act in that situation.

Reviewing the second conditional

1. **Read** the example from the text.
2. **Review** the formula and grammar explanation below.

You could end up losing Martin as a friend
if he ever found out that you'd broken his promise.

Second conditional

Could / couldn't



infinitive
without 'to'



if + past simple

- We can also put the **if clause at the end** of the sentence. If so, we remove the comma.
- We use **could** when we are **less certain** about the consequences.



What would you do if you were Tim?

Answer using the second conditional. **Give a reason** for your answer.

Keep the secret?



or

Tell the police?



Practising the second conditional

Choose the correct form of the verb and **form** a second conditional sentence.

1 If I _____ (*know*) the answer, I _____ (*tell*) you straight away.

2 They _____ (*consider*) stealing if they _____ (*be*) really desperate for money!

3 _____ (*help, you*) me out if I _____ (*ask*) you to?

4 If she _____ (*get*) a better job, she _____ (*feel*) much happier.

5 He _____ (*be*) extremely angry if he ever _____ (*discover*) the truth!

Exploring dilemmas

1. **Read** the situations below. **Decide** what you would do in each one and **why**.
2. **Choose** one and **ask** a classmate how they would respond and their reasons why.
3. **Repeat** until everyone has spoken at least once.

Dilemma 1

You're at a party with your best friend. They have too much to drink and won't let you drive them home. Do you stay or leave?

Dilemma 2

When making a purchase at a local shop, you are given too much change. Do you say something or keep quiet?

Dilemma 3

Your boss often tells offensive jokes that make you feel uncomfortable. Do you say something or just laugh along with him?

Dilemma 4

You receive a package that was delivered to the wrong address. The label shows it's a favourite item that you can't afford to buy. Do you keep it or notify the person it belongs to?

Dilemma 5

You're at a restaurant and see a friend's spouse having dinner with a young, attractive person. They behave very affectionately when they say goodbye. Do you tell your friend or not?



End of the lesson

Idiom

caught between a rock and a hard place

Meaning: where you have to choose between two things, both of which are unpleasant

Example: I absolutely hate my job but need the money to survive. I'm caught between a rock and a hard place.



Additional practice



Fill in the gaps

Complete the sentences using the phrases in the red box.

- 1 _____, I think it's better to do a job that you love.
_____, you do need to make money to live.
- 2 Sharla has been _____ for almost a year since the restaurant she worked at closed down.
- 3 He is offering a big _____ for any information about where his car might be.
- 4 It's not a very interesting job. _____, it pays well and I get to spend a lot of time with my family so it's not that bad.
- 5 Pete knows I cheated on the exam and he's _____ to tell the teacher.

out of work
On the one hand
Having said that
threatening
reward
On the other hand





Match the sentences

Match the sentence beginnings (1-5) with the correct ending (a-e).

1 I could imagine her threatening to call the police...

2 If I were you,

3 Even if we looked for a job all day, every day,

4 Would you give me some advice...

5 They would be much better off...

a we wouldn't find anything because no one is hiring.

b if they didn't spend so much money on clothes.

c if I told you what's happened?

d if she were really angry.

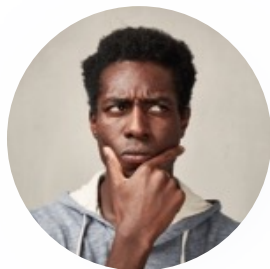
e I wouldn't tell him. Some things are better as a secret.





Responding to a dilemma

1. **Choose** one of the dilemmas below.
2. **Discuss** with a partner: What advice would you give this person?



Your friend has been offered a job that they would love to do. But the pay is very low, and they have two children are planning to have a third. They are bored in their current job but their salary is very good. Should they take the new job?



Kelly has been in a long-distance relationship for two years. She's just finished university. She had promised to move to be with her partner. But she's been offered a great job in the city she lives in. Her partner also has a job they love and doesn't want to move. What should Kelly do?



Giving advice

1. **Read** the quotation.
2. **Answer** the questions in the red boxes.

“

Sometimes it's better not to give someone advice. You should keep quiet and let them decide themselves.

Do you agree with the quotation?

Can you give an example of when it would be better not to give someone advice?

Can you think of a situation when you would rather not get advice?





Answer key

P. 5: 1. F, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. T

P. 6: 1d, 2e, 3b 4c, 5a

P. 14: 1. knew, would tell; 2. would consider, were; 3. Would you help, asked; 4. got, would feel; 5. would be, discovered

P. 19: 1. On the one hand – On the other hand, 2. out of work, 3. reward, 4. Having said that, 5. threatening

P. 20: 1d, 2e, 3a, 4c, 5b



Summary

Describing dilemmas and problems:

- out of work, robbery, reward
- to threaten, to break into

Showing sides of an argument:

- On the one hand
- On the other hand
- Having said that

Reviewing the second conditional:

- We use the second conditional to talk about **imaginary situations**, present or future.
- We say how we think we **would** or **would not** act in that situation.
- Structure: if + past simple, would/wouldn't + infinitive without 'to'

Second conditional with *could*:

- We use **could** when we are **less certain** about the consequences.
- Structure: could/couldn't + infinitive without 'to', if + past simple



Vocabulary

out of work

to threaten

robbery

reward

to break into

on the one hand

on the other hand

having said that...

