

# Problem Page

## Reading, writing, and discussion.

### Contributor's Notes

Here's a session based on the type of problem page found in a tabloid newspaper, and it can be used with both ESOL and Literacy learners at L1/L2, though stronger E3 learners have also coped when given a little extra support with the reading. This is how it goes:

- 1) Introduce the situation e.g. if you have a problem in your personal life, where can you turn to for help? Elicit 'problem page' as a possible answer.
- 2) Find a (non-salacious!) problem from a recent newspaper. Read it out, and ask learners to come up with possible solutions.
- 3) Learners then work in pairs. Hand out one problem to each pair (pages 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10). They read the problem, discuss possible solutions, then in the speech bubble below write down their best answer.
- 4) Swap problems until each pair has looked at each problem and written down their best answer.
- 5) Each pair keeps the problem they wrote about last. Hand them the corresponding solution, taken from the newspaper (page 3, 5, 7, 9 or 11). Each reads the solution, then answers the following a) who was closest to what the newspaper suggested? b) who gave the best advice?
- 6) Correct the spelling/grammar in learners' answers either as a final activity, or at the beginning of the next session.

Of course, this resource could be used in different ways, and I encourage tutors to experiment. Page 12 is a blank to use for your own problems.

*Saul Pope*  
[saulpope@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:saulpope@yahoo.co.uk)

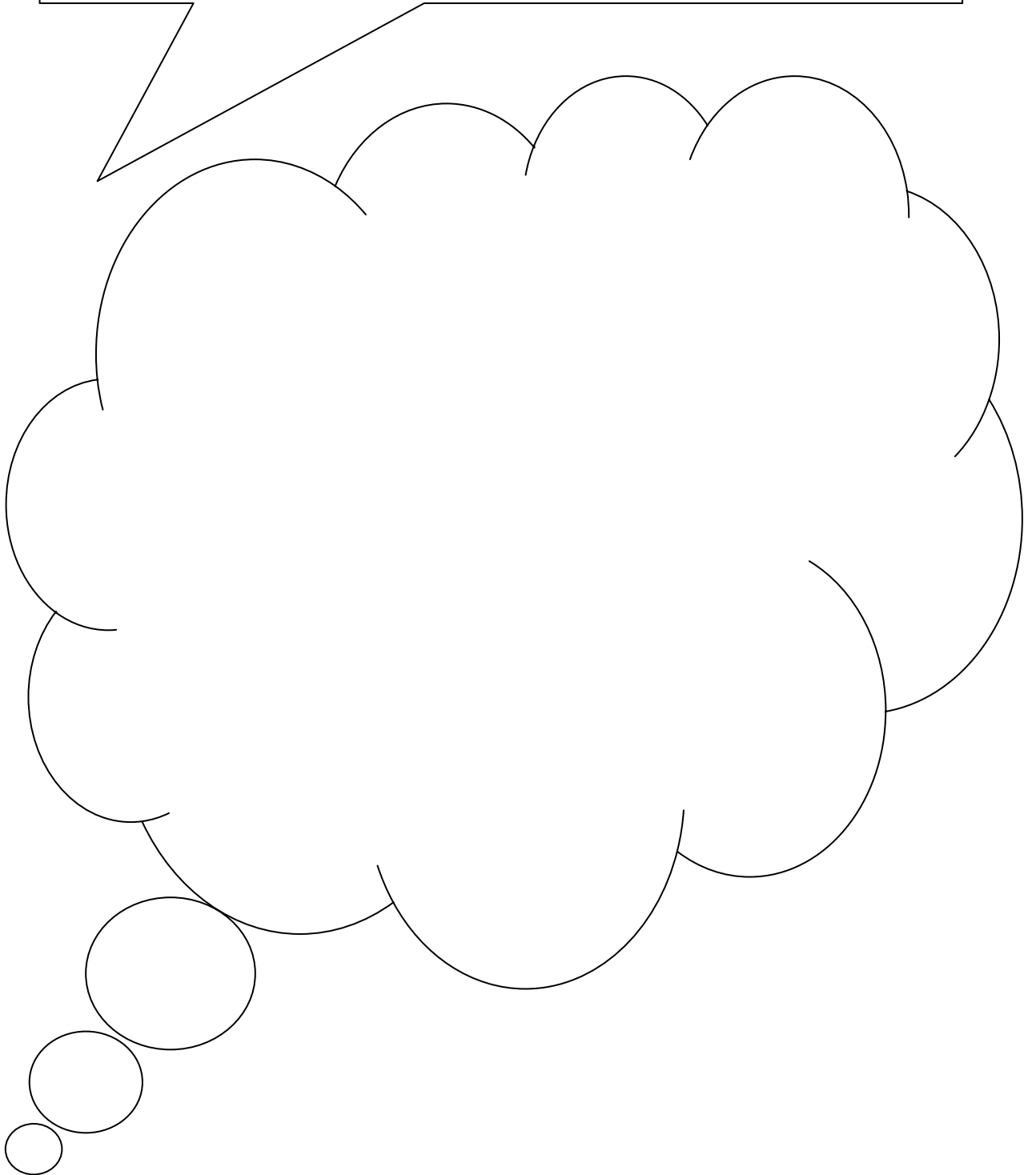
### Main Curriculum Links

Rt/E3.1 L1.1 L2.1 Trace and understand the main events of continuous text  
Wt/E3 L1 L2 Writing composition (many elements)  
SLd/E3 L1 L2 Engage in discussion (many elements)

To obtain an editable version of the original Word document please send teaching ideas or any adult basic skills resource that you would like to share to [maggie@skillsworkshop.org](mailto:maggie@skillsworkshop.org)

**THANK YOU**

My fear of spiders is getting worse. Now I'm scared it will ruin my life and lose me my job. I'm 21 and work as a teacher in a school. I've never liked spiders but I could cope with them until I saw a horrific film about killer spiders multiplying and destroying everything in sight. Now I can't control my fear. The other day I saw a huge spider at school and started screaming. All the children started screaming and crying as well. My boss has been understanding until now, but after this told me that I can't carry on like this as I am scaring the children. I love my job, and I really don't want to leave.

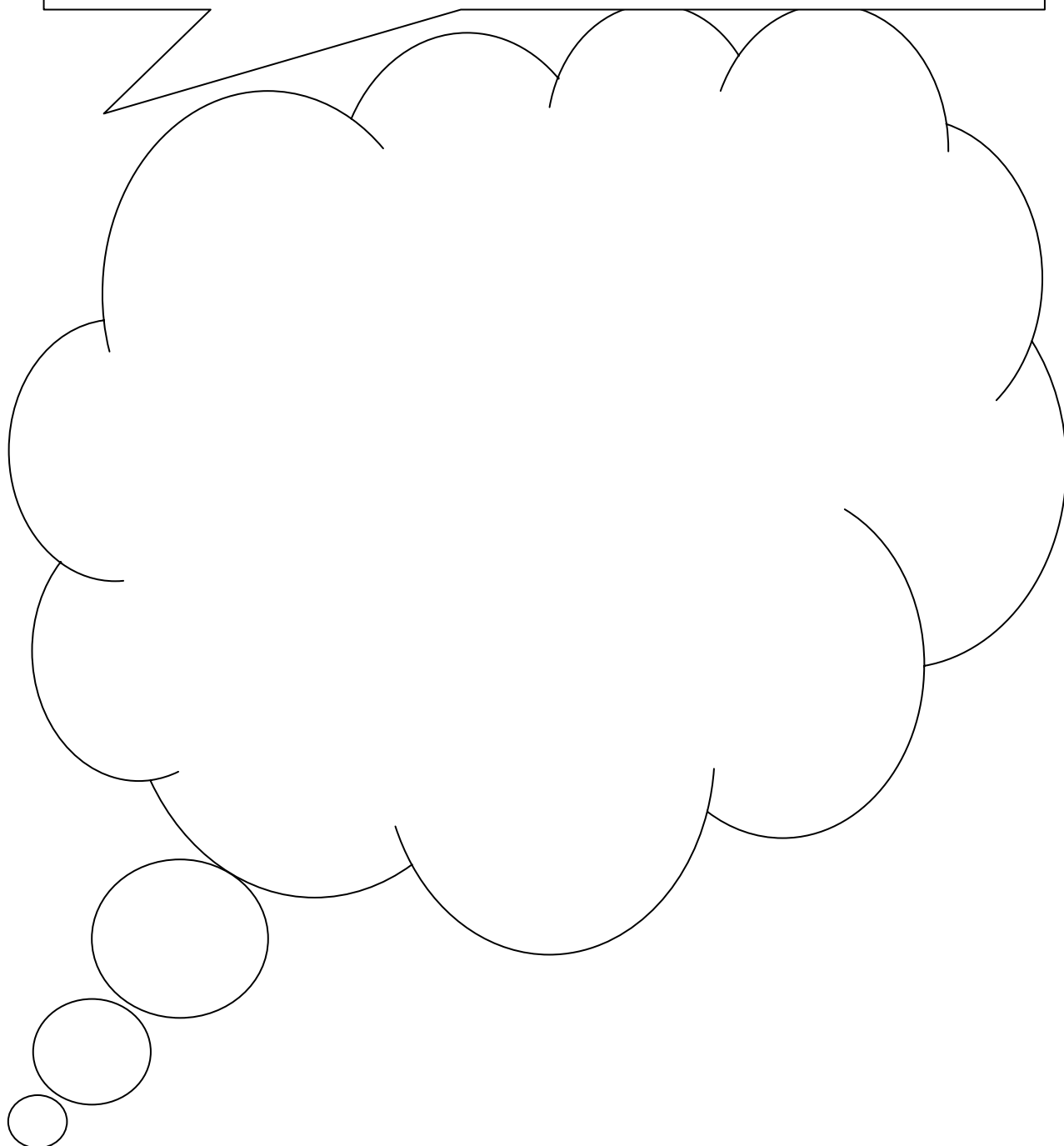


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This is a common issue, but it can cause real problems. Talk to your doctor and see if she can help. You also need to concentrate on relaxing more – learn some deep breathing techniques, as these will help to reduce your stress levels. You could also contact [nopanic.org](http://nopanic.org) for some advice and support

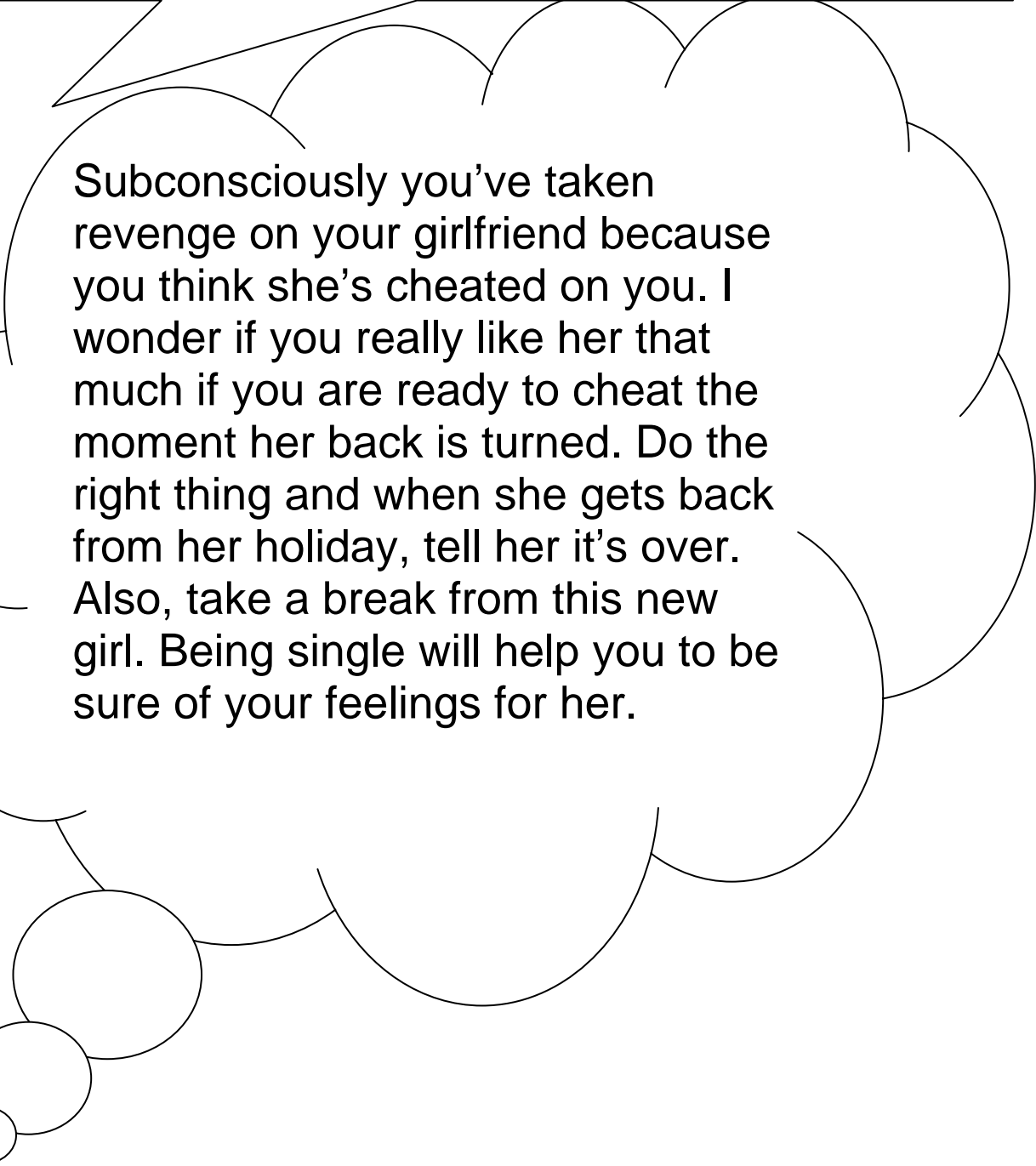
I cheated on my girlfriend the day she went away on holiday. She's coming back soon, and I don't know what to do. We've been together for nearly a year, but the night she went away for 2 weeks my mates invited me out to a club. Straight away I spotted this gorgeous girl by the bar. I bought her a drink and we started flirting. We got really drunk and one thing led to another.

At first I didn't feel guilty, but now I do. I don't know what to do when my girlfriend comes back from her holiday. If she knew she would hate me, but then again things have been getting worse and worse in our relationship lately. I reckon she's cheated on me before, and I really like this new girl - we've been texting ever since the night we met.



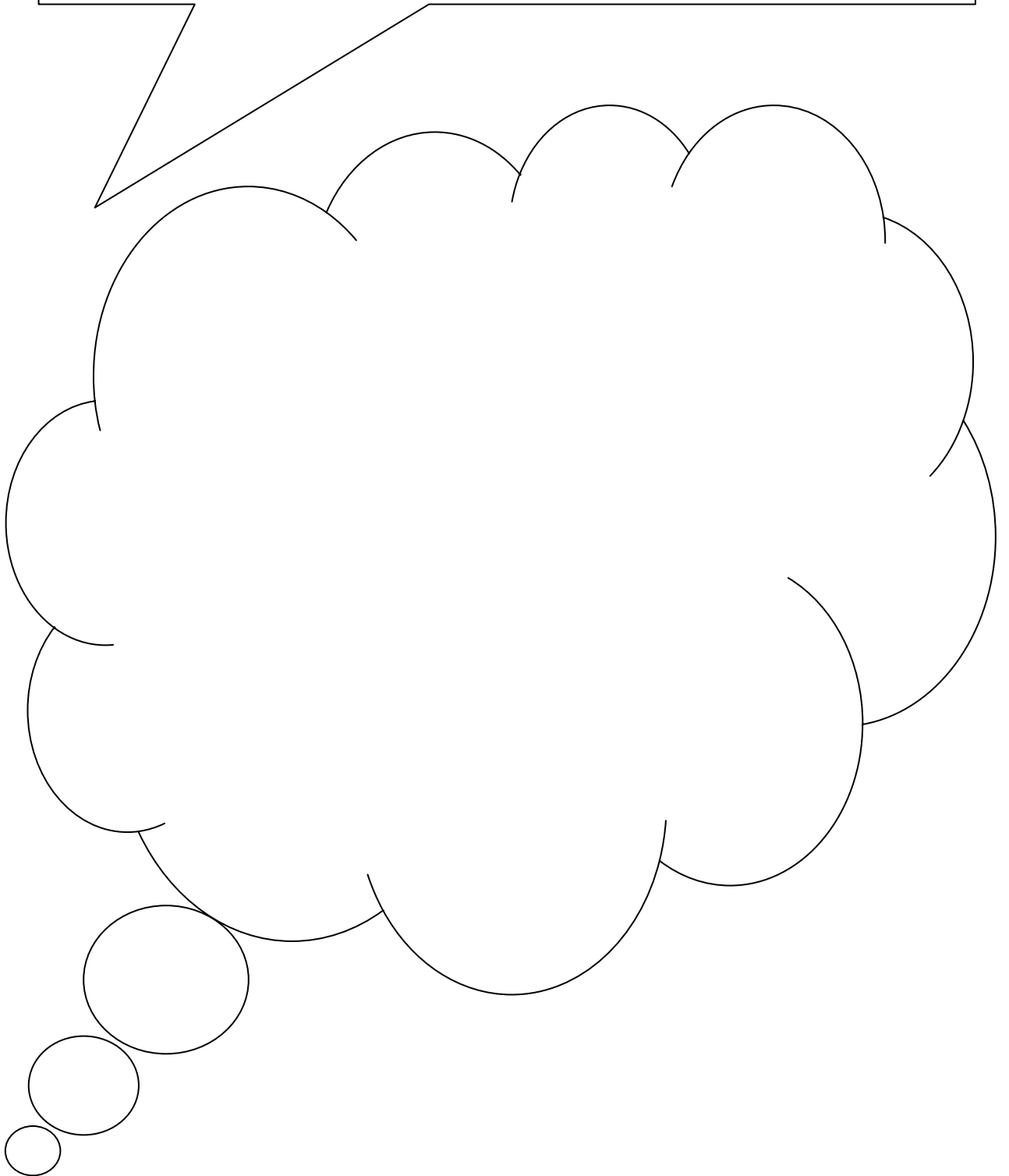
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Subconsciously you've taken revenge on your girlfriend because you think she's cheated on you. I wonder if you really like her that much if you are ready to cheat the moment her back is turned. Do the right thing and when she gets back from her holiday, tell her it's over. Also, take a break from this new girl. Being single will help you to be sure of your feelings for her.

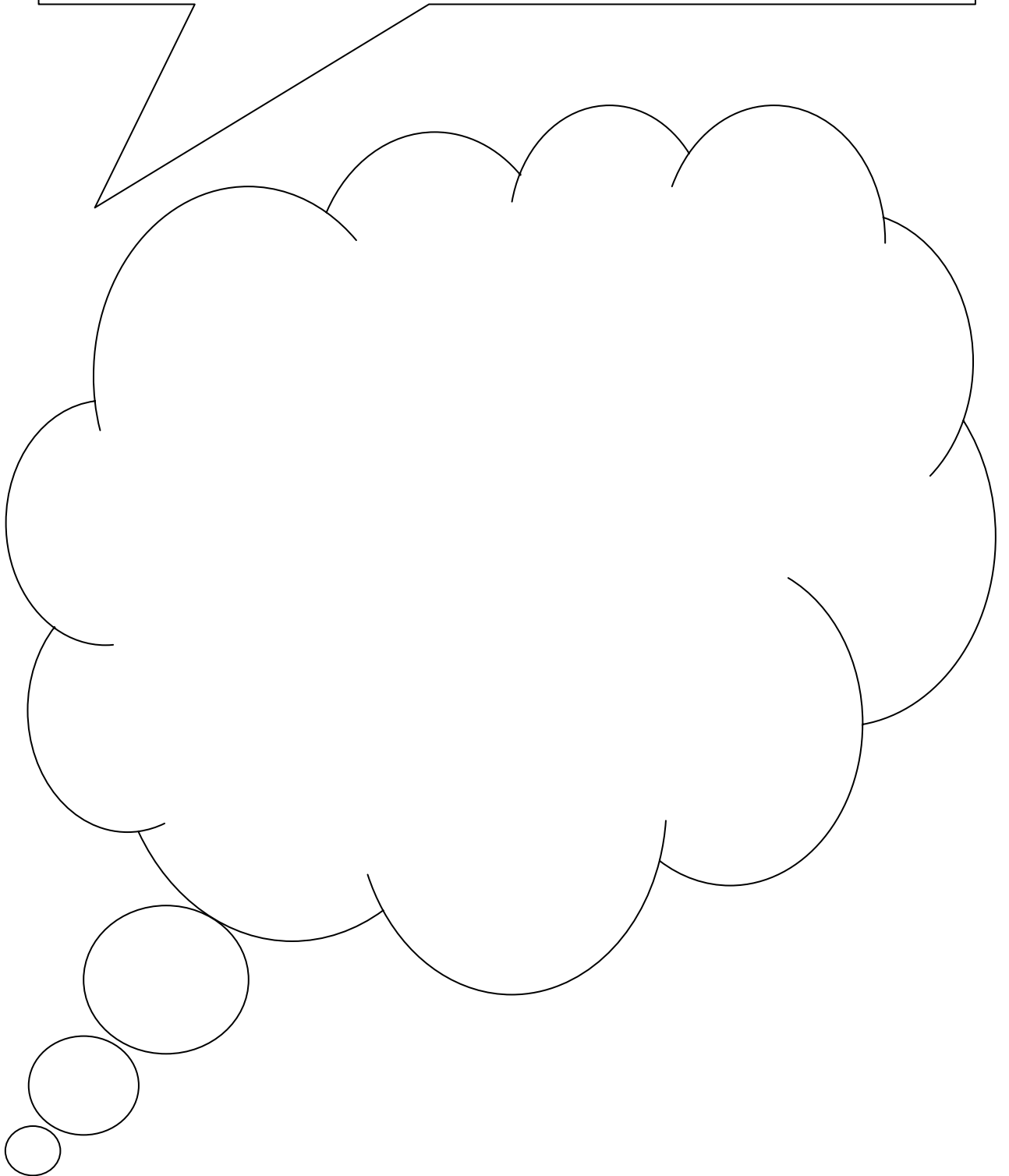
I'm thinking of taking drugs so that the council has to give me somewhere to live. I'm 25 and have been homeless for almost a year. I've been to the local housing office, but they can't help. Apparently they can only help people with special needs, for example drug addicts or alcoholics. I'm neither of these things, but if I lie and say I am they will probably check me with a blood test. Should I start taking drugs so that I can get help? I don't want to, but it seems like the only answer.



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Don't be silly. This sounds like a very bad idea indeed. Although your situation is difficult, you'll only make it worse if you start abusing drugs or alcohol – you probably won't be able to stop. You need to be more determined, and look for a positive answer. Believe me, there is one. Contact the Citizens Advice Bureau ([nacab.org.uk](http://nacab.org.uk)) or Shelterline ([shelter.org.uk](http://shelter.org.uk)).

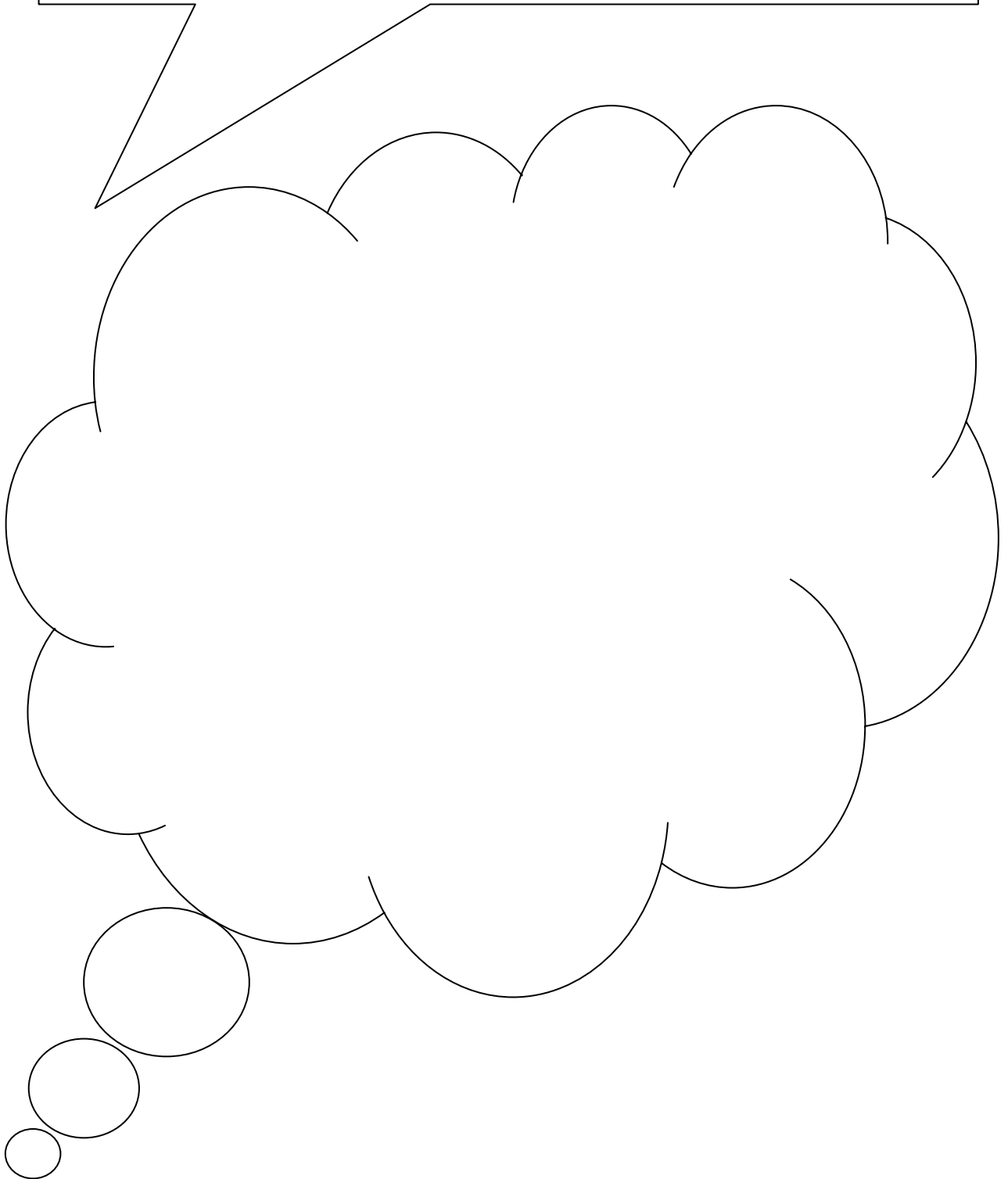
Two of my friends smoke cannabis regularly. They are always too stoned to go out, and are never any fun any more. I've tried to tell them that drugs are bad, but they just laugh and ask me to go to the corner shop for them. I'm worried that smoking cannabis will lead them on to harder drugs. What can I do?



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I think you've already done a great thing in asking them to stop and giving them information on the dangers. You're quite right that starting to take cannabis can be a slippery slope, and can lead on to harder things. Now all you can do is show them it's possible to say no and still be cool. And don't give in to peer pressure and start taking drugs yourself.

I have my own style when it comes to clothes and I don't follow fashion, but my friends sometimes make fun of me. I don't want to dress the same as everyone else, but I don't like being teased either because it makes me feel awkward and self-conscious. What can I do to stop them teasing me?



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I think it's great that you know your own mind when it comes to fashion, but it's sad that your friends are laughing at you. I think the best strategy is to laugh it off, and make a joke of their comments. The worst thing you can do is to get upset or argue back. If you laugh it off, it shows you don't care. People who pick on other people are looking to get a reaction, and when they don't get one, they stop doing it. Don't be bullied into changing your identity.

