

Learning English with CBC Radio – Living in Alberta



Caring for Elderly Family Members: Communicating

by

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CBC

Alberta  Government

Integration Enhancement

Topic:	Caring for the Elderly
Lesson:	Communicating
CLB Level:	6
CLB Skills:	Reading, Writing
Essential Skill(s):	Reading, Writing, Working with others, Digital technology

CLB Outcomes	
Reading:	<p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to guess the meaning of unknown terms, phrases or idioms from the context of moderately complex texts on familiar topics.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to identify specific factual details and some implied meanings from moderately complex texts on familiar topics.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to apply information literacy skills when using online resources.</p>
Writing:	<p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to reduce a page of information to a summary.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to convey personal messages in short informal correspondence.</p>
Language Skills	
Grammar Focus:	<p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to identify the form and meaning of phrasal verbs.</p> <p>Learners will demonstrate the ability to use adjectives, modals, qualifiers in diplomatic writing.</p>
Vocabulary:	<p><i>waffling, tricky, resentful, stick to it, Issue, react, plus, scenario, estimates, challenges, burned out, firm, established, resource</i></p>
Culture	
<p>As people get older they change physically and mentally. They become more dependent on others to help them with their daily living activities. In a number of cases the elderly need someone to look after them. Some seniors are looked after at home by their children or relatives while others are looked after in nursing homes and long term care facilities. Looking after an elderly person at home is not an easy job. People who look after the elderly at home often have other responsibilities too. They need to take care of themselves first but they do not always realize it or do not know to balance all their responsibilities.</p>	

Websites: www.dictionary.com
www.learnersdictionary.com
<http://www.prowritingaid.com/collocation.aspx>
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/ps-1604-journeys-newsletter-fall-2012.pdf>

Introduction

Before you read, complete the first two columns of the KWL chart below:

K	W	L
What I know about setting limits as a caregiver.	What I want to know about setting limits as a caregiver.	What I learned about setting limits as a caregiver.

Pre-reading

Hi Jean,

I hope your week is going well. How are the kids? It seems like I haven't seen my grandkids in ages! If I were still able to drive I would come and see them. I need some help. My doctor's office called and I need to go in for my test results this week. Also, I am almost out of groceries. I would like to go grocery shopping at Safeway - they have senior's discount on Tuesdays. Winter is around the corner and I cannot find my boots and winter jacket. I cannot find anything these days because my closet is a mess! I can't remember where I put my gloves and scarf. The house is also a mess. I fired the cleaning lady you hired because she was not doing a good job. You know how I like things to be done. I can clean my house myself with a little help. Could you take me to Safeway on Tuesday after you are done work? I have booked a doctor's appointment for Thursday afternoon. Could you take me there too? Maybe you could help me clean up the house and find my winter gear this weekend? I would love to go for breakfast with my grandkids on Sunday. Could you take us to IHOP for breakfast?

Love
Mum

Food for thought

1. What is the purpose of this note?
2. What is the relationship between the sender and the receiver of this note?
3. How would you describe the mood of the sender?
4. How many roles do you think the receiver of the message plays in his / her life?

Main Reading

Title: Communicating

Glossary¹

1. **Incur** means to cause yourself to have or experience something unpleasant or unwanted.
2. **Indispensable** means extremely important and necessary.
3. **Chronically ill** means always being feeling sick or unwell.
4. **Pecking order** means the way in which people in a group or organization have different importance or status.

As you read the selection, use *context clues* to help you figure out the meaning of the following words that you will come across: *waffling, tricky, resentful, stick to it*

Reading Strategy Tip: Identifying Cause and Effect

When one event happens that causes another event to happen we say that there is a cause and effect relationship. Being able to identify a cause and effect relationship in a reading text is an important reading strategy. Sometimes the cause and effect relationship in a text is stated clearly. Other times it is not clearly stated and you have to figure it out.

As you read the article below, look for a cause and effect relationship. Ask yourself “what happens when the caregiver does or does not set limits?”

The reading selection was taken from “Journeys” a newsletter for family caregivers, which can be found at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/ps-1604-journeys-newsletter-fall-2012.pdf>

¹ Definitions taken from www.learnersdictionary.com

Communicating
by Joan Craven

Communicating with elderly parents or chronically ill partners is tricky. We have history, an already established pecking order and all of a sudden what has been a comfortable relationship becomes increasingly uncomfortable. We are no longer cared for, we become the caregiver. We have to make unpopular decisions. As one of my friends said, "Now, when I leave my parents I either feel guilty or upset."

A caregiver is a family member or friend who provides unpaid care for a loved one living with challenges due to disability, illness, or aging. The Canadian Caregiver Coalition estimates there are 4.5million caregivers today.



Most unpaid caregivers have difficulties setting limits and asking for help. If you do not say no, you will feel resentful, burned out and will probably become ill. Often the caregiver dies before the person he or she was caring for.

How can you set limits? Begin small. If phone calls are an issue say "I can only talk for ten minutes tonight. Then I have work to complete." Stick to it. Use statements like "I wish I could talk longer. I can't, we'll chat tomorrow night."

If it is stopping by to 'help' say "I am on my way home so I can drop in for 15 minutes. If the job takes longer, we will plan to do it on the week end or let's phone up that resource I found in the community newsletter." Be pleasantly firm. No waffling.

Sometimes you can give your care receiver choices. "I can't take you to the doctor today. I could phone a taxi and have them pick you up at a specific time. Or, if you can make a Saturday appointment I can take you then." You do not have to make excuses. You simply state the facts. You are the boss of yourself. You can't control what others do, even your loved ones. What you can control is how you react.

Prepare your responses before you are asked. Think up possible scenarios and then practise. Say your responses out loud so they roll off your tongue and you are less emotional. When you are direct and honest, especially if you haven't been before, your care receiver might accept it because they are shocked. If they are unhappy, remember that any time you set limits or change things people are upset.

Seven out of ten caregivers are also employed so they are tired plus they incur extra expenses, adding to their stress. When flight attendants tell us to put on our oxygen mask and then our children's, we accept it. We know we have to be well to care for others. If a caregiver does die or become ill, the care receiver finds other help or it is provided. You are never indispensable. Communicate firmly, honestly and learn to say no. We can't change others, what we can change is how we react and how we set limits. We are the boss of ourselves.

Reading Comprehension

1. What is a caregiver?
2. List three things that can happen to caregivers if they do not set limits and take care of themselves.
3. Can you suggest a reason why most caregivers find it difficult to set limits and ask for help?
4. Find three things mentioned in the article that are examples of what caregivers do to help those people they take care of.
5. What are the two possible reactions that someone who is being taken care of might have when a caregiver sets limits or says “no”?
6. Give one example of an “extra expense” a caregiver might incur because of caring for a loved one.

Vocabulary Development

A. Context Clues

Use context clues from the reading to guess the meaning of the following words: *waffling*, *tricky*, *resentful*, *stick to it*

B. Definition Matching

The words in italics on the next page are taken from the reading. These words are also found on the *list of the first 2000 most commonly used words of English* and on the *Academic Word List*. Match the words to the correct definition and find the part of speech. The first one has been done for you as an example

estimates, react, plus, scenario, resource, challenge, established, issue, burned out, firm,

	Word	Part of speech	Definition
1.	Issue	Noun	problem or concern
2.			to behave or change in a particular way when something happens, is said, etc.
3.			and or in addition
4.			a description of what could possibly happen
5.			to give or form a general idea about the value, size, or cost of (something)
6.			a difficult task or problem : something that is hard to do
7.			feeling very physically and emotionally tired after doing a difficult job for a long time
8.			not likely to change or be changed
9.			successful for a long period of time
10.			a place or thing that provides something useful

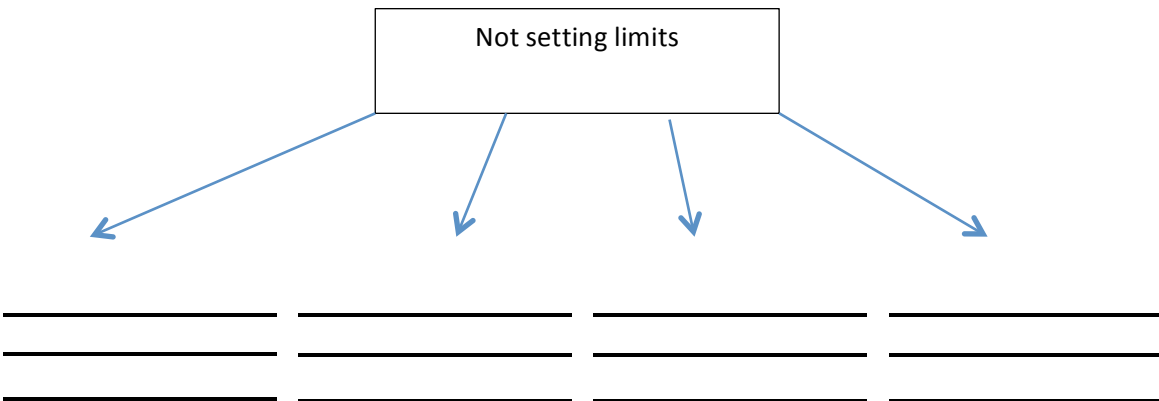
C. Collocations

Words that are used in a certain way together are called collocations. A collocation is a particular combination of words. Take the word “digital”. Collocations of the word “digital” are *technology* and *camera*– “digital technology” and “digital camera” for example. Use online reference sites such as www.prowritingaid.com/collocation.aspx or www.thesaurus.com or www.dictionary.com to find the collocations of “stick” and “talk”. Complete the table below. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Stick	Talk
Stick out	Talk about

Reading Strategy

Read the selection again and identify the effects on caregivers when they do not set limits. Look for a cause and effect relationship. Ask yourself “what happens when the caregiver does or does not set limits?”



Grammar Focus / Pragmatic Competence

A phrasal verb is a group of words that functions as a verb and is made up of a verb and a particle. Particles are prepositions or adverbs. Examples of phrasal verbs are “look down”, ‘stick out”, and “catch on”.

A phrasal verb should be read as you would read one word. You cannot guess the meaning of the phrasal verb by looking at the verb alone and the preposition or adverb alone. You need to know the meaning of the whole phrasal verb as a unit.

Phrasal verbs have grammar patterns. Some phrasal verbs are used without an object while other phrasal verbs need an object.

Verb	Particle	Example	Meaning
Stop	over	The plane stops over in London before going on to Addis.	The plane goes to London first and then to Addis.
Ask	after	Jane asked after Henry’s health.	Jane asked how Henry was doing health wise.
Drop	off	Mel dropped the keys off at the office /Mel dropped off the keys at the office.	Mel left the keys at the office.
Talk	out of	Faiza talked Zina out of quitting school.	Faiza convinced Zina not to quit school.

** Sometimes phrasal verbs can be three part verbs when they are followed by certain prepositions. Here are some examples: look forward to, look down on, get away with, and come up against

Activity 1 – Identifying phrasal verbs

The passage below is taken from the main reading. Underline the five phrasal verbs in this passage.

If it is stopping by to 'help' say "I am on my way home so I can drop in for 15 minutes. If the job takes longer, we will plan to do it on the week end or let's phone up that resource I found in the community newsletter." Be pleasantly firm. No waffling.

Sometimes you can give your care receiver choices. "I can't take you to the doctor today. I could phone a taxi and have them pick you up at a specific time. Or, if you can make a Saturday appointment I can take you then." You do not have to make excuses. You simply state the facts. You are the boss of yourself. You can't control what others do, even your loved ones. What you can control is how you react. Prepare your responses before you are asked. Think up possible scenarios and then practise.

Activity 2 – Finding the meaning of phrasal verbs

Match the five phrasal verbs you underlined in activity 1 with their meanings from the box below.

	Phrasal verb	Meaning
1		to visit someone briefly
2		to make a telephone call to someone
3		to let or put people or things into or onto a car, bus, ship
4		to visit briefly without an appointment
5		to use your mind to form or invent something

Activity 3 – Identifying the synonyms of phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs often have single verbs that have a similar meaning. For instance, a single verb synonym of the phrasal verb “take off” is “remove”. The verbs in italics in the table below are synonyms of phrasal verbs found in the main reading. Complete the table below by locating the phrasal verbs in the reading that are synonyms of the single verbs provided.

Phrasal verb	Single verb synonym
	<i>wear</i>
	<i>invent</i>
	<i>continue</i>
	<i>call</i>
	<i>visit</i>

Reading – Writing Link

The article describes the ways in which caregivers can set limits. What have you learned about setting limits?

What I learned about setting limits

Link to Essential Skills

Essential skills are the skills needed for work, learning, and life (www.hrsdc.gc.ca). They are enabling skills that help you perform daily tasks as well as tasks required on the job. In this section of the lesson you will focus on **working with others** and **writing**. Working with others refers to interacting with other people in order to complete a task or tasks. In this section you will write an email in response to a request for assistance to complete a number of tasks.

Diplomacy is very important when interacting with other people. Diplomacy refers to working with others so that good relationships are maintained and there are no (or few) bad feelings. To be diplomatic you have to be able to use phrases that soften statements that give bad news or negative judgements.

How can you soften your language?

	Strategy	Examples
1.	Use negative questions to make suggestions	<i>Wouldn't it be better to.....? / Don't you think we could.....? / Couldn't we.....?</i>
2.	Use the past continuous to sound more distant	<i>We were hoping to hammer out the details today. / We were thinking of offering you a three month trial.</i>
3.	Use positive adjectives with 'not' instead of negative adjectives	<i>That might not be possible / The food was not very attractive.</i>
4.	Use phrases to signal bad news for the listener	<i>Unfortunately..... / I'm afraid..... / I'm sorry but..... / With respect.....</i>
5.	Use modal verbs	<i>That time might not work well for me./ We may be able to help you there.....</i>
6.	Use modifiers / qualifiers to make things seem less or smaller	<i>We had a bit of a disagreement. / He seems a little rude. / That may cause a slight problem for us. / We have a bit of a problem with the new schedule.</i>

Instructions:

Read the note in the “pre-reading” section at the beginning of this lesson that Jean’s mum wrote. Imagine that you are Jean. You work at a full time job. You have two very active children aged 6 and 9. You always help out your mum, a senior, who depends on you a lot. You are happy to help out but you are getting burnt out. There is a lot on your plate and you are always tired. You do not have much time to rest. Write a note responding to your mum’s request for help. In your note summarize the requests she has made. Explain that you have commitments this week and are not able to take her around on the days she has mentioned. Suggest alternative ways to have her requests met. Use diplomatic language.

Answer Keys

Reading Comprehension

1. A caregiver is a family member or friend who looks after a loved one who is ill, has a disability or is elderly.
2. Caregivers can feel resentful, burned out, become ill, or die.
3. They may feel guilty.
4. They talk on the phone, they stop by to help with chores, they take the elderly to appointments.
5. The person being taken care of might be accept the limits or they might be unhappy or shocked .
6. Answers will vary – extra money spent on gas or transportation, food, medications

Vocabulary Development

A. Context Clues

<i>Waffling</i>	to be unable or unwilling to make a clear decision about what to do
<i>Tricky</i>	difficult to do or deal with
<i>Resentful</i>	having or showing a feeling of anger or displeasure about someone or something unfair
<i>stick to it</i>	to not change a decision, belief, etc

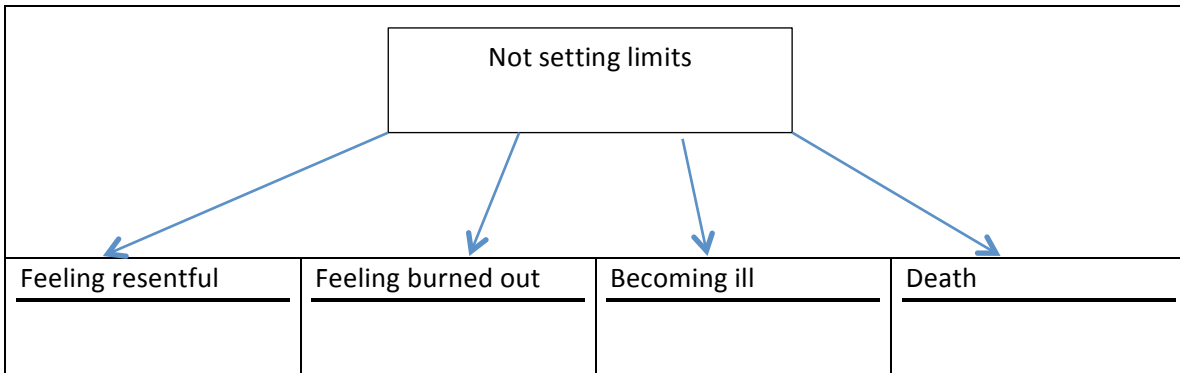
B. Definition Matching

	Word	Part of speech	Definition
1.	Issue	Noun	Problem or concern
2.	React	Verb	to behave or change in a particular way when something happens, is said, etc.
3.	Plus	Preposition	And or in addition
4.	Scenario	Noun	a description of what could possibly happen
5.	Estimate	Verb	to give or form a general idea about the value, size, or cost of (something) : to make an estimate of
6.	Challenge	Noun	a difficult task or problem : something that is hard to do
7.	Burned out	Adjective	feeling very physically and emotionally tired after doing a difficult job for a long time
8.	Firm	Adjective	not likely to change or be changed
9.	Established	Adjective	successful for a long period of time
10.	Resource	Noun	a place or thing that provides something useful

C. Collocations * Answers will vary**

Stick	Talk
Stick out	Talk about
Stick to it	Money talks
Measuring stick	Now you're talking
Stick around	Talk into
Stick by	Talk around

Reading Strategy



Grammar Focus / Pragmatic Competence

Activity 1

If it is stopping by to 'help' say "I am on my way home so I can drop in for 15 minutes. If the job takes longer, we will plan to do it on the week end or let's phone up that resource I found in the community newsletter." Be pleasantly firm. No waffling.

Sometimes you can give your care receiver choices. "I can't take you to the doctor today. I could phone a taxi and have them pick you up at a specific time. Or, if you can make a Saturday appointment I can take you then." You do not have to make excuses. You simply state the facts. You are the boss of yourself. You can't control what others do, even your loved ones. What you can control is how you react. Prepare your responses before you are asked. Think up possible scenarios and then practise.

Activity 2

	Phrasal verb	Meaning
1	Stop by	to visit someone briefly
2	Phone up	to make a telephone call to someone
3	Pick up	to let or put (people or things) into or onto a car, bus, ship
4	Drop in	To visit briefly without an appointment
5	Think up	to use your mind to form or invent (something)

Activity 3

Phrasal verb	Single verb synonym
Put on	wear
Think up	invent
Stick to it	continue
Phone up	call
Stop by / drop in	visit

Reading –Writing Link

*Paragraphs will vary**

Link to Essential Skills

Notes will vary

Hi mum,

I got your note asking for help. You need me to take you to your doctor's appointment, go grocery shopping, help you clean your house, and find your winter clothes. You would also like to be taken out for breakfast with your grandkids.

Unfortunately this week is a very busy week for me. We might have to leave some tasks for next week. Taking you to the doctor on Tuesday won't work for me. I could arrange for a taxi to pick you up and take you there. I am afraid cleaning your house this weekend might not be possible. Don't you think we could call a different cleaning company to come this weekend? Once your closet is clean you will be able to find your winter clothes. The kids would love to spend some time with you; I am afraid breakfast on Sunday won't work well for me. Couldn't we do lunch on Sunday?

Love
Jean