It Depends on the Situation

The same action can fit one place and not another. I can be a detective and read the clues.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Read the situation

Three clues tell me what most people expect right now

Where am I?	Who is here?	What is happening?
classroom, bus, library, party	friends, a teacher, little kids, strangers	a test, a game, a story, lunch
_____	_____	_____

2 Same action, two situations

Tick E (expected) or U (unexpected) for each place

The action	Situation A	Situation B
Talking in a loud voice	on the playground ☐ E ☐ U	in the library ☐ E ☐ U
Running fast	in a race at recess ☐ E ☐ U	in the hallway ☐ E ☐ U
Asking a question	during a lesson ☐ E ☐ U	while a friend is crying ☐ E ☐ U
Telling a joke	at lunch with friends ☐ E ☐ U	during a fire drill ☐ E ☐ U
Singing out loud	in music class ☐ E ☐ U	during a test ☐ E ☐ U
Talking about my favorite game	when a friend asks ☐ E ☐ U	when the teacher is giving directions ☐ E ☐ U
Hugging someone	my parent at pickup ☐ E ☐ U	a new kid I just met ☐ E ☐ U
Saying "that is wrong"	in a debate game ☐ E ☐ U	about a friend's drawing ☐ E ☐ U

3 How might people feel?

Expected actions often help people feel calm. Unexpected ones can surprise or confuse.

When I did something expected, people felt: _____

When something unexpected happened, people felt: _____

My own example: the same action, two places: _____

Where it fits: _____

Where it might surprise people: _____

A hidden rule I noticed this week: _____

A place where I can ask what is expected: _____

Original layout by Lotus & Tulip. A social understanding tool, not a behavior rule chart or a score.

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My Read the Situation Plan

A plan for one tricky situation. I get to choose, and I can ask for help.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 My tricky situation

Fill this in with an adult before the situation happens

The situation (where, who, what): _____

What most people expect here: _____

What is hard for me here: _____

What I will try: _____

If it gets too hard, I can: _____

An adult or friend who can help: _____

A support that helps me: _____

2 Ways I can figure out what is expected

Tick the ones I will use

- ☐ Watch what others are doing
- ☐ Look for a sign or a schedule
- ☐ Ask: what do we do here?
- ☐ Think: what happened last time?
- ☐ Wait and listen first
- ☐ Ask a friend quietly

Unexpected is not bad. It means "not what people thought would happen here."

3 My situation tracker

One check each day

Day	The situation	What I noticed	How did it go?
Mon			☐ Great ☐ Okay ☐ Hard
Tue			☐ Great ☐ Okay ☐ Hard
Wed			☐ Great ☐ Okay ☐ Hard
Thu			☐ Great ☐ Okay ☐ Hard
Fri			☐ Great ☐ Okay ☐ Hard

For counselors, SLPs, teachers and parents

1. Teach that the situation decides, not the action: the same action can be expected in one place and unexpected in another.
2. Never use "unexpected" to scold or as a label for a child. Use it to talk about a situation, calmly and later if needed.
3. Notice and name expected choices much more often than unexpected ones.
4. Expectations go both ways. Adults can make unexpected choices too, and others can adjust to a child's needs.
5. Hidden rules are not always fair or needed. Masking a harmless difference is not the goal; safety and kindness are.
6. Review the tracker together at the end of the week and change what is not working.

Ongoing big struggles in social situations? Talk with the school counselor or speech-language pathologist.

Notes: _____

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