

Unit 1 > Session 9

This session aims to:

- introduce language functions and exponents (Outcome 4)
- introduce language grading (Outcome 4)
- practise effective instruction giving (Outcome 4)
- provide preparation for Outcome 4 assessment (Outcome 4)

We suggest that you allocate 180 minutes for the session.

Focus A *Functional language and exponents*

Aims:	To introduce language functions and exponents To provide practice in identifying functions and exponents
Time needed:	75 minutes
Materials:	DVD — Getting your message across Handouts 1, 2, 3 and 4
Preparation:	Preview the DVD clip See also Toolkit Sample Session 9, page 84
Notes:	Both Sessions 9 and 10 cover the knowledge and skills for Outcome 4. It would be useful if the trainees were provided with opportunities to observe ESOL delivery.

Task 1 *Functions and exponents*

Stage 1

Tell the trainees that they have moved to a different country. They need to enrol in a language class. They do not have access to the internet and there are no other English speakers living locally. What are the stages they will have to go through and what are the feelings they will experience as they do?

While taking feedback don't focus too much on the stages. Write some of the words to do with emotions/feelings on the board. Use this as an opportunity for a mini word-class review by insisting on adjectives, then asking if the trainees can provide the noun forms, eg worried — worry; confused — confusion.

Potential feedback

- Stages — making appointments, taking tests, reading e-mails/letters, buying coursebooks etc.
- Emotions/feelings — nervous (before and during enrolment — especially if telephoning), confused/embarrassed (filling out forms, during conversation, during tests), worried/apprehensive (finance, about attending a new course), relieved (when it has been successfully completed).

Stage 2



Distribute [Handout 1](#). Tell the trainees to watch the video clip (Getting your message across) and make notes on how the learner felt and how the interviewer behaved.

Potential feedback

Learner — confused, nervous, apprehensive, worried, comfortable (once put at ease by interviewer)

Interviewer — helpful, calm, efficient

Tell the trainees to watch again and to take a note of the two offers of assistance and the two questions about the learner's address. Let the trainees compare their answers, then distribute [Handout 2](#) for them to confirm.

Answers

Offering assistance: What can I do for you?

Can I help you?

Asking for address: Would you mind telling me where you live?

What's your address?

Stage 3

Provide [Handout 3](#). Introduce/explain the terms **function** and **exponent** and tell the trainees to complete the paragraph defining them. During feedback make sure the trainees are comfortable with these terms.

Answer

Functions are our **purposes** when we are using language. We often describe them using the *-ing* form (asking, suggesting, apologising etc.). **Exponents** are the pieces of **language** we use to **achieve** those purposes.

Stage 4

The trainees should look at the other questions on the handout related to functions and exponents. In groups, they should come up with exponents for the three functions and name the functions where an exponent is given. Monitor and provide suggestions, taking note of any interesting exponents they think of.

Potential feedback

Asking for the time:	What time is it? Excuse me. Have you got the time? Have you got a watch?
Apologising:	Sorry! I really am most terribly sorry. Please forgive me.
Answering the phone:	Hello. 555 6767. Good afternoon. How may I help you?
Leave taking:	See you!
Organising an appointment:	Would 9.30 be convenient?
Making a financial transaction/ asking for payment:	That'll be £12.50, please.

Task 2 Function dialogue*Stage 1*

Display the function cues from [Handout 4](#) on the board. Tell the trainees to imagine two older people meeting in the street. Elicit a conversation from the group based on the function cues and write the suggestions on the board to create the dialogue.

Stage 2

Ask how the conversation would be different if the speakers were young people. Elicit some different exponents which would still cover the same functions.

Stage 3

Put the trainees into pairs, provide Handout 4 and assign different roles to them (eg two teenagers at a party, two new work colleagues, two minor celebrities on a reality show, a couple in a new relationship, a mother and child, two old friends). The pairs should script a dialogue which is based on their roles and use the function cues. Pairs should then act out their dialogue and the other trainees should try to guess what the relationship between the speakers is. Highlight how relationship affects our choices of exponents.

Focus B Language grading

Aims: To introduce language grading
To practise simplifying oral instructions

Time needed: 90 minutes

Materials: [Handouts 5, 6 and 7](#)
Handout 6, Session 6 — Activities 3 (The weather), 5 (Abilities survey) and 6 (Definitions)
DVD — Audio Clips — Language grading

Preparation: Preview the audio
See also Toolkit Sample Session 8, page 77

Notes: Do not give out the instructions script on Handout 6 until the trainees have heard it.
Make sure you have extra copies of Handout 6, Session 6 as the activities are used as a base for scripting instructions in this Focus.

Task 1 Communication breakdown

Stage 1

Provide [Handout 5](#). Direct the trainees to the questions about the interview they watched in Focus A (Getting your message across). In groups they should answer the questions using the script in [Handout 2](#). Conduct feedback.

Potential feedback

- At what points does the learner become confused?

There is confusion with the initial offer of assistance, at the point the interviewer asks about the learner's husband and when she asked about her address. There isn't much confusion at the point of offering a seat as the learner probably knew what to expect from other such situations.

Potential feedback continued

- What happened to cause the confusion?

Initially, the learner was asked a question she didn't expect. When asked about her husband the language was complex and packed with sub-questions (more than one question at a time). Also, she spoke quite quickly with an accent the learner may not have been used to. In the final example about her address, the interviewer uses a complex question form which gets in the way of the 'simple' lexical item which the learner would know.

- What does the interviewer do to help the situation?

In the first example, she rephrases the question to make it simpler. In the second example, she slows down and separates the information/questions into chunks. She waits for one question to be answered before moving on to the next. In the final example she simplifies the grammar structure and vocabulary.

Stage 2

Elicit the term 'Language Grading'. Use the first couple of examples from the 'Dos and Don'ts' to consider good advice in this area. Put the trainees into small groups to discuss the remaining items. Conduct brief group feedback.

Potential feedback

- Speak very slowly separating every word and pronouncing it very clearly. ✘
- Break the communication into parts. ✓
- Avoid asking multi-point questions. ✓
- Try not to use specialised vocabulary. ✓
- Raise your voice. ✘
- Avoid using words like the, a, do etc. ✘
- Give the other person plenty of time to think before you decide they don't understand. ✓
- Try to repeat using different structures if the other person doesn't understand. ✓
- Try to make jokes. ✘
- Be friendly and open. ✓

If any groups finish earlier than others, direct them to the question about communication breakdown. Allow time in feedback for the trainees to discuss their own experiences where language has caused a breakdown in communication and how they dealt with it.

Stage 3

Write up the first example from [Handout 6](#) on the board:

Do you want to just answer questions one to eight?

Ask the trainees what they feel might make this instruction confusing. Elicit that the use of 'do you want to', although often used in Scotland as an instruction, is unclear and unnecessary. Ask the trainees to think of a better way of giving this instruction:

eg Please, answer questions one to eight.

Provide Handout 6. (It is best not to give the bottom half of the handout with the instruction on it until the next stage). Individually, trainees should try to make the statements clearer, then compare in pairs/groups. The trainees should be able to come up with a range of suggestions.

Potential feedback

- Would you mind just taking a wee seat over there for just a minute?
Can you wait for a moment? Sit down here, please.
- What's your spouse's name and the names of any dependents?
Do you have a wife/husband or partner? What is his/her name? Do you look after any children or grandparents? What are their names?
- Whereabouts do you stay?
What is your address?
- Someone from the SAIC will get back to you in a couple of days.
We will send you a letter in two or three days.
- Are you on benefits?
Where do you get money (income) from?
- What's your marital status?
Are you married? Do you have a partner?
NB: This question may lead to discussion on equality issues and the appropriacy of certain questions.
- How long have you been resident in the UK?
When did you come to Britain/the UK?
- Have you brought any documentation to establish your identity, address and status?
Do you have an ID card or passport? Can I see it?

Stage 4

Give a poor example of instruction like the one below.

(Without trying too hard to attract everyone's attention...) I'd like you all to get into pairs or small groups or something like that. If you'd like to, it would be great if you could then just tell each other about some of the high and low points of your weekend. You know if anything exciting happened at all 'cos mine was just a bit dull all the way through — you know. Well, apart from seeing the new Tarantino movie with my pals and going for a drink after. That was on Saturday night — yeah that was OK. I didn't like having to tidy up my flat on Sunday. It was a real mess. So right, can you do that for me, yeah?

Discuss how well the trainees were able to follow your instruction. The trainees may have been able to complete the task, but they will realise that the instruction could have been much clearer and for many learners would have been impossible to follow.

Highlight the need for grading of tutor language at different stages of a lesson, and especially when giving instructions.

Stage 3

Provide Handout 6 (bottom half). In groups, the trainees come up with ideas to make the instructions clearer — they then try to script the instructions. Briefly take some feedback. There should be lots of different ideas. The task also helps to focus on how to order instructions effectively.

Potential feedback

- OK everyone, stop and listen. (waits for attention)
- Can you two work together? You two. You two. And you three. (With hand gestures.)
- Listen. Some things were good for me this weekend and some not good. I had a really nice night with my friends on Saturday when we saw the new Tarantino movie and went for drinks after. On Sunday, though, I had to tidy my flat. I hate that.
- So, I want you to tell each other one good thing and one not so good thing that you did this weekend.
- Tomoko. When are you going to talk about (Tomoko: The weekend). Sadeeq. Are you only going to talk about good things? (Sadeeq: No. Good and bad)
- OK. Begin!

Task 2 Practitioner discussion

Stage 1



Tell the trainees they are going to listen to some tutors talking about language grading. Provide [Handout 7](#). The trainees should listen and make notes under the mind map. Play the audio (Language grading). After listening the trainees should compare their notes in pairs. Conduct group feedback.

Potential feedback**When**

giving instructions, setting up activities, introducing new language, especially important at low levels

Definition

language moderation, restricting language, simplifying language, clarity of speech

Dos

consistency, use correct grammar, simplify vocabulary, paraphrase, repetition, visuals/gestures, write down instructions, use emphasis

Don'ts

shouting, overgrading, colloquial language, phrasal verbs

Other

Language grading comes with experience and practice, balance needs to be struck. There is a need to be careful not to fall into 'pidgin' form of language.

Stage 2

After feedback on the listening ask the trainees to think about what else would be important to include in an assignment on language grading, eg when it might be important not to grade language, why language grading is still important at higher levels.

Task 3 **Instruction activity***Stage 1*

Put the trainees into three groups. Assign each group either Activity 3 (The weather), Activity 5 (Abilities survey) or Activity 6 (Definitions) from Session 6, Handout 6. Tell the trainees that they should script the instructions to set up their activity.

Stage 2

Regroup the trainees. They should give their activity instructions to each other and then comment on their clarity.

Potential feedback

- Separate any instructions about movement and space from instructions about how to carry out the activity.
- Demonstrations in front of the group are good. Initial demonstration can be tutor to learner followed by learner to learner.
- Instructions can be repeated.
- Gestures can be very helpful.

Review and reflect (10 minutes)

Put the following questions on the board and ask the trainees to discuss in small groups:

What are some of the reasons we have for choosing different language exponents?

If learners aren't able to use a range of exponents, what could happen?

What are the benefits of giving clear instructions?

What happens if our instructions are not clear?

Potential feedback

- Relationship, age, difficulty of task, desire to be polite etc. Appropriacy and register.
- Could offend people, could be afraid to ask for something if they don't know how to do it appropriately.
- Saves time, learning is more purposeful, learners feel positive about own abilities.
- Time wasted, lack of interest in activity, negative feelings about language ability.

Session 9

Handouts and Resources

Task 1 Functions and exponents



Getting your message across

You will view a clip of a learner who wishes to enrol in English classes.

First viewing

How did the learner feel during the interview?

How did the interviewer behave?

Second viewing

The interviewer offers assistance twice and asks for the learner's address twice.

Watch again and write down her exact words.

- Offering assistance

- Asking for learner's address

Task 1 Functions and exponents

Script of 'Getting your message across'



[Knock at door]

P: Come in. Hi there. What can I do for you?

A: Sorry?

P: Can I help you?

A: Oh, yes. I want to study English.

P: OK. You're in the right place. Take a wee seat and I'll be with you in a minute.

A: Thank you.

P: Is that your husband out there?

A: Yes.

P: Do you think he'd like to come in and join us or is he OK out there?

A: Sorry?

P: Is that your husband?

A: Yes.

P: Does he want to come in? He can come in with you.

A: Yes, thanks.

P: Come in. OK. Would you mind telling me where you live?

A: Uh?

P: What's your address?

A: OK. 12 Brown Street, Glasgow.

P: OK. Thank you.

Task 1 Functions and exponents

1 Complete the paragraph below using the words in the box.

purposes	functions	suggesting
exponents	achieve	language x 2

_____ are our _____ when we are using _____. We often describe them

using the *-ing* form (asking, _____, apologising etc). _____ are the pieces of

_____ we use to _____ those purposes.

2 Write three exponents for each of the functions below.

- Asking for the time
- Apologising
- Answering the phone

3 Write the function of each of these exponents.

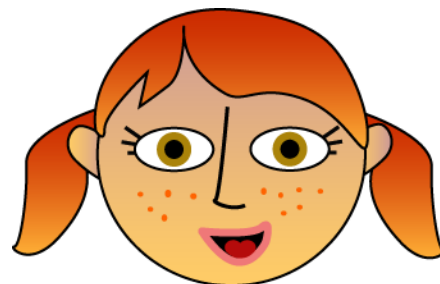
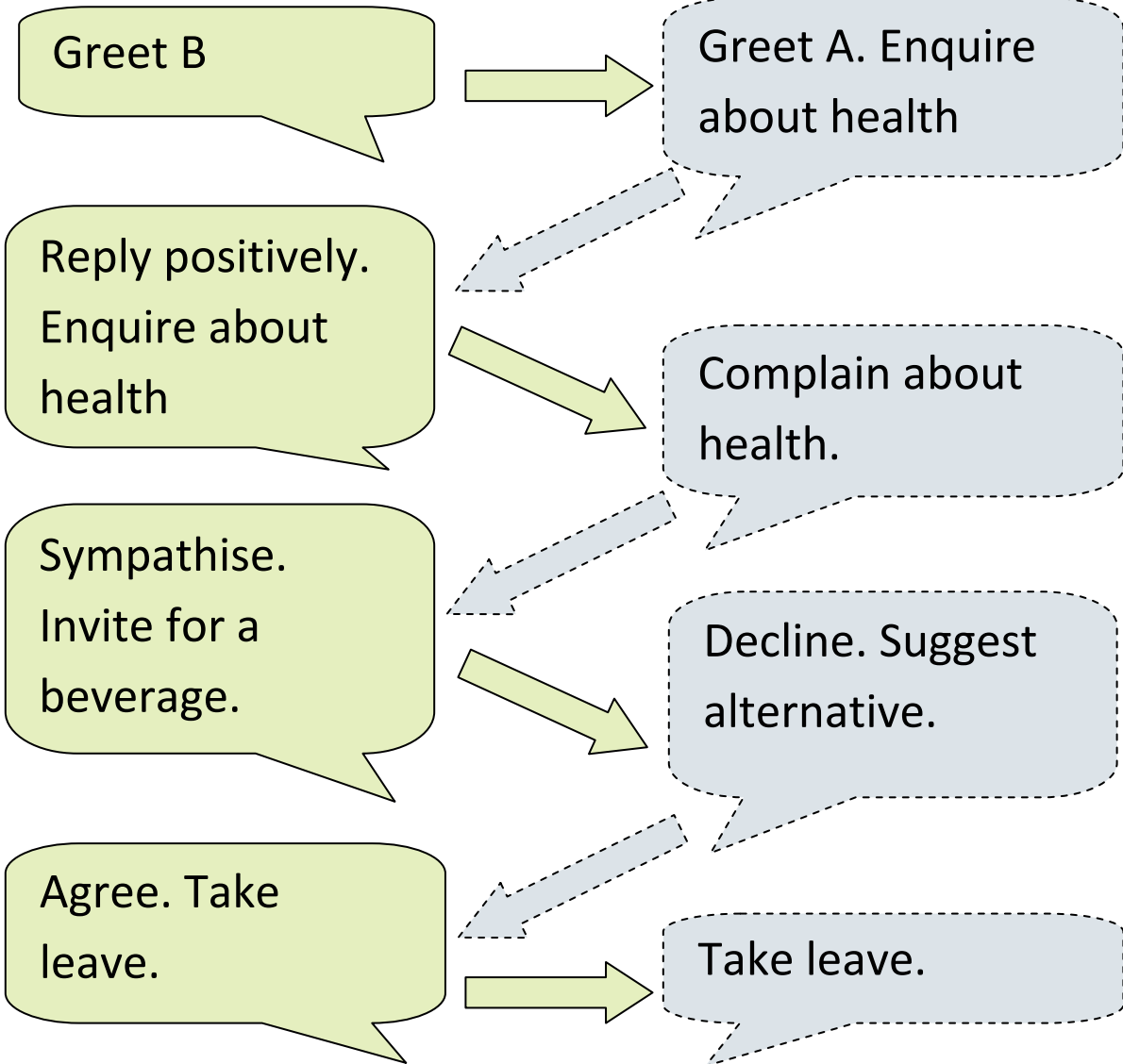
- See you!
- Would 9.30 be convenient?
- That'll be £12.50, please.

4 Write some more exponents for these functions.

Task 2 Function dialogue

A

B



Task 1 Communication breakdown

Look back at the interview from Handout 2.

- At what points does the learner become confused?
- What happened to cause the confusion?
- What does the interviewer do to help the situation?

Dos and Don'ts

Look at the advice about language grading below. If you think it is good advice put a tick beside it (✓). If not, put a cross (✗).

- Speak very slowly separating every word and pronouncing it very clearly.
- Break the communication into parts.
- Avoid asking multi-point questions.
- Try not to use specialised vocabulary.
- Raise your voice.
- Avoid using words like *the, a, do* etc.
- Give the other person plenty of time to think before you decide they don't understand.
- Try to repeat using different structures if the other doesn't understand.
- Try to make jokes.
- Be friendly and open.

What experiences have you had of 'communication breakdown'? How did you deal with the situation?

Task 1 Communication breakdown

Giving clear instructions

Improve what the interviewer has said and compare with a partner.

- Do you want to just answer questions one to eight?
- Would you mind just taking a wee seat over there for just a minute?
- What's your spouse's name and the names of any dependents?
- Whereabouts do you stay?
- Someone from the SAIC will get back to you in a couple of days.
- Are you on benefits?
- What's your marital status?
- How long have you been resident in the UK?
- Have you brought any documentation to establish your identity, address and status?

Giving instructions to ESOL learners

Here is a script of the instructions you have just heard:

I'd like you all to get into pairs or small groups or something like that. If you'd like to, it would be great if you could then just tell each other about some of the high and low points of your weekend. You know if anything exciting happened at all 'cos mine was just a bit dull all the way through — you know. Well, apart from seeing the new Tarantino movie with my pals and going for a drink after. That was on Saturday night — yeah that was OK. I didn't like having to tidy up my flat on Sunday. It was a real mess. So right, can you do that for me, yeah?

Improve the instructions to make them clearer. Write what she should have said and done.

Task 2 Practitioner discussion



Listen to three tutors talking about grading their language. Make notes. Talk to your colleagues about what you heard.

