

It's a Heat Wave

Eight Short Argument Role-plays

Level: pre-intermediate - intermediate

Aim: a speaking activity with emphasis on oral fluency; students role play a series of arguments that all take place on a hot summer's day.

Language point: expressions to use for getting angry.

Note: Try using these role plays on a really hot day. It will allow your students to unwind and let off steam! Tell the teacher next door before you do this activity!

Warmer

Write the words *Heat Wave* on the board. What do people understand by Heat Wave? A heat wave is a continuous period of hot weather. Are heat waves common where the students come from? At what temperature would students consider they are in a heat wave? (note: there may be some variation in the answers here; a heat wave for an English person may be radically different than for a Mexican, Spanish or Turkish person!) What usually happens during a heat wave. Elicit examples of things that happen. Doctors say that during heat waves people become more irritable and likely to get into arguments.

Stage one:

Set up the situation. It is the middle of a heat wave in a big city. Each pair of students will be given a role card with a situation and some language on it. They have five minutes to prepare their role play. The role play must last at least one minute and they must incorporate the expressions on their role cards (for this part they have to decide who says the expression!). They mustn't tell anyone else what their expressions are. Circulate and help students with the meanings of their expressions. There are eight different role play cards. If you have less than sixteen students, choose the ones you think will be best in the situations. If you have more than sixteen students, repeat some of the situations.

Stage Two

Pairs perform their mini role play in front of the class. So that the class pays attention, give them the following task: they must try to "spot" the expressions that were on the card and record them in their notebooks. After each role play, see if the class can find the expression!

Stage Three

After all the role plays are finished, do a quick review of the new language that came out. You might want to pick up on an interesting use of language you heard, or students' errors. Do any of the situations seem familiar to the students? Has anything like this happened to them before?

Variations

For more or less advanced learners, vary the preparation time and presentation time. For lower students give them more language to get them started, for example the first two lines of dialogue (this requires a little more preparation on your part). Very creative classes could make up their own situations for role play.

If you have an odd number of students, make a group of three with the family role play situation.

Taboo variation: Of course, in a native speaker argument, the expressions might be made a little more "colourful" with intensifiers (see below). To make the activity more realistic you might suggest some of these. If you do teach your students "bad" words, discuss the issue first! They should know when these are acceptable and when not. Some teachers (and students) might feel that swearing is never acceptable and certainly not in class, while others not. Only use these if you as a teacher are comfortable doing this and that there is no objection in your school or by your students!

Expressions for getting angry (stronger variations)

You've got a **damn** nerve!

It's not my fault goddammit!

Your attitude really pisses me off!

I don't believe this! It's **bloody** ridiculous!

I'm tired of getting all the shit jobs!

I'M NOT **BLOODY** SHOUTING!

It's a Heat Wave

Role Cards

It's A Heat wave!

A: You are waiting in line to buy an ice cream. You turn around to talk to someone and when you turn back, **B** has stepped in front of you.

B: A friend was holding your place for you before A arrived.

Expression:

"You've got a nerve!"

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A & B: You are a couple driving to see some friends outside of town. When the car breaks down. You are alone on a deserted road. **A** was supposed to take the car to a garage for servicing last week but forgot.

Expression:

"It's not my fault!"

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A: You are an English teacher on a summer course. **B** is always late for class and never listens to you.

B: Your parents are making you take a stupid English course this summer. It is boring. You want to be with your friends.

Expression: **"This is the last time. I'm warning you!"**

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A: You are taking your child to a big theme park, but it is time to go. You don't want to spend another 30 minutes waiting to go on a ride.

B: You really want to go on the giant roller-coaster. It's the best ride in the park and your parents want to leave.

Expression:

"That's it! I've had enough!"

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A: You bought a train ticket two minutes ago, but you realise now that you gave the wrong date. You want to change your ticket.

B: A bought a non-refundable train ticket. They cannot make changes or get their money back.

Expression: **"I don't believe it. This is ridiculous!"**

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A: You are going out for an evening walk with your girlfriend. When she arrives, you think she is wearing inappropriate clothes.

B: Your boyfriend is very jealous. He doesn't like it when other boys look at you. He is also paranoid.

Expression: **"Your attitude really bugs me!"**

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A & B: You both work in a nice cool shop, but one of you has to go outside and clean the front windows (a 30 minute job!) You can't agree who has to go outside.

Expression:

"I'm tired of getting all the bad jobs!"

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A: You came to the clinic because you have a stomach-ache. A nurse told you that someone would see you in 10 minutes. You have been waiting for 45 minutes.

B: You are the nurse.

Expression:

"I'M NOT SHOUTING!"