Expressing yourself: ways of warning people

Overview: In this lesson learners develop their awareness of expressions for giving warnings.
Total time for activities: 30 – 35 minutes
Level: upper intermediate to advanced

1. Before class, cut up the Student’s Copy so that you have copies of Worksheets A to D for each learner.

2. Introduce the lesson by asking learners how spoken and written warnings are given in their L1(s); are any particular words, phrases or grammatical constructions used? Then ask them to suggest typical ways of giving warnings in English.

3. Distribute Worksheet A. Learners work on the task in pairs. Check answers in plenary.

   Answers
   1. Be careful with the shower – the water gets really hot.
   2. Take care crossing the main road.
   3. Easy does it! If we drop this they’ll be furious!
   4. Mind how you go – the roads might be icy.
   5. Watch / Look out! There’s a car coming!
   6. Beware of the dog.
   7. Watch / Look out – the mug’s on the edge of the table!
   8. Steady! Are you sure you can carry that by yourself?
   9. Mind you don’t slip on the bathroom floor – I’ve just washed it.
   10. You can’t be too careful – you never know who’s listening to you.
   11. Keep your wallet in an inside pocket – better safe than sorry.

4. Distribute Worksheet B. Learners work on the task in pairs. Check answers in plenary.

   Answers
   1. Take care. / Mind how you go.
   2. Be careful. / You can’t be too careful. / Better safe than sorry.
   3. Look out! / Watch out!
   4. Easy does it! / Steady!
   5. Beware.

5. Distribute Worksheet C. Learners work on the task in pairs. Check answers in plenary.

   Answers
   1. Be careful. / Take care.
   2. Watch out. / Look out.
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6. Distribute Worksheet D. Learners work on the task in groups of four. Circulate, monitor and help as necessary. Various answers will be acceptable, but some suggested answers are given below.

Suggested answers
1. Look out! / Watch out!
2. Take care. / Mind how you go.
3. You can't be too careful. / Better safe than sorry.
4. Be careful! / Easy does it! / Steady!
5. Be careful! / Watch yourself!
6. Be careful!
7. Take care. / Mind how you go.
8. Look out! / Watch out! / Mind out.

Follow-up
► Ask learners to collect warnings from products they use and signs and notices they see, and report them to the class. The warnings may be in English; if not, learners can translate them into English.
► Ask learners to notice and report warnings they hear people use in films and on TV (and in real life, if they are in an English-speaking country). They can discuss what factors may have influenced people's choices of warning expressions.
Worksheet A

Complete these warnings with words from the box below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>how</th>
<th>care</th>
<th>safe</th>
<th>beware</th>
<th>too</th>
<th>steady</th>
<th>does</th>
<th>watch</th>
<th>don’t</th>
<th>be</th>
<th>look</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. ___________ careful with the shower – the water gets really hot.
2. Take ___________ crossing the main road.
3. Easy ___________ it! If we drop this they'll be furious!
4. Mind ___________ you go – the roads might be icy.
5. ___________ out! There's a car coming!
6. ___________ of the dog.
7. ___________ out – the mug's on the edge of the table!
8. ___________ ! Are you sure you can carry that by yourself?
9. Mind you ___________ slip on the bathroom floor – I've just washed it.
10. You can't be ___________ careful – you never know who's listening to you.
11. Keep your wallet in an inside pocket – better ___________ than sorry.

Worksheet B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch out!</td>
<td>Look out!</td>
<td>Easy does it!</td>
<td>You can't be too careful.</td>
<td>Steady!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Which two of these expressions are used especially to warn someone to be careful when they leave to go somewhere?
2. Which three of these expressions are ways of warning someone to be careful and not to take risks?
3. Which two of these expressions are used especially to warn someone that they are in immediate danger?
4. Which two of these expressions are used especially to warn someone to do something carefully and gently, especially when they are moving something large or heavy?
5. Which of these expressions is used especially on signs and notices?
Worksheet C

1. Which two ‘warning’ phrases fit into all three of these sentences?
   ____________________ ___________________ with that vase – it’s fragile.
   ____________________ ___________________ you don’t drop that vase – it’s fragile.
   ____________________ ___________________ not to drop that vase – it’s fragile.

2. Which two ‘warning’ phrases fit into both of these sentences?
   ____________________ ___________________ – the floor’s rather uneven.
   ____________________ ___________________ for pickpockets.

3. Which ‘warning’ word fits into all three of these sentences?
   ____________________ your head on the ceiling.
   ____________________ you don’t hit your head on the ceiling.
   ____________________ how you go.

Worksheet D

What warnings could you give to the people in these situations?

1. You see a boy crossing the road. A car is coming down the street, and not slowing down.
2. Your parents have been visiting you and are now setting off on the long drive home.
3. Your partner isn’t sure whether to bother putting their laptop in the hotel room safe before you go out in the evening.
4. You’re having your flat redecorated, and the workers are moving a big, heavy desk that belonged to your grandfather. You’re worried that they aren’t being careful enough.
5. You see someone holding an ice cream which is melting and dripping onto their clothes.
6. You’re sitting at a pavement cafe. A man sitting at the next table has hung his jacket over the back of his chair, with his wallet protruding from one of the pockets.
7. It’s early morning, after an overnight frost. You’re partner is setting out to walk to the shops.
8. You see someone walking along the pavement. Next to them is a huge puddle in the road. A car is approaching at high speed, near the kerb.