

Working on a Building Site: An ESOL Resource



Resource developed by Nicky Riddiford from authentic data collected by the Language in the Workplace Project, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington.

Funding received from TESOLANZ and the Settlement Division of the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

Published by the Language in the Workplace Project

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First published 2013

About this resource

Who this resource is for

This resource is an English language listening resource designed for learners at a beginner/elementary level in reading, writing, listening and speaking who come from non-English speaking backgrounds and who plan to work in the construction industry.

It is designed for use in workplace focused ESOL classes or communication training courses in English speaking countries, especially, but not exclusive to, Australia and New Zealand. The book could also be used in one-to-one tutoring contexts.

How this resource is organised

The resource has been developed from recordings of ordinary everyday interactions between builders as they go about their work on a building site. The recorded interactions were collected, transcribed and analysed by the Language in the Workplace researchers from the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.

Each of the units in the resource addresses a speech function or set of related speech functions that are common in the construction industry. The first units focus on understanding directives on a building site.

Each unit is based on a rerecording of an authentic interaction on a building site. The units follow a top-down approach where learners are prompted to focus on the general meaning of the interaction before any intensive focus on the specific language features. The units provide opportunities for learners to listen to the interaction many times, to focus on and notice specific language features of the interaction and then to practise these features. Each unit is divided into the following parts:

1. Pre-listening activities where learners are encouraged to draw on their existing knowledge of the construction industry.
 - a. Setting the scene: Questions to introduce the first unit are: Look at the picture: Who works on a building site? What do they do? What do they use? What is your experience of working on a building site? Pictures and objects to supplement what is provided in the unit would be useful.
 - b. Prediction: In this section, learners are asked to predict what might be happening from the title and context of the unit. The teacher could then elicit possible content words, for example, the vocabulary for the predicted equipment and predicted actions.
 - c. Pre-teaching of content words: Teachers could use objects, pictures, actions wherever possible to supplement the pictures provided in the unit.

2. Listening activities. In this section learners are introduced to the listening activity using the top-down approach. Learners are encouraged to discuss their answers together, perhaps in small groups or pairs. Each unit includes these features:
 - a. Listening for the main ideas/gist while looking at the strip story. What is happening? The recording could be played many times.
 - b. Listening to notice specific details: vocabulary
 - c. Listening and looking at the text
 - d. Listening for further details, for example, prepositions, actions.
 - e. Listening for the language used in the directives.
 - f. Listening for strategies for checking and clarifying directives.
 - g. Opportunities to practise clarifying and checking.
3. Post-listening activities.
 - a. Activities to retell and role-play the interaction.
 - b. Suggestions for more open-ended role-plays.
 - c. Vocabulary revision with an audio recording
4. Audio recordings.

Rerecordings of the authentic conversations that form the basis of each unit are available for downloading from the website. The audio files for most units include:

 - a. The complete conversation with the participants speaking at a natural native speaker speed.
 - b. The complete conversation with the participants speaking more slowly.
 - c. Short clips of the conversation (natural speed and slower versions) for intensive listening to specific phrases and interactions.
 - d. A word/picture matching exercise.
 - e. The key vocabulary in the unit.

Understanding and following instructions on a building site



Talk to your partner

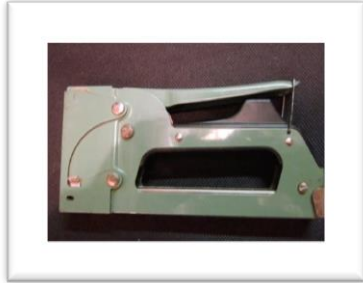
Who works on a building site?

What do they do?

What do they use?

What do they say?

Unit 1. Finding the staples.



Tom and Rick are working together. Tom needs more staples for his staple gun. He asks Rick to find some.



Tom



Rick

1. Vocabulary

Here are pictures of some of the words you will hear. Listen to your teacher and repeat the words.



A white box with staples



A couple of strings of staples



Some strings of staples



A white box



The shelf



A white box on the shelf



The shed



The door of the shed

2. Listen to the words and number the pictures in the order you hear.



Audio clip 5

The first one is done for you:



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Did you hear?

1. A white box
2. A white box on a shelf
3. The shelf
4. The door of the shed
5. A white box with staples
6. A couple of strings of staples
7. The shed
8. Some strings of staples

3. Listen to the conversation and look at the pictures.



Audio clip 1N or 1S (normal or slower speed)

Find out:

- What is happening?
- How many people are talking?
- What are their names?
- What are they doing?
- What is Tom holding in the first picture?
- What does Rick have to do?

The comic strip consists of four panels. In the first panel, Tom, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, a green cap, and yellow earmuffs, holds a box of staples. A speech bubble from him says, "Can you grab some staples from the shed Rick." In the second panel, Rick, wearing a red and black striped shirt and yellow earmuffs, stands outside a shed with his hands open, asking, "Where are they in there?" In the third panel, Tom points towards the shed and says, "In the shed ...". In the fourth panel, a hand is shown opening the door of the shed, with a speech bubble saying, "If you go in the door".

Straight ahead on the shelf
there's a white box with
staples in it.



Might even be some loose
strings of staples just beside
the box.

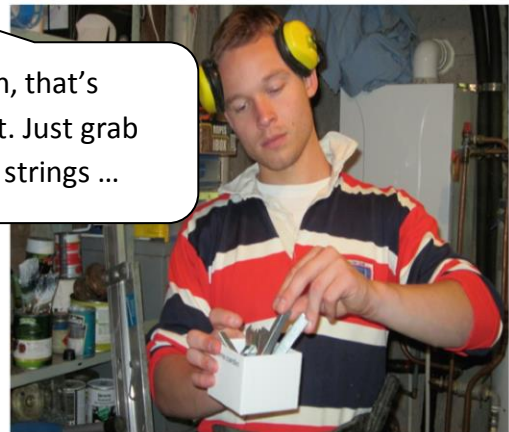


Can you just grab
a couple out, please.

In the white box?



Yeah, that's
right. Just grab
two strings ...



... and leave the box
there.



4. **Listen** to the conversation again



Audio clip 1N or 1S

Tick the pictures for the words you hear. The first two are done for you.



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v



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v



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5. **Listen** to the conversation again



Audio clip 1N or 1S

What does Rick have to get? Tick the picture.



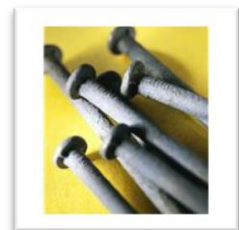
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6. Look at the text

1	TOM:	Can you grab some staples from the shed, Rick.
2	RICK:	Um, where are they in there?
3	TOM:	In the shed, in the ... if you go in the door and straight ahead
4		on the shelf there's a white box with staples in it.
5		Might even be some strings of staples just beside the box.
6		Can you just grab a couple out, please.
7	RICK:	In the white box?
8	TOM:	Yep, that's right. Ok, just grab two strings and leave the box there.

What does Rick have to get?

- Find the words in the text and underline them.
- Check with your partner.
- How many times did you underline: *staples*, *strings of staples*?

7. Listen to the conversation again



Audio clip 1N or 1S

- Does Rick have to get the box of staples?
- What does he have to do with the box?
- How many strings of staples does he have to get?

8. What does Rick have to do? Listen to the conversation again



Audio clip 1N or 1S

- Underline the words in the text.
Check with your partner.
- How many times did you underline: *grab*, *go*, *leave*?
- What are other words that have the same meaning?
- Repeat the instructions to your partner. Act them out.

9. Listen again



Audio clip 1N or 1S

- What does Rick have to do first?
- Tell your partner what Rick has to do next.
- Listen and number the pictures in the order you hear. Check with your partner. The first one is done for you.



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10. Where are the staples?

Look at the text. Underline **where** the staples are.

How many times did you underline *in, on, beside*?

11. Listen again. Where are the staples?



Audio clip 1N or 1S

- Tell your partner where the staples are.
- Listen again and choose the correct word to complete the sentences below:

The staples are _____ a white box.

The white box is _____ the shelf.

Some strings of staples are _____ the white box.

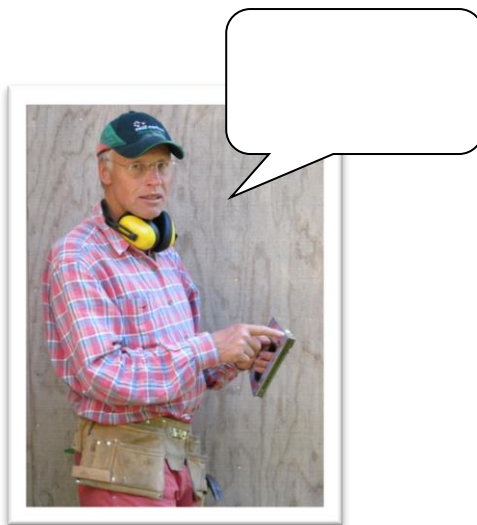
12. Listen again. What does Tom say?



Audio clips 2Na or 2Sa, 2Nb or 2Sb, 2Nc or 2Sc, 2Nd or 2Sd

What does Tom say
when he wanted
Rick to get some
staples?

Listen to Tom
speaking.



- a. Look at the text. Underline his instructions.
- b. Repeat his instructions to your partner

Did you find?

- i. *Can you grab some staples from the shed, Rick?*
- ii. *Can you just grab a couple out, please?*
- iii. *OK, just grab two strings and leave the box there*

13. Listen to your teacher giving instructions using the range of phrases above and follow.

14. Complete the sentences below using the words in the box, and give the instructions to your partner:

Can you grab some

Can you grab a

Can you just grab a couple of

<i>nails</i>	<i>boxes</i>	<i>hammers</i>	<i>saw</i>	<i>strings of staples</i>
	<i>screws</i>	<i>hammer</i>	<i>cordless drill</i>	

15. What are other ways of giving instructions?

e.g. Could you get, We need

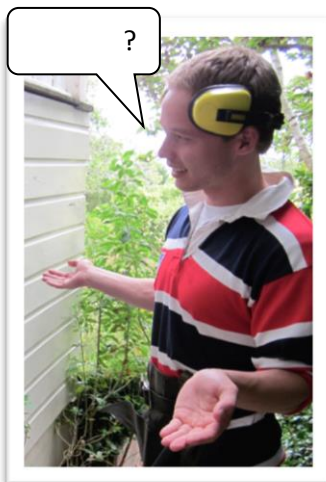
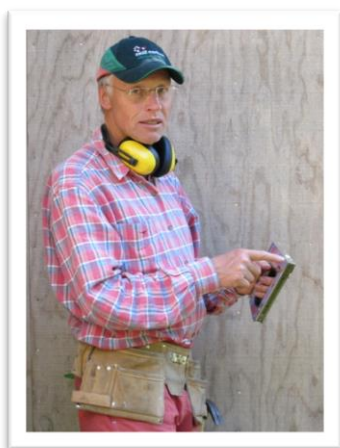
16. Checking and clarifying instructions.



Audio clips 3Na or 3Sa, 3Nb or 3Sb

Listen to Rick speaking and look at the pictures below:

What does Rick say when he doesn't know what to do, or he doesn't understand? Fill in the missing words.



1. What else could Rick say to show he had understood the instructions?
 - a. **Repeat the key words, for example:**
 - i. "In the shed?"
 - ii. "Two strings of staples?"
 - iii. "Leave the box there?"
 - b. **Repeat the meaning:** "So you want me to get two strings of staples from the shed?"
2. **Listen** again: What does Tom say to show Rick has understood correctly.



Audio clip 4N or 4S

Look at the text and underline the words.
Did you hear: *Yep, that's right.*

17. **Practise** checking and clarifying instructions

- a. Tell your partner to do something using *just grab*, *can you grab*.
- b. Your partner will check the instructions with you by
 - i. Repeating the key words
 - ii. Summarising the instructions
 - iii. Asking you to repeat the instructions

18. Look at the pictures and retell the story. Do the actions.



19. Practise with a partner

a. Finding the electric screw driver



Role A (Tom): Ask Rick to get the screw driver from the truck. Use some of these words: grab, get, see, back, bring, leave, beside, in, on.

Role B (Rick): Ask Tom to repeat the instructions. Then check by repeating the key words.

b. Using an ATM



Give your partner instructions about how to use an ATM

Key vocabulary in this unit:



Audio clip 6

staples shed door shelf end box white box string of staples a couple	leave see grab go	straight ahead in on beside there
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Audio clips for this unit:

The audio files that relate to the conversation are at two speaking speeds:

N = Normal speaking speed

S = Slower version

1. The whole conversation:
1N & 1S
2. Clips of all Tom's instructions:
2Na & 2Sa: *Can you grab some staples from the shed Rick.*
2Nb & 2Sb: *If you go in the door and straight ahead*
2Nc & 2Sc: *Can you just grab a couple out please.*
2Nd & 2Sd: *Ok, just grab two strings and leave the box there.*
3. Clip of Rick clarifying and checking the instructions:
3Na & 3Sa: *Where are they in there?*
3Nb & 3Sb: *In the white box?*
4. Clip of Tom confirming that Rick has understood:
4N & 4S: *Yep, that's right.*
5. Word and picture matching exercise
6. Key vocabulary in this unit