

# What's Out There

## Workwise English Puzzles by Clare Harris

Reviewed by Lynne Matheson

Doing puzzles is good for your brain. As someone who has done crossword puzzles for most of my adult life, I can vouch for that sense of satisfaction when the puzzle is completed, and all the clues are solved. At the same time, I like to know that some new words have been added to my personal word bank (*etui* is one new word I doubt I will ever use). I also admit being a *Words with Friends* addict – don't get me started on some of the bizarre words that come up in the course of a game. Whether I am staving off the effects of ageing while sharpening my cognitive skills is a matter for the researchers to continue to puzzle over.

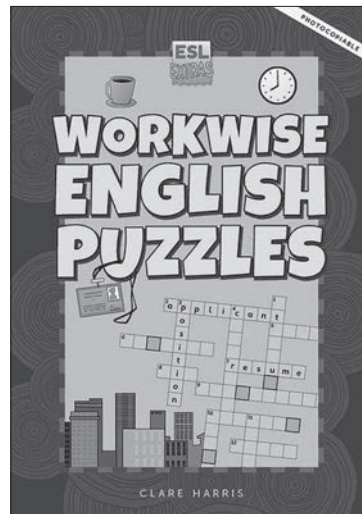
I do believe that regular engagement with word puzzles leads to increased word knowledge and language skills. Back when I was teaching, the nine-letter word challenge was a kick start activity for my Monday morning adult literacy class. It stimulated a whole range of language exploration and practical activities that would lead to further reading or writing. I would also create basic word puzzles using an online tool. Life would have been much easier at the time if I had a resource such as *Workwise English Puzzles*.

### The hidden word payoff

With over twenty years of teaching experience, Clare Harris has created engaging and authentic reading materials for EAL students through her publishing company The Book Next Door. Readers will be familiar with her *ESL Extras* series of readers.

Clare decided to include simple puzzles in the activities for her reading books and the next step was to create a photocopiable puzzle book, based on 'magazine-style' puzzles. She liked the format as it has the added attraction of that 'find a hidden word' payoff.

The first book she created was *Extra Easy Puzzles*, which proved to be very popular, and the second one, *Workwise English Puzzles*, is certain to be really useful across EAL, VET, VCAL and adult literacy classes with workplace skills as their focus. It makes for some great teaching and



learning opportunities in the one package of printable and projectable puzzles that can be used in a variety of ways, with the added bonus of saving some precious preparation time.

### What's in the book?

The aim of *Workwise English Puzzles* is to provide engaging and fun activities as learners review the language of job-seeking and employment. Additionally there are opportunities to learn some new vocabulary and explore the kind of idiomatic language common to the workplace.

The puzzles are in sections:

- Jobs and applications
- Starting a new job
- How's it going?
- Getting it right
- Talking to workmates
- Think about it (includes pair work puzzles and a board game)

The puzzles are aimed at the pre-intermediate to low intermediate level with suggestions as to how they may be used for individual or pair work. Of OH&S relevance are the puzzles that deal with safety; 'Stay safe', and awareness of appropriate protective clothing; 'What do we wear?'. There are some good communication activities; 'Which word? Get the email right', and practise for talking on the phone that could be extended with partner work or

whole group discussions. The 'Quick Quiz #4: What do they mean?' has some examples of acronyms that are commonly used and likely to cause confusion OTJ.

The Start Talking! game can be copied onto A3 paper and is bound to provide lots of casual conversation practice. There are sample pages you can download on the website and these give a good sense of the language level, format and range of puzzles. You will also find one of these pages reprinted overleaf.

You can also read a little more on Clare's blog at: <https://clareharris.com/workwise-english-puzzles-looking-at-workwise-language/>

### **Workwise English Quiz videos**

Teachers have told Clare how much they like the quizzes in the puzzle books; they use them at the end of term, at the end of the week, as team activities etc. (quiz nights and quiz shows are an authentic part of our culture). Feedback has shown that teachers like the language discussion that arises, and they'd like to do more quizzes. However, often their students aren't quite ready for the quick reading skills required of 'on-your-mobile' competitive online quizzes.

So, Clare has created some quiz videos with a Workwise flavour. They are basically slide shows with 20 questions, each with a photo and just three short answer options. Each set of 20 questions runs as a 10-minute video. There's a timer, so that students have 20 seconds for a group to read the question and make their decision before the buzzer goes off and the answer pops up. The videos can also be left playing in a classroom during the break, or on the screen in the foyer. At time of printing, the videos were not yet available but information about these and other resources can be found at <https://www.thebooknextdoor.com/>.

The need for some instant resources with an Australian English focus is an eternal one and *Workwise English Puzzles* makes a well-considered contribution to this space.

Workwise English Puzzles (2018) is published by The Book Next Door. A list of suppliers is available at <https://www.thebooknextdoor.com/suppliers/>

**Lynne Matheson has been a member of the VALBEC executive committee since 2000 and *Fine Print* editorial group since 2002, with a term as *Fine Print* editor from 2014 to 2017. She currently works in Learning and Development at Melbourne Polytechnic.**

### CHECK THE AD!

Do you know the language of job advertisements?

Match the job with the job description, using the 'answer letters'. Then read down (↓) the answer letters to find a new word.

- 1. Hairdresser
- 2. Childcare Worker
- 3. Gardener
- 4. Cook
- 5. Waitperson
- 6. Software Developer
- 7. Truck Driver
- 8. Youth Worker
- 9. Concrete Worker
- 10. Dental Assistant

Working with 'at-risk' young people. **u**

Must have HC licence. **o**

Certificate II or III in horticulture preferred, plus pest spray licence. **c**

Applicants will work in both surgery and reception. Excellent patient care a must. **d**

Plan and prepare nutritious meals and snacks. **k**

Superior cutting and colour skills. **b**

Are you a recent IT graduate? **r**

You will have previous experience working on construction sites. **n**

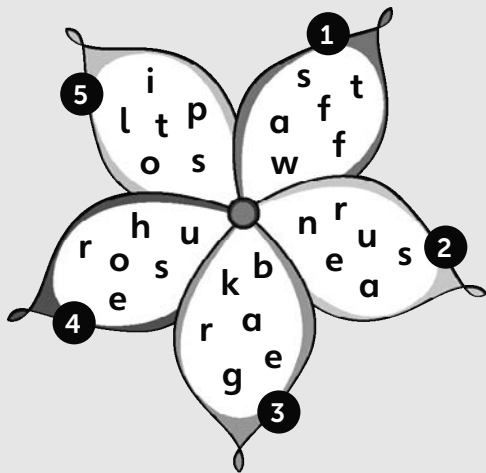
Correctly take and deliver orders to tables. **g**

Dedication to working in the early learning environment. **a**

**THE NEW WORD IS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(WHAT'S YOURS?)**

### MIXED UP WORDS #1

Find the 5-letter word in each petal of the flower. There will be one extra letter. Use the extra letters to find a new word.



- 1. Workers in a business: \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Works in a hospital: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Makes and sells bread: \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Working times: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Flies planes: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE NEW WORD IS:**

Look at job ads and find 3 new words or phrases.