

## Activity 4: Offers of help (CEFR B2)

**Level:**

CEFR B2

**Time:**

90 minutes

**Resources:**

- ✓ Handout
- ✓ Link to online dice (can be found via google)

**Aims:**

- ✓ To develop skills and knowledge in speaking and listening at Level 1
- ✓ To explore vocabulary connected to L1 topics
- ✓ To develop students' ability to describe and respond, through active listening, to a past event in the context of doing kind deeds
- ✓ To practise narrating events in the past, asking about past events, asking about people's feelings and opinions, responding to personal stories, checking back
- ✓ To practise offering to help

**Exam task focus:** Component 1 Task 2

**Procedure:**

Acts of Kindness

1. Tell students (SS) they are going to talk about acts of kindness! Ask them what they understand by the term and elicit examples. Display the lesson aims.
2. Share handout via chatbox and share link to online dice. Put SS into groups of 3/4. Give them a minute to look at the points in the game in activity 1 and check they understand how to play. Highlight the prompts for suggestions of what they can talk about but emphasise that these are only suggestions. Open Break Out Rooms (BORs) for each group of 4/3.
3. After the activity, close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback to find out what they have done or what people have done for them. Particularly focus on the last question – *Are people more likely to do things in their countries or in the UK?* Discuss the fact that in big cities in the UK, neighbours are less likely to know each other whereas in small towns, it is different. Compare with students' own backgrounds and situations. Have they met any of their neighbours?
4. Tell SS they are going to read a story about 2 acts of kindness in activity 2a. Suggest that they initially ignore the fact that it is in sections but explain why it is. Ask gist question, eg 'What are the acts of kindness'? Answer = giving up a seat on the bus and carrying the woman's shopping.
5. Response to the text, activity 2b – suggest SS work in small groups in BORs to discuss the questions then close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback.

Again, contrast with what happens in other countries. How often do people give up their seats? How likely is it that a stranger would offer to do something for you? Would they trust anyone who offered to do something for them in the UK or in their country?

6. Finally, focus on the lexis and demonstrate how to deduce meaning from context. Tell students to do the matching activity 2c alone then conduct whole class feedback and concept check the vocabulary.

Answers:

- a. packed = crowded
- b. bulging = overfull
- c. to feel bad = feel guilty or ashamed
- d. concerned = worried

7. Ask SS how they know they are being listened to when they are telling a story – discuss active listening. Explain that the story they read is in chunks and they should imagine that someone is telling the story. The gaps indicate natural points in the story where a listener might respond. Focus SS on the language box and drill the examples focusing in particular on intonation and how it can be used to express emotions.
8. Tell the SS to look at possible responses to sections of the story and put them at an appropriate point in the story, activity 3. Put SS in BORs of 3 or 4 SS. Open BORs and then visit to monitor as they are doing it. Check in BORs then close BORs and return to main room for whole class feedback.

**Suggested answers:**

- What did you do? (d) (g)
- That was nice of you. (f)
- Why not? (e)
- Oh? Why did you hesitate? (a)
- Really? Then what happened? (c)
- So what did you do? (g) (d)
- Oh no, so then what did you do? (h)
- That's great. How did you feel? (b)

9. Put SS into pairs. Explain that A is going to talk about an act of kindness they have experienced – either something someone did for them or they did for someone else. If they can't think of anything, they should think of a story they have heard and tell it as if it was their own. Explain that whilst they are talking, their partner will demonstrate active listening so they should pause at appropriate points in the story to allow them to do this. Briefly focus attention on the role cards in activity 4.
10. Give them a couple of minutes to prepare then open BORs for each pair and tell them to start the activity. Ensure they swap roles. Visit BORs to monitor and make a note of things done well and areas to work on. Close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback focusing on the content and things done well and areas to work on.

11. Spend a few minutes reflecting on the process of active listening, activity 5. Ask whether it is something they do naturally in their own language and explain the importance of transferring skills they have in their own language, to English.
12. Focus on ways of asking someone to repeat something if you don't understand. Drill and concept check.  
  
Possible suggestions:
  - a. Could you repeat that please.
  - b. I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.
  - c. Would you mind repeating that?
13. Ask SS where they are / were during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ask them to look at the short stories in activity 6a and elicit the neighbourly acts. Tell them to discuss the questions in activity 6b in their new groups in BORs. Close BORs and return to main room to conduct whole class feedback. Encourage them to exchange ideas on how to get to know your neighbours. For some learners, not knowing their neighbours is very strange and different from their experiences in their own country.
14. Focus SS attention on the exam box at the bottom of the handout to explain how the lesson has helped to prepare them for Task 2 of the Trinity Level 1 Skills for Life Speaking exam.

# Handout Activity: Offers of help

**Activity 1: Have you ever...?**

**Roll a dice and talk about the subject you land on. Use the prompts to give you some ideas.**

- Have you ever done it either in your country or in the UK?
- Has anyone ever done it for you?
- Who did you do it for? Who did it for you?
- Do you think people are more likely to do it in your country or in the UK? Why?

<p><b>1</b> look after another person's child, eg take them to school</p>		<p><b>2</b> do somebody's shopping for them</p>
	<p><b>3</b> help older people in the community who need assistance with everyday tasks</p>	
<p><b>4</b> organise / go to a party for the people in your neighbourhood</p>		<p><b>5</b> give up your seat for somebody on public transport</p>
	<p><b>6</b> cook a meal for somebody who was unable to do it for themselves</p>	

## Activity 2: Acts of kindness

### a Read the story about acts of kindness. What were the acts of kindness?

Often when we tell a story, we pause whilst we are talking to get a reaction from the listener/s. This story is in short sections to reflect this.

A few years ago, I was travelling on a London bus. It was **packed** but since I'd been on the bus for a while, I'd managed to get a seat. At one stop, I looked up and I saw a woman who was probably in her 70s, get on with lots of **bulging** bags of shopping.



1 \_\_\_\_\_

I waited to see whether anyone would offer her their seat because I didn't really want to give mine up! Sometimes people do, but on this occasion, no-one did. I **felt bad**, so I offered her my seat and of course, she gladly accepted.



2 \_\_\_\_\_

I got off a few stops later and so did the woman. I watched her struggle off the bus and attempt to carry her heavy shopping bags. I felt rather sorry for her and wanted to help but I hesitated to offer.



3 \_\_\_\_\_

I was **concerned** that she might not trust me.



4 \_\_\_\_\_

These days, you can't really trust people but I really didn't want to see her struggle.



5 \_\_\_\_\_

I had an idea. I offered to help her carry her bags and also offered to give her my credit card to prove that I wouldn't run off with her shopping!



6 \_\_\_\_\_

She looked at me a bit suspiciously but said 'Yes, please' and 'I don't need to take your credit card'.



7 \_\_\_\_\_

I was really pleased. I carried most of her bags and chatted to her as we walked along. Anyway, it turned out that she lived in a third floor flat and the lift was broken!



8 \_\_\_\_\_

I carried them up the stairs. And the most surprising thing was that once all the bags were in the flat, she invited me in for a cup of tea!

**b Discuss the questions.**

- Why do you think the lady hesitated before accepting the offer?
- If you were in the same situation would you have offered the lady your seat? Offered to carry her shopping?
- Would you have accepted a stranger's offer to carry your shopping?

**c Match the boldened words with the definitions.**

1 packed (adj.)
2 bulging (adj.)
3 to feel bad (adj.) about something
4 concerned (adj.)

A overfull
B crowded
C worried
D guilty or ashamed

### Activity 3: Active listening

When somebody tells you a story, it's important to demonstrate that you are listening to them. This is **active listening**.

You can:

- use non-verbal gestures such as nodding or raising your eyebrows
- use expressions to show you are listening and comment on what they said e.g. Really? That's awful / interesting / a shame. That was nice of you.
- ask questions e.g. What did you do? What happened next? Why?

#### Language Box: Demonstrating active listening

Really?	That's awful / interesting / amazing / incredible!
What did you do next?	How did you feel?
Oh, no!	Why ...?

### Put the language below into the gaps in the story

- Oh? Why did you hesitate?
- That's great. How did you feel?
- Really? Then what happened?
- What did you do?
- Why not?
- That was nice of you.
- So what did you do?
- Oh no, so then what did you do?

### Activity 4: Active listening in action

You are now going to practise active listening.  
Work in pairs (A & B). Take it in turns to tell your stories.

A – You are going to describe an occasion when you helped someone or someone helped you. As you tell your story, pause to give your partner an opportunity to respond by commenting or asking a question.

B – You are going to listen to your partner's story. Demonstrate that you are listening by using non-verbal gestures, comments and questions.

### Activity 5: Reflection

- What did your partner do to ensure that you felt you were being listened to as you were telling your story?
- What can you do if you are listening to an English person tell you a story and you don't understand what they are saying?

## Activity 6: Discussion

### a Where were you during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Look at the stories below. What did these people do during the Covid-19 pandemic?

### b Discuss the questions in small groups.

- Do you think people changed their behaviour? If yes, in what ways?
- Did you offer anyone any help or did anyone offer you help?
- What could you do to get to know your neighbours?



SIMON O'CI

Joe and Michelle Gray and Rob and Jo Ridland have put a letter in all their neighbours' letterboxes offering a help should they need it during lock down.

from <https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/120586895/the-good-neighbours-reaching-out-via-letter-during-lockdown>



**Nick Doody**  
@NickDoody



Our street now has a WhatsApp group & this morning one neighbour was struggling with loneliness, so earlier we all had a socially distanced cuppa and chat together. This stuff makes a difference. #lookaftereachother



from <https://www.itv.com/news/2020-03-29/the-good-news-stories-keeping-us-all-going-through-coronavirus-lockdown/>

### Exam Hint

In Task 2 of the Level 1 Skills for Life exam, the examiner will tell you a story from their past. As they are telling you their story, you need to demonstrate active listening. You should use non-verbal gestures, comment and ask questions.

You will also need to demonstrate that you can understand and use specific communicative functions such as *narrating events in the past*, *asking about past events*, *asking about people's feelings and opinions*, *responding to personal stories*, *checking back*. You have practised doing this in this lesson.