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UNEX Developing Written Skills

Title: magazine columns

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Title: Magazine columns

Keywords: #writing short messages, # advices

Duration: ~25 mins / depending on the students' level of knowledge

Description:

The main idea of this task is to provoke students to write letters/short messages and answers in "advice columns" in magazines or newspapers. The topic of the columns can be different, depending on the studied subject, e.g. English, information technology, biology, geography etc. For example "Ask the doctor", "Ask the IT Master" etc. The teacher chooses the topics of the columns. After a short discussion, students write short letters/messages to one of the columns, sharing their problems, asking for advice. Then, the teacher mixes the messages, and in groups students write replies.

Objectives:

1. developing students' writing skills;
2. writing short messages;
3. developing the abilities to share problems, giving advices and expressing personal opinion.

Activities:

1. The teacher (T) chooses four topic of columns (advice rubrics) from magazines or newspapers and writes them on the board. T explains what is their idea – readers write short letters (messages) to a specialist, sharing a problem they have, asking for advice. In the next copy an answer from the specialist is posted, with some pieces of advice for each letter.
2. T writes on the board the titles of four advice columns. Students discuss together what kind of problem may readers share. For example in "Ask D-r Queen", they can be connected with health problems.
3. Students choose one column and write a short message, sharing their problem/problems asking for advice. They can be signed with nicknames or initials.
4. The class is divided into four groups, representing each team of specialists for each column. T spreads the letters to the corresponding team. It's important not to give a student his own letter.
5. Students write short answers to the letter they have just read.
6. At the end of the activity T chooses one letter and its answer for each column and reads them to the students. The class decides how both writing are done.

