

Word Finding Tips and Strategies

Delay

Sometimes we just need to give it a second or two.
“Do you have any... uhm... oh... one sec... any scissors?”

Describe

We can describe what the word/thing looks like or does.
“Do you have any... oh dear, those things that cut? Scissors!”

Association

We can think of something related. Even if it’s not quite right, it may prompt the word or convey the meaning.
“Do you have any... oh my... they’re not knives, but like that? Do you have any clippers?”

First Letter

We can try to write or think of the first letter of the word. Scan the alphabet to see if each letter prompts anything for you.
“Do you have any... (traces an S in the air)... scissors?”

Gesture

We can use our hands or body to act out the word, like playing a game of charades.
“Do you have any... (making cutting gesture with fingers)?”

Draw

We can sketch out a quick picture of what we’re trying to say.
“Do you have any... (draws scissors on a notepad)?”

Look it up

We can think if there’s somewhere the word is written down or pictured. A communication notebook, the Contacts app in our phone, or a ticket stub in our pocket may hold the word.
“Do you have any... (points to scissors in a picture dictionary)?”

Narrow it Down

We can give the general topic or category. Is it a person, place, or thing? A family member or friend?
“Do you have any... oh... they’re office supplies.”

Come Back Later

If we can’t think of the word, it is okay to try again later.
“Do you have any... oh, never mind... I will ask you again later.”