

## IF I WERE A GHOST, I'D ONLY EAT VEGETABLES

**Purpose:** The conditional form is useful, everyday language that is often needed for success with the independent speaking and writing questions on the TOEFL® iBT test. This activity will help your students strengthen their ability to use accurate conditionals in speaking and writing.

**Organization:** Whole class

**Preparation:** Two index cards per student

**Time:** 20-30 minutes

### Procedure:

1. Give students an index card and ask them to write a *Wh-* question using a present “unreal” or contrary-to-fact conditional. (Other kinds of conditionals can be used, but this one is the most fun.) You may want to focus the questions on a topic or theme(s) they have studied in class. Model questions on the board, e.g.,
  - ∞ What would you do if you won the lottery?
  - ∞ If you could say something to the whole world, what would you say?
  - ∞ If you could be someone else for a day, who would you be?
2. Students write their questions on their question card. As they write, walk around and check for grammatical accuracy and clarity.
3. Collect, shuffle and re-distribute the question cards so that each student has someone else’s question.
4. Give students a second blank index card.
5. Instruct students to write an answer to the question they received on this answer card. Again, as they write, check for grammar and (more important) clarity. Some grammatical inaccuracy related to conditionals can be overlooked at this point. They will correct errors later.
6. Collect the question cards and the answer cards separately. Shuffle both piles. Distribute one question and one answer to each student.
7. Ask students to stand up with their two cards.
8. Instruct them to mingle—walk around the room. Students will ask each other the question the on their question card. (This is an excellent time to teach: Read, Look up, and Speak.) After being asked a question, students will say the answer on their answer card. If the

- question and answer match, the person who asked the question takes possession of the two matching cards and returns to his or her seat. Note that students should never show what is on their cards. They should listen for a match or, often, a very humorous mismatch.
9. Continue until all students are seated again.
  10. In pairs have students check the grammar of the answers on the answer cards. As they do this, walk around the room addressing questions individually or on the board for the class, as needed.
  11. Again, collect the question cards and the answer cards separately. Shuffle both piles. Distribute one question and one answer to each student. Repeat Step 7 for a new round of silliness.

### **Follow-Up:**

1. Ask students to take out a piece of paper and a pen or pencil. Tell them they are going to hear some questions with conditionals in them. They are to write answers in complete sentences, using the conditional. They should not write the question. Note that students answers may vary—as long as they answer the question in content and form. Grammatical accuracy and clarity of idea are what's important.
2. Shuffle the question cards.
3. Ask 5-10 questions, pausing for students to think and write answers. Repeat each question only twice: the first time slowly, and the second time at a more natural rate.
4. After all of the questions have been answered, have students compare answers in pairs and adjust their answers.
5. Read each question again to give students a chance to make adjustments.
6. Allow time for students to check with a partner again briefly.
7. Collect their writing to give additional feedback.

For further practice, find ETS or textbook samples of independent speaking and writing task questions that utilize the conditional. Practice using the conditional to answer them.