



Before watching:

A faux pas /ˌfoʊˈpɑː/ is, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, words or behavior that are a social mistake or not polite. You can say *make a faux pas*, *make a gaffe* /gæf/, *put your foot in it*, *put your foot in your mouth*.

Tell a partner:

- a. About a faux pas you (or somebody you know) have made and what you did when you realized it.
- b. How, in your opinion, you can avoid gaffes.

While watching:

- a. Chandler’s colleague really puts her foot in it in the passage you’ll now watch. Watch the excerpt and then, together with a partner, summarize it in writing.

-----Fold here

- b. Watch it again and decide if the questions have rising (r) or falling (f) intonation. Why?

Shelly: Hey, gorgeous! **How’s it going?** ()

Chandler: Dehydrated Japanese noodles under fluorescent lights. **Does it get any better than this?** ()

Shelly: Question: You’re not dating anybody, **are you?** () Because I met somebody who would be perfect for you.

Chandler: Ah, you see, perfect might be a problem. Had you said codependent or self-destructive...

Shelly: **You want a date Saturday?** ()

Chandler: Yes, please.

Shelly: Ok. He is cute, he is funny, he’s –

Chandler: **He’s a he?** ()

Shelly: Well, yeah. Oh, God. I just... I... You’re nice. Oh, God! Good, Shelly! Ok, I’m just gonna go flush myself down the toilet now. Ok, bye-bye!

**After watching:**

- a. Practice the questions in the dialog with the correct intonation and then the opposite intonation.
- b. What's the difference in meaning in each case? How could that change the answers received?



Teacher's notes:

Introduction:

The main objective of this activity – apart from entertaining students, changing the pace of the lesson a bit and providing exposure to authentic (-ish) use of the language – is to clarify and exemplify the difference between rising and falling intonation for questions in English.

Gerald Kelly, in his book *How to Teach Pronunciation* (Pearson, 2000), says the following about the connection between grammar and intonation:

“Many attempts have been made to show connections between intonation patterns and particular types of grammatical structure, and the following list shows some of these. The reader will find it easy to say these examples in other ways; it should be remembered **that these are generalizations rather than rules**. They can, however, help in giving students guidance in making appropriate choices in regard to intonation.

Information questions with Who, what, where, etc.: Falling intonation (if being asked for the first time), e.g. *What's your name? What's the time? Where do you live?*

Questions expecting a 'yes/no' answer: Rising (*Is it the blue one? Have you got a pen?*)

(...)

Question tags expecting confirmation: Falling (*You're French, aren't you? He's very tall, isn't he?*)

Question tags showing less certainty: Rising (*You're French, aren't you? Your train leaves at six, doesn't it?*)”

(p. 89)

This could be clarified to students based on examples or, in the case of Brazilian students, for example, where the intonation patterns are very similar, you can first have students predict what the intonation will be and then check while watching the passage.

Suggested Procedure:

Lead-in: Tell students about a faux pas you've made. Have them do the pre watching activity in pairs. Check with group.

While watching: Tell them they'll watch a short extract from *Friends* in which a colleague suggests arranging a blind date for Chandler. Ask them who they think made the faux pas and what it could have been.

After students have watched the video for the first time, have them, dictogloss-style, try and summarize what happened in the passage in written form.

Have students swap accounts and – rapport allowing – correct one another's summaries. Have groups take turns to read their summaries.

Have students unfold the worksheet. They now look at the dialog and try to predict the intonation patterns.

Watch a second time to check.

Correct with group, explaining rules/clarifying as needed (see excerpt from *How to Teach Pronunciation* above).

After watching:

You can have students practice the dialog, taking turns as Chandler and Shelly. They can then try it out again changing the intonation patterns and trying to respond appropriately.

Possible changes:

You're not dating anybody, are YOU? – Chandler would probably feel like he had to answer the question: *'No, I'm not!'*

HE'S a he? – It would sound like he was just confirming the information (and not asking whether she'd make a mistake!), to which she could've said, *'Yes, of course'*

Phonology Key:

Hey, gorgeous! How's it going? (r) – Information question

Does it get any better than this? (f) – Rhetorical question (just expecting confirmation, or no answer)

Question: You're not dating anybody, are you? (f) – Question tag, expecting confirmation

Do you want a date Saturday? (f) – Question (similarly to a question tag) – expecting confirmation

He's a he? (r) – Question (similarly to a question tag) – showing less certainty (shocked!)

Thanks for downloading this activity! Let me know how it went in case you use it! ☺
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