

Theme 1 Unit 4

Communication Skills

Coursebook, pages 8 and 9 Workbook, pages 8 and 9

Lead-in

Apart from finding the language content of this unit useful, it is hoped that students will benefit from the advice about how to improve their conversational skills. Shyness among teenagers is a common problem, and it is even more daunting making conversation in a foreign language.

Discuss briefly with students the importance of communication. Ask questions such as:

- Why is it important to be able to communicate well?
- Do you consider yourself to be good communicator? Why/why not?
- What type people do you have problems communicating with? What happens?

Coursebook, page 8, Activity 1

Students read the text and answer the three questions. Get them to read the questions first, so that they know what information they are looking for. They should also think of an appropriate title for the text.

Answers:

- a** Communication involves talking and listening.
b Because negative feelings can get stuck inside your head.
c 'Pent-up' means 'closed or held in'

Suggested titles for the text:

The Importance of Communication
Why Communication is Important

Coursebook, page 8, Activity 2

Students listen to a teacher interviewing two students at a language school. Play the first conversation (Listening 1.4.1) then pause the CD.

Listening Script 1.4.1

Conversation A

- Teacher: Hello, what's your name?
 Student: Ahmed.
 Teacher: Where are you from, Ahmed?
 Student: Er ... Muscat.
 Teacher: Do you have a big family?
 Student: Yes.
 Teacher: How many brothers and sisters do you have?
 Student: Er ... five.
 Teacher: What do you like doing at weekends?
 Student: Um ... sport.
 Teacher: What kind of sport?
 Student: Football.
 Teacher: Nothing else?
 Student: Um ... No.
 Teacher: Have you ever visited another country?
 Student: Yes.
 Teacher: What other country?
 Student: Er ... England.
 Teacher: Did you like it?
 Student: No.
 Teacher: Why not?
 Student: Er ... don't know.
 Teacher: I see. Well, thank you very much, Ahmed. Goodbye!

Discuss the conversation with Ahmed. Did students think it was successful? Why/why not? They should tell you that it wasn't successful because Ahmed's answers are too short, and he hesitates a lot. Ask how Ahmed could improve his communication skills. Then play the second conversation (Listening 1.4.2).

Listening Script 1.4.2

Conversation B

- Teacher: Hello, what's your name?
 Student: Laila.
 Teacher: Where are you from, Laila?
 Student: I was born in Salalah, but now I live in Muscat.

Theme 1 Unit 4

Communication Skills

Teacher: Do you have a big family, Laila?
 Student: Yes, I've got three brothers and two sisters. All my brothers are older than me. One's an engineer, one's a doctor and one's at university. My sisters are still at school.
 Teacher: What do you like doing at weekends?
 Laila: Oh . . . swimming and going to the gym. Or just meeting my friends for coffee and a chat. That's very relaxing.
 Teacher: Have you ever visited another country?
 Laila: No, but I'd love to go to France one day and learn French. It's such a beautiful language. Do you speak French?
 Teacher: Yes, a little. Well, best of luck with your plans, Laila.
 Laila: Thank you. Have a nice day!

Discuss Conversation B with students and ask how it compares with Conversation A. Why is Laila a better communicator than Ahmed? Students should tell you that it is because she doesn't just respond with 'Yes' or 'No'. She keeps the conversation going by adding more information, or a comment, and she even asks the teacher a question.

Coursebook, page 8, Soundbites

Direct students to the Soundbites box of phrases used in everyday conversation. Play Listening 1.4.3. Practise the language with students, paying attention to the intonation.

Listening Script 1.4.3

Soundbites

Phrases used in everyday conversation

Hello, how are you?
 Nice to see you!
 Really?
 That's interesting.

How exciting.
 I'm sorry to hear that.
 What do you think?
 How about you?
 See you later! (tomorrow, next week)
 Goodbye.

Coursebook, page 9, Activity 3

Students read the picture strip conversation and discuss whether it is successful, and why. Although the conversation consists of simple language, it is a good example of how two people play equal parts to keep a conversation going.

Some reasons the conversation is successful are:

- the participants take turns talking and listening – the conversation is not one-sided
- each person shows interest in what the other person is saying
- each person asks questions and adds comments related to what the other person has just said
- the conversation has a definite beginning and ending
- the participants make eye contact with each other

Ask students to identify the stages in the conversation where the participants are doing the following:

- greeting the other person (picture **a**)
- starting the conversation (picture **b**)
- showing interest in what the other person is saying (pictures **c, d, e**)
- asking a question or making a comment related to what the other person has just said (pictures **c, d, e, f, g**)
- making plans (pictures **g, h**)
- taking turns (all pictures)
- ending the conversation (picture **h**)

Coursebook, page 9, Top Tip

Direct students' attention to the Top Tip. Ask them to find examples of the suggested ideas in

the picture strip conversation in Activity 3. Get them to act out the picture strip conversation with a partner and add variations of their own.

Workbook, page 8, Activity 1

This activity introduces students to the practice of using material in a Fact File to communicate information about a topic to a partner. It aims to develop students' confidence, and can be used as a first step in public speaking.

Tell students to work in pairs. Student A takes the topic of the Internet and Student B, mobile phones. Students read the information in the relevant fact file about their topic, and prepare a short talk to communicate the information to their partner. Give students time to practise by themselves first. They should speak in complete sentences, use facial expressions, maintain eye contact and present their information as clearly as they can.

Go round the classroom offering guidance and support. When students have had time to practise, you may want to ask a few confident students to give their talk to the whole class.

Workbook, page 8, Activity 2

Discuss the idea that it is not always easy to make conversation, especially for teenagers. Tell students they are going to hear a young man called Mark talking about a problem he had as a teenager. Play Listening 1.4.4. As they listen, students should write notes to answer the three questions on the appropriate lines in their Workbooks. They won't have time to write complete answers – notes are enough.

Listening Script 1.4.4

When I was a teenager, I was very shy. People thought that I was rude and unfriendly, but really I was just shy. I'm not sure what caused my shyness, but maybe it was because I come from a big family. When I was growing up, I didn't get much chance to talk because so many people were talking at once. So it was

easier just to keep quiet. How did I cure myself? Well, there was an English teacher at school whom I admired a lot. He was always so relaxed and easy to talk to. So I made him my role model. I watched him and tried to copy him. Gradually, I became more open and friendly too. I started smiling, and asking questions, and showing people I was interested in what they were saying. And it worked! I'm still a little shy, but things are much better now.

Answers:

- 1 He was very shy.
- 2 He came from a big family and didn't get much chance to talk.
- 3 He made his English teacher his role model.

Workbook, page 9, Activity 3

Students listen to the interview with Marina White and answer the questions as they listen. This dialogue reinforces the idea that shyness is not unusual (even famous people can be shy), and that you can do something about it. Play Listening 1.4.5. Repeat as necessary.

Listening Script 1.4.5

Int = Interviewer

- Int: Good afternoon, Marina, and welcome to our programme *Talking About Shyness*.
- Marina: Good afternoon.
- Int: You're a famous actress and you always seem very confident. But have you ever suffered from shyness?
- Marina: Oh, yes. In fact, you would be surprised to know that a lot of actors and famous sportspeople are really very shy inside.
- Int: Interesting! So can a shy person cure themselves of being shy?

Theme 1 Unit 4

Communication Skills

- Marina: Yes, they can. It's important to remember that shyness is normal, and cureable. You *can* do something about it.
- Int: Can you give us some advice?
- Marina: Yes. For a start, don't think about your shyness yourself when you're talking to someone else. Show that person you are really interested in what they have to say.
- Int: How can you do that?
- Marina: Well, by smiling, making eye contact and asking questions. Listen to the person's answers, and make comments to show that you are following what they are saying.
- Int: That's good advice. Anything else?
- Marina: Yes. If you can, find a role model – perhaps a friend or family member, who has good social and conversational skills. Watch how they behave and copy them. That will help you become more confident.
- Int: Excellent idea, Marina.
Many thanks for talking to us today.
- Marina: Thank you!

in the example. After talking to one partner, they should move on to another.

Workbook, page 9, Activity 5

Students turn to the phrases in the Soundbites box on page 8 of their Coursebooks, and make up two short conversations with a partner to practise using the phrases. They can then act out their dialogues in front of the class.

Answers:

- 1 (c) actress
- 2 (a) yes
- 3 (a) shy
- 4 a,b,d,e,g are mentioned. c and f are not mentioned

Workbook, page 9, Activity 4

This activity gives students the opportunity to practise making everyday conversation. Give them time to write down one initial question about each topic to start the conversation. They should follow this up with other questions depending on their partner's answers. Students should try and keep the conversation going, as