

The Old Man and his Garden

Aims: To review and practice the 3rd Conditional within a Task-based framework.

To develop speaking skills in the context of storytelling.

To develop listening for detail in the context of following a narrative

Length of lesson: 45mins

Level/age: C1 Advanced

Language: *What would you have done? We would have etc.*

Materials: The *Old Man and his Garden* letters.

Preparation: None

Procedure:

Warmer: Brainstorm what problems old people face if they live alone.

Divide them into physical and psychological.

1. Teacher reads the first paragraph of the story '*The Old Man and his Garden*' to the students. What do you think the old man said in his letter?
Students discuss in gps, Then T reads letter to check.
2. T tells sts the son had a plan. What do you think it was? Sts discuss again in their groups
3. Teacher reads the son's first letter. Groups discuss: Is he telling the truth? If not, what is his intention?
4. Teacher reads the next paragraph. Groups discuss: What had the son's plan been? What do you think he said in his second letter?
5. Teacher reads the son's second letter to check.
6. Teacher sets discussion topic 1: 'What would you have done if you'd been Vincent?' Groups come up with one good idea each.
7. Feedback on good examples of emergent language. Error correction as appropriate. Drill examples of 3rd Conditional, with contractions. Check concept of 'imaginary past'. Board and analyse structure.

8. Teacher sets discussion topic 2: What would you have done if you'd been the head of the FBI team?
9. Feedback on good examples of emergent language. Error correction as appropriate.

Contributed by David Birch, Edinburgh
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THE OLD MAN AND HIS GARDEN

An old man lived alone in New Jersey. He wanted to plant his annual tomato garden, but it was very difficult work, as the ground was hard. His only son, Vincent, who used to help him, was in prison. The old man wrote a letter to his son and described his predicament:

Dear Vincent

I am feeling pretty sad, because it looks like I won't be able to plant my tomato garden this year. I'm just getting too old to be digging up a garden plot. I know if you were here my troubles would be over. I know you would be happy to dig the plot for me, like in the old days.

Love

Dad

A few days later he received a letter from his son.

Dear Dad

Don't dig up that garden. That's where the bodies are buried.

Love

Vincent

At 4 a.m. the next morning, FBI agents and local police arrived and dug up the entire area without finding any bodies. They apologized to the old man and left. That same day the old man received another letter from his son.

Dear Dad

You can go ahead and plant the tomatoes now. That's the best I could do under the circumstances.

Love you,

Vincent

(Adapted from *Planted Evidence* available at www.snopes.com)