

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.

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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.

Re-recordings 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. A word/picture matching exercise.
- b. The whole conversation with the participants speaking at a normal native speaker speed (labelled N).
- c. The whole conversation with the participants speaking more slowly (labelled S).
- d. Short clips of the conversation (slower version) for intensive listening to specific phrases and interactions.
- 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 wear?

What do they say?

Understanding and following instructions on a building site

Unit 3: Using the hand saw

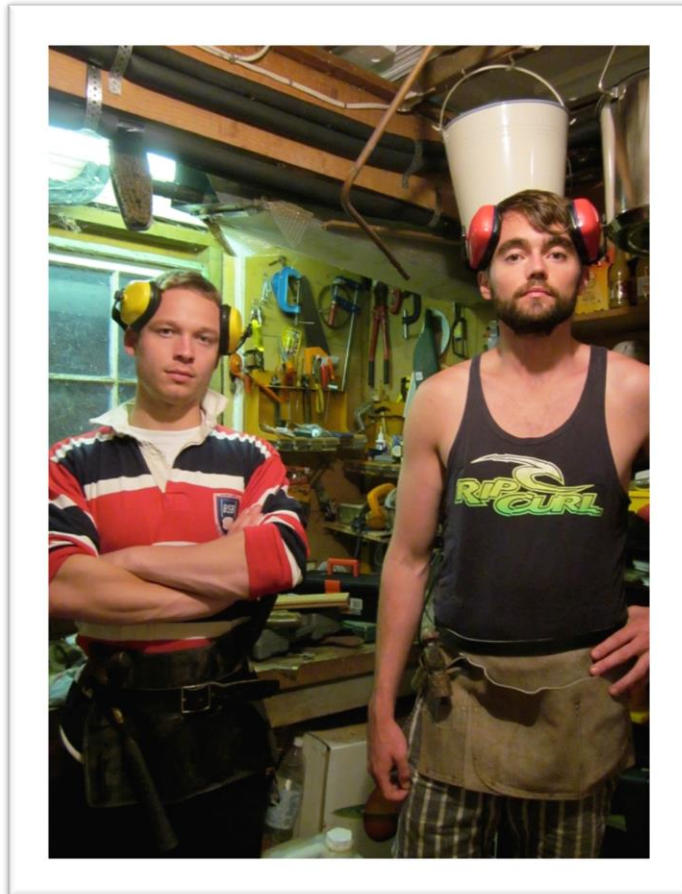


Look at the picture. Tell your partner what you can see.

What are the builders wearing?

What tools are they using?

What are they saying?



Rick

Max

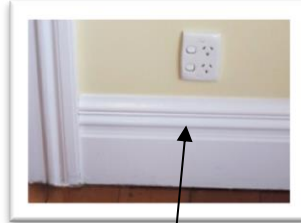
Max and Rick are sawing the skirting boards. Max needs the finishing saw. He asks Rick to find it. Max then shows Rick how to use the finishing saw.

1. Vocabulary

a. Here are pictures of some of the words you will hear. [Listen](#) to your teacher and repeat the words.



a hand saw



skirting



on the line



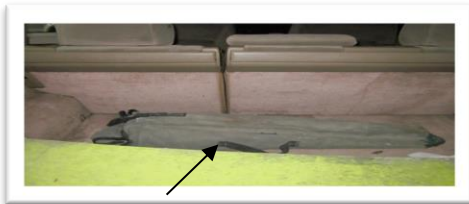
a car



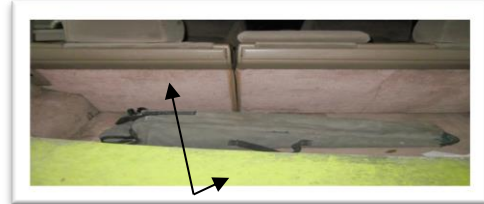
a box



back seat of the car



behind the box



between the seat and the box



a green saw bag



a finishing saw

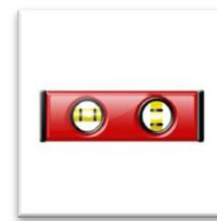


teeth of the saw



bigger teeth

finer teeth



level

b. Listen and number the pictures in the order you hear. The first one is done for you:

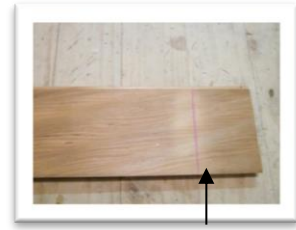
 Audio clip 1



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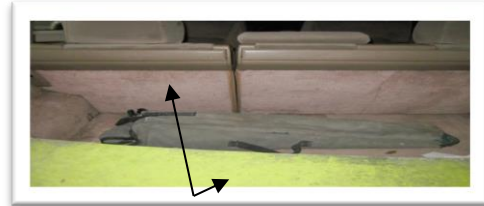
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Did you hear?

1. Level
2. A finishing saw
3. A car
4. A green saw bag
5. Skirting
6. Between the seat and the box
7. Bigger teeth
8. Finer teeth
9. Behind the box
10. On the line
11. A box
12. A hand saw
13. Teeth of the saw
14. Back seat of the car

2. Listen to the conversation between Max and Rick



Audio clip 2N and 2S

- a. Listen to the conversation and look at the pictures.

Find out:

Who is talking?

What is happening?

What are their names?

What are they doing?

What does Rick have to do?

Rick, just grab a hand saw and chop these skirting boards off on that line please.



Yep

Is there one in your car?



Yeah behind the box.



Between the seat and the box there's a green bag, that's the saw bag.

Do you know how to tell a finishing saw from the other saws?



This one?

Yeah, that's a finishing saw. See it's quite small for like, you know, skirting.

And there's that one, see the difference in the teeth?



Yep, bigger

So this is kinda like finer for the skirting you know, stuff like that.

What's the best way to do this?



Yeah, just, just hold it level, not like that cos otherwise, you know, it won't end up straight enough.





3. Listen to the whole conversation again.

 **Audio clip 2N and 2S**

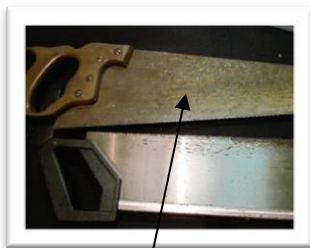
Tick the pictures for the words you hear. The first one is done for you.



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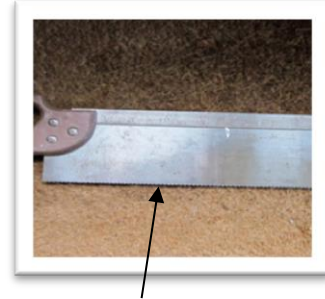
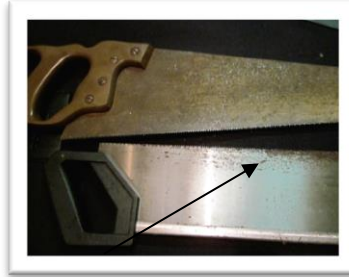
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Did you hear:

1. A hand saw
2. On the line
3. Your car
4. The box
5. Between the seat and the box
6. Green saw bag
7. A finishing saw
8. The teeth
9. Bigger
10. Finer
11. Skirting
12. Level

4. Look at the text

1	Max: Rick just grab a hand saw and, er, chop them off on that line, please.
2	RICK: Yep Is there one in your car?
3	Max: Yeah behind the, um box, between the seat and the box there's a green
4	bag, that's the saw bag. Do you know how to tell a finishing saw from
5	other saws?
6	Rick: This one?
7	Max: Yeah, that's a finishing saw. See it's quite small for like, you know,
8	skirting. And there's that one, see the difference in the teeth?
9	Rick: Yep, bigger
10	Max: So that's kinda like finer for the skirting you know, stuff like that.
	<i>Later</i>
11	Rick: What's the best way to do this?
12	Max: Yeah, just, just hold it level, not like that cos otherwise, you know, it
13	won't end up straight enough. And you can probably do those two at the
14	same time.
	<i>[Rick sawing]</i>
15	Max: That's right.

5. What does Rick have to do?

a. Look at the text. **Underline what Rick has to do or not do.** Look at the pictures to help you. Check with your partner.

Did you find:

<i>Grab a hand saw</i>	<i>Just hold it level</i>
<i>Chop these skirting boards off on that line</i>	<i>You can probably do those two at the same time.</i>
<i>Not like that cos otherwise it won't end up straight enough.</i>	

b. **Talk** to your partner

- I. What do these words mean: *grab, chop, hold it level*.
- II. What other words have the same meaning?
- III. Look at line 10. What does “stuff like that” mean?
- IV. What does ‘cos’ in line 12 mean?
- V. What is the difference between ‘this one’ and ‘that one’?
- VI. What does ‘you can probably do those two at the same time mean’?

6. **Listen** to the conversation again



Audio clip 2N and 2S

- a. Listen again and underline **where** the saw bag is.
- b. Tell your partner.
- c. Did you hear: **in the car, behind the box, between the seat and the box?**

7. **Listen** again: What does Rick have to do first?



Audio clip 2N and 2S

- a. First Rick has to
- b. Tell your partner what Rick has to do next.

Next Rick has to

8. Listen to the conversation and number the pictures in the correct order. The first one is done for you. Check with your partner.



Audio clip 2N and 2S



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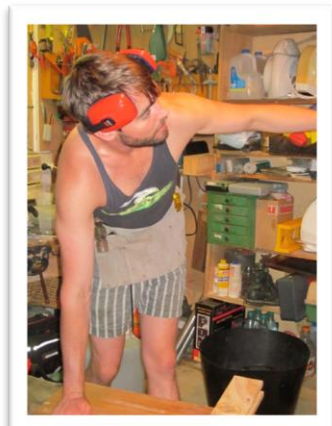
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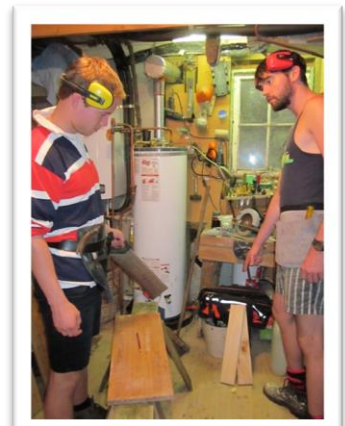
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9. Max's instructions

Audio clip 2N and 2S

What does Max say when he wanted Rick to help with the sawing?

- a. Listen and look at the text.
Underline ***all*** Max's instructions.
- b. Repeat Max's instructions to your partner



c. Did you hear?:

1. *Rick, just grab a hand saw*
2. *Chop them off on that line, please.*
3. *Just hold it level. Not like that cos otherwise it won't end up straight enough.*
4. *You can probably do those two at the same time.*

Listen and check.



Audio clips 3S, a-c

10. **Complete** the sentences using words from the box below:

hammer	straight	pocket	skirting boards
blocks	nails	saw bag	finishing saw

1. Just grab the _____ please Rick
2. Do you want to bring the _____.
3. Just hold it _____.
4. You can probably throw those _____ over there.
5. Just keep the hammer in your _____.
6. Do you want to bring the _____.
7. Might want to get some _____.
8. Just grab the _____.

c. What *other* ways could Max tell Rick to do something?

d. **Listen** to the teacher giving instructions using the phrases above. **Do** what the teacher says.

11. **Checking and clarifying instructions.**

a. **Listen** again: What does Rick say to check the instructions?



Audio clip 2N and 2S




Did you hear:


Is there one in your car?

This one?

What's the best way to do this?

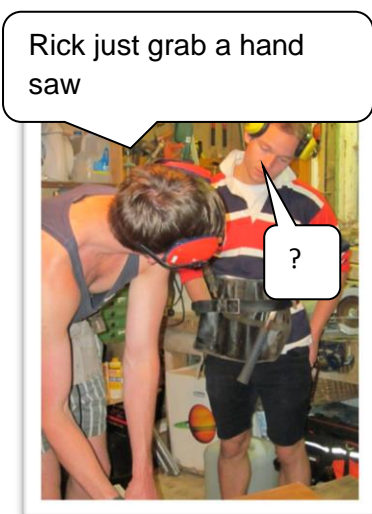
- a. Listen and check.  **Audio clips 4S, a-c**
- b. Repeat what Rick says
- c. Underline the words in the text.
- d. Did you hear any others?

- e. What else could Rick say to show he had understood the instructions?
 - I. Repeat the key words, for example:
 - i. A hand saw?
 - ii.?
 - II. Repeat the meaning:
 - i. Saw along this line?
 - ii.?

- f. Listen again: What does Max say to show Rick is using the saw correctly?  **Audio clip 5**

- g. What could Rick say if he didn't understand the instructions?

- h. Look at the pictures and tell your partner what Rick *could* say to check the instructions.

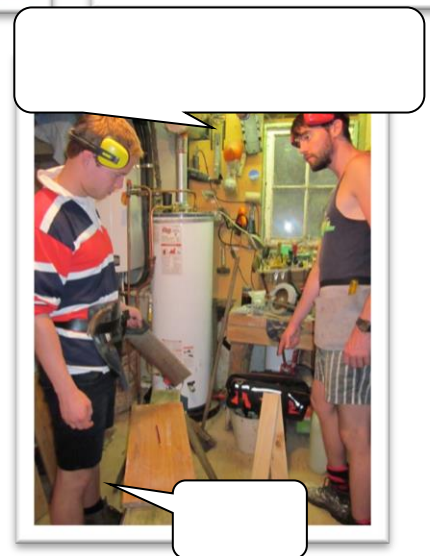
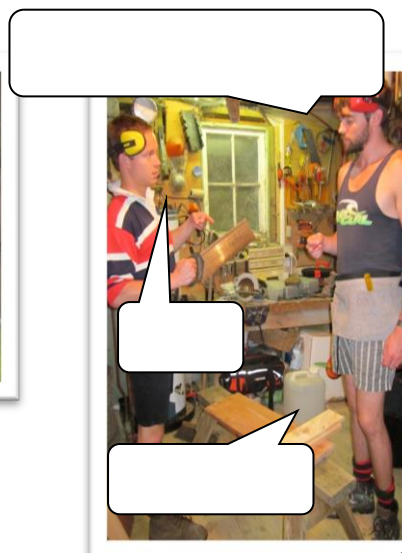





12. Practise checking and clarifying instructions


- a. Tell your partner to do something using grab, chop, hold, do
- 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.

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



14. **Practise** with your partner

<p>Role A (Tom): Ask Rick to get the cordless drill from the car. Use some of these words: <i>grab, between, behind, green bag, car, seat, box</i></p> <p>Role B (Rick): Ask Max to repeat the instructions. Then check by repeating the key words.</p>	
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15. **Key Vocabulary** in this unit.  **Audio clip 6**

<p>hand saw green bag skirting stuff teeth car seat box line saw bag finishing saw the difference two way</p>	<p>grab chop hold do</p>	<p>in on that line behind between at the same time</p>	<p>small bigger finer best level straight</p>	<p>this that</p>
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Audio clips for this unit:

1. Word/picture matching exercise
2. The conversation between Max and Rick: (illustrated in the strip story)
3. Max's instructions
 - a. *Rick just grab a hand saw and, er, chop them off on that line, please.*
 - b. *Yeah, just, just hold it level, not like that cos otherwise, you know, it won't end up straight enough.*
 - c. *And you can probably do those two at the same time.*
4. Rick checking the instructions
 - a. *Is there one in your car?*
 - b. *This one?*
 - c. *What's the best way to do this?*
5. Max's approval
That's right.
6. Key vocabulary in this unit