

# Unit 4

# Public transport

## Overview

Learners practise:

- **Asking simple questions**
- **Saying and understanding numbers**
- Saying and reading local place names

## Suggested context

Someone outside a shop/in the street/by a bus stop asking for information about a journey.

**Dialogue 1:** Ask a stranger for help with a journey.

**Dialogue 2:** Buy a ticket for a journey and check where to get off.

## Skills

### Speaking and listening

- Listen to dialogues and answer comprehension questions
- Role play asking for and giving information
- Adapt dialogues to their own situations
- Use stress, rhythm and intonation in questions and answers
- Practise pronunciation of important local street and place names
- Practise pronunciation of numbers and prices

### Literacy and phonics

- Learners recognise street names
- Learners identify bus numbers and place names
- Focus on initial graphemes in place/street names
- Numeracy focus

### Language points

(Core points – bold, extension points – not bold)

- Questions:
  - asking for help: **Excuse me**, can you help me?
  - asking for information:
    - Where is ...?**
    - Where can I ...?**
    - Which ...?**
    - How many ...?**
- Key words – public transport, numbers, street names, local places and prices

## Before you start

Depending on the level of your group, record exemplar **Dialogue 1** only, or both parts. (See *Guidance for further details*)

Source/select relevant images of local public transport. If possible, take pictures of the local area. Otherwise, use the images provided from the [New to ESOL picture pack](#).

### Materials needed

#### Speaking and listening

**Activity 1** **Resource 1: Images** – bus, train, taxi, bicycle, people walking, local bus station or bus stop

**Activity 2** Images of buses showing local destinations and routes (these should be taken locally, or can be found using Google search), picture of a bus ticket machine;  
**Dialogue 1**;  
**Resource 2: Bus routes handout/cards** – one copy per pair and one set of cards per pair.

**Activity 3** Realia: local train and bus tickets, travel cards;  
**Resource 2: Bus routes handout/cards**.

**Activity 4** **Dialogue 2**;  
**Resource 2: Bus routes handout**.

#### Literacy and phonics

- Copies of Numbers template ([New to ESOL templates](#), Template 11) cut into sets of matching cards
- **Resource 3: Numbers**
- Flashcards of relevant words and images
- Sticky notes for graphemes
- Personal vocabulary books
- Multiple copies of audio transcripts, cut into strip

**TIP** For the bus routes resource, teachers can create their own version of the table provided using local destinations and routes. Make one copy of the table and one set of cards per pair.



**Note that each unit can be covered across two or three sessions.** You can follow the order of activities suggested below or incorporate literacy, phonics, digital opportunities and resources/activities from other sources at different points across the sessions to best meet the needs, interests and priorities of your learners.

Allow some time at the beginning of each session for:

- General chatting
- A warm-up activity
- Recapping and reviewing the main learning from the last session and/or topic.
- Learners to tell each other about anything they have done or followed up related to the most recent topics.

## Speaking and listening

### Activity 1

#### Introduction to the topic

- Show learners **Resource 1: Images of public transport** (and include trams and underground if relevant for your location). Ask learners to point to and say the method they used to get to the class today.
- Then ask each learner: *How did you get here today?* If necessary, prompt with: *I came by bus / car / bike / taxi / I walked.*
- Drill the key words and phrases, focusing on stress patterns. Use choral and individual drilling:  
**Train. I came by train.** (Repeat for other pictures.)
- Draw attention to I walked as a different construction. Focus on pronunciation and stress: *I walked.*
- Now focus on numbers: ask learners to sit in a circle and take turns to count from 1 – 10, starting again at 1 at the end of a round. Repeat but this time anyone can call out the next number. If two or more people call out the number at the same time, the whole group has to go back to 1.
- For learners who travel by bus, elicit the bus numbers and clarify how we say them, i.e. 27 = twenty-seven, 269 = two-six-nine.

**TIP** If learners don't seem to understand, use more pictures, video clips, mime and/or translation to help convey meaning.



### Activity 2

#### Speaking and listening (Dialogue 1)

- Set the context for the dialogue: show an image of two people standing at a bus stop, and other images of the front of buses showing destination and number sign. (If possible, take your own pictures locally, or use *Google images*.)
- Ask learners to listen to the two people talking and set the first comprehension question: *Where does s/ he want to go?*
- Play the audio, more than once if necessary. Check answer (*Station Road*).
- Set the second question: *Which bus number?* Play the audio, more than once if necessary. Check answer (*245 or 317*). Check learners understand that both these buses go to the same destination.
- Play audio again and pause after lines 1 and 2. Choral drill the first two lines and ask each learner to repeat in turn.
- Ask learners to memorise and practise the two-line dialogue in pairs.
- Set the third question: *Where can he buy a ticket?* Play the audio, more than once if necessary, and check answer (on the bus or from the machine).
- Now drill the whole dialogue, line by line, and focus on pronunciation, including the falling intonation pattern in the questions.
- Encourage learners to memorise the dialogue and practise in pairs.
- Change pairs, ideally pairing learners with lower level literacy skills with stronger learners. Now give each pair a copy of **Resource 2: Bus routes**, cut into cards. Hold up each place name, check pronunciation and drill if necessary.
- Learners practise the dialogue again, using the cards as prompts and then using familiar street names and local bus numbers.
- Model the activity with a more confident learner before starting.

**TIP** This is a good opportunity for learners to practise saying, reading and copying local place names and numbers.



## Activity 3

### Speaking and listening (Dialogue 2)

- Bring in and show learners a selection of bus and train tickets and travel cards. Ask if anyone has a travel card and encourage learners to discuss differences, in first language(s) if necessary. Discuss where to buy tickets – at a ticket office, from a machine or bus driver, or on-line – and how much they cost. You may need to check learners can pronounce and distinguish between 13 – 30, 14 – 40, 15 – 50, etc.
- Elicit the difference between single and return tickets. Reinforce by drawing two bus stops at either end of a board. Write *Bus station* at one end and *Station Road* at the other.
- Stand by the *Bus Station* stop and say *Single to Station Road, please*. Mime getting on the bus, going to Station Road and getting off the bus at the bus stop. Repeat, but this time ask for a return ticket and mime going both ways.
- Add another two bus stops to your board and demonstrate counting stops.
- Before playing the audio, set the question: *What ticket does he ask for – single or return?*
- Play the audio and check answer (*Single*).
- Set the second question: *How much does it cost?* Play the audio (more than once if necessary) and check answer (£1.90) Learners may need to practise the distinction between 19 and 90.
- Set the third question: *How many stops?* Play the audio and check answer (5).
- Learners practise the dialogue in pairs, from memory as far as possible.
- Then practise again using their own ideas and changing details, e.g. destination, single/return, price and number of stops.

## Activity 4

### Speaking and listening (Dialogue 3)

#### Intercultural understanding



This is a good opportunity to flag up:

- queueing and try it out
  - saying 'please', 'thank you'/'thanks'
  - softening a request or getting attention by first saying, 'Excuse me' or 'Sorry'.
- Create "bus stops" by sticking names of destinations around the room (e.g. High Street, Hospital) etc.
  - Drill the names of the places and ensure learners can pronounce them clearly.
  - Split learners into two groups – bus drivers and passengers. Ask bus drivers to stand by any bus stop.
  - Using **Resource 2: Bus routes**, give 'passengers' three bus route cards each (destinations only). They need to go to a bus stop, ask for a ticket and get the bus (walk!) to their destination. Once they get there, they start again by using a new card to go to a new destination.
  - Swap roles after 5 minutes or so.
  - Display the basic dialogue on the board as a reminder if helpful.
  - Encourage learners to use additional language from previous units – greetings, small talk, etc. as well as the target structures.

## Literacy, numeracy and phonics

### Reading

- Using the transcript, learners listen and follow the text.
- Give pairs the transcript, cut into sections, and ask them to sequence the dialogue. Play the audio to check.
- Use word cards to match to the pictures and add other words/pictures as appropriate, e.g. station, platform, ticket office.
- Use the Literacy resource Numbers for a number/word matching activity or use them to play Pelmanism.
- Alphabet practice: sequence the street name cards in alphabetical order. .

**TIP** Don't expect learners to be able to read all the words but concentrate on the name and sound of the initial alphabet letter/phoneme.



- Create a group 'language experience' text (see suggestion below in Differentiation and extension ideas)

### Phonics

- Use the dialogue and/or street name cards to focus on initial or final sounds and blends, e.g. s – t in station, stop and street, the soft 'c' in city centre, / t / in ticket, street and market.
- Sound out short, simple words, e.g. b – u – s, c – a – n, s – t – o – p, m – i – ll and work on syllables in words such as sta – tion, ti – cket, mar – ket, hos – pi – tal
- Make a set of cards of local place names and another set with just the initial grapheme (e.g. Ch for Chester, S for Southwark). Ask learners to match the place name cards to the initial grapheme cards.
- See the [New to ESOL Phonics Pack](#) for more ideas and suggestions.

### Numeracy

- Check learners' understanding of numbers 0 – 10 (or more, as appropriate). Hold up a number of fingers and ask: *How many?* Go through in sequence from 1 – 10, then randomly. Stop, then ask: *How many?* without holding fingers up. Elicit zero.
- Use **Resource 3** and/or write the numbers on the board or hold number cards up so that learners can see them. Point and count aloud with learners from 1 – 10.

**TIP** To support less confident learners, add dots alongside numbers (one dot for 1; 2 dots for 2, etc.)



- Ask learners to sit in a circle and take turns to count from 1 – 10, starting again at 1 at the end of a round.
- Ask learners to put numbers into the correct order (**Resource 3: Numbers**) and/or match the numeral with the word.
- Recap how we say bus numbers – 245 is usually *two-four-five* (not 'two hundred and forty-five') and the use of 'oh' for 0, e.g. 107.
- Check understanding of money – coins and notes, how we say amounts and write them. You might wish to use some of the ideas and suggestions in [Money: notes and coins](#).

### Writing

- Use street name cards for learners to practise tracing and copying.
- Select words to learn to spell and write them on mini whiteboards.
- Use one of the dialogues as a model for learners to write their own short dialogue.

### Digital opportunities



- Learners record the dialogues on their phones and listen to them afterwards to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Encourage learners to show each other apps they use to help with planning a journey.
- Learners can use their own languages to help each other download and explain how to use apps.
- Learners use their phones to record new vocabulary.

### Learning to learn

- Help learners to make flashcards of any words/ numbers they wish to add to their personal word banks (an envelope of flashcards with words/numbers that learners need to recognise – bus numbers; names of people and places; social sight words). These can be used for independent reading practice at home.
- Write or stick images and words in vocabulary books.

### Differentiation and extension ideas

- Ask learners to change/extend the dialogues using their own ideas, ask for repetition, clarification, etc.
- **Dialogue 2** can be recycled to practise talking about prices.
- Display a large map of the local area. Show pictures of local landmarks and ask learners to locate them on the map.
- Make copies of the local network rail map (freely available online). Use this to generate dialogues for asking about train times and prices.
- Ask learners to collect bus and train tickets, travel cards and timetables to bring to the next session. Use the information to review this unit and to create new dialogues, e.g. Can I have a single/return to ....., please. How much is it? How much is a day travel-card?
- Use learners' experiences of travelling on public transport to create a 'language experience text' which can be used for reading, writing and phonics practice.

### Home learning

- Provide number matching cards (words and numerals) for learners to practise at home.
- Set learners tasks to do before next session: find out which bus you need to get to the library; museum; hospital; park; leisure centre; find out how much it costs to travel from xxx to xxx. Give each learner a different task and share information the following week.

### Out and about

- Ask learners to collect important local street names to add to their personal word banks.
- Suggest they take photos of buses, their streets and/or local places and use these in another session to share information about them, e.g. There is a nice park, food bank, clothes bank for refugees, conversation club every Wednesday at 4.00, etc.

### Unit review



In your next lesson, and before you start a new topic, here are some ideas to help you review and recap language learning from this unit:

- ask learners to tell each other about journeys they have made on public transport
- play Pelmanism with numbers
- review key vocabulary and phrases
- ask learners to recap the dialogues from memory.

### Useful links for further practice



- ESOL Nexus beginners 'How we travel'  
<https://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners/grammar-and-vocabulary/beginners/how-we-travel>
- BBC Learning circles: Bus video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ySh81TclVn4>
- English My Way, Out and About (you need to register)  
<https://www.englishmyway.co.uk/topics/130>
- English My Way Learning Circle, Session 3 – Bus  
<https://www.englishmyway.co.uk/learning-circles/session3>
- ***New to ESOL templates*** e.g. Template 11, numbers; Template 2, sentence strips  
<https://esol.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf3085>
- Talk English (you need to register)  
<https://www.talk-english.co.uk/introduction/learners-introduction/>
- Money: notes and coins  
<https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf27>

## Dialogue 1

A	<b>Excuse me. Which bus goes to Station Road?</b>
B	<b>The 245 or the 317.</b>
A	<b>Where can I get a ticket?</b>
B	<b>On the bus or from the machine.</b>
A	<b>OK, thanks.</b>

## Dialogue 2

A	<b>Station Road, please.</b>
B	<b>Single or return?</b>
A	<b>Single, please.</b>
B	<b>That's £1.90.</b>
A	<b>How many stops?</b>
B	<b>Five. You need the stop after the market.</b>
A	<b>Thank you.</b>













# Bus routes

Station Road	<b>245</b>
High Street	<b>369</b>
City centre	<b>107</b>
Mill Road	<b>27</b>
Airport	<b>248</b>
Hospital	<b>63</b>

1	one
2	two
3	three
4	four
5	five

6	six
7	seven
8	eight
9	nine
10	ten