

Art with Heart presents

# Dial in,

Tired of talking about the pandemic?  
Out of practice in making conversation?  
Looking to connect? Fancy getting creative?

**Dial in - we're here to help!**

Designed for use over the phone, in person or via video call, Dial In is a booklet of activities created by artists from Greater Manchester – chock full of fun games and creative activities to activate your imagination and help you build connections.



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**GMCA** GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
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# Introduction

## Ring Ring

### What will I find in this booklet?

This booklet's activities range from fun games and storytelling to drawing, writing poems, and building fantasy journeys that allow us to escape to new worlds and revisit old ones. None of our activities require internet access and have been designed with telephone conversations in mind.

### Who is this booklet for?

This booklet has been designed for use by:

- Curious individuals looking for activities to do with family, friends and neighbours
- Community groups who like to get creative
- Busy community and voluntary sector workers looking to connect with their service users
- Care home staff looking for ways to get creative with their residents

The activities are suitable for all ages; however, they have been created with older people (over 60s) in mind.

### What inspired us to put this booklet together?

Last summer, we paired 5 Greater Manchester artists with 25 elders from across the region with the simple aim of connecting with one another. We called this project Dial as it took place over the telephone between 2 people. Through Dial we wanted to reduce isolation for participants who might not have the digital skills or internet access to take part in online activities.

Over 150 hours of conversation took place before our creative collective hung up their phones to one another. During that time, they laughed together, sang together, drew portraits of one another, wrote poems, talked politics and pandemics, shared life stories and recipes, created maps and imagined fantasy lands together.

At the end of the project, our artists and elders shared how much they enjoyed their creative conversations and how the activities had helped lift their mood and keep their imaginations alive during lockdown – so we decided to share some of the activities we enjoyed the most!

### Who put this booklet together?

We're Art with Heart, an award-winning Salford based arts company that designs and delivers performances, workshops and people-led creative projects for community groups, arts organisations and schools across the UK.

We believe that when people come together through theatre and art, they have the power to make change – and that it's our responsibility to create accessible, representative spaces where they can give it a try.

The 5 artists who put the activities together for you are: Ella Otomewo, Chelsea Morgan, Joe Gilmour-Rees, Roma Havers and Alice Proctor. This booklet has been designed by Studio Baba.



# Let's break the ice!

<b>Duration of activity:</b>	10 minutes
<b>Number of people:</b>	2
<b>Materials needed:</b>	None
<b>Access:</b>	You can do this activity anywhere, even over the phone! You just need to be able to hear each other's voices.

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## Instructions

Before you jump into the activities, we thought we'd share some of the questions our artists and elders asked one another to help kickstart their conversations and warm up their imaginations!

Simply pick a question and read it out to your partner for them to answer. You can then answer the question too, or let your partner ask the next question if they have a copy of the booklet.

What would you cook for me if I came to your house for dinner?

For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

What is the best advice you've ever received?

What is the most ridiculous outfit you have ever worn?

If you could visit one point in history, where would you time travel to?

What would be a perfect day for you?

Tell me about your favourite encounter with a stranger?

Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?

What was the first thing you bought with your own money?

# Story Building

<b>Duration of activity:</b>	10 minutes
<b>Number of people:</b>	Perfect in pairs but can be played in groups of any size.
<b>Materials needed:</b>	None
<b>Access:</b>	You can do this activity anywhere, even over the phone! You just need to be able to hear each other's voices.

## Instructions

- You start a story by saying, "Once upon a time..."
- Your partner replies by saying, "Yes, and..." And then adds a sentence to the story.
- You reply by saying, "Yes, and..." and continue the story again.
- Take turns until the story feels like it has reached an ending. You might be surprised where your story ends up!

## Here's an example:

**You:** Once upon a time, there was a small girl who loved to go on adventures!

**Your partner:** Yes, and she went all over the world.

**You:** Yes, and one morning she built a boat on a beach in Cornwall.

**Your partner:** Yes, and she pushed the boat out into the cold waves.

**You:** Yes, and the waves soaked the bottom of her shorts.

**Your partner:** Yes, and she jumped in the boat.

**You:** Yes, and she realised she didn't have anything to row with.

**Your partner:** Yes, and suddenly a stick fell from the sky!

**You:** Yes, and she snapped it in two to use as oars.

**Your partner:** Yes, and she sailed into the sunrise.

**You:** Yes, and at home that evening, no one believed the adventure she had been on.

**Your partner:** Yes, and that didn't matter because the little girl knew she had been on an adventure and that she would go on an adventure the day after too.

# Once upon a time

After, you could try telling a story saying 'No but...' instead and see if that changes what kind of story you tell together.

The best thing about this activity is that you can't get it wrong! The story might be long or short, funny or serious; it's up to you. You can play with any number of people and take it in turns to add to the story.

**Have fun Story Building!**

# If you Could...

<b>Duration of activity:</b>	You can set a time limit or carry on for however long you would like.
<b>Number of people:</b>	2 (could be adapted as a group activity by going around the room asking people individually)
<b>Materials needed:</b>	None (unless participants are eager to show pictures or bring examples)
<b>Access:</b>	This activity may require some memory of past events (i.e. places you've been.) This could be adapted by offering either/or choices.

## Instructions

This activity aims to encourage conversation about fantasies. One person could ask the questions and the other answer, this can be reversed, or if a particular question gets exciting, spend all your time on that one! There are prompts too for a shy answerer.

### Option 1: Fantasy Journey

#### If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go? What time of year?

Think about all the best places you've travelled, places you've read about or seen on TV, maybe somewhere you went as a child, or where you went on your honeymoon, somewhere that's always been too expensive, or you haven't had time.

**Example: I'd love to go to the Lakehouse in Canada where I saw a bat for the first time!**

#### How would you like to travel to get there? Would you stop anywhere on the way?

Do you hate planes or can't drive? Or do you love exciting train journeys? Would you love to be strong enough to swim there or walk? What do you like to bring with you on long car rides? Who would you visit on the way, or where would you stop for a meal?

**Example: I'd travel by boat. I'd wear a jaunty hat and visit my sister in Sweden on the way.**

#### Who would you like to go with?

Would you like to travel alone, with family, friends, partners? Or someone you don't know well, but you think would be an interesting companion, is there someone you miss who you'd like to go on one last journey with? Would you bring your pets if you could?

**Example: I'd take a parrot so I would look like a pirate.**

#### What would you pack?

What do you take everywhere? What luxuries? Do you want to document your trip?

**Example: I'd manage with two shirts! And I'd bring some birds custard powder for my aunt!**

#### How long would you go for?

Would you love to go for a long weekend, or would you like to go for four years?

**Example: I'd stay until winter, see the lake frozen, I could learn to ice skate in that time.**

#### What would you love to do when you get there?

What would you like to eat? Maybe there are people you'd like to meet? Or just relax in a beautiful environment? What have you always wanted to experience?

**Example: I'd like to recreate the scene where Colin Firth drops his novel in the lake.**

## Option 2: Fantasy meal



**It is a night to remember, and you are in charge!**  
**What meal would you have if you could have anything you wanted?**

### Where would you like to eat?

Do you love fancy restaurants or quiet family run, or would you prefer to eat at home, or in the woods, a picnic maybe? Or a castle? In a cloud?

**Example: I love eating while camping; everything tastes better outside.**

### What would you like to eat?

Would you like a starter, any side dishes, how many courses, what about pudding?! Where did you first taste that dish?

**Example: I'd like a whole meal of foods I used to love but am now allergic to (surely a fantasy meal can't stop me breathing!)**

### What would you like to drink?

You could have several across the meal if you'd like?

**Example: I'd like a tasting menu of every juice ever created.**

### Who would you like to join you?

Do you prefer quieter meals with someone you love, or a banquet with all the most interesting people you've ever met, or all historical figures you'd like to meet? It could even be fictional characters! What would you talk about?

**Example: I'd like every person I love to be there, but I'd love to introduce Boudica to oranges.**

### Would there be any entertainment?

Music? Someone having a dance? A show afterwards?

**Example: Sorry to the haters! But there will be karaoke and dancing. Everyone will be embarrassed at first, but then they'll talk about it forever.**



# Partners in Rhyme

<b>Duration of activity:</b>	10 - 20 minutes
<b>Number of people:</b>	2
<b>Materials needed:</b>	None
<b>Access:</b>	All you will need for this activity is your voice and your imagination, but if you would like to make notes with a pen and paper to jot down what you and your partner have said, then you can.

## Instructions

The aim of this activity is to create a fun and silly poem together on the spot.

You and your partner will take turns to speak a line that rhymes with what the last person said.

After partner A has come up with a starting line, each person will take it in turns to come up with two lines at a time: one that rhymes with their partner's last word and a second for their partner to rhyme with.

### Suggested themes are:

- I can see
- A memory we share
- If I ruled the world
- I once met a stranger who

### Here is an example:

**Partner A:** When I look out of the window,  
I see my neighbour's tomcat.

**Partner B:** I can see the city skyline, up here in  
my flat. And the birds in the distance  
make the shape of an arrow.

**Partner A:** I think the tomcat has its eyes  
on a sparrow.

# Ask then Draw



**Duration of activity:** 20 minutes

**Number of people:** 2 people

**Materials needed:**

- Paper
- Whatever pens, pencils and colours you have to hand!

**Access:** This activity involves drawing (good and 'bad' drawing welcomed!) You also need to talk to your partner either on the phone, video chat or in person.

## Instructions

This is adapted from an exercise that theatre designers use for inspiration before creating a set.

### Step 1 – think of a place

You'll be the 'drawer' first, and your partner the 'describer'. Ask your partner to think of a place they know well but not tell you what it is. E.g. "my front room" or "the park".

### Step 2 – the rules

Now tell your partner, "In this game, Ask Then Draw, you can't just describe your place – you can only answer my questions. And I have to draw something after each answer you give."

The aim of the game is not to create an accurate drawing, or to guess the place correctly. We hope that by responding to the questions, your partner thinks of their place in a new way rather than just describing.

### Step 3 – ask then draw

Ask your partner your first question. For example, "What is the floor like in this place?". Draw their answer.

### Step 4 – ask then draw again

Now ask another question, for example, "What do you feel in this place?" Draw that answer too! Parts of your drawing might be realistic and others more creative – how do you draw the feeling of relaxation? There's no wrong answer!

Continue until you've finished your drawing or feel like swapping over.

### Step 5 – swap over

Swap roles so your partner is now the 'drawer'.

### Step 6 – reflect

Finally, have a chat. Start with the question, "Was it harder being the describer or the drawer?"

It's nice to find a way to share your drawings with each other afterwards. If you're far away from each other, you could post them or send a photo.

Here is a drawing that two of our Dial elders, Glennis and Rosetta, created when we did Ask Then Draw together on the phone – don't worry, yours doesn't need to be as polished!



Glennis' image:



Rosetta's image:

# Fun Phone Games

## Instructions

<b>Duration of activity:</b>	Each game will last anywhere between 5-10 minutes.
<b>Number of people:</b>	2 or more. These games can be used in group settings.
<b>Materials needed:</b>	None.
<b>Access:</b>	You can play these games anywhere – over the phone or in person. You just need to be able to hear each other's voices.

Have a party over the phone with this fun collection of games. Stick the kettle on and get ready to use your imagination, have a laugh and get chatting.

You can play as many games as you like for as long as you like. These games will work well with family, friends or between strangers. All you need to do is read out the bits in blue to tell your partner how to play.

## This or That

A quick-fire word game where players have to choose between two things.



### How to play

Tell your partner you are going to play a quick game called This or That.

*"We are going to play a quick game called This or That."*

You will say two different things to your partner and they will choose their favourite.

*"I'm going to say two things, and you are going to choose your favourite."*

See what your partner answers. You could take it in turns asking the questions, or you could ask all the questions.

*"Do you have a This or That question to ask me? We can take turns, or I have a list of questions I can ask you?"*

### Here are some questions to help, or you can use your imagination to create your own:

- Summer or Winter
- City or Countryside
- Baking or Cooking
- Fast food or Home cooked food
- Ice cream or Cake
- Ocean or Mountains
- Book or TV
- Tea or Coffee
- Morning or Evening
- Cinema or Theatre
- Singing or Dancing
- Gold or Silver

## Would you Rather

A fun conversation game that creates a tricky choice between two scenarios.



### How to play

Tell your partner you are going to play a game called Would you Rather.

*"We are going to play a game called Would you Rather."*

You will ask your partner a series of questions. Both players will think about which option they will choose and tell their partner why. Players are allowed to talk about the questions together.

*"I'm going to ask a question that has two tricky choices."*

*We have to tell each other which one we would pick and why.*

*We are allowed to have a conversation about our thoughts, and we can change our minds at any time."*

### Are you ready for the first question?

Here are some example questions, but you and your partner are welcome to come up with your own! You can do as many or as little as you like. Take time discussing the questions and have fun:

1. Would you rather be able to fly or be invisible?
2. Would you rather live without music or live without TV?
3. Would you rather have bananas for fingers or bananas for toes?
4. Would you rather sound like Mickey Mouse or Donald Duck?
5. Would you rather always talk in rhymes or sing instead of speak?
6. Would you rather be able to speak to animals or every language in the world?



