Come up with solutions

- describe experiences of problem solving
- describe a scene
- participate in a problem-solving discussion

TASK LISTENING



1 Read Case study 1 from a training course on problem solving.
What's Chen's problem? Why hasn't he taken any action?

CASE STUDY 1: CHEN

* Chen is a lab assistant in an environmental science company.
* He's noticed that equipment is disappearing – usually minor things, but last week an expensive digital microscope.
* He suspects two male office workers, though many people use the lab.
* He saw them quietly leaving the lab two days ago, carrying something.
* He heard them talking yesterday about selling something – but what?
* He doesn't want to accuse them until he's sure – it could be someone else.
* He can't risk losing any more equipment as he's responsible for it.

2 2.17 Listen to three students on the course discussing Chen's problem. Which of these possible solutions do they decide would be best?

a lock the lab door when he's away
b tell his boss about the missing items
c get someone to supervise the lab when he's out
d set up a camera to film the thieves
e tell his boss who he thinks is doing it
f speak directly to the two office workers
g hide in the lab and wait for the thieves

3 2.17 Listen again. Why do they reject the other ideas in 2?

4 Do you agree with their solution? Why? / Why not?

TASK VOCABULARY

Discussing possible solutions

5 Complete the sentences from the conversation. Then check the script on p150.

Proposing ideas

1 It might be w_____h speaking to the two workers privately.
2 Al_____y, he could hide somewhere and wait.
3 Another o_____n would be to lock the lab door.
4 A different a_____h would be to inform the head of the lab.

Reacting positively

5 There's s_____g in that.
6 That's quite f_____e.
7 That's worth c_____g.

Reacting negatively

8 That would be t_____y.
9 That's not really p_____l.
10 I wouldn't r_____d that.

TASK

6 a Work in groups. Read Case study 2 on p123.

1 Brainstorm a number of possible solutions.
2 Consider the pros and cons of each one.
3 Decide on the best solution.

Use language from 5 to propose and react to ideas.

b Now do the same for Case study 3 on p123.

We thought it might be worth going to the police but that wasn't really practical because ...

7 a Plan how to tell another group about your discussions.

1 What possible solutions did you consider?
2 Which did you choose? Why?
3 What were your reasons for rejecting the other options?

b Tell the other group about your discussions. Did you have similar ideas?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

LIVEWORKSHEETS

TYLER So, this guy Chen ... what are his options?

FAISAL Well, it might be worth speaking to the two workers privately. You know, just ask them.

HAN Hmm ... There's something in that, I suppose.

T No. I think that would be tricky. He doesn't have any clear evidence, really, so they'd have every right to feel upset or insulted. They could even accuse Chen of trying to get them fired.

F Well, obviously he'd have to word it carefully.

T Even if he did that, they'd still see it as an accusation.

F Hm.

T I'd install a camera in the lab, get film evidence and prove who's doing it that way.

H Filming secretly? That's probably illegal, isn't it?

T Really? Well, erm, alternatively, he could hide somewhere and wait until the thief tries to take something.

H That's not really practical, though. He's got a job to do. He can't spend hours hiding and waiting.

F No ... Another option would be to lock the lab door when he goes out. Then, no problem!

H Yes. That's quite feasible.

T Er, I don't think so. Other people will need to use the lab even when he's not there.

H You know, what he really needs is an assistant.

F Hm, that's worth considering. He could get someone to supervise the lab, just while he's out.

T But *he's* an assistant himself. That's like having an assistant to an assistant!

H I guess you're right. Look, a different approach would be to inform the head of the lab about the losses.

T OK, but remember, the problem's been going on for weeks. The head will wonder why Chen didn't say anything about it before.

F Yeah, that's true.

H Then maybe he could just mention the microscope but nothing else. That's the most important thing.

F I wouldn't recommend that. It would be best just to tell the truth about all the missing things.

T OK, agreed. But should he name names?

H No, because he's not sure who did it. The two workers *could* be innocent.

F Well, that looks like the best solution then.

H Yes, all right.

T Fine by me. OK, er, what's the next one?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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