



John: Did I tell you I might be heading back home this Christmas?

Barry: News to me, thought you were spending Christmas with Louise.

John: Yeh that was the plan, still might to be honest. But half of her family are coming over from Vienna and Sydney so I'm not sure there'll be room. Plus my brother has decided last minute to come back from America. He usually spends Christmas with his bloke but this year he's decided to grace us with his presence. He might *even* bring his fella along, which'd be great since none of us have met him yet.

Barry: Ah well you might as well then. I mean, you can't miss out on that, who knows when your brother will be back again. He's not exactly a home-bird is he?

John [*laughing*]: no, that he is not.

Barry: I tell you what though, I saw some cheap flights on Ryanair when I was looking last week. You should check them out, they might still be there. I'm getting home for about twenty quid return.

John [*nodding*]: cheers, I may well do. Not a massive fan of Ryanair but you can't argue with 20 quid.

Comprehension:

- 1) Read the conversation above quickly and decide what their relationship is? What makes you think this?
- 2) Read the conversation again. What other people are mentioned, what is their relationship to the speakers? How do you know this?
- 3) What information is given about John’s brother?

Vocabulary:

Examine the conversation and answer the questions below

- 1) What does John mean by “heading back home”?
- 2) What does he mean by “he’s decided to grace us with his presence”? Who is “us”?
- 3) What words does he use to describe his brother’s partner?
- 4) What does “quid” mean?
- 5) What does he mean by “you can’t argue with...”?
- 6) Can you find any chunks of language that have a function but don’t carry much meaning? How are they being used?

Language Analysis:

Examine all of the uses of “might” in this conversation. Using the context try to decide how it is being used in each case. Make notes in the box below.

Teaching Notes

A lot of this is self-explanatory but there are a few areas where I felt it would be helpful to give the answers I was looking for and suggestions for how I'd go about setting up the activity. However, you may well disagree with me about the uses of “might” so feel free to discuss it with your students and explain it how you feel is best. It's your lesson after-all.

Level: Intermediate and above (but upper ints & advanceds will get the most from this)

Procedure:

- 1) Start by writing the words “might/may” on the board and asking students in pairs/groups to discuss how it can be used. Board their ideas. You're going to return to this later so if you can leave it on the board, great. If not, take a picture for reference later on.
- 2) Hand out the picture and the conversation. Ask them to skim read it quickly and then discuss what their relationship is. Discuss as a class.
- 3) Instruct sts to reread the conversation and discuss the conversation questions on the back of the sheet and then feedback as a group.
 - 2- John's brother / John's brother's boyfriend / John's girlfriend Louise / Louise's family from Australia and Vienna
 - 3- His brother is gay, he lives in America, he has a boyfriend (but his family hasn't met him yet), he rarely returns home, not even at Christmas.
- 4) Focus sts attention on the vocab questions. Encourage them to work in pairs and to keep away from dictionaries.
 - 1- Going back to where he is from originally.
 - 2- His brother rarely attends family occasions but has decided to do so. John may be a little annoyed by this.
 - 3- Bloke / Fella
 - 4- Pounds (countable but without the added 's')
 - 5- That it's an excellent price / deal / proposal
 - 6- The chunks I'm looking for here are:
 - I mean: used to give you thinking time and signal you're going to expand on a previous statement
 - I tell you what: I just thought of something related to our conversation and I'm going to tell you

- 5) The sts should work in pairs deciding what “might” and “may” mean in each sentence. I have included my own ideas below.
- **I might be heading back home this Christmas:** Compare this with “I might head home this Christmas”, the progressive aspect of it seems to suggest that there is a tentative plan in place. **I would go through this one with the whole class together to help them along.**
 - **Still might to be honest:** There is a lot omitted from this sentence (I still might do that to be honest). This seems to be your average use of “might” for possibility. But compared to the example above, it seems like more of an outside chance.
 - **He might even bring his fella along:** The interesting word here is “even”. Everything else is normal. The addition of “even” highlights just how interesting or surprising John feels this prospect is, especially as it is stressed.
 - **You might as well then:** This is a lovely chunk of English that rarely comes up in coursebooks or in lessons. The general meaning being: I think that’s probably a better idea than all the other options. It might be useful to come up with a few other examples for your sts here. **See below for ideas.**
 - **They might still be here:** Nothing remarkable here.
 - **I may well do that:** Interesting here that “may” is used over “might”. Very often sts have the impression that “may” is more formal but not in this case. The overall meaning of the sentence is: That sounds like a good suggestion to me.

Might as well:

- Are you heading out with us tonight?
- I might as well, my girlfriend is going out with her friends too.
- You may as well walk home, it doesn’t look like the bus is coming anytime soon.

Textploitation

“Ah, ya might as well”

Follow-Up Activities:

- (1) Pronunciation 1: There's so much to focus on in this conversation but I'd suggest having a look at ellipsis (the natural omission of words in speech) as there's loads of it. Start with the sentence below and then get sts to find more examples and decide what words are missing.
 - **That is** News to me, **I** thought you were spending Christmas with Louise

- (2) Pronunciation 2: Connected speech. Check out some of the examples below and drill the natural pronunciation with your sts:
 - Which'd be great.
 - You might as well then.
 - I tell you what though.
 - I mean

- (3) Have sts create their own short dialogue, using a number of the features discussed above. If you can record them and work on naturalising and pronunciation in another class, even better.