

Giving directions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To speak clearly and confidently
- To understand and use methods which confirm that important details have been understood



RESOURCES

- Copies of Resources 1–3
- Role-play cards prepared from Resource 4
- Audio equipment  10–11

RELATED THEMES

Getting to the hospital (pages 60–72)

HEALTH SKILLS

Organising transport to and from hospital and other health appointments can cause anxiety and stress. Difficulties can lead to missed appointments and ultimately a lack of continuous care for the patients involved.

This theme looks at how patients can give clear directions to drivers unfamiliar with where they live (e.g. community / voluntary transport drivers) and how patients can check their directions have been understood.

SKILLS FOR LIFE

In order to give clear directions to your home it is important to speak clearly and describe the stages of the journey in a clear sequence using directional language and landmarks. It is also important to check the listener has understood the directions. In order to do this, learners need to:

- give an explanation clearly and including the right amount of detail
- ask questions to check the listener's understanding
- listen to confirm understanding has taken place.

Core curriculum

Activities in this theme will contribute to learning in the following curriculum areas:

- give instructions clearly (**L**SLc/E3.3)
- ask questions to clarify and confirm understanding (**L**SLlr/E2.4)
- listen to confirm that instructions have been understood (**L**SLlr/E3.1)
- speak clearly in a way which suits the situation (**L**SLc/E3.1).

- Ask learners if they have ever been asked to direct someone to a particular place. Encourage them to think what made it possible / not possible to give clear directions.
- Display main points, for example ‘didn’t know where they wanted to go’ (not enough knowledge); ‘could see it in my mind’s eye but couldn’t describe it’ (difficulty with directional language such as ‘left’, ‘right’, ‘go further along’, ‘half a mile’, etc.); ‘should have used more landmarks rather than try to remember road names’; ‘just can’t see the journey in my mind’s eye’ (can’t visualise, which helps when giving directions).
- Continue the discussion by asking learners for their experience of asking for directions: ‘Has anyone here asked someone for directions and found they made no sense at all, or you couldn’t remember them after the person had gone?’ ‘Do you think it may have been because of some of the reasons we have just identified?’
- Establish that difficulties with giving or following directions effectively are connected to the amount of preparation time we have, and / or our previous knowledge. Another important factor is our concern about what people may think of us if we ask them to repeat what they’ve said, or if we repeat our instructions in order to check they have understood.
- Encourage learners to suggest situations in a health context where it might be necessary to ask for or give directions. Invite learners to share personal experiences.

Has anyone stopped you in the street and asked you the way to somewhere? How did you get on?

Have you ever asked anyone to repeat directions you’ve given them? How did they react?

How would you direct someone to your local GP practice?

ACTIVITY 1 10–11

Introduce skills for giving clear directions or instructions

- Introduce the situation in the telephone conversations (a woman giving directions to a driver). Play Conversation 1 through once for learners to get the gist.
- Play Conversation 1 again. Ask one group of learners to think about the lady giving the directions: ‘What do you think about the way she gives the instructions for picking her up? What does she do well? What could she do better?’ Ask the other group to think about the man responding to her instructions: ‘What do you imagine the driver is thinking during this conversation? What did he do well? Was there anything he could have done better?’
- Hand out Resource 1. Ask for a volunteer to read the part of the caller and another to read the part of the driver. Alternatively, play the audio clip of the telephone call (Conversation 2). Ask learners if they feel that the caller communicated well with the driver, and the driver with the caller – if so, why? (The caller took her time to explain everything and asked for confirmation of understanding; the driver listened well and repeated the directions to confirm his understanding.)
- Discuss how repeating back or asking someone to repeat back instructions is an important way of:
 - letting a listener know you have understood what they have told you
 - checking you have understood (otherwise you would not be able to repeat what they said)
 - helping you to remember.

Why is repeating back the directions useful?

- In pairs, ask learners to identify the positive statements on Resource 2 – those which help to make communication between two people clear and effective.
- Encourage each pair to volunteer one positive statement and to say why it is positive.

Support

Practise giving some simple instructions and getting learners to repeat them back. Then reverse the situation: ask them to give you some simple instructions (e.g. nearest bus stop from their house) and you repeat them back.

ESOL

- Ask questions to check that learners understand the call (e.g. 'What time does she want the driver to pick her up?' 'How many instructions does she give to help the driver find her house?').
- Ask learners to practise the conversation; first the caller's lines, then the driver's lines, and finally the whole conversation.

TIP

Help learners to pick out the key directional words 'left' and 'right'. Give examples of further directions (e.g. 'straight on', 'go round', 'over the bridge', 'under the bypass').

ACTIVITY 2

Practise giving clear directions and instructions

- Hand out Resource 3. Ask for volunteers to read out each statement in turn. Point out that these are tips to enable instructions or directions to be given and received more effectively.
- Give pairs of learners role-play cards from Resource 4. Invite them to take turns to role-play the person giving directions and the person receiving them. Depending on how much time is available, they can do one, two or all three role-plays.
- Circulate and listen in on the role-plays. Make mental notes or brief written notes about how learners get on and any issues with speaking and listening skills (e.g. speaks clearly; checks for understanding; listens well to responses; uses vocabulary confidently, etc.).
- When the activity is over, ask learners how they think it went and whether it has made them think differently about the way they communicate information.

What do you need to remember when giving directions?

Do you think being anxious or worried makes a difference to what you say and how you say it?

Support

- Go through each scenario first and write down some prompts together about the important things to get across in the role-play.
- Ask learners to concentrate on just one scenario or to think of one of their own.
- Act as a learner's partner to help them structure their responses.

ESOL

- Discuss some useful expressions for cards 2, 4, 7 and 8 and display them. Encourage learners to practise them before doing the role-play.
- It may be useful to pair ESOL learners with native English speakers for the role-play to create more authentic practice.

Action

- For the next session, ask learners to think about directions to their home from a given point (e.g. a local landmark, the hospital, the town centre).
- Support (where necessary) each learner as they write the directions on a card along with their address and postcode. Suggest they keep this by their phone at home. It could be useful in many situations: for example, taxi driver, visitors, emergency services, hospital / community driver.

*How would you direct a driver to **your** home from the hospital?*

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RESOURCE 1

11



My appointment is at 9:30, but I'll need to be there at least half an hour earlier because I walk very slowly. Do you know where I live?



I know you're in Goxton, but I don't know the village very well.



What's the best way to give you directions?



I know how to get to the Green. Could you tell me where to go from there?

Yes. If the Green is on your left, turn right into Abelforth Road. Drive for about half a mile, and you'll see a large, pink house on the left. Turn left into Deer Street, and we're the last house on the right-hand side. Could you repeat that to me so that I know you'll find me?

Of course. Right into Abelforth Road until I see a pink house. Then left into Deer Street, and you're the last house on the right. I'll be there at 8 o'clock, that'll give us plenty of time.



Giving directions

RESOURCE 2

I'm glad she told me she needs more time. I would hate to make her late for her appointment.

I hate it when people tell me my job. I'll decide what time we'll need to leave.

The best way to give me directions? Funny question. I'm an expert at finding places. I don't need help.

What a fusspot, wanting me to repeat the directions! Does she think I'm stupid?



This is going to be a nice, straightforward job. I'm looking forward to it.

The best way to give me directions? That's such a good question. I get confused when the directions are too long, even after all these years of driving people around.

I can't wait to get this job over and done with. I hope she doesn't ask for me again!

Getting me to repeat the instructions is a very good idea. I've been late before because I thought I understood.

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RESOURCE 3

1

Check that you have the listener's full attention.

2

Ask questions to check that you've been understood.

3

Use words the listener will definitely understand.

4

Ask questions to check what the listener already knows.

5

Speak clearly, not too fast and not too slowly.

6

If you are feeling anxious, take a deep breath or two before you start.

7

If you have a speech impediment, strong accent or do not speak English fluently, tell the listener at the beginning so that he or she knows to listen carefully.

8

Ask the listener to repeat the important points to you so that you know they have understood.

9

Prepare what you need to say beforehand.

10

Keep to the main points and avoid distracting the listener with unnecessary information.

Passenger

You have an appointment at a clinic at the hospital at 10:15 am. You live 20 minutes' drive away from the hospital, and you know from experience that it will take you another 20 minutes to get to the clinic once you arrive at the hospital.

Driver

You are a volunteer driver who is coming to pick person A up and take him or her to the hospital. You don't know where person A lives, but you do know the area very well.

Passenger

You attend a clinic at your GP practice once a week, but your regular driver is away. She has arranged for someone to take her place. You need to explain where you live and what time you need to be at the practice.

Driver

You have volunteered to take over for a friend while she is away. You are new to the area, and don't know your way around at all.

Passenger

You have been in hospital for a week and need to arrange transport home. You don't know the area around the hospital very well as you have not lived here for long. You are worried about getting home in time to meet the community nurse at 2:00 pm. Your journey takes about 30 minutes by car.

Driver

You work for the hospital transport service. Although you are very busy, you need to arrange to take person A home at the best time for him or her.

There are no specific answers for this theme.

ACTIVITY 1



Conversation 1

Driver: Can I help you? Oh, hang on a sec ...

Woman: I have an appointment at the hospital in Oakton and I need a driver to take me there.

Driver: Right, sorry, um – hospital appointment, is it?

Woman: Yes, on Tuesday.

Driver: OK, what time is that?

Woman: Oh, I'm not sure, hold on ... It's 9 o'clock.

Driver: And where do you live?

Woman: 19 Westville Place – oh, but I won't be there, I'll be staying with my niece for the night, I'll be in Easton. 23 Windsor Road. The new housing estate.

Driver: Right. What's the postcode?

Woman: I'm afraid I don't know.

Driver: So I'll pick you up at 9 o'clock next Tuesday from 19 Westville Place and take you to the Cottage Hospital.

Woman: Oh dear, I don't think that's right at all ...

Driver: What's that? Sorry, I've got another call coming in. I'll see you next week. Don't worry. Goodbye.



Conversation 2

Woman: My appointment is at 9:30, but I'll need to be there at least half an hour earlier because I walk very slowly. Do you know where I live?

Driver: I know you're in Goxton, but I don't know the village very well.

Woman: What's the best way to give you directions?

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ANSWERS AND AUDIO SCRIPTS

Driver: I know how to get to the Green. Could you tell me where to go from there?

Woman: Yes. If the Green is on your left, turn right into Abelforth Road. Drive for about half a mile, and you'll see a large, pink house on the left. Turn left into Deer Street, and we're the last house on the right-hand side. Could you repeat that to me so that I know you'll find me?

Driver: Of course. Right into Abelforth Road until I see a pink house. Then left into Deer Street, and you're the last house on the right. I'll be there at 8 o'clock, that'll give us plenty of time.

Woman: Thank you very much.

Driver: You're welcome.