

# Essential Skills Home Learning Challenges

October 2020

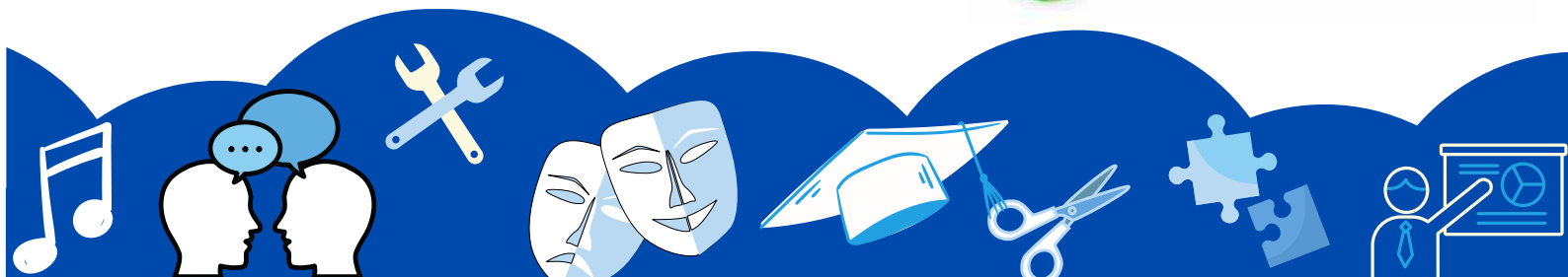


**Have fun earning CU credits and  
developing the skills you need to succeed in  
education, work and life**

Download them from  
<https://bit.ly/SCUEssentialSkillsChallenges>



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# Welcome to the Essential Skills Home Learning Challenges!



We know children and young people enjoy taking part in extra learning activities and it makes a real difference to them too. They grow in confidence, self-esteem and feel motivated to do more, which in the longer term helps them do better at school. We also know that by taking part in these Children's University (CU) activities, they're learning and developing a wide range of essential life skills which will help them through school. They are also cultivating these skills for later life too – to support them to do well at work, training or in further or higher education.

CU has been working with an organisation called the Skills Builder Partnership over the last few years to identify 8 skills that a whole range of people such as education settings, businesses, young people and families, etc feel are essential for life. They are:

- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| - Aiming High | - Problem-solving  |
| - Creativity  | - Speaking         |
| - Leadership  | - Staying positive |
| - Listening   | - Teamwork         |

Whilst children and young people are already developing these skills by taking part in CU activities, we think it's important that they recognise how they're developing these individual skills and know how vital they are. Do they realise they're developing teamwork, listening and leadership skills when they're playing football? Do they know they're developing skills in speaking, problem solving and staying positive in their School Council meetings?

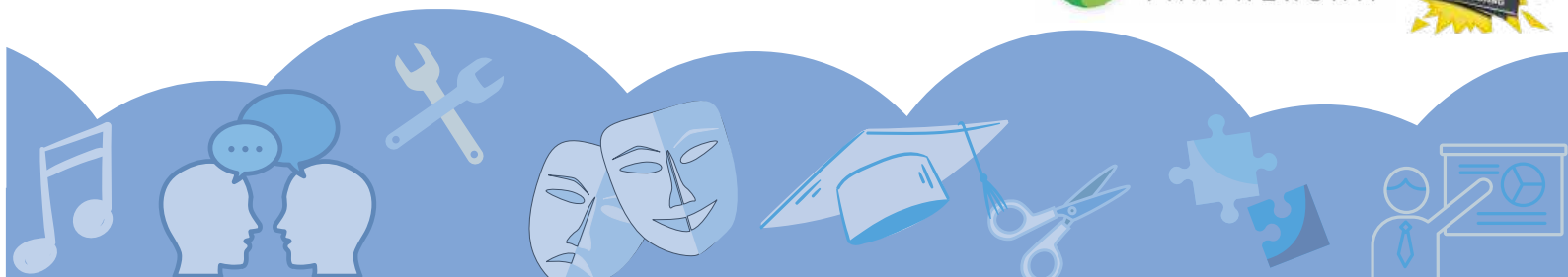
Each month, we will publish a collection of eight fun, learning challenges, covering all 8 essential life skills. We know taking part in activities with other children and young people is more difficult at the moment, so we wanted to provide a way in which your child can develop their essential life skills at home too! They'll receive ONE CU credit for each of these challenges they complete which will go towards their CU awards.

They'll need to complete the challenge at home then take some evidence of their activity into school (photos, video, their writing or art work for example), and the staff will send us a register so we can award their CU credits. You might even receive some special Skills Builder certificates or stickers from school for your child to track their skills development.

We hope you and your child enjoy the challenges!

Best wishes

The Sheffield CU Team



# Challenge: Try Your Best!



Trying your best is important. It might be with your schoolwork or homework or it might be trying your best at a club or activity. Trying your best is important when you're at home too – being kind, keeping your bedroom tidy, helping out with jobs around the house, or even just being on your best behaviour. Trying your best is just that – YOUR best, no-one else's. Some people find things easier than others, so their best might not be as good as yours. Their best might be even better than yours but that doesn't matter. Trying your best is important, and it's important to feel proud of yourself for that. Here's a challenge for you to set your own targets and try your best to meet (or even beat) them.

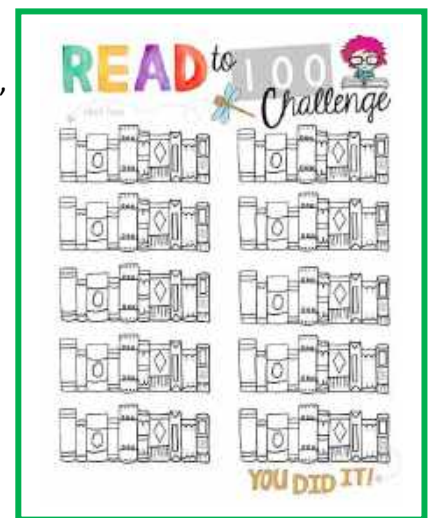
**Step 1:** Think about something you would like to challenge yourself with. It might be something to do with fitness (e.g. how many star jumps or sit ups can you do in 1 minute?), or it could be helping around the house, or keeping your bedroom tidy, or even reading books!

#### You will need:

- Paper or card
- Pencil, crayons or craft items

**Step 2:** Think about how you might achieve your challenge. It won't be easy (otherwise it's not a real challenge!), so make it easier to achieve by breaking it down into steps. For example, could you increase the number of star jumps or sit ups by 5 every day? Could you increase the number of times you do your job to help around the home, or even add extra jobs to your list each day or week? Could you tidy a different area of your bedroom each day? Could you read an extra page of a book each day?

**Step 3:** Now it's time to get creative! Find some paper or card (recycled is fine), and make your very own challenge chart. Think of a name for your challenge and write it at the top. Think of how you could show your progress towards achieving your target – perhaps steps on a ladder or a row of smiley faces or some blank stars to colour in one by one? Make it bright and colourful and when you've finished, put it somewhere so you'll keep seeing it, to remind yourself of your challenge and most importantly, your progress towards it!



**Step 4:** Start your challenge! Remember to record your progress as you go. Don't worry if you find it hard at first – that's what a challenge is all about! Remember to celebrate each step of progress and don't be afraid to go back a step if you need to.

**Step 5:** A few days in, sit down with an adult and look at your progress. Talk about why you are proud of yourself, and how you feel about your challenge. You could do this again at the end when you're SUPER proud of yourself! Remember to reward yourself too and keep thinking about how you achieved your challenge!

**Which skills will I be developing?**

**Main**



**Additional**



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# Challenge: Meal Planner!

Eating a varied and balanced diet is really important in keeping us fit, healthy and ready to learn. It's important to squeeze in our '5 a day' of fruit and vegetables, as well as a good mixture of protein and carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals too - phew! This challenge will help you to think about a healthy diet, then plan a menu for your family for a weekend...or even a week! Can you keep to a budget too?

**Step 1:** Ask an adult to help you ask your family members if anyone has any ingredients or foods that they are allergic to. You need to make a note of these so you don't include them by mistake.

#### You will need:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Crayons or craft items
- Calculator (or your brain!)

**Step 2:** Ask your family members what their favourite foods are, so that you can try and include them in your meal planner. Don't forget to include your own favourites too!

**Step 3:** Have a think about the meals - breakfast is a really important meal as it gets your brain working well, ready for the day ahead. Next comes lunch (or some people call this dinner!), then tea (some people call this dinner too - very confusing!). Will you include supper before bedtime? How about some healthy snacks during the day? You could make a list of the meals, then start to think of ideas for each.

**Step 4:** Start to plan each meal - you could include the ingredients needed and make sure you have included your '5 a day'! Ask an adult to help you if you need to. How about looking online or in cook books for some ideas of new foods to try? You could even have a theme for your meals, such as 'food from Italy' or 'trying new things every day'. See [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) for some ideas!

**Step 5:** Design your planner - you could create a table (like a calendar) with the days along the top and the meals or snacks down the side. You could create a set of individual menu cards, one for each meal? It's up to you how you create your meal planner - just make it bright and colourful.

**Step 6:** Can you help the adult shopper in your home by making a shopping list together? Could you even help them with the shopping, or ticking off your list when unpacking it at home? Can you work out the cost of the meal per person? You could help them to prepare some of the meals - do you need to get any food from the freezer to defrost? Use your meal planner to help you remember!



**Which skills will I be developing?**

**Main**



**Additional**



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# Challenge: Your turn to talk

When we're working with others, clear communication is really important. This is especially important when we're describing something or giving instructions, as it helps the other person to understand your message. Often when something goes wrong, it's because the communication wasn't clear enough. Here's a fun challenge to test your speaking skills almost as much as someone else's listening skills! Do they understand what you mean? Were you clear enough? Do you need to change how you describe something?

**Step 1:** The aim of the challenge is to describe something to your partner so that they can use your instructions to create the same thing, but without seeing your example to copy! So, decide how you'll do this. Perhaps you could draw a simple picture (e.g. a house), then describe it to your partner for them to try and draw the same on their paper (remember, they can't see yours!). Or, you could use a few building blocks (e.g. Lego) to create a simple shape. Why not use some recycling items (e.g. boxes, tubes, or packets)? Remember, they need to have the same equipment that you were able to use.

**Step 2:** Create (or draw) the original object without them seeing it

**Step 3:** Find your partner (family member) and explain the challenge (remember to use clear instructions!)

#### You will need:

- Paper, pencil
- Building bricks or recycled objects

**Step 4:** Sit somewhere so you can't see what each other is doing! Begin to give your step-by-step instructions for your partner to follow to try and create the same object. You can't look until the end!

**Step 5:** If they're not sure what you mean, they might ask a question. This is OK but make sure you give clear answers. You might need to explain the step again but in a different way. You might want to check with them at certain points, e.g. 'so by now you should have...'

**Step 6:** When you've finished, it's time for the big reveal! Show your creations to each other – are they the same? Are they different and if so, why do you think this happened? Why not change places and see if they can give you clear instructions to follow? What did you learn from being in both roles? What might you do differently next time?



Which skills will I  
be developing?

Main

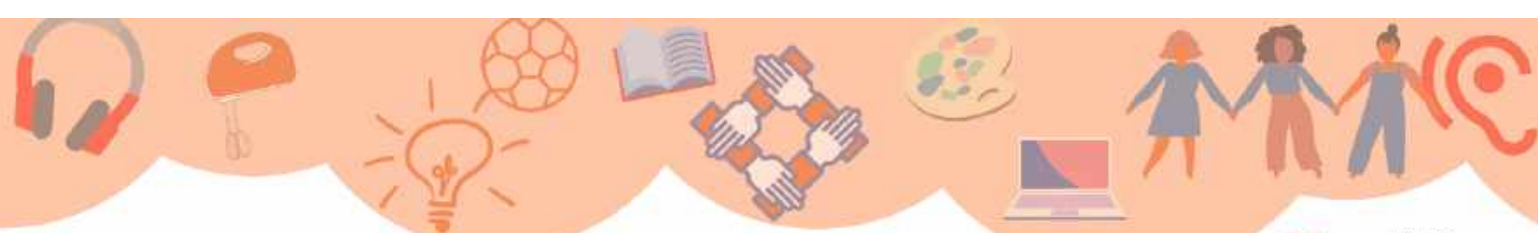


Additional



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# Challenge: Hearing or Listening?

Even when you're not concentrating on the sounds you're hearing, your ears are always sending sound signals to your brain. Most of the time your ears do this automatically, even if you don't realize it. This is called 'passive listening'. You're aware that there are sounds in the background, but you're not focusing on them. When you've got music on in the background, you're listening to it passively.

## You will need:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Crayons

'Active listening' is what you do when you're focusing on what you hear, for example when you're having a conversation with someone. You pay attention to the sound of their words, how fast they speak and their tone of voice. All of this helps you understand the meaning of what is being said. Sometimes, you might be hearing the teacher in your classroom but if you're focussing on your piece of work, you might not 'hear' what they said. Now imagine applying that kind of attention to a piece of music that you hear. When you listen actively to music, you're focusing on what you hear and trying to understand it.

**Step 1:** Choose a piece of music. Start out with something you like that you're familiar with, something you want to listen to. Play the music (try not to watch any music videos if it has one (maybe close your eyes?)) and really focus on what you hear. As the music plays, ask yourself the following questions...

**Step 2:** How does it make you feel? Is the song happy? Sad? Exciting? Does the feeling change during the song? What is it about the song that make you feel this way? The music, the words?

**Step 3:** What instruments do you hear? For some people this is easy, but for others it can be hard to tell what instruments are playing. Can you hear drums? Wind instruments? Strings? Voices?



**Step 4:** Is this song fast or slow? To help you decide, try clapping or tapping along with the song. Listen for fast parts and slow parts happening at the same time.

**Step 5:** Can you transfer what you hear onto paper? Perhaps a drawing of something the music makes you think about or imagine? You could even just let your pencil draw freely to see what happens – maybe lots of spikes for fast, louder music? Perhaps lots of swirls or sweeping lines for quieter, slower music? Add some colour to your artwork – what colours does the music make you choose? Remember, this is YOUR active listening, so be creative in whatever way you choose – there's no right or wrong answer. You could try the same with some different styled music and compare your work? Can you explain your designs to an adult?

## Main

## Additional

**Which skills will I be developing?**



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# Challenge: From both sides

October is Black History Month - a recognised time to celebrate the history, arts and culture of black people, but it's also a time to learn. It's important that we learn about periods in history (either a long time ago or even fairly recently) when the lives of black people in particular were affected in some way. That way, we can celebrate some of those times, and for other times, it might be more about learning lessons for now and the future. Here's an activity which will help you learn about one story which changed the way people were treated, but there are lots more stories available on the link. Despite all the difficult times the main character was living through, she stayed positive and fought for what she believed in. We'd like you to think about the story from different sides.

## You will need:

- Access to the internet
- Paper or card, pencil, crayons, video camera (all optional)

**Step 1:** Ask an adult to help you find the story on this link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/true-stories-rosa-parks/z7rtvk7> Watch the video (about 12 minutes long). They could even watch it with you.

**Step 2:** Have a think about how Rosa might have been feeling at different points through the film:

- The beginning
- When she was on the bus at first, then when she was refusing to move
- When she was in court
- When everyone began walking to work and school
- The end



**Step 3:** Have a think about how the other people in the film might have been feeling at those same times. Why were they all feeling this way?

**Step 4:** Thinking about Rosa and how she might have been feeling, can you present this in a creative and interesting way? Perhaps you're a reporter writing a newspaper article at the time, or even presenting a video, reporting from outside the court? Maybe you could write a diary entry that Rosa herself might have written? Present your work as if you were on Rosa's side.

**Step 5:** Now could you do the same, but from someone else's viewpoint, someone on the other side? Perhaps you're reporting from the Government's viewpoint – they made the rules after all? 'Why was this lady trying to break our rules?'

**Step 6:** Have a think about what you've learned. How do you think Rosa stayed so motivated to protest against all those people? How do you think she stayed positive throughout a difficult time? Do you think you could apply any of that to yourself and your life, to help you to stay positive?

**Which skills will I be developing?**

**Main**



**Additional**



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# Challenge: Too Many Cooks?

Did you know, there's a phrase 'too many cooks spoil the broth'? This means if there are too many people involved, it isn't successful and doesn't work! We want to test this out with this challenge. Teamwork is important and can be REALLY successful if the team are led in the right way. We want you to be a leader in this challenge, leading your team to be successful cooks in the kitchen. Often, people volunteer to be a leader, but it's not always easy being in this role. You need to think about the skills of all the team members, as well as what they might not be so good at. You might give them a job to do that you know they can do easily, but if they always get this job, how will they ever learn some new skills from the other roles? Do you give them a chance to train and learn new skills, but this might take longer and they might not get it right first time? It's up to you!

**Step 1:** Ask an adult to help you decide on a recipe you'd like your team to make. It could be one of the meals you planned as part of the 'Creativity' challenge? You could have a look at [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) for some ideas! You could even make a three-course meal – a starter, a main course and a dessert! That will really test your team of cooks!

**You will need:**

- Paper, pencil, crayons
- food ingredients
- cooking equipment

**Step 2:** Think about your team members (the people who live in your house). What are their skills in cooking? What will any younger team members be able to do to help? Can some of the older members teach the younger members how to do things? You might want to ask them what their cooking skills are (peeling, chopping, mixing, weighing, timing, frying, etc.) and write a list of them?

**Step 3:** Now you've got your team members and their skills, think about your dish/es. What are the steps you'll need to do to create it and who will do it? For example, if you're making mashed potato, you'll need to wash and peel them, chop them, boil them, strain them (take them out of the water), then mash them. Will it be the same member of your team or will the different steps be done by different members of the team? Write or draw your plan.



**Step 4:** Explain your plan to your team. Make sure you're clear and explain why they've been given their jobs. Listen to any feedback they have – remember, they might not like the job you've given them – will you let them change or swap or will you stick to your plan? Remember to keep clean and tidy as you go. Some of your team will have to do this job so how will you make sure they're not unhappy about it? A good leader listens and helps out! What will your job be?

**Step 5:** How will you know if it was a success? Or was it 'too many cooks spoil the broth'? Sit down with your team afterwards and talk about how everyone felt. Did they like their jobs? Would they like to do a different job next time?

**Which skills will I be developing?**

**Main**



**Additional**



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# Challenge: Swap Your Senses

We usually read by using our eyes, but what happens if you can't use your eyes to read? Then you can use your sense of touch, and braille. Braille is a system of raised dots that blind people can read. Braille is read by touch, using your fingers to feel the letters and symbols. Blind people can also make their own braille using computers or other gadgets. Braille is available in nearly every language and used throughout the world.

Each letter of the alphabet, punctuation mark or number has its own special symbol/s. Each symbol is made by arranging raised dots within a six-dot braille cell. By using some or all of the six available dots a large number of different letters and symbols can be created. Each of the six dots has a number to help identify which one you are talking about.



The space that six dots occupy is known as a braille cell

We'd like you to have a go at writing using the braille system, then perhaps having a go at making your own braille dots. Does your family know anyone who uses braille?

## You will need:

- Paper
- Card
- Pencil

**Step 1:** Have a look at the braille cell alphabet below. On a sheet of paper (or the worksheet attached), have a go at writing your name to begin with, then underneath, colouring the dots for each letter using the braille alphabet. Have a go at writing other braille words.

**Step 2:** Once you've mastered this, why not play a game with your family? Instead of writing your name, this time, just colour in the dots on the braille cells to make a sentence or perhaps a message. Give your family the braille alphabet to help them, and ask them to work out your sentence or message by colouring the dots!

**Step 3:** With an adult's help, try and make your own braille – be careful as you'll need to use something sharp. Find some cardboard (recycled is fine) then draw out your name to begin with, using the coloured dots system just like before. From the other side of the cardboard, push a sharp object (such as a pencil or pen) through for each of the coloured dots. Work your way through your name (remember, one braille cell per letter), then close your eyes and feel the dots. Imagine reading EVERYTHING this way. You could ask an adult to create a braille word or short sentence for you to feel to try and work out.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T
U	V	X	Y	Z	W				

## Main

## Additional

## Which skills will I be developing?



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# Braille these objects – activity sheet

Use your braille handout and colour in the dots to make braille words

Practise with  
your first name: \_\_\_\_\_

in print



in braille

in print



in braille



in print



in braille



in print



in braille



in print



in braille



in print



in braille



in print



in braille



# Braille these words – activity sheet

Translate the words and sentences that your teacher gives you into braille.

Practise with  
your first name: .....

in print



in braille

in print



in print



in print



in print



in print







# Challenge: Beautiful Autumn

October is the start of the new season of Autumn, the time of year when the sun shines golden, the crisp morning air brings crunchy frosts, and the trees turn beautiful shades of orange, yellow and red before losing their leaves for winter. It's a perfect time to get out and about for a walk with your family, and we're lucky that in Sheffield, you don't have to go far before you find trees and see those beautiful autumn scenes. Keep your eyes peeled and collect some signs of autumn for this teamwork challenge!

**Step 1:** Gather your team (your family members) and get wrapped up warm and head on out for a walk.

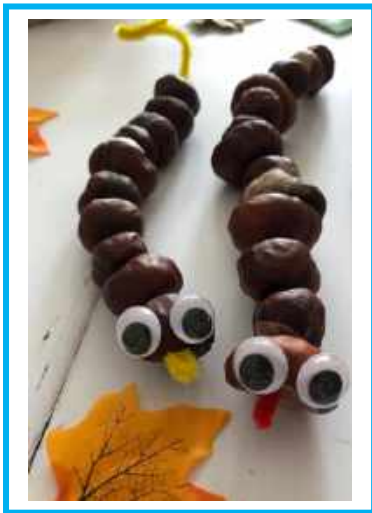
#### You will need:

- Collecting bag
- Paper, glue, thread, pencils, etc. (optional)

**Step 2:** Keep your senses on high alert – what signs of autumn can you see, hear, smell or even touch?

**Step 3:** Collect some signs of autumn if you can – a selection of leaves (different colours, sizes and shapes), maybe some conkers or acorns or 'helicopter' seeds from sycamore, ash or maple trees? Perhaps you could work as a team and each person collect something different? Could one of your team take some photos to include? Take them home and make sure they're dry...remember not to touch your face and to wash your hands after you've touched items outdoors.

**Step 4:** As a team, take a look at what you've collected for your signs of autumn. How could you use these to be creative and remember your autumn walk? Here are a few ideas but you might have your own – it's however your team decides to present your collection. You might need to lead your team as you discuss ideas and agree on one – that's all part of being a team, working through something when you might have different ideas.



**Main**

**Additional**

**Which skills will I be developing?**



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