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A photograph of three people in business attire. A woman on the left holds a white hard hat. A man in the center and another man on the right are looking at a document together. The background is dark and industrial.

# 初级英语 口语

An Elementary Course to English Conversation

华东理工大学出版社

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## 内 容 简 介

《初级英语口语》共 18 个单元,主要内容为日常的英语口语会话。书中不仅提供了以功能意念为主的若干话题所需的基本句型,还给出了许多相关词汇及表达方式,为学习者进行替换练习、灵活表达思想创造了条件。

每个单元共分 6 个部分,包括习语、俗语的正确理解,故事的复述,功能用语,课内活动,以及中英文中易混淆之处等部分。

全书内容丰富,结构清晰,语言生动,形式活泼,充分体现口语教学形式的灵活多样。

该书可供大学英语专业、非英语专业高年级的课堂教学和课外练习使用,也可作为参加自学考试的本、专科学生以及英语爱好者的学习参考书。

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## FOREWORD

English, one of the most widely languages in the world communities, is unanimously considered as an effective tool with which to conduct various kinds of social activities — exchange ideas among the people of different ethnic groups, with different cultural background, maintain the hamonious relations with people of different interests, persuade people to accept one's own point of view, to name just a few.

With the advent of telecommunications, especially thanks to the wide applications of the computers, people have far more access to the latest information from all quarters of the world and it is no longer taken as the difficult thing to keep oneself abreast of the times with the help of the modern technology. Whatever forms the communication may take place, it seems inevitable that nothing can take the place of the communication between people through verbal means.

From the communication point of view, we will not deem it rather difficult to express ourselves in somewhat simple English. Through some basic training, we may learn how to ask for help, how to solicit some useful information, how to make complaints.

However, when it comes to speaking appropriately, things may not turn out to be so easy as people may imagine. To enable learners to communicate appropriately, they will have to take into full account various factors, for example they will have to consider the factors like "age, sex, social status, the purpose of the communication and the setting in which the conversation is held". It is from this that fluent and accurate or better says appropriate communication seems, as it were, to be a rather comprehensive and somewhat difficult goal for learners to attain.

The difficulties of the successful communication also lie in the different undersanding of the cultural norms. Learners of English, owing to the lack of the awareness of the "target culture", more often than not, take the things concerning the different culture for granted, which is again considered to be one of the main hindrances of the successful communications.

This book aims to provide learners of English with some valuable ideas on how to improve their spoken English. While writing this book, the authors have been making praiseworthy efforts in gearing the merits of the books with the concrete problems that learners of English may encounter in their daily learning activities.

It has to be stressed that the authors of this book are all the young teachers of the School of Foreign Languages of East China University of Science and Technology, who have been enthusiastically devoting themselves to the teaching of English, the teaching of Minor Major of English in particular. Despite their tight schedule of the teaching work, they have been making persevering efforts and spending almost all of their own spare time writing this book, hoping that it be of much to the further expansion of the Minor Major of English program in East China University of Science and Technology.

We sincerely hope that the present will be of some help to our learners and we would be much grateful to the users of the book if they could be so generous as to let the authors know their suggestions or even criticisms, which we believe will be extremely valuable in the revision of the book in future.

Zhu Shichang (朱士昌)

February 2, 2001

## **Directions on How to Use This Book**

### **Part One: Idiomatic English including Shoots and Idioms**

For this part, it is necessary for the teachers to explain the importance of using them in their daily conversation. There are a lot of ways to help the students be familiar with these idiomatic usages. The following are the alternative that teachers may choose as references:

1. Write down the idioms on the blackboard. Assign them to different pairs. Let each pair guess what each idiom means. According to agreed definition through discussions, each pair is required to use it to make a short dialogue. After several minutes, each pair presents their dialogue. Then the teacher may ask another student to explain what is meant by the idiom in this dialogue. Later the teacher can make a brief comment on the dialogue. If what the students guess is right, repeat it clearly. But if what their answer is wrong, give them the correct meaning. Only in this way will the teachers be able to produce a deeper impression on the students concerning the idioms under discussion.

2. If it is possible, try to tell the students the stories behind some idioms. You will see that the students are keenly interested in the related stories. The students are encouraged to try these idioms on their friends and then to retell the stories about these idioms to their friends out of class time. During this course, it is expected that the abilities of listening comprehension and spoken English should be noticeably improved.

3. Teachers are advised to read aloud to the students the sentences with idioms and encourage them to explain in English what a certain idiom may mean in a certain sentence. If necessary, these sentences can be repeated or read with special emphasis on certain key words. Any success in attempting this kind of task among the students will give them a sense of accomplishment, which will in turn surely motivate the students to strive for better performance in the days to come.

4. Teachers can sometimes just ask the students to read this part by themselves as a kind of assignment. Teachers are also advised to split the

students into pairs to practice during the class. Each pair is required to make up a dialogue by using at least five of these idioms. There is no restriction to the theme of their dialogues as long as the dialogue is both interesting and imaginative. When the next class starts, several pairs are invited to present their dialogues to the class. How surprised you will be when you find that your students are so imaginative in their ideas and creative in their ways of using the source language for practice and enthusiastic for further improvement.

## **Part Two: Stories for Reproduction**

There are several ways for teachers to choose in dealing with this part. For example, they can ask students to answer questions related to the story, use their imagination to continue the story, point out and discuss on the humor underlying in the story, or suggest several possible endings of the story. Students can learn how to make the story explicit.

## **Part Three: Language Functions**

Teachers should make every effort to make sure that English used in specific situations should be most appropriate and effective. So, when trying to explore the possible best way to express themselves as the situation varies, teachers will have to keep in mind several things:

- What are teachers trying to do with the English used? In other words, is the language used to accomplish such functions as “describing something, persuading someone to do something, giving someone’s personal opinions on a certain topic?” These are called *language functions*.
- What is the imagined relationship among the participants in the given situation? Are they playing a role like “friends, strangers, employees and employer, customer and shop assistants, doctor and patients, parents and children, policemen and criminal, to name just a few?”
- Where is the conversation held? Is it “on board the plane, at a party, at a meeting, at church, in the streets or in the park?”
- What is the conversation mainly about? Does it cover the things like

“business dealing, a sightseeing trip to a foreign country or any fascinating sports game that was televised live before?”

The units in this book will explicate and exemplify how major language functions are to be assumed by fully considering such factors as “participants, setting and topics”. Through this kind of linguistic exposure students are encouraged to practice what they have already grasped and learn what may be still new to them.

## **Practice**

In each unit are arranged several sections for general practice, all of which are to be controlled by the teachers so as to enable students to have a chance to ask for help and advice if needs be. For some other sections for practice, it is suggested that students be organized into pairs or small groups to carry out practice on their own. It is essential that students are required to use new expressions that they have just learnt in the unit.

## **Part Four: Activities and Games**

The section of “Activities and Games” is intended to provide the students with a kind of pleasant atmosphere that students may find themselves in. Besides, teachers should also consider very carefully such things as “their roles, and ways of organizing discussions, choice of the strategies to ensure the success of the activities and finally the decision on the chosen activities in class.

## **Atmosphere**

Many activities and games in this book are focusing on the individual student, which means that a student is asked to tell each other his/her emotional feelings. It would be quite naive for the teachers to imagine that students may find it an easy thing to talk about themselves. In addition to the desire for practice and the ability to communicate with others, the atmosphere in the group will be considered as another essential factor for the smooth communication. Imagine how student is brave enough to speak freely if the group atmosphere is not so favorable and the speaker himself/



herself is afraid of being laughed at for any possible mistakes. Therefore, it seems that the most important merit for this section is that it will provide the students with a quite relaxed, encouraging and friendly atmosphere in the group. Only then can the aims of these activities be achieved: sense of cooperation and the deepening of the mutual understanding being enhanced.

Teachers should bear this point in their minds that it will usually take some time for such a pleasant atmosphere to be formed in a class, especially for a new one where students know little about each other and teachers are still unfamiliar to the students. If such a case emerges, teachers should be careful enough not to introduce any topics which will intrude into personal privacy. However, the teachers may employ some lively games instead. All in all, the selection of the suitable activities will rest upon the teachers themselves and we may have every assurance that teachers' praiseworthy efforts will help ease the students' nervousness and encourage them to practice the target material with ease.

### **Teachers' Role**

In a class which is communication-oriented, it is imperative that teachers be well aware of the roles that they may play. When the activities are in full swing, the teachers may assume various functions: participants in some cases if there are not enough students to be grouped into pairs, manipulators, who will be monitoring the activities, coordinators, who will make some adjustment to the activities to achieve the maximum success; information providers, who will be of some help if students come across some difficulties. It should be also born in mind that in order to encourage students to talk as much as they can, teachers should not be too meticulous about the accuracy of the language students use because too much correct will in one way or another discourage students' enthusiasm. In fact, during this stage it is important that teachers should be quite tolerant towards the language students may produce.

### **After the activities**

It is equally important for the teachers to solicit any kind of feedback once the activities are finished. It is also advisable for the teachers to make a note of any problems arising in the course of practice or write down the comments from the part of students, all of which will be believed to be conducive to the further improvement of the activities as well as the materials themselves if any revision is needed in future.

### **Part Five: Phonetic Drill**

The aim of this section is to provide a wide range of phonetic exercises for students to acquire a better English pronunciation. The exercises are divided into two parts: Sounds and Intonation. Teachers can ask students to try practicing them many times after class. In some units, students are provided with some tongue twists so that they can enjoy some fun by practicing them. For the later units, students are given some excerpted parts taken from the famous works to appreciate. While reading them, students are required to pay special attention to the listed phrases listed as well as to understand their meanings in the context.

### **Part Six: Common Mistakes**

Being taken as a supplementary section, it is very important that the teachers require their students to read this part by themselves because these mistakes, mistakes arising from the misunderstanding of the Western culture in particular, are frequently made by students themselves.

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## Unit One Talking about Yourself and Starting a Conversation

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### Part one: Idiomatic English

#### A. Shoots

- |                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| 1. Absolutely!             | 绝对没问题!     |
| Absolutely not!            | 绝对不行!      |
| 2. Afraid not.             | 恐怕不行。      |
| Afraid so.                 | 恐怕是这样。     |
| 3. After you.              | 你先请。       |
| Allow me.                  | 请允许我为您效劳。  |
| 4. Ladies first.           | 女士优先。      |
| Age before beauty.         | 老人优先。      |
| 5. Will that be all?       | 就这些吗?      |
| Anything else?             | 还有什么?      |
| 6. After while, crocodile. | 一会儿见。      |
| 7. Not again!              | 不会又是这样吧!   |
| 8. Act your age.           | 别耍孩子气。     |
| 9. All very well, but...   | 那固然很好,但是…… |
| 10. All the best to...     | 请代我向……问好。  |

#### B. Idioms (Animals I)

1. *A little bird told me* you will get married next week.
2. I *had butterflies in my stomach* for an hour or so before I was about to make my speech.
3. The workman stamped around the garden *like a bull in a china shop*.
4. Their engagement was to be a secret, but the ring on her finger *let the cat out of the bag*.
5. We had to stay indoors all day long as it *had been raining cats and*

*dogs* all day long.

6. The soldiers proved themselves *chicken-hearted* and dare not make a single move upon seeing the enemy approaching towards them.
7. If you don't know how to skate, why don't you give your skates to me? Don't *be a dog in the manger*.
8. We should *let sleeping dogs lie* and not tell him that we had disobeyed him.
9. He has such a high opinion of himself that criticism flows off him *like water off a duck's back*.
10. That loud music frequently coming from the next door to ours really *bugs me*.

### Notes

1. I have been told, I have heard.
2. have a feeling of nervousness
3. in a very clumsy, rough way
4. give away a secret
5. rain very hard
6. cowardly
7. a person who selfishly keeps what is useless to himself in order to prevent somebody else from enjoying it
8. do not disturb someone or something which may give trouble, not look for trouble
9. without having any effect, without leaving any mark
10. make somebody annoyed irritated

## Part Two: Story for Reproduction

### Passage 1

A very strict officer was talking to some new soldiers whom he had to train. He had never seen them before, so he began: "My name is Stone, and I'm even harder than stones, so do what I tell you or there'll be trouble. Don't try any tricks with me, and then we'll get on well together."



Then he went to each soldier one after the other and asked him his name. "Speak loudly so that everyone can hear you clearly," he said, "and don't forget to call me 'sir'."

Each soldier told him his name, until he came to the last one. This man remained silent, and so Captain Stone shouted at him, "When I ask you a question, answer it! I'll ask you again: what's your name, soldier?" The soldier was very unhappy, but at last he replied. "My name's Stonebreaker, sir," he said nervously.

### **Answer These Questions**

1. What was Captain Stone like?
2. What did he say to the new soldiers at the beginning of this story?
3. What happened then?
4. What did he tell the young soldiers to do then?
5. What answer did the last soldier give?
6. What did Captain Stone shout about then?
7. What was the soldier's answer this time?
8. Was the captain happy? Why?

9. If you were the soldier, how would you answer the question by the Captain?
10. Please begin the reproduction with sentences like:
- I am a new soldier. . .
- I am a captain. . .

## Passage 2

### **You are giving them to me for Christmas**

One evening, we were watching television when our doorbell rang. I went to the door as my wife was interested in the program. Our next-door neighbor was there, holding a parcel.

"This is for you," he said. "The postman left it with us this afternoon because you were both out."

"Yes, my wife and I went to the cinema," I explained. "Thank you very much."

I took the parcel into the sitting-room and sat down next to my wife again.

I pulled off the brown wrapping paper and found half a dozen books inside the parcel.

There was also a bill for \$ 25 addressed to me.

"But I haven't ordered any books!" I exclaimed in surprise.

"No, darling," said my wife. "I ordered them. You are giving them to me for Christmas."

*Obviously you have read a humorous story. Then what is it that is especially humorous? Is it the conversation between the husband and wife? Or is it the strange way of getting a Christmas gift? Think it over and talk it over with your partner.*

## **Part Three: Talking about Yourself and Starting a Conversation**

### **A. Language Functions**

#### ***Talking about Yourself***

Find a partner for yourself and start to introduce yourself first and then find out as much as you can about each other. When everyone has finished this activity, tell the whole class the most interesting thing(s) you have found out about your partner. Suggested ideas:

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>FAMILY</b>       | Brothers and sisters. Parents. Childhood-happy? Where does he or she live? Home-hometown.  |
| <b>FRIENDS</b>      | Many or just a few? What do they usually talk about and what do they usually do together? Is it easy to make new friends?                        |
| <b>EDUCATION</b>    | Different schools, colleges or universities. Favorite subjects at school and why. Diplomas, degrees and paper qualifications. Future plans.      |
| <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>   | Present job. What exactly does she or he have to do? Merits and demerits for their decisions. Previous jobs-detailed descriptions. Future plans. |
| <b>LEISURE TIME</b> | Hobbies. Sports. TV, radio, cinema. What does he or she do at weekends and in the evenings? What materials does he or she like to read?          |
| <b>TRAVEL</b>       | Countries visited. Parts of one's own country that he or she knows.<br>Languages or dialects to be spoken. Favorite holiday.<br>Future plans.    |

Notice: The presentation section in this book will usually give you some new expressions to learn. But at present, we'd like you to concentrate on using the English you know already. Try to ask as many short questions as you can so as to obtain the maximum amount of information from your partner. Try to say 'No' in an appropriate manner if you are



not so sure as to what to say or how to continue. Don't hesitate to turn to the teacher for help or guidance.

### ***Starting a Conversation***

It is often difficult to start a conversation with a stranger, especially when he speaks another language unless, that is, you have a few opening gambits up your sleeve!

Here are some useful ways of initiating a conversation with a stranger:

*What a nice day, isn't it?*

*Dreadful weather, don't you think?*

*Excuse me, is anybody sitting here?*

*Excuse me, haven't we met somewhere before?*

*Sorry, I couldn't help overhearing-did you mention something about...?*

*Excuse me, have you got a light by any chance?*

*Excuse me, could you tell me the time/ have you got time?*

*Excuse me, I was wondering if you could help me, I'm trying to find my way to ...*

Question for further thought:

- Decide when these opening gambits would be appropriate.
- How will you continue talking to your addressee once the conversation is started?
- Imagine the situations where you might use each opening gambit.

### **B. Sample Dialogue**

A: Great crowd, isn't it?

B: It certainly is. I never thought there would be so many students.

A: Same here. By the way, my name's Ted Harrison.

B: Glad to meet you, Mr. Harrison. I'm William Holland.

A: I beg your pardon. I didn't catch your first name, Mr. Holland.

B: William, but please call me Bill.

A: You must be the new teacher from America.