# ESL Role Play Cards for Adults

Twelve real-life scenarios from A1 to C1, from checking in at a hotel to asking for a raise. Each role has a goal the other player does not see, so students have to ask, explain and negotiate to reach a deal.

| LEVEL | STUDENTS | GROUPING | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|
| A1 to C1 | Adults and older teens | Pairs | 10 to 15 minutes each |

## Before class

**1 Print**
The pages for your students' level. Each page holds three scenarios.

**2 Cut**
Along the dashed lines. Keep the A and B cards of each scenario together.

**3 Pick**
One scenario per pair. Pairs at different levels can play different ones.

**4 Hand out**
Role A to one student, Role B to the other. Cards stay face down until you start.

## How to run a role play

STEP 1 · 2 MIN

### Read alone

Each student reads their card silently and underlines one phrase to use. Nobody shows their card or reads the goal aloud.

STEP 2 · 5 TO 8 MIN

### Talk to a deal

Pairs talk until they agree or the time runs out. The secret goals clash, so nobody gets everything: they have to give something to get something.

STEP 3 · 3 MIN

### Report and swap

Each pair tells the class what they agreed and who gave up what. Then they swap roles, or take a new scenario at the same level.

## Language for the task

**ASKING**

Would it be possible to...?
What if we...?
Could you explain why...?

**BUYING TIME**

Let me think about that.
That's a good question.
Give me a second.

**AGREEING**

That sounds fair.
Shall we meet halfway?
OK, it's a deal.

## Give feedback after, not during

**NOTE THESE, FIX THEM AFTER**

~~I want refund.~~ → **I'd like a refund, please.**

~~You must give me a discount.~~ → **Could you do a better price?**

~~No. Is not possible.~~ → **I'm afraid that's not possible.**

**LET THESE GO**

Articles and small tense slips in the middle of a deal.

Stopping a negotiation for an article costs the conversation more than the slip does. Tone is the point here: too direct sounds rude in English.

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: **esllaboratory.com**

01 · A1-A2 — ROLE A

## Signing up for a class

You are the **student**.

You want to start a beginner cooking class at the community centre. You are at the front desk.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You work every weekday until 6 p.m., so you can only come at weekends.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I'd like to sign up for...
→ Is there a class on Saturday?
→ How much is it?

01 · A1-A2 — ROLE B

## Signing up for a class

You are the **receptionist**.

You work at the front desk of a community centre. A new student wants to join a cooking class.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

The Saturday class is full. There is a Tuesday class at 7 p.m. and an online class any time.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ Which class would you like?
→ Sorry, that class is full.
→ What about...?

02 · A1-A2 — ROLE A

## Checking in at a hotel

You are the **guest**.

You arrive at your hotel after a long trip. You booked a double room for three nights.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

Your booking says sea view. You want that room, and you don't want to pay more.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I have a booking for...
→ My booking says...
→ Can I see the room first?

02 · A1-A2 — ROLE B

## Checking in at a hotel

You are the **receptionist**.

A guest is checking in. You check the computer.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

The system shows a double room without a view. The last sea view room costs 20 euros more a night.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ Can I see your passport, please?
→ I'm sorry, but...
→ I can offer you...

03 · A2-B1 — ROLE A

## At the doctor's

You are the **patient**.

You have had a headache for a week. You are at the doctor's.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You want antibiotics and a note for five days off work.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I've had a headache for...
→ It hurts when...
→ Could you give me...?

03 · A2-B1 — ROLE B

## At the doctor's

You are the **doctor**.

A patient comes in with a headache.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You think it is stress and too much screen time. You can give two days off, but no antibiotics.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ How long have you had it?
→ Do you sleep well?
→ I'd recommend...

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: **esllaboratory.com**

04 · A2-B1 — ROLE A

## Small talk at a party

You are the **guest**.

You are at a friend's birthday party. You don't know anybody here.

**YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET**

You are looking for a job in marketing. Find out what the other guest does and get their contact.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

→ So how do you know...?
→ What do you do?
→ That sounds interesting!

04 · A2-B1 — ROLE B

## Small talk at a party

You are the **guest**.

You are at a friend's birthday party. Another guest starts talking to you.

**YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET**

You work in marketing, but you don't want to talk about work tonight. Your last train is in 20 minutes.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

→ Nice to meet you.
→ Anyway...
→ I'm afraid I have to go soon.

05 · A2-B1 — ROLE A

## Returning headphones

You are the **customer**.

You bought headphones in this shop three weeks ago. The left side has stopped working.

**YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET**

You want your money back. You have lost the receipt, but you paid by card.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

→ I bought these here three weeks ago.
→ They don't work.
→ I'd like a refund, please.

05 · A2-B1 — ROLE B

## Returning headphones

You are the **shop assistant**.

A customer brings back a pair of headphones.

**YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET**

You can't give a refund without a receipt. You can repair them (two weeks) or swap them if the customer can prove the purchase.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

→ Do you have the receipt?
→ I'm afraid we can't...
→ What we can do is...

06 · A2-B1 — ROLE A

## A call on a noisy train

You are the **host**.

You are having a dinner party on Saturday. You call a friend to give them the details.

**YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET**

Your friend must know the address (14 Mill Lane, flat 3), the time (7.30) and to bring a dessert.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

→ It's at 14 Mill Lane.
→ Let me spell that.
→ Did you get that?

06 · A2-B1 — ROLE B

## A call on a noisy train

You are the **friend**.

A friend calls you about a dinner party. You are on a very noisy train.

**YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET**

You keep missing words. Don't guess: check the address, the time and what to bring.

**USEFUL PHRASES**

→ Sorry, could you say that again?
→ Did you say 7.30 or 7.13?
→ So that's flat 3, right?

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: **esllaboratory.com**

07 · B1-B2 ROLE A

## Viewing a flat

You are the **tenant**.

You are viewing a one-bedroom flat. The rent is 950 euros a month.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You want the rent 100 euros lower, you want to move in in two weeks, and you have a cat.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ Is the rent negotiable?
→ Would it be possible to...?
→ What about pets?

07 · B1-B2 ROLE B

## Viewing a flat

You are the **landlord**.

You are showing your flat to a possible tenant.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

Two other people are interested. Pets are not in the contract, but you might allow one for a higher deposit. You want a 12-month contract.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ The rent includes...
→ I've had a lot of interest.
→ I could agree to that if...

08 · B1-B2 ROLE A

## The heating has broken

You are the **tenant**.

It is November. The heating in your flat stopped working three days ago. You call the building manager.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You want it fixed today. You work from home and the flat is very cold.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I'm calling about...
→ It's been three days.
→ I really need it fixed by...

08 · B1-B2 ROLE B

## The heating has broken

You are the **building manager**.

A tenant calls about a problem in their flat.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

The plumber can't come until Monday. You can bring an electric heater today.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ Can you describe the problem?
→ The earliest we can do is...
→ In the meantime, I can...

09 · B1-B2 ROLE A

## Ordering coffee beans

You are the **café owner**.

You run a small café. You are meeting a new coffee supplier.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You want a 15% discount. You can only pay at the end of each month.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ What's the best price you can do?
→ That's a bit more than we expected.
→ Could you meet us halfway?

09 · B1-B2 ROLE B

## Ordering coffee beans

You are the **supplier**.

You sell coffee beans to cafés. A café owner wants to order.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You can give 10%, or 15% if they sign a six-month contract. You prefer payment on delivery.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ Our standard price is...
→ I could offer...
→ That would depend on...

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: **esllaboratory.com**

10 · B2-C1 — ROLE A

## Asking for a raise

You are the **employee**.

You have taken on the work of two colleagues who left this year. You have a meeting with your manager.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You want a 10% raise. You have an offer from another company, but you would prefer to stay.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I'd like to discuss my salary.
→ Since March, I've been...
→ What would it take to...?

10 · B2-C1 — ROLE B

## Asking for a raise

You are the **manager**.

A member of your team has asked for a meeting.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

The salary budget is frozen until January. You can offer a new job title, a training budget or an extra day working from home.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I really value your work.
→ My hands are tied until...
→ What I can do right now is...

11 · B2-C1 — ROLE A

## Feedback to a colleague

You are the **team lead**.

One of your team's reports has been late three times this month, with mistakes in the numbers.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

Get your colleague to agree to a plan, without starting an argument.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I wanted to talk about...
→ I've noticed that...
→ How can I help?

11 · B2-C1 — ROLE B

## Feedback to a colleague

You are the **colleague**.

Your team lead has asked for a quick chat.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You have been doing a sick colleague's work as well as yours for a month. You feel nobody has noticed.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ That's not entirely fair.
→ What you might not know is...
→ I'd appreciate it if...

12 · B2-C1 — ROLE A

## Not renewing a contract

You are the **manager**.

You manage a small team. A colleague's six-month contract ends next month.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

The company will not renew it. Explain clearly and kindly, and offer a reference.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ I have some difficult news.
→ The decision has been made to...
→ What I can offer is...

12 · B2-C1 — ROLE B

## Not renewing a contract

You are the **employee**.

Your manager has asked to see you. Your six-month contract ends next month.

YOUR GOAL · KEEP IT SECRET

You were going to ask for a permanent contract today. You want to know why, and what happens next.

USEFUL PHRASES

→ Can I ask why?
→ Was it something I did?
→ What happens next?