

Emergency calls

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To understand key questions asked by the operator and control assistant when making a 999 call
- To give clear information in response to questions



RESOURCES

- Copies of Resource 1 cut into four parts
- Cards/sticky notes with control assistant's questions from Resource 1 (Activity 1 Support)
- Role-play cards prepared from Resource 2A and B
- Prompt cards for role-play to be devised by teacher (Activity 3 Support)
- Audio equipment 🎧 29–31
- Audio script for track 29 (Activity 1 ESOL)
- Audio script for track 31 (Activity 2 ESOL)
- Mobile phones or toy phones

RELATED TOPICS

Emergency services (Theme 9, Topic 9)

Following emergency instructions (Theme 8, Topic 5)

HEALTH SKILLS

Making emergency calls quickly and efficiently can save lives. This starts with assessing a situation quickly, making a decision about the appropriate help needed and calling 999. What follows then can affect the response time. It is vital that correct and sufficiently detailed answers are given in response to the control assistant's questions to help get the emergency services to the casualty or scene as quickly as possible.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

In order to make an emergency phone call which brings about a quick, effective response, learners need to be able to:

- listen and respond to questions about where they are calling from and the nature of the emergency.

Functional Skills/Core Curriculum

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

- respond to a range of questions
English E3.4 (L SLr/E3.6)
- Listen for and understand explanations and instructions **English** L1.7 (L SLr/L1.2)
- speak clearly in a way which suits the situation **English** L1.2 (L SLc/L1.2).

Engage

- Set the scene by discussing what an emergency is. If appropriate, encourage learners to talk about any emergency situations they have witnessed or have been involved in, and to briefly describe what happened. Remind learners that if they need urgent medical help but it is not an emergency they can call 111.
- Find out if any of the learners have experience of making calls to the emergency services.
- Discuss the type of situations that require the attendance of the emergency services – ambulance, fire brigade or police (or coastguard in coastal areas). If necessary, suggest some scenarios (e.g. smoke coming out of a neighbour’s flat; graffiti all over the side of the block of flats where you live; a collision between a car and a lamp post). Check learners are aware of the number to call.
- Set up groups to discuss and list information the operator will need from the caller to deal with the emergency (e.g. caller’s name; phone number; what the problem is; the exact location of the incident; whether anyone is hurt; the condition of any injured people).
- Take feedback from the group and display.

Have you ever had to call the emergency services?

What information did the operator ask you for?

Enable

ACTIVITY 1 29

Listen to a call to emergency services

- Set the scene for the audio clip of Meesha’s emergency phone call. Play it once to get the gist, and then again to answer two questions: ‘Which emergency service does Meesha ask for when she dials 999?’ ‘Why does she ask for that service?’
- Give learners Resource 1 cut into the four parts. Ask them to put the parts in order like a story board to tell Meesha’s story – following the order they heard on the audio clip.
- Discuss the questions the control assistant asks (third section of Resource 1). Play the audio clip again and ask learners to listen for the order in which he asks them, numbering the speech-bubbles.
- Take suggestions about the control assistant’s reasons for asking each question (e.g. the phone number in case he needs to re-establish contact; the exact location of the incident so that the ambulance can be sent to the right place as quickly as possible; etc.).
- Ask learners for their views on how well Meesha handled the phone call. Focus the discussion on how well she communicated (e.g. ‘Did she sound calm or upset?’ ‘Did she speak clearly?’ ‘Did she give a lot of detail in her answers?’). Replay the audio clip as necessary.
- Point out that the job of the control assistant is to find out as much information as possible in a short time. Stress the importance of staying calm, and giving short but precise answers to questions.

Why do you think the control assistant asks each question?

Support

Provide the control assistant’s questions (third section of Resource 1) on cards or sticky notes so that learners can physically move them into the correct order.

ESOL

Encourage learners to work with the audio script. Discuss Meesha’s answers, explaining unfamiliar words (e.g. ‘collapse’; ‘unconscious’; ‘breathing’; ‘chest’; etc.).

TIP

When phoning the emergency services, stress the importance of:

- keeping calm
- listening carefully
- giving short but precise details.

ACTIVITY 2 30–31

Raise awareness of the need to listen carefully to the control assistant

- Ask learners to think about what to do until help arrives. 'You've called for help and the ambulance is on its way. What can you do while you wait? What shouldn't you do?'
- Discuss the importance of listening carefully to any instructions, remembering them and carrying them out.
- Play the extract from the end of Meesha's emergency call (track 30). Ask learners to focus on the instructions given by the control assistant.
- Ask learners to listen for the instructions and verbally sort them into things to do and not to do.
- Play the extract again and discuss the action words they heard (e.g. 'stay', 'check').
- For extra practice in listening to instructions, play the audio clip of five instructions from different emergency calls to the fire brigade. Ask learners to listen carefully to each instruction and say what action they need to take (e.g. 1 = go to the bottom of the drive and wait for the fire engine).

What can you do until help arrives?

How can you check any instructions you are given?

Support

- Support learners as they write the action they are to take (or not take) on sticky notes.
- They can arrange these under the headings 'Do' and 'Do not' while listening to the audio clips again.

ESOL

- Point out different ways of giving instructions:
 - instruction words (e.g. 'Don't move him'; 'Keep him still')
 - expressions with 'want' and 'need' (e.g. 'I want/need you to keep him still').
- Ask learners to find examples in the audio scripts.

ACTIVITY 3

Practise making an emergency call

- In pairs, learners role-play making an emergency phone call for an ambulance using the role cards on Resource 2A and B. Suggest they take turns to be the control assistant and the person calling.
- Give out Resource 2A to each pair. Ask each of the learners to think through an imaginary emergency scenario in their immediate locality. They may like to make brief notes for the points on the card.
- Give out Resource 2B – the questions the control assistant needs to ask.
- Ask learners to act out the phone call using mobile phones as props and/or sitting back to back.
- Swap roles to ensure that both learners have a chance to play the role of the caller.
- Encourage learners to reflect on how the role-play went: what they got from it, what went well, and things they would do differently next time. Handle feedback sensitively, concentrating on the positive aspects of the communication and giving constructive suggestions for improvement.

Why is it important to try to speak calmly and clearly?

How do you think the role-play went?

- As a follow-up, discuss with the group if all the situations they acted out merited an emergency phone call, and why (life-and- death situation; unconscious person; real danger to person and/or others; needs specialist equipment; etc.). Ask learners when they might call 111 for medical help instead of 999 i.e. when they need urgent medical advice but it is not an emergency. Come up with some examples.
- Emphasise that if the emergency services are called out all the time on non-emergency calls, then they may not be there to respond quickly when there really is an emergency. (This point is covered in the 'Emergency services' topic as well; it can't be stressed enough.)

Why is it important that the emergency services are only called out for a true emergency?

Support

- Work with learners to build up a scenario, or provide one yourself. It may be helpful to prepare prompt cards for the control assistant or the caller (e.g. My name is ... My mobile number is ...).
- Some learners may be uncomfortable with role-plays. In this case, play the part of the control assistant yourself. First go through the questions and discuss how to answer them. Then ask the questions so learners can practise their answers.

ESOL

- As preparation for the role-play, review words for landmarks in the learners' locality (e.g. 'block of flats'; 'parade of shops'; 'garage'; 'road junction'; 'roundabout'; etc.).
- Also check prepositions of place (e.g. 'in Bolton Avenue'; 'in St Clements'; 'next to/behind/opposite the White Horse pub'; 'at the junction of the High Street and Granville Road'; 'near the cinema'; 'on the Morefield estate').

Action

- Encourage learners to find out about ICE, an initiative encouraging people to store their personal details on their mobile phone under the heading ICE – In Case of Emergencies.
- If possible, learners should programme their mobile phone. Suggest that those who know how to do this help others at the next session.
- Ensure learners are aware that 999 can be called even from a locked mobile phone and that the call is always free.

TIP

Use the police non-emergency number **101** to report crime and other concerns that do not require an emergency response.

Emergency calls

RESOURCE 1

29

Meesha sees an emergency situation and calls 999 ...

Emergency. Which service do you require?
Police, fire brigade or ambulance?



Ambulance, quickly, please.

The operator puts Meesha through to the control assistant ...



A man's just collapsed in the car park. He's unconscious.

The control assistant asks Meesha some important questions ...

Which car park are you in?

Is he breathing?

Did you see what happened?

Are you at the accident scene?

What's your name?

What number are you calling from?



Tell me what's happened.

Finally, he gives her some instructions ...

OK, Meesha – the ambulance is on its way, so I want you to ...



What was it he told me to do? What did he tell me **not** to do?

Caller

**Plan your call. Think about each of these points.
If you like, make some notes for each point.**



What has happened

The number you are calling from (use your mobile number or invent one)

Your name (remember you may need to spell it)

Your exact location (think about the street, and any landmarks that will help the ambulance find you)

Information about any people involved in the incident (how many, their approximate age)

The condition of any injured people (Are they conscious? Are they breathing? Are they in shock?)

TIP

When you make your call:

- listen very carefully to the questions
- keep your replies short and precise
- check if you don't understand
- make sure your voice sounds calm.

Control assistant

Use these questions to help you.

What number are you calling from?

Can you tell me what's happened?

What's your name?

Are you at the scene of the accident?

Where exactly are you?

Did you see what happened?

Is anybody hurt?

What's their condition?



TIP

If you find it difficult to follow the caller:

- ask questions
- check information
- ask him or her to repeat.

ANSWERS**ACTIVITY 1 / Resource 1**

The control assistant asks the questions in this order:

What number are you calling from?

Tell me what's happened.

Are you at the accident scene?

Is he breathing?

Did you see what happened?

What's your name?

Which car park are you in?

ACTIVITY 2 / Resource 1

The control assistant tells Meesha to stay by the person and check that he keeps breathing.

He tells her not to put the phone down.

AUDIO SCRIPTS**ACTIVITY 1**

999 operator: Emergency. Which service do you require? Police, fire brigade or ambulance?

Meesha: Ambulance, quickly, please.

999 operator: Just a moment.

...

Control assistant: This is the ambulance service. What number are you calling from?

Meesha: Oh ... oh, it's my mobile and it's 07431 452608, but please come quickly.

Control assistant: Tell me what's happened.

Meesha: A man's just collapsed in the car park. He's unconscious.

Control assistant: Are you at the accident scene?

Meesha: Yes, I'm right by him.

Control assistant: Is he breathing?

Meesha: Yes, I can see his chest going up and down a bit.

Control assistant: OK. Did you see what happened?

Meesha: No, not really. One minute I saw him get out of his car, and when I looked again, he was on the ground.

Control assistant: What's your name?

Meesha: Meesha Gaddu ... but please come quickly, I'm here on my own.

Control assistant: Which car park are you in?

Meesha: The one behind Williams, the tyre place in the town centre. I think it's in Cave Street.

Control assistant: OK, Meesha – the ambulance is on its way, so I want you to stay by the person and check that he keeps breathing. Don't put the phone down. OK?

Meesha: I won't, but please be quick!

ACTIVITY 2



Meesha: The one behind Williams, the tyre place in the town centre. I think it's in Cave Street.

Control assistant: OK, Meesha – the ambulance is on its way, so I want you to stay by the person and check that he keeps breathing. Don't put the phone down. OK?

Meesha: I won't, but please be quick!

ACTIVITY 2



- 1 OK, what I want you to do is to wait for the fire engine at the bottom of the drive.
- 2 Right. I need you to stay on your mobile until the fire engine arrives.
- 3 Whatever happens, don't let anyone go back inside the house.
- 4 OK, the fire engine's on its way and should be with you in about ten minutes, so stay where you are.
- 5 Whatever happens, don't try to fight the fire yourself.