Communication Starters and 'Enders'
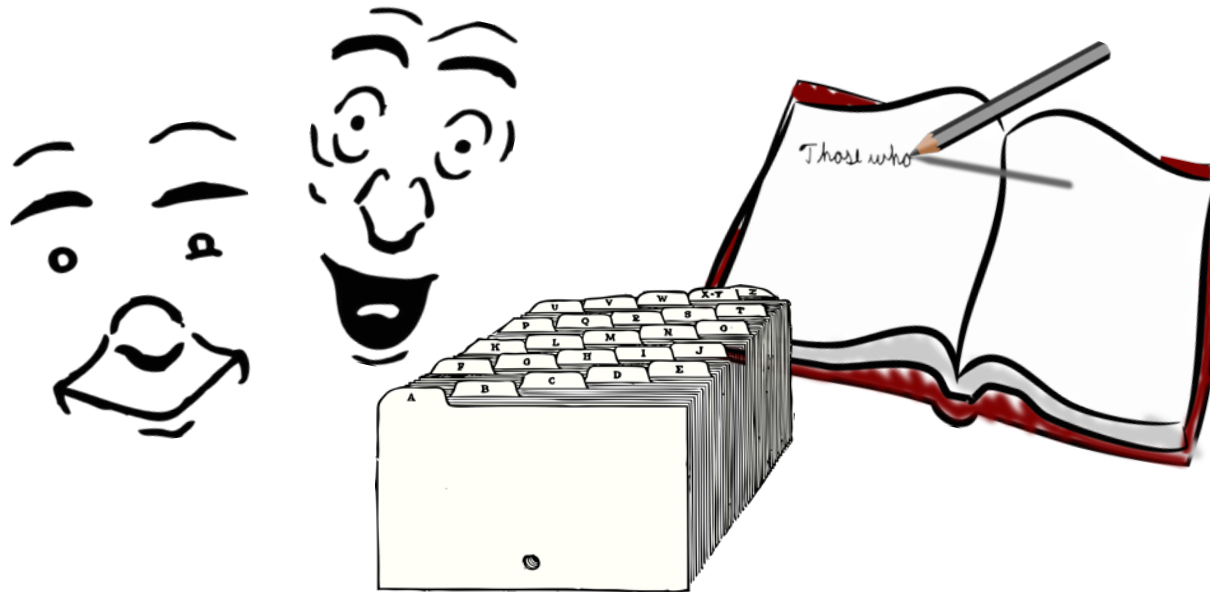
Welcome to the pack

Helping people develop their confidence in English language and literacy is something that everyone can contribute to. The Education and Training Foundation has produced some cards showing short (5 - 10m) activities that you can use at the start or end of prison workshops, training or education sessions. Doing the activities on these cards will help people to develop confidence and abilities to communicate effectively. This is particularly important for employability, or the communication practices people need to take part in to seek and keep work and navigate their lives and learning.

You will find the following in this set:

• Toolbox - listing some resources that will be useful

• Communication abilities valued by employers

• English Development: Guiding Principles

• Mapping of Principles to activities

• Activity cards (1 - 12)

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

Toolbox

You'll need the following resources in your communication 'toolbox':

Scrap paper	Useless/ broken items	Trade magazines
Pencils/ pens	Pictures of things relevant to the work/ training you do	Dictionary
Letter tiles (e.g. from Scrabble/ Bananagrams)	Dice	(Just people talking)

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

Communication abilities valued by employers

Research by the University of Kent[1] has identified the top ten employability skills:

1. Verbal communication
2. Teamwork
3. Commercial awareness
4. Analysing and investigating
5. Self-motivation
6. Drive
7. Written communication
8. Planning and organising
9. Flexibility
10. Time management

Good **verbal communication** sits at the top of this list because: "Almost every job will involve talking to colleagues or customers at some point and employees should be able to express themselves clearly, confidently and concisely, tailoring their style to their audience. Communication is not all about talking, the best employees will be able to listen to what people are saying, process it and act on it."

---

[1] www.kent.ac.uk/careers/sk/top-ten-skills.htm

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

English Development: Guiding Principles

1. **All varieties of the English language are valid in the appropriate setting and circumstances.** This means that knowing your purpose and audience and instinctively switching codes (e.g. between written and spoken forms) are important skills.

2. **Being good at English involves being able to judge what is 'good' and how it could be better.** This means that people need to understand what good English involves, see clearly what steps they can take to get there and recognise when they have made improvements.

3. **English development should begin with people's own communication needs and practices.** This is partly because we need something to 'hang' new learning onto. It is also because it is motivating and respectful to build on what people can, want and need to do in their lives.

4. **English development depends on the inner need of a person to 'say something'. Therefore, language use is a form of identity.** This means that language finds its purpose and is motivating for learners when they are fully engaged with the outcome.

5. **Language enables expression of thoughts and feelings and empowers people to deal with a range of situations and make appropriate choices.** This means that people must be able to select appropriate language for their purpose and must also listen to other people's responses and learn from them.

6. **English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study.** This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

7. **Language is dynamic, in a constant state of flux** and we are always learning.

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

Mapping of the principles to activities on cards:

1.	All varieties of the English language are valid in the appropriate setting and circumstances.	Activity 3 – Dictionary Activity 7 - Tweeting
2.	Being good at English involves being able to judge what is 'good' and how it could be better.	Activity 8 – Trade magazines
3.	English development should begin with people's own communication needs and practices.	Activity 1 – What's in a name?
4.	English development depends on the inner need of a person to 'say something'. Therefore, language use is a form of identity.	Activity 1 – What's in a name?
5.	Language enables expression of thoughts and feelings and empowers people to deal with a range of situations and make appropriate choices.	Activity 2 – Drawing Activity 4 – What's the question? Activity 9 – Useless item Activity 11 – Roll the dice
6.	English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study.	Activity 2 – Drawing Activity 5 – Asking about work Activity 6 – Hangman Activity 8 – Trade magazines Activity 9 – Useless item Activity 10 – Scrambled letters Activity 12 - Crosswords/word searches
7.	Language is dynamic, in a constant state of flux.	Activity 3 – Dictionary Activity 7 - Tweeting

Activity

What's in a name? As a group, ask people to share something about their name - are they named after someone? Do they know anything about their ~~surname~~ last name and where it comes from?

English Development Principles

3: English development should begin with people's own communication needs and practices. This is partly because need something to 'hang' new learning onto. It is also because it is motivating and respectful to build on what people can, want and need to do in their lives.

4: English development depends on the inner need of a person to 'say something'. Therefore, language use is a form of identity. This means that language finds its purpose and is motivating for learners when they are fully engaged with the outcome.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

Activity 2 - Drawing

Activity

Split the group into pairs (you may need to be the other half of one pair if you have odd numbers). Give one person in each pair a picture and ask them to sit back to back with their partner.

Version 1 - the person with the picture describes it, without saying what it is and the other draws.

Version 2 - the person who is drawing can ask 'yes', 'no' questions only to identify what they need to draw.

You will need…

English Development Principles

5: Language enables expression of thoughts and feeling and empowers people to deal with a range of situations and make appropriate choices.

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

# Activity 3 - Words in the dictionary
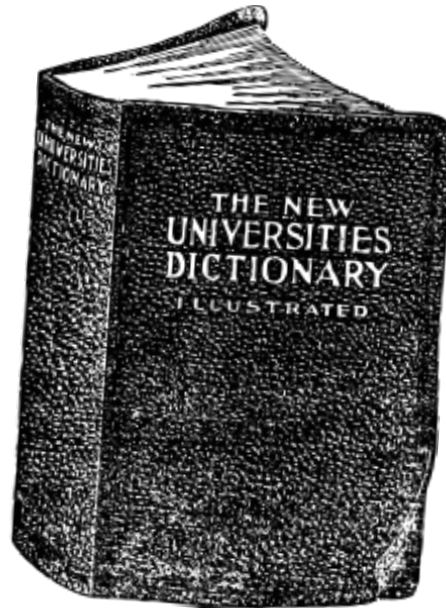
Activity

(Avoiding swear words) think of words/ phrases that someone living in 1916 (or 100 years before now) would have been confused by. How would you explain their meaning? E.g. 'To text', 'a chat room', 'that's wicked'.

Say that dictionary publishers have to make difficult decisions about which words to keep in dictionaries and which to exclude, especially in children's dictionaries, because space is limited. To make this more challenging, our language keeps growing, with new words like 'blog' being added all the time.

Working in pairs/ groups of three, ask people to pick three words they think should be added to the dictionary (they will need to check if they are there currently) and three words they think could be 'kicked out' to make more room.
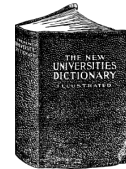
English Development Principles

1: All varieties of the English language are valid in the appropriate setting and circumstances. This means that knowing your purpose and audience and instinctively switching codes (e.g. between written and spoken forms) are important skills.

7: Language is dynamic, in a constant state of flux and we are always learning.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION
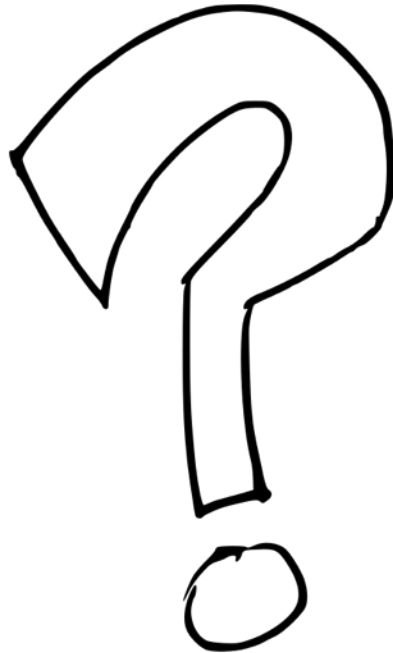
Activity

What's the question? Start the group off by giving them an answer, e.g. 'tuna salad' and asking them what the question could be (i.e. 'What's for lunch today?'). Repeat this a couple of times and then ask people to continue in pairs/ threes.

English Development Principles

5: Language enables expression of thoughts and feeling and empowers people to deal with a range of situations and make appropriate choices.

Activity 5 - Asking about work

Activity

Put people in pairs and allocate them a topic connected to the work/ training you do. One person starts with an open-ended question about the topic and the other person replies with another open-ended question. Keep going without making a statement, asking a closed question (yes/ no) or repeating a question already asked.

For example, you might choose the topic 'being on time' and someone starts by asking; 'Why were you late this morning?' and another person says; 'What's the main reason that anyone is ever late?' and someone else says; 'What do you think about that question, Barry?", and so on…

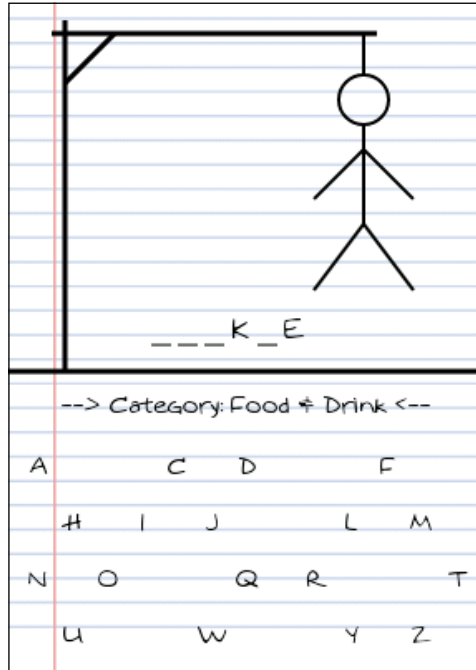### English Development Principles

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

Activity 6 - Hangman

Activity

Choose words or short phrases relevant to the work/ training you do. Play 'hangman'. If you have never played it*, the rules are as follows: The word to guess is represented by a row of dashes, one for each letter of the word. Put people in teams and give each team a chance to guess a letter. If the team suggests a letter which occurs in the word, write it in all its correct positions. If the suggested letter or number does not occur in the word, draw one element of a hanged man stick figure (and note the unused letter at the side of the drawing). When it is their turn, teams can attempt to guess the whole word. If the word is correct, the game is over and the guessing team wins. If the teams make enough incorrect guesses to allow you to complete the diagram, the game is also over.

* If people your group were not brought up in the UK, don't assume they will know hangman - you may need to explain the rules.
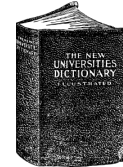
English Development Principles

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

Activity 7 - Tweeting
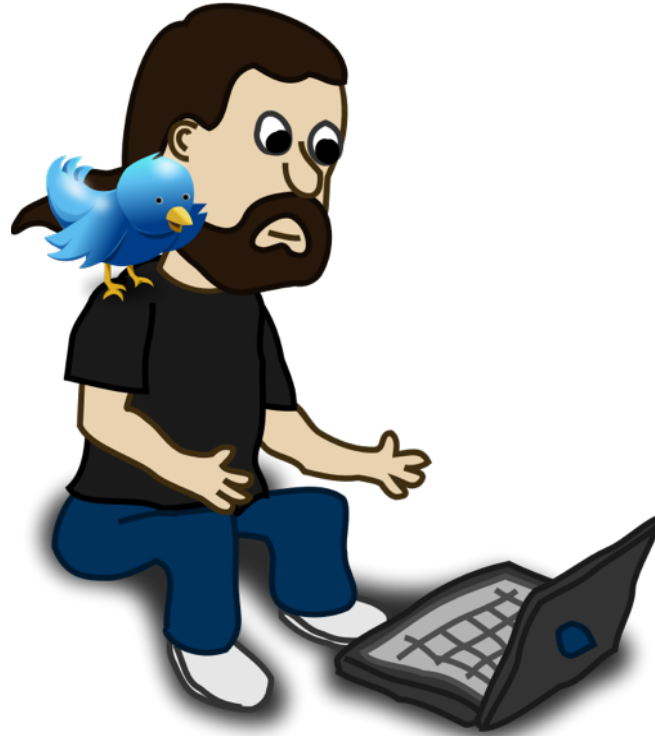
Activity

Ask people to imagine they are composing a tweet. Explain/ elicit what this is and how Twitter is used. (Tweets have to be 140 characters or less (a character is a letter, symbol, number or space). Say that 'correct' spelling and punctuation might be a disadvantage in this activity. (Distribute paper and pens so people can count their characters.)

Version 1 - 'Tweet' to explain a process people have done/ been part of in your workshop/ training session.

Version 2 - 'Tweet' to say something you learned today.

You will need…

English Development Principles

1. All varieties of the English language are valid in the appropriate setting and circumstances. This means that knowing your purpose and audience and instinctively switching codes (e.g. between written and spoken forms) are important skills.

7. Language is dynamic, in a constant state of flux and we are always learning.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

Activity 8 - Trade magazines

Activity

Distribute some trade magazines to people in pairs/ groups of three. Now ask people to find the following:

- An image that tells a story (one that makes you want to read more).
- An advert that represents a particular lifestyle (what lifestyle?).
- An example of bias (an unfair representation of one person/ group's point of view).
- Humour.
- A process (how to do something).

In each case, ask how well the writer has achieved their goal (e.g. to persuade you/ to make you want a lifestyle, etc.)
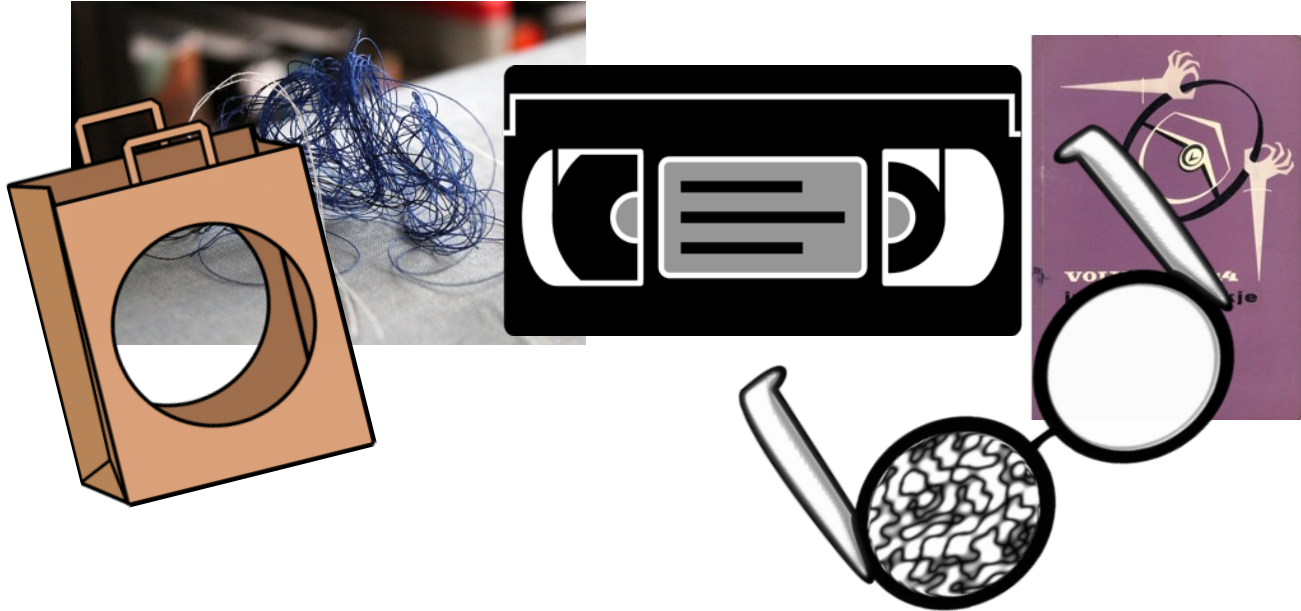
English Development Principles

2: Being good at English involves being able to judge what is 'good' and how it could be better. This means that people need to understand what good English involves, see clearly what steps they can take to get there and recognise when they have made improvements.

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

Activity 9 - Useless objects

Activity

Ask everyone to think of a useless item (or distribute any you can find) - it could be some mouldy cheese, a 'Betamax' video cassette, a broken CD, a broken screwdriver, etc. They then have to choose someone in their group and have 2 minutes (only) to try and persuade them that they desperately need the 'useless item'. The person being persuaded can resist and give arguments as to why they don't need it. After 2 minutes, the group votes on whose argument was most persuasive (was there a sale?).

Note If you haven't got any real objects to use, some cards with pictures of useless items on them will work too (like the ones described above and overleaf). People could also draw their own useless item and then try to 'sell' it.

English Development Principles

5: Language enables expression of thoughts and feelings and empowers people to deal with a range of situations and make appropriate choices. This means that people must be able to select appropriate language for their purpose and must also listen to other people's responses and learn from them.

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

Activity 10 - Scrambled letters

Activity

Using letters tiles in a bag, randomly pull a letter out of the bag and ask everyone to name something that starts with that letter. You can make each round harder by asking people to choose words in a certain category (e.g. from your training/ work setting), choose words that end with the letter, or words that contain the letter two or more times, but not consecutively.

You will need…

English Development Principles

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

Activity 11 - Roll the dice

Activity

You will need two dice for this task. Allocate a question word for each number on the first dice and a topic for the second, e.g. as follows

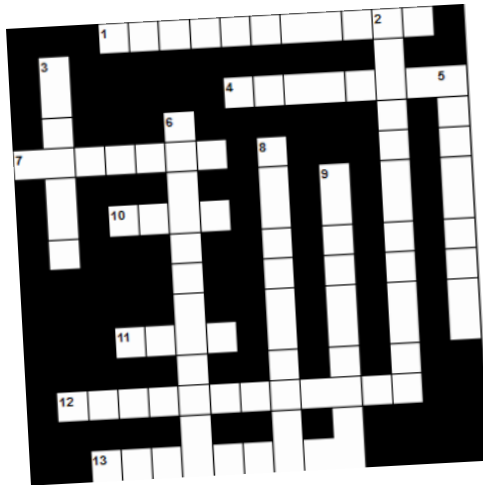|	
1 = Who	1 = Food
2 = Why	2 = Sport
3 = Where	3 = Hobbies
4 = When	4 =Jobs
5 = What	5 = Pets
6 = How	6 = Favourite TV shows

If someone rolls a 3 and a 1, they have to create a question such as: 'Where is the best restaurant you have ever eaten in?'. You could use a third dice roll to determine who answers the question.

English Development Principles

5: Language enables expression of thoughts and feelings and empowers people to deal with a range of situations and make appropriate choices. This means that people must be able to select appropriate language for their purpose and must also listen to other people's responses and learn from them.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017

EDUCATION & TRAINING
FOUNDATION

Activity 12 - Word searches and crosswords

Activity

Crosswords and word searches can be printed freely from the internet or saved from magazines/ newspapers. They are a good way to practise spelling and to learn new words.

You could also distribute some letter tiles for people to make into crosswords (with letters from words 'crossing over'). Alternatively, you can distribute pens and paper and ask people to make word searches or crosswords for each other on a specific topic like objects in the workshop or words connected to a particular trade.

You will need…

English Development Principles

6: English is a tool we use to navigate our lives, including work and study. This means we need to develop language practices as part of learning new work and life skills.

The Education and Training Foundation, February 2017