

# Conversation Cards



## ABOUT THESE CONVERSATION CARDS

It's sometimes hard to know what to say or do when spending social time with someone whose needs or situation have changed significantly.

These cards aim to support you, as a relative, friend or carer, to build social connections and conversation with an older person who is living in care, living with dementia, or both.

They are suitable for use with any older person who is able to understand spoken questions and able to reply in ways that make sense to you and them. They are not suitable if a person is no longer able to hold or respond to conversation.

The cards are designed as a starting point to stimulate conversation, memories and enjoyment for both of you.

They are not intended to be used in a fixed way, but whichever way works for you and your loved one. We hope you'll find them easy to use at any time, anywhere, whatever age you are.

Be patient – and don't be discouraged. If things aren't working out, take a break or try another time.

Don't bombard someone with questions but look out for what sparks their interest. You're aiming to have a friendly chat, not an interview!

The cards are divided into different topics, with 4 or 5 questions on each side. Have a good look through them before hand – but don't feel you've got to cover all of them! Feel free to mix and match.

Overleaf are some suggestions for getting the most out of these cards.

## HOW TO USE THESE CARDS

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Here are some suggestions for getting the most out of these cards.

- ◉ **Print them double sided in colour** (if you can), and cut them horizontally across the centre of the A4 paper so that you end up with A5 size 'cards'
- ◉ **Take your time and allow the other person time to respond at their own pace** – see how the conversation develops and flows
- ◉ **It's a conversation, with give and take** – let the other person ask you questions too!
- ◉ **Share a little of your own experience** - it may encourage the other person to do the same
- ◉ **You may need to repeat a question** if the other person doesn't hear or understand first time
- ◉ **You'll notice that many questions are put in the present tense** – this is to reinforce the feeling of being able to contribute and to actively participate in life
- ◉ **Rephrase the question if necessary** – or you may just need to move on to something else.
- ◉ **If someone is living with dementia, it often helps to focus on feelings rather than facts** – don't be afraid to acknowledge difficult feelings, but gently move on to something else.
- ◉ **Very occasionally, it's possible someone may share something very personal** or even distressing
- ◉ **Acknowledge and support their feelings** as much as you can
- ◉ **Respect confidentiality** - but if you have real concerns about any risks to their wellbeing or safety, speak to someone else (e.g. a social worker or the care home manager)
- ◉ **Be aware that a person may have difficulty hearing** what you are saying so it can be helpful to speak clearly
- ◉ **Speaking in a warm and reassuring way** will help the person feel comfortable and more likely to engage in the conversation
- ◉ **Try to keep distractions to a minimum** and engage in conversation in an environment in which the person feels most comfortable and at ease e.g. quiet corner of a communal area if living in a care home or perhaps somewhere out in the garden - weather permitting!
- ◉ **Keep the conversation flowing and natural** with prompts that encourage and support. Such as "tell me more about ..." or "that sounds interesting/exciting, what else happened?"
- ◉ **You could also use a tablet or phone** to look at pictures or video online that connect with conversation.

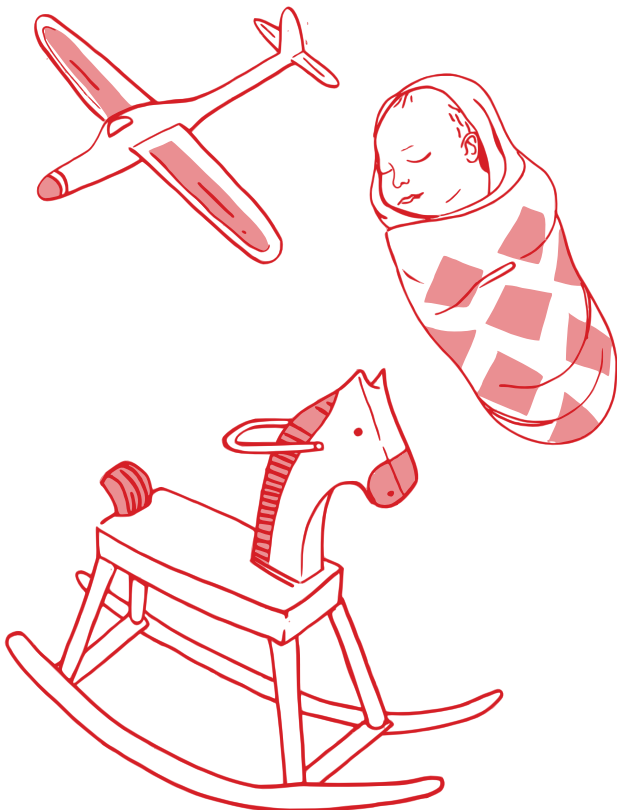
## FAMILY LIFE 1



- Where were you born?
- Where did you grow up?
- Tell me about your Mother.
- Tell me about your Father.
- Did your parents go out to work?

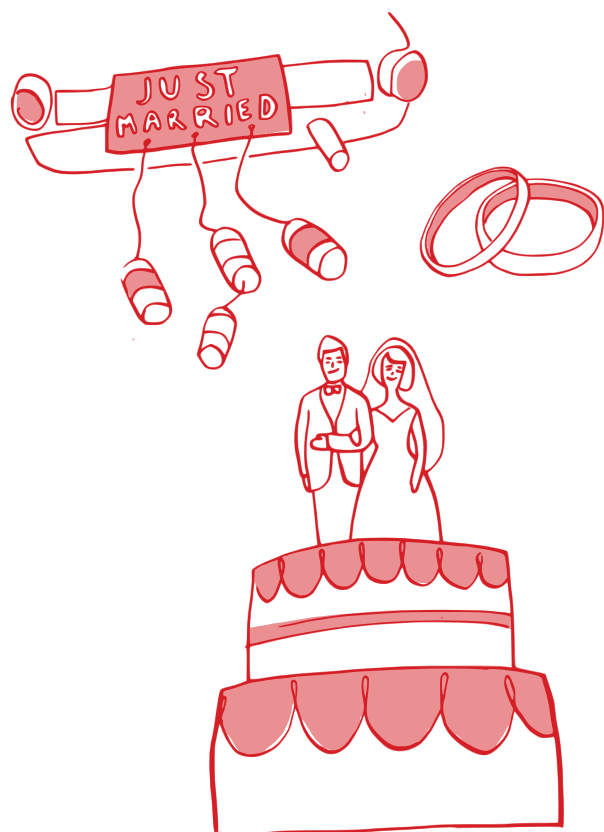


## FAMILY LIFE 3



- Do you have brothers and sisters?
- Did you get on well as children?
- Are you from a big family?
- Did you live close to other relatives when you were growing up?

## FAMILY LIFE 2



- Did you get married? Where was your wedding?
- Did you go on a honeymoon?
- Do you have children? Where were they born?
- Do you have grandchildren? Or even great-grandchildren?

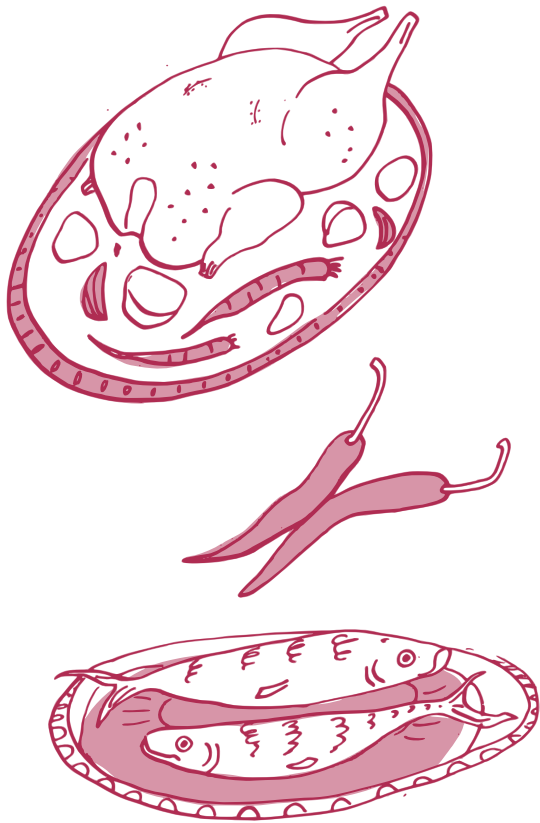


## FAMILY LIFE 4



- Where is your favourite family holiday?
- Have you ever had a family pet?
- What is your favourite thing to do with your family?
- What is your favourite childhood memory?

## FOOD 1



- What do you love to eat?
- What is your favourite food/ vegetable/ fruit/ dessert? Why?
- What food do you really not like? Why?
- Do you prefer sweet or savoury foods?
- What's the most unusual thing you've eaten?

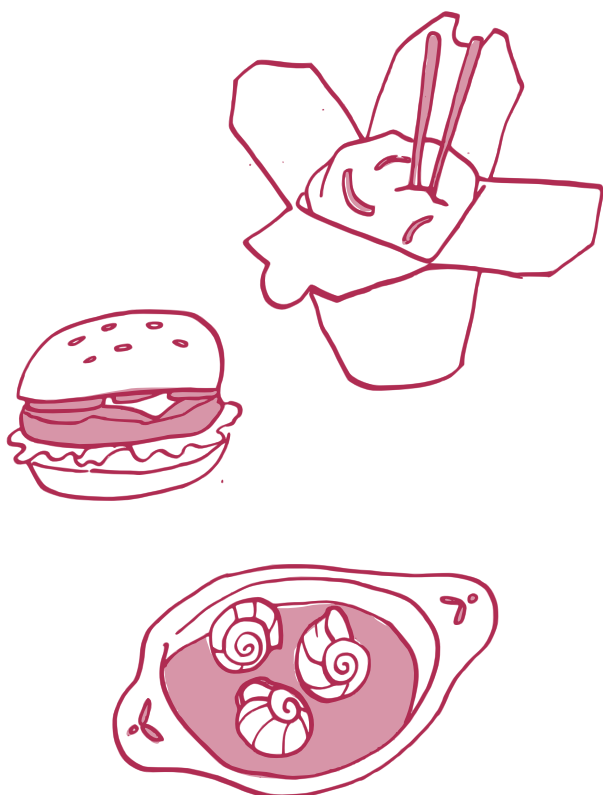


## FOOD 3



- Do you like to cook?
- What is your favourite dish to cook?
- What is your biggest cookery 'disaster'?
- Do you prefer tea or coffee?
- What is your favourite tippie?

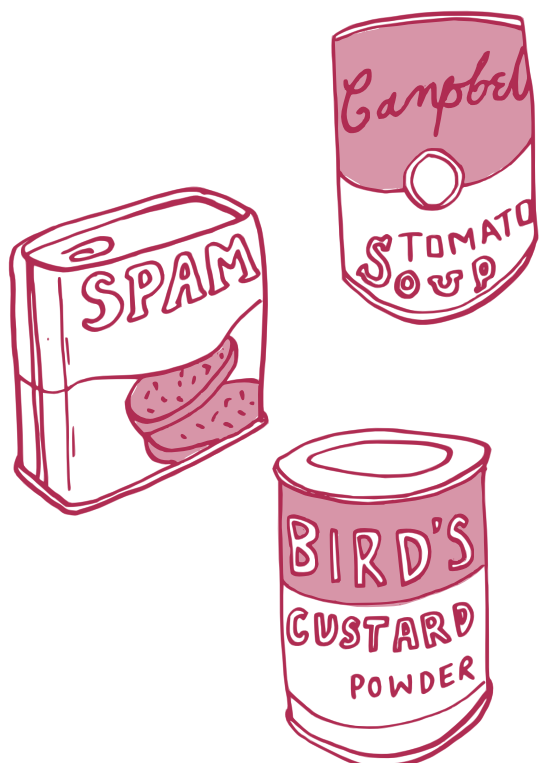
## FOOD 2



- What food would you like to try but never have? Have you ever tried Indian, Chinese, Thai, French food etc, did you like it?
- What is the most disgusting thing you've eaten?
- Do you have a favourite restaurant/place to eat?
- Where do you like to eat?



## FOOD 4



- Have you ever grown your own fruit and vegetables?
- What was your favourite childhood food?
- Do you think food has changed over the years?
- Do you think food shopping has changed over the years?

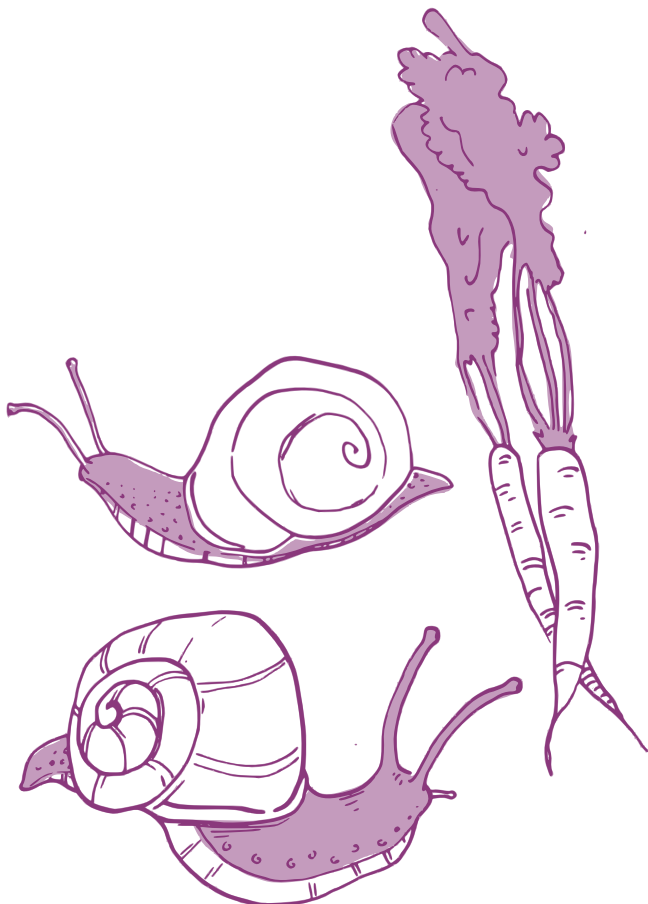
## GARDENING 1



- When you think of a garden, what do you see / smell / hear?
- What do you like about gardens?
- What is your favourite season?
- What gardens have you had? (patios, BBQ's, lawns, ponds, flower beds)
- What are your favourite flowers and why?



## GARDENING 3



- Do you grow fruit/vegetables? What is hardest to grow?
- Have you ever had an allotment?
- Whose job was to grow vegetables?
- Have you ever entered vegetables or flowers into a competition?
- Do you know any pest control tips?

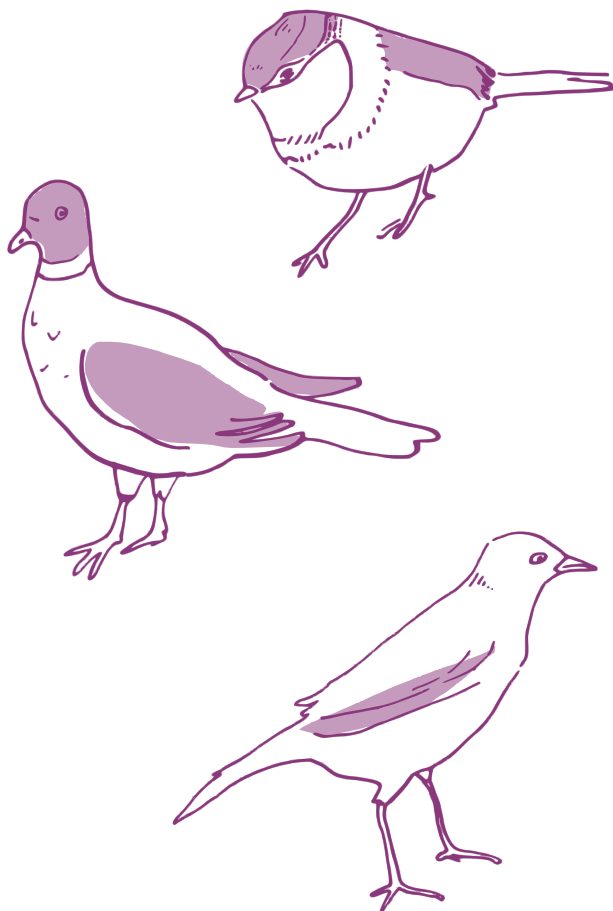
## GARDENING 2



- ◉ Whose job was to tidy the garden?
- ◉ Have you ever used a compost heap?
- ◉ Have you ever had a shed?
- ◉ Have you ever had a greenhouse?
- ◉ Did you have bonfires in your garden?



## GARDENING 4



- ◉ Which birds come to the garden?
- ◉ Have you ever had wildlife or animals in the garden?
- ◉ Does your garden have a lawn / a pond?
- ◉ Could you play in your garden?
- ◉ Do you keep ornaments in the garden?

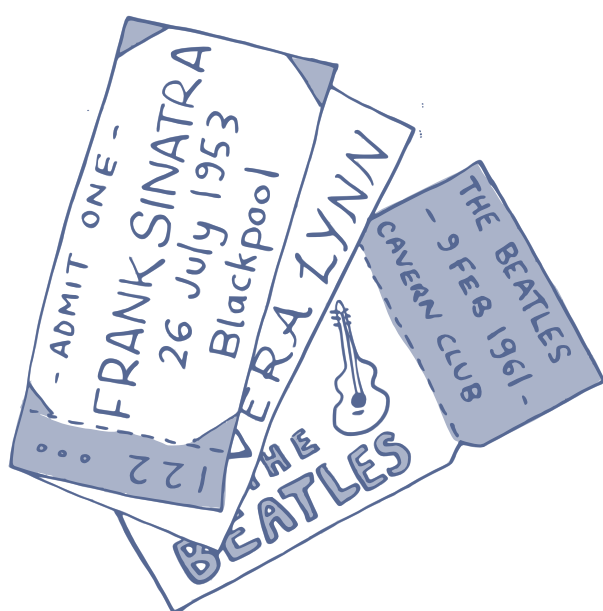
## MUSIC 1



- What kinds of music do you like?
- Is there any music you don't like?
- Do you have a favourite singer?
- Do you have a favourite song?

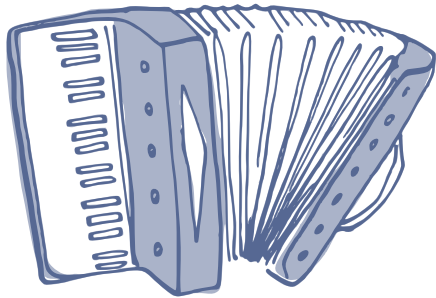
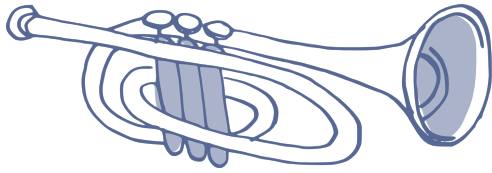


## MUSIC 3



- Have you been to see a live band?
- Where do you like to go to listen to music?
- Did you have a favourite 'pin-up,' when you were a teenager?
- Do you enjoy dancing to music?

## MUSIC 2



- Can you play any musical instruments?
- Have you ever played an instrument in front of an audience?
- Have you ever been in a choir?
- Have you ever been in a band?
- Have you ever been in an orchestra?



## MUSIC 4



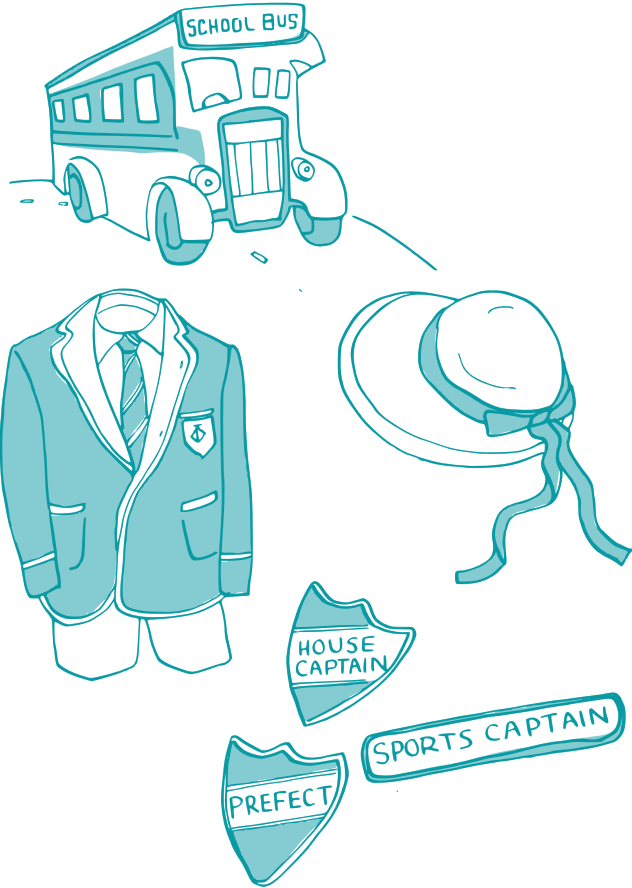
THE  
PHANTOM  
OF THE OPERA



JOSEPH

- Do you like to sing?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- Do you enjoy musicals?
- Have you ever been to an opera?
- Have you ever been to a ballet?

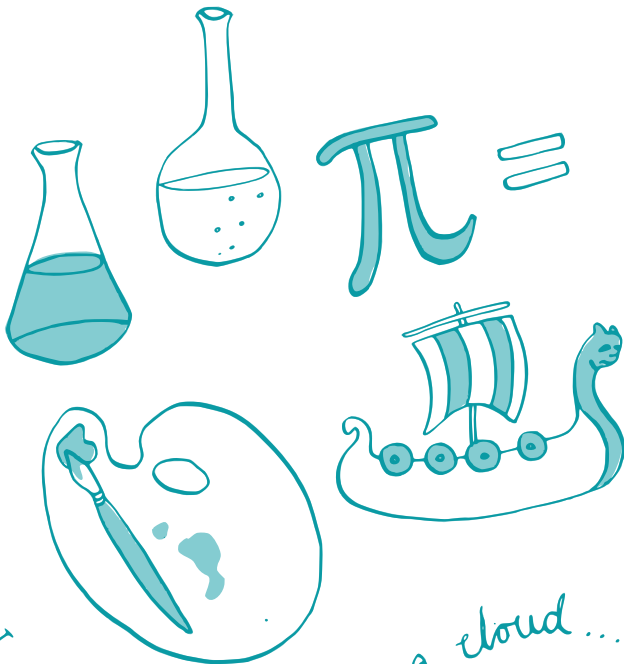
## SCHOOL DAYS 1



- What was the name of your school?
- Where did you go to school?
- Do you remember your first day at school?
- Did you wear a uniform to school? What were the uniforms like?
- How did you get to school?



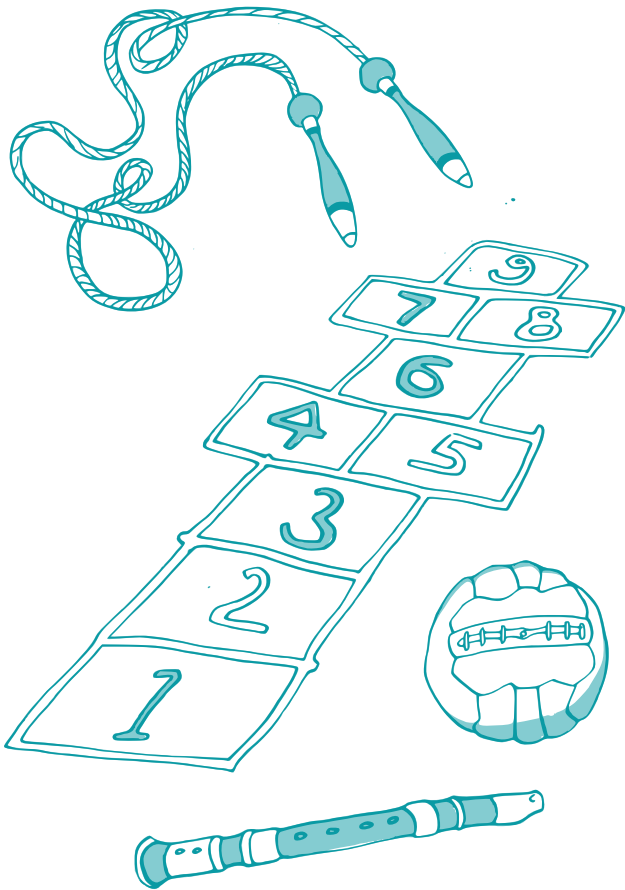
## SCHOOL DAYS 3



*I wandered lonely as a cloud...*

- Who were your favourite teachers? (and why?)
- Who were your best friends at school?
- Which lessons did you enjoy / dislike?
- Which lessons did you find easy / difficult?
- Do you enjoy reading / writing?

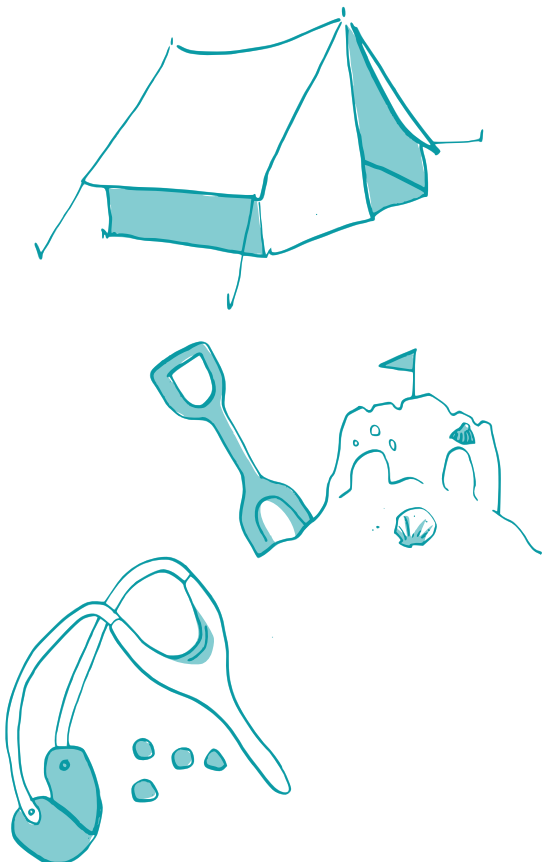
## SCHOOL DAYS 2



- Did you have an assembly in the morning?
- What did you do for lunch?
- Were you ever part of a school play or orchestra?
- Did you go on any school trips?
- What sports did you do at school?



## SCHOOL DAYS 4



- What did you do during the summer holidays?
- Were you ever told off?
- Did you ever skip school ('play truant')?
- Have you been to a school reunion?
- How old were you when you left school?

## TRAVEL 1



- What is your favourite holiday destination?
- Why does it mean so much to you?
- Where is the most interesting place you've been to?
- Where would you really love to go?
- Do you like travelling/going away/holidays?

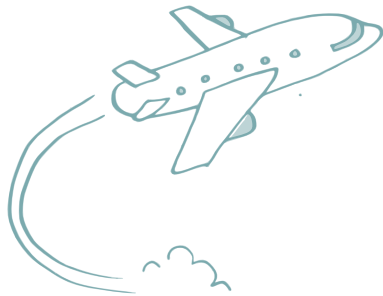
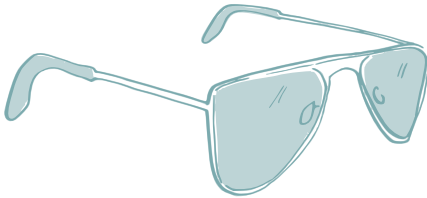
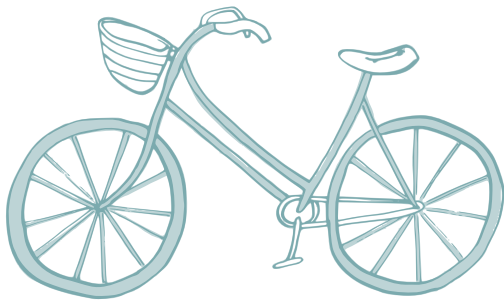


## TRAVEL 3



- What is your most amazing experience of travelling?
- What is your worst experience of travelling?
- What kind of holidays do you prefer? Activity, relaxing, etc?
- Have you ever had to travel for work? Where have you been?
- Have you ever lived abroad?

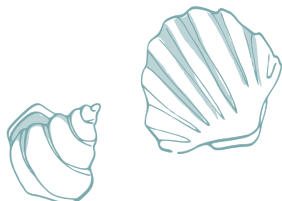
## TRAVEL 2



- What is your favourite way to travel and why? Bus, plane, train, bike, etc?
- What is the furthest you have ever travelled?
- What is the longest journey you have ever made?
- Have you been on a plane? Did you like it? Where were you going?

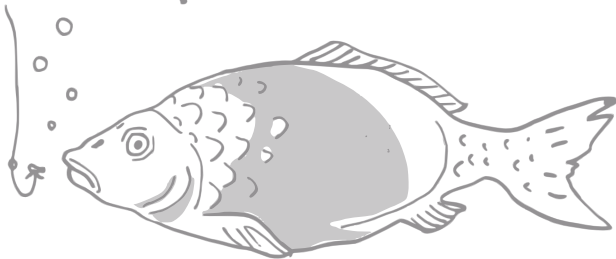
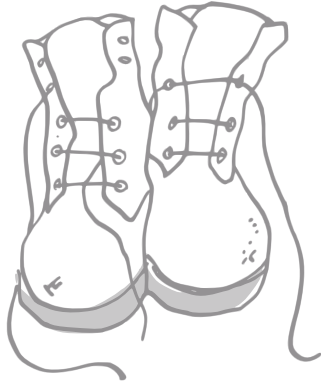


## TRAVEL 4



- What can you not do without when travelling?
- What makes travelling more comfortable for you?
- What is your favourite food when abroad or on holiday?
- Can you speak any languages or know any phrases?
- Do you have any family that live abroad?

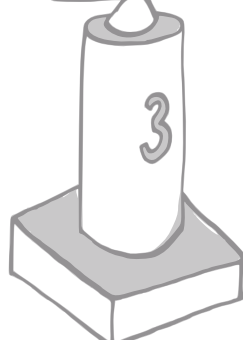
## HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 1



- What would you most enjoy doing?
- Have you ever had an unusual hobby?
- Which do you prefer – being active and keeping busy, or sitting quietly with something?
- Which do you prefer – things you can do alone, or things you do with other people?

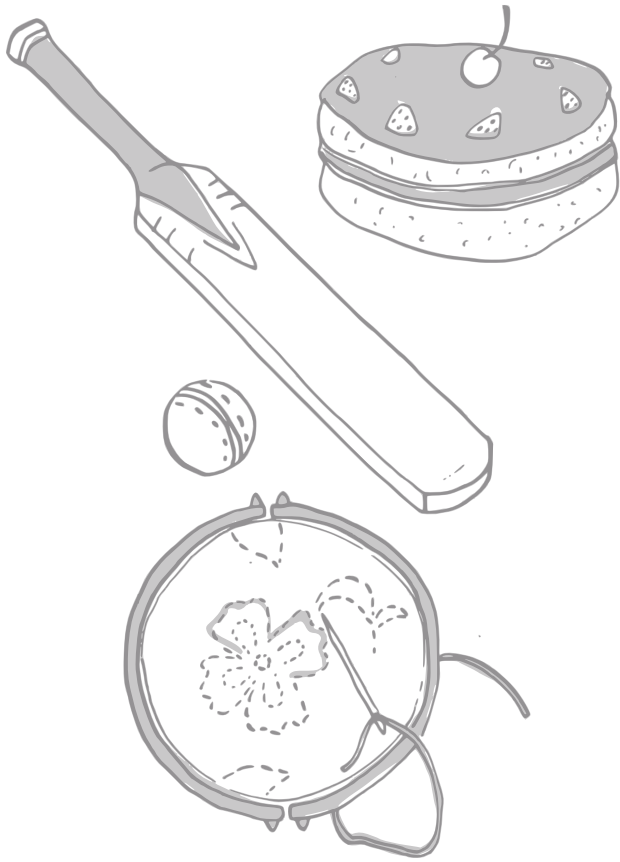


## HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 3



- What's your idea of a good evening out?
- Where would you go to meet your friends?
- Have you belonged to any kind of club or society?
- Have you ever won a prize or award for something you've done?

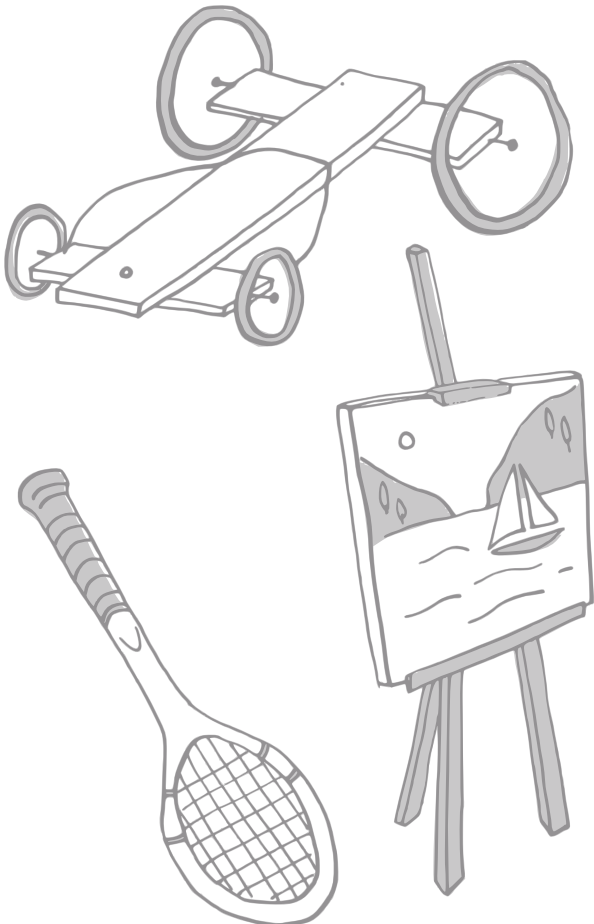
## HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 2



- Are you an outdoor or an indoor sort of person?
- Are you a sporty person?
- Where would you most like to go if you went for a walk?
- Are you good with your hands?
- What sort of things do you like to make?



## HOBBIES AND INTERESTS 4



- What hobbies did you have when you were younger?
- What things would you like to try that you haven't done yet?
- What makes you feel happy?
- Do you enjoy things that present a bit of a challenge?

## WORK 1



- What's the best job you've ever had? (Including raising a family).
- What's the worst job you've ever had?
- Have you had lots of jobs?
- Where did you work longest?
- What work have you most enjoyed?



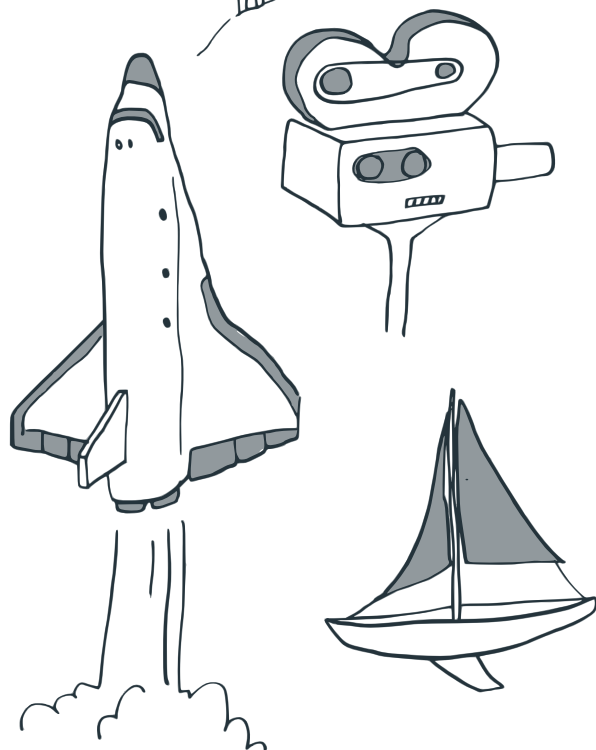
## WORK 3



- How old were you when you got your first job?
- What was your first job?
- What did you earn in your first job?
- Did you have to put some money aside?
- Did you have to give some money to someone else?

## WORK 2

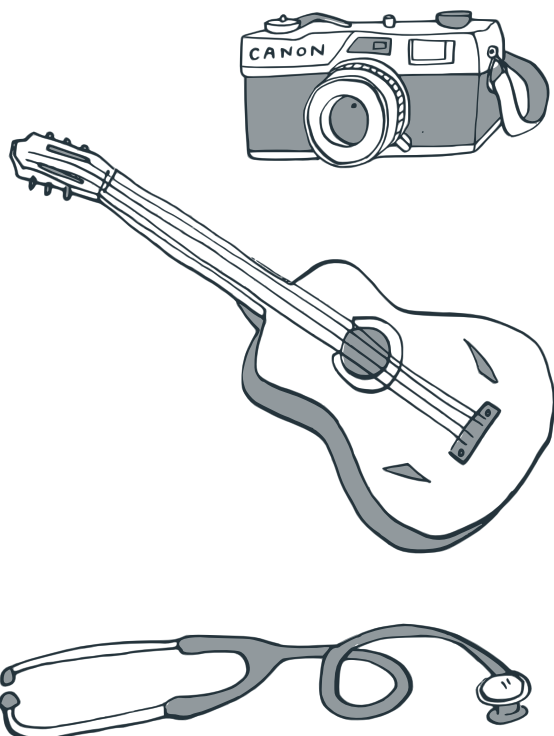
HOLLYWOOD



- When you were a child, what did you want to be/do when you grew up?
- What did your parents want you to do?
- Did you make friends through work, or was your social life separate from work?
- Have you ever done any volunteer work?

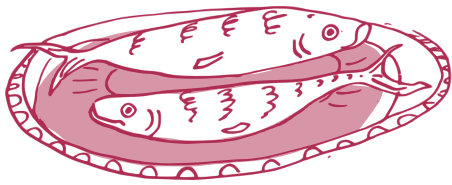


## WORK 4



- Have you been able to pass on things you've learned through work to other people?
- Have you ever had an unusual job?
- 'All work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy' – do you think that saying is true?
- Have you ever been able to mix work with play?
- What would your dream job be?

## GENERAL PACK 1



- Where were you born?
- What food do you really not like? Why?
- What do you like about gardens?
- Can you play any musical instruments?
- What was the name of your school?

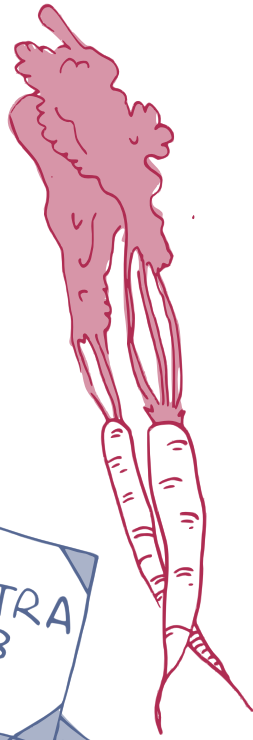
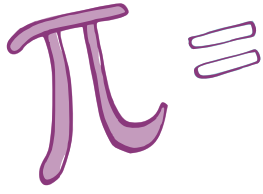


## GENERAL PACK 3



- Where did you go to school?
- Where is the most interesting place you've been to?
- Which do you prefer – being active and keeping busy, or sitting quietly with something?
- Have you had lots of jobs, or just a few?
- What is your favourite season?

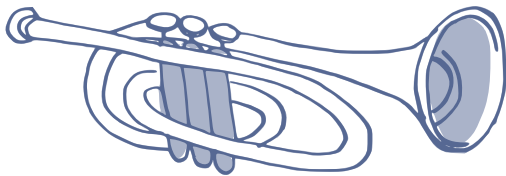
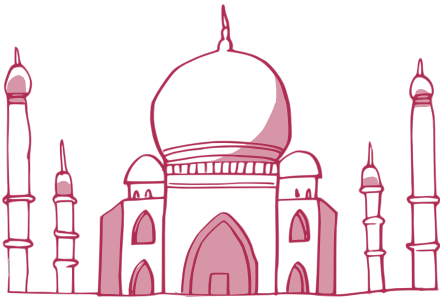
## GENERAL PACK 2



- Do you grow fruit or vegetables? What is hardest to grow?
- Do you have a favourite singer?
- At school, which lessons did you enjoy / dislike?
- Tell me about your parents.
- Do you prefer sweet or savoury foods?

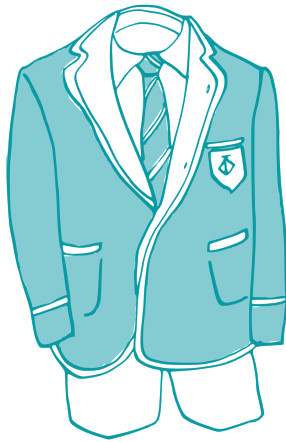
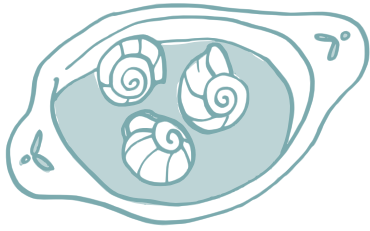


## GENERAL PACK 4



- What food would you like to try but never have?
- Have you ever had wildlife or animals in the garden?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- Did you go on any school trips? (if yes, where?)
- What is your most amazing experience of travelling?

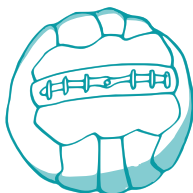
## GENERAL PACK 5



- What is your worst experience of travelling?
- Have you ever won a prize or award for something you've done?
- What hobbies did you have when you were younger?
- Did you wear a uniform to school? What were the uniforms like?
- What is your biggest cookery 'disaster'?

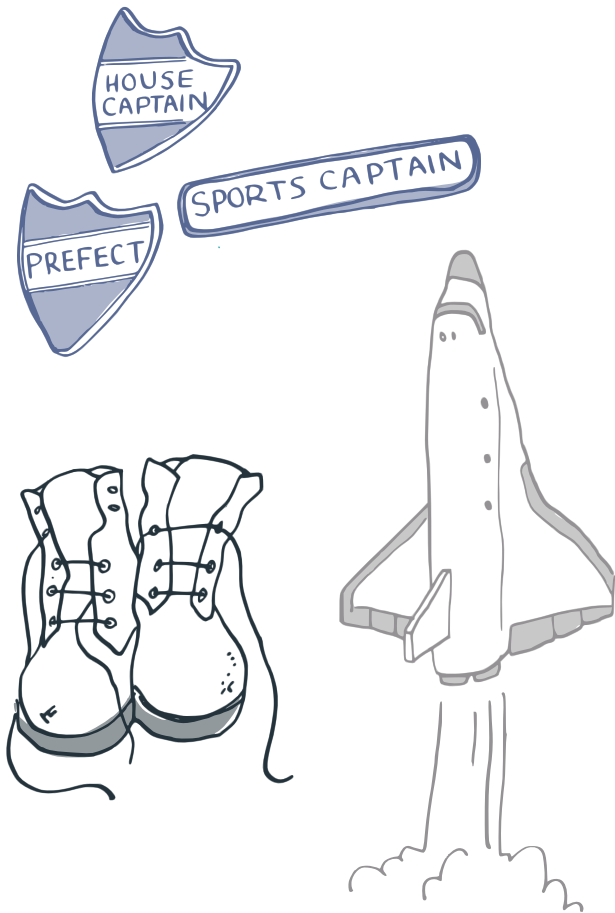


## GENERAL PACK 7



- Did you live close to other relatives when you were growing up?
- What's the most unusual thing you've eaten?
- When you think of a garden, what do you see / smell / hear?
- Do you have a favourite song?
- What sports did you do at school?

## GENERAL PACK 6



- How old were you when you left school?
- What is your favourite way to travel and why?
- Can you speak any languages or know any phrases?
- Are you an outdoor or an indoor sort of person?
- When you were a child, what did you want to be/do when you grew up?



## GENERAL PACK 8



- What would your dream job be?
- What things would you like to try that you haven't done yet?
- What is the furthest you have ever travelled?
- What is your favourite musical instrument?
- Have you ever had an allotment?