

Lesson Plan: Advanced uses of would

Level	Advanced (C1–C2)
Time	60–90 minutes
Skills	Grammar, speaking, writing
Focus	Would for distancing, habitual past, hypothetical stance, and polite formality

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Use would for distancing and hypothetical stance in formal writing
- Use would to describe habitual past actions (vs. used to)
- Use would to soften assertions and express degrees of certainty
- Distinguish the nuanced functions of would from its basic conditional use

TARGET LANGUAGE (EXAMPLES)

Hypothetical/distancing

- I would argue that the policy is flawed. (distancing from full ownership)
- One would expect a more considered response.
- This would suggest a fundamental misunderstanding.

Habitual past

- Every morning she would make coffee and read the paper.
- As a child, he would spend hours in the garden.
- Note: only for actions — not states (used to for states)

Softened assertion

- That would be the marketing report on your desk.
- That would explain the discrepancy in the figures.
- You would need to speak to the compliance team about this.

Willingness (past)

- She wouldn't listen to a word of advice. (refusal in the past)
- The door wouldn't open no matter what I tried.
- He would insist on doing everything himself. (irritating habit)

LESSON PROCEDURE

1. Warm-up (10 min)

Task: Students identify which use of would appears in each sentence.

- 'I would suggest reconsidering.' / 'Every evening he would read to his children.' / 'That would be the problem.'
- Category labels: distancing / habitual past / softened assertion

2. Presentation (15 min)

Task: Four advanced uses with clear examples and contexts.

- Focus on distancing would in academic/professional writing — very common and underused by learners.
- Habitual past: compare with used to — would works only for actions.
- Wouldn't for past refusal/characteristic behaviour.

3. Guided practice (10 min)

Task: Identify the use of would in 8 sentences.

- Then: rewrite using would to express a distancing stance.
- 'The results prove that the theory is wrong.' → 'The results would suggest that the theory is flawed.'

4. Writing task (25 min)

Task: Write a formal analytical paragraph using would for distancing at least 4 times.

- Topic: 'What factors would explain the recent decline in public trust in institutions?'
- Peer review: does the distancing feel appropriate and not evasive?

5. Discussion (5–10 min)

Task: Compare: 'This suggests...' vs. 'This would suggest...' — what is the difference in commitment?

EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one:

1. Write a formal analysis paragraph using distancing would at least 5 times.
2. Write 3 short nostalgic paragraphs using habitual past would.
3. Find 5 examples of advanced would in a broadsheet opinion piece. Identify the function of each.