



The Irish Message Banking Toolkit



Themed Questions for Message Banking

These themed questions are suggestions and are intended as a prompt only, so do not feel confined by them!

You will find that some may apply to you while others may not.

The **categories** of themed questions include:

Page 2: **Personally meaningful phrases**

These are phrases that are important in your relationships and feeling close to the people in your life. They tend to be very personal to you. This might be the best place to start if:

- You have already experienced some changes in your speech.
- You are not sure how many recordings you would like to make.
- You are uncertain about how much time you want to spend on *message banking*.

Page 3: **Feelings and concerns**

These are phrases and ways of saying things that capture:

- Both positive and negative feelings as well as physical feelings or concerns.
- How you use different language, tone of voice, etc. depending on who you are talking with (i.e. how well you know them, your relationship with them).

Page 4: **Help and control**

These are phrases and ways of saying things that you would use to:

- Request help.
- Direct those who are caring for you.

Page 5-6: **Chit chat**

These include phrases and ways of saying things that you would use to:

- Start or finish a conversation.
- React to what you hear.
- Correct someone if they misunderstand you.



It can be helpful to collect digital photos of people you see or talk about regularly.



Personally meaningful phrases

Our personality is often expressed in **what** we say and **how** we say it. Think of messages that help **you** to express **your** personality, and the things that are meaningful to you in your relationships with others.

Some questions to help you to generate ideas include:

- What are the names and nicknames of your family and friends?
- What are you passionate about?
- What are your hobbies and/or interests (e.g. sports, music, movies, travel)?
For example:
 - What messages or phrases would be useful to keep you engaged with these?
 - When watching sport, how do you cheer on a person or team and/or how do you give out about the opposition or referee?
- What phrases do you use that make people reply: *'I knew you'd say that!'*?
- What idioms or sayings do you use? Friends and family can be best placed to tell you these as you may not be aware how often you use them.
For example, *'Get a life!'*, *'That's the way the cookie crumbles'*, *'You missed the boat'*
- What are the 'play' phrases, stories or songs you use for children you know?
- What do you say when you are excited or happy?
- What do you say when you want to praise, encourage or thank someone?
- What do you say when you flirt?
- What regional phrases do you use that are unique to the town/county/country you come from?
- What jokes, humorous or sarcastic comments do you like to make?
- What relationship-specific phrases do you say?
For example, are there phrases that mean something specific to you and a friend due to a shared experience that others would not know what you were talking about?
- How do you laugh, whistle, sing, sigh, etc.?
- How do you show appreciation?
For example, *'Thanks so much for everything'*, *'You're great'*, *'I love you so much'*

Life roles or places you visit that you would like to have phrases for. Consider:

- Who in your immediate or wider circle of people would you use messages with?
- Where might you use your phrases (e.g. home, others' homes, work, parties, appointments)?
- What are your life roles (e.g. child, sibling, partner, parent, friend, colleague) and what sorts of phrases would you use in these roles?
- What routines do you have (e.g. daily, weekly, monthly)?
- What are the special family routines in your household (e.g. children's bedtime, family mealtimes, general household management)?
- How do you control/praise your children?
For example, *'Good job'*, *'Stop acting like that'*, *'Play nicely together'*
- What messages might you use outside of your home (e.g. at the shops, doctor, going for coffee, going to the pub)?
- What places have you been to in the last few weeks? Where do you plan to visit in the next couple of weeks?



Feelings and concerns

It can be important to have a range of messages to allow you to express how you are feeling. Often, we have different ways of expressing ourselves with different people. For example, you might use different phrases when talking about how you are feeling with family members as compared with friends or healthcare staff.

Some questions to help you to generate ideas

- In what ways do you tend to express **positive feelings** or being in a good mood?
For example ...
 - 'I'm feeling brilliant'
 - 'I'm feeling pretty good today'
 - 'That sounds fantastic'
 - 'I'm really excited about it'
- In what ways do you tend to express **negative feelings** or being in a bad mood?
For example ...
 - 'I'm really angry'
 - 'I just feel down'
 - What do you say when you are frustrated, angry or want to give out to someone?
 - What things do you really dislike?
 - Are there things in your environment that really annoy you?
 - Are there times when you might ask a person to stop doing something?
- How do you express **physical feelings**?
For example ...
 - 'I'm really tired, I need to rest for a bit'
 - 'I don't have the energy for it today'
 - 'I have an itch'
 - 'I'm uncomfortable'
- How do you tell people you love them, are proud of them, glad to have them in your life?
- How do you tell people you are sorry?
- How do you want to talk or ask questions about important aspects of your medical treatment plan?
- What worries and/or concerns do you think you might want to talk about (e.g. your family, financial issues, wishes for the future) that you feel would be important to have recorded in **your** own voice?



Don't forget to include any slang and/or swear words you may use regularly or when you are just fed-up or angry!



Help and control

Often people want to have a way of letting others know how they would like things done. Some people might call this bossing people around, but others call it getting things right the first time!

Some questions to help you to generate ideas

- What things might you need to ask family and/or friends to help you with that you would prefer to have said in your own voice?
- What general phrases do you use to ask for or direct help that you feel would be important to have recorded in your own voice? Consider topics such as...
 - **Health**
For example, 'I need to take my tablet now', 'I have a pain in my back', 'I need help now', 'This is an emergency'
 - **Personal care**
For example, 'Will you brush my hair?', 'Would you cut my nails?', 'Can I get some moisturiser?', 'Will you scratch my nose?', 'Will you get my eyebrows waxed?'
 - **Clothing**
For example, 'Put on my blue jumper today', 'I need my glasses.'
 - **Food**
For example, 'I'd love a cup of tea', 'I need more time between mouthfuls', 'I've had enough', 'Can I have ...' with lists of favourite foods and drinks
 - **Home**
For example, 'Will you put away the shopping?', 'Will you change the channel, I don't want to watch this!', 'Did you remember to put out the bins?', 'Have you paid the bills?', 'Have you done the lotto?'
 - **Positioning**
For example, 'Lift my feet up', 'Can you help me go back to bed?', 'Will you move that pillow?'
 - **Places**
For example, 'Will you put that over there?', 'The living room', 'School', 'Centra'
 - **Comfort**
For example, 'It's hot, would you open a window for me?'
 - **Things to do**
For example, 'Will you get me the paper?', 'Let's go out for a walk'
 - **Social requests**
For example, 'Come talk with me', 'I need a hug', 'Can I have time to myself for a while?'
 - **Equipment**
For example, 'Something's wrong with my chair', 'Will you look at my footplates?', 'My computer is acting up'
 - **People who help**
For example, names of health care professionals and others working with you
 - **Appointments**
For example, ways of reminding or asking people to make appointments for you such as with the hairdressers, doctor, speech & language therapist, wheelchair repair etc.



Chit chat

Communicating using technology can feel a little different than when both people in the conversation are speaking verbally. Some differences are:

- You might need a moment to prepare a message and you may want to signal that.
- If someone incorrectly guesses what you were trying to say, you may want to let them know that quickly so that you have an opportunity to stop and correct them before the conversation moves on.

Some questions to help you to generate ideas

Introductions and greetings

- How do you greet different people? This could be more casual or formal depending on the person.
For example, *'Hello, pleased to meet you'*, *'Well, how are you?'*, *'Hiya'*, *'Alright?'*, *'Hi sweetheart'*, *'See ya'*, *'Chat soon'*
- What way do you want to introduce yourself to new people you meet?
- How do you want to explain that you use an electronic device to help you to communicate?
For example, *'I use a system to talk'*, *'It takes a while for me to type my message so please give me time to answer you'*
- What special occasions (e.g. birthdays, anniversaries) would be important to have messages for?
- What words do you think would be useful to have recorded with different intonations to show different degrees of feeling?
For example, *'Yes'*, *'No'*, *'Thank you'*, *'You're welcome'*
- What phrases do you use that relate to different times of the day?
For example, *'Good morning'*, *'Time for school'*, *'What time are we leaving?'*
- What phrases would be useful for phone conversations?
For example, *'Can you hold on for a minute? I need to type something for you'*, *'He's not at home right now'*, *'Can you understand me?'*

Starting a conversation

- How do you usually start a conversation or change the topic?
For example, *'Have you any news for me?'*, *'By the way...'*, *'Did you know that...?'*
- What phrases do you want in case you bump into a friend?
For example, *'I haven't seen you in so long, it's so nice to see you!'*, *'Any news?'*, *'What have you been up to lately?'*
- What phrases do you want to use when you chat about the weather?
For example, *'It's a grand soft day out there'*, *'Does it look like rain?'*



Maintaining conversations

- What words/phrases do you use to let someone know you are listening to them?
For example, 'Really?', 'Go on', 'For God's sake!'
- What do you say when you switch between topics?
For example, 'Remind me to fill you in later', 'What were you saying earlier?'
- What words/phrases do you use when you want to tell people how you feel about a topic?
For example, 'That's gas', 'I couldn't care less'

Finishing a conversation

- What do you usually say when you finish a conversation?
For example, 'Thanks for calling', 'I'd better let you go now', 'It was great to see you', 'I'll chat to you later'

Conversation repair

- How do you usually tell people they have misunderstood you?
For example, 'You picked me up wrong'
- How do you usually let someone know you want in on a conversation?
For example, 'Slow down, I need to get a word in!'
- How do you usually ask the other person to clarify something?
For example, 'What do you mean by that?'
- How do you usually let someone know you have more to say?
For example, 'Just a minute, I'm not finished'