

Activity Type

Listening and speaking activity, pair work

Focus

Softening complaints

Aim

To soften complaints using 'not very' plus positive adjective and 'rather' plus negative adjective'.

Preparation

Make one copy of the cards for each pair of students and cut as indicated. Keep the white and grey cards separate.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

25 minutes

Introduction

In this making complaints speaking activity, students learn how to soften complaints using 'not very' and 'rather'.

Procedure

Write the following on the board:

Excuse me, but ... is incredibly slow!

Ask the class to suggest noun phrases that could complete the sentence.

Example: Excuse me, but this computer is incredibly slow.

Explain how complaints can be softened by using 'not very + positive adjective' (e.g. not very fast) or 'rather + negative adjective' (e.g. rather slow)

Examples: Excuse me, but this computer is not very fast.
Excuse me, but this computer is rather slow.

Next, divide the students into pairs (Student A and B).

Give Student A a set of (white) strong adverb-adjective collocation cards and Student B a set of (grey) positive and negative adjective cards.

Review the adverbs and adjectives on the cards.

Tell the students to shuffle their set of cards and place them face down in a pile in front of them.

Student B takes the top nine cards from their pile and places them face up on the table in a three by three square.

Student A takes the top card from their pile and makes a complaint using the vocabulary on the card.

If Student B has an adjective in their square that can be used to soften the complaint, they say the softened complaint and turn the card over.

Student A then takes another card and the process is repeated.

When Student B has three cards turned over in a row (vertically, horizontally or diagonally), the students change roles.

Have the students play several rounds to practice the language.



incredibly slow	extremely rude	extremely expensive	incredibly greedy
deeply offensive	totally useless	unbearably hot	absolutely freezing
absolutely disgusting	incredibly boring	downright lazy	absolutely filthy
absolutely horrible	unbelievably stupid	incredibly ignorant	absolutely terrifying
fast	impolite	costly	hungry
insulting	helpful	cool	cold
nice	interesting	hardworking	dirty
good	intelligent	knowledgeable	frightening