



11 Role Play Scenarios that Encourage English Students to Build a Complete Story

The following 11 role play scenarios are designed to help teachers to encourage their students to interact more in the English classroom. The aim is to progressively build a complete short story based on the life of a university student in America who is learning a foreign language. With this idea of an underlying story in the back of your student's minds, they will have more enthusiasm to find out what the next scenario will be and allows them to decide how each scenario will play out in terms of dialogue, each character's personality, and so on. Since a semester is generally 12 weeks, you can complete one scenario per week plus the final week to build the story.

Before You Begin

Depending on the nationality of your English students, choose their native language as the language that the main character is learning and replace it in all scenarios. For example, if you are teaching English in Costa Rica then the American student is majoring in Spanish at university, and has a strong desire to study abroad in Costa Rica. You can discuss the names of the characters with your students to kick start their creativity. Continue using the same character names throughout but you can switch the 'actor' playing each role for each scenario. Ask for volunteers or select from the class. Before each role play scenario begins, write the description on the board for students to copy. They will use this information at the end to hand in their version of the complete story.

Story Format

The story that your students should hand in will follow a conversation style format, including one line to introduce the upcoming scene followed by the character's conversation. Here is an example:

(Paul and Carlos go to a Mexican restaurant together)

Waiter: *Good evening. Table for two?*



Paul: *Yes. Thank you.*

Carlos: *The restaurant is very full tonight. Is it because it's the weekend?*

Paul: *Yeah. Besides Saturdays and Sundays, other days are really quiet.*

Waiter: ...

This kind of format will give your students more practice at using conversation style sentences and less pressure to think about the written form of English.

1. New Roommate 1

Requires two students: One student will act as the American university student. The other student will act as a new international student moving into the same dorm room. The two should begin with the usual introductions including: finding out each other's names, giving a quick tour of the room and nearby amenities, and asking questions about each other's university courses.

2. New Roommate 2

Requires four students: One student will act as the American university student. The second student will act as the international student. The other two will act as the international student's parents who have just walked into the dorm room to introduce themselves to the American student. The parents are fussing over their son because it is his first time leaving home. They are also surprised that the American student can speak their native language. They are very happy that their son has this chance to continue practicing the language.

3. Dinner Together 1

Requires three students: Student A is the American student. Student B is the international student. Student C is a waitress in the restaurant where the students have come to have dinner together. The scene begins with the waitress showing the students to their table and introduces some dishes from the menu. The two will then talk about what to eat and then order. To add to the scene, the waitress could bring the wrong food or forget to bring cutlery to the table.



4. Dinner Together 2

Requires four students: Student A is the American student. Student B is the international student. The other two students will act as two female international students from the same country as Student B. B overhears the two female students talking in his language and dares A to strike up a conversation with them. After introductions are made, the four students begin to discuss the different eating habits between Western culture and their own including: when people usually eat, what types of food, the fast food culture, and so on.

5. Studying Abroad 1

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B is Student A's professor. Student A goes to talk to the professor about opportunities for studying abroad (in your student's country) and asks for help regarding exchange programs, scholarships, costs, calculating grades, work-study information, etc.

6. Studying Abroad 2

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B is one of the female students that they met at dinner. A bumps into B on campus and asks for her advice about what it's like to be a student in her country including: finding an apartment, looking for a part-time job, public transport, etc.

7. At the Post Office

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B is another international student and close friend of A. A bumps into B at the post office where B has just received a package from his girlfriend back home. A notices the stamp on the package and enquires about the picture of a museum on it. After B has explained all he knows about the national museum, A asks B about his country's other tourist attractions.

8. At the Bus Stop

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B is another one of the female international students A met at dinner. A notices B has a cold due to



the recent bad weather and the two begin to compare the weather in each other's country during each season.

9. Deducting Points

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B is Student A's professor. Student A goes to discuss with the professor why he was deducted some points from the recent language exam. After the usual greetings, A will ask why he was deducted points for certain questions and the professor will explain why for each one. B should end the discussion by giving encouragement to A to do better next time.

10. Failing a Test

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B is the international student. B has just returned to the dorm room where A is reading a newspaper and is angry about not doing well on the test he just finished. The scene begins with B slamming the door shut before A asks B why he is so angry. After B has explained the situation, A gives advice to B about how to do better on test including: discussing the subject with other students, asking professors for help, going to the library to research information, etc. A can end the scene by telling B not to slam the door next time.

11. Hand in Homework

Requires two students: Student A is the American student. Student B will act as the teaching assistant to A's professor. A goes to the professor's office to hand in his assignment but the professor is not available. He sees the teaching assistant marking papers and asks her about her duties and how it affects her studies and free time. Things to discuss can include: marking papers, doing her thesis, finding time for activities, the salary of a teaching assistant, etc.

Week 12. Final Activity

You may lengthen or shorten the number of role play scenarios to fit your schedule. When all scenarios are complete, ask your students to form a complete story following the exploits of the university student and all the people he interacts with



using the conversational format described earlier. You may even use this as part of a final test to help you determine a student's grades.