

*'Written in a lively, witty style, this guide bridges the gap between phrasebook and language course'* – Gordon Lewis, Laureate Higher Education

# Learning English as a Foreign Language

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>

## Learn to:

- Improve your English without a teacher
- Speak English confidently in the workplace or out and about
- Use correct grammar and perfect your pronunciation

 Listen to dialogues from the book on the audio CD

**Gavin Dudeney**

**Nicky Hockly**

*English language teachers and trainers*



*Learning English as  
a Foreign Language*

FOR

DUMMIES®

常州大学图书馆  
藏书章

## Learning English as a Foreign Language For Dummies®

Published by  
**John Wiley & Sons, Ltd**  
The Atrium  
Southern Gate  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
PO19 8SQ  
England

Email (for orders and customer service enquires): [cs-books@wiley.co.uk](mailto:cs-books@wiley.co.uk)

Visit our Home Page on [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)

Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, West Sussex, England

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, West Sussex

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except under the terms of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 4LP, UK, without the permission in writing of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, England, or emailed to [permreq@wiley.co.uk](mailto:permreq@wiley.co.uk), or faxed to (44) 1243 770620.

**Trademarks:** Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way, Dummies.com and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

**LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER, THE AUTHOR, AND ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED IN PREPARING THIS WORK MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.**

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the US at 877-762-2974, outside the US at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

For technical support, please visit [www.wiley.com/techsupport](http://www.wiley.com/techsupport).

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-470-74747-6

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bell & Bain Ltd, Glasgow

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



## ***About the Authors***

**Gavin Dudeney** is author of *The Internet & The Language Classroom* and co-author of *How To Teach English with Technology*. The latter won the 2007 International House Ben Warren Trust Prize for the most outstanding work in the field of language teacher education. Gavin is Project Director for The Consultants-E, a British Council award winning educational consultancy.

**Nicky Hockly** is a language teacher, teacher trainer and consultant, and Director of Pedagogy of The Consultants-E. She gives seminars, in-service workshops and teacher training courses all over the world, and writes regular articles and columns in teachers magazines and journals. Nicky is co-author with Gavin of the book *How to Teach English with Technology*.

## ***Dedication***

**From Gavin:** As always, this book is dedicated to my parents, without whom (quite literally) I wouldn't be writing it.

**From Nicky:** Heartfelt thanks to my students, who first made me aware of just how idiosyncratic the English language can be!

## ***Acknowledgments***

This book is inspired by all the people like us who've struggled – sometimes successfully, other times less so – to learn a foreign language. Between us we've tried French, Spanish, Catalan, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Latin and Indonesian! Friends from those countries who know us will be better judges than we are of our expertise in each of those. As teachers of English, this book is particularly indebted to all the learners we've had the privilege of teaching over the past twenty years and from whom we have learnt more than they could possibly have learnt from us.

## **Publisher's Acknowledgments**

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at [www.dummies.com/register/](http://www.dummies.com/register/).

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

### ***Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development***

**Project Editor:** Rachael Chilvers

**Development Editor:** Colette Holder

**Copyeditor:** Charlie Wilson

**Content Editor:** Jo Theedom

**Commissioning Editor:** Wejdan Ismail

**Assistant Editor:** Jennifer Prytherch

**Production Manager:** Daniel Mersey

**Cover Photos:** © OJO Images Ltd / Alamy

**Cartoons:** Rich Tennant

### **CD Recording and Production:**

Heavy Entertainment, with special thanks to Davy Nougarede and David Roper

### ***Composition Services***

**Project Coordinator:** Lynsey Stanford

**Layout and Graphics:** Samantha Allen,  
Claudia Bell, Carl Byers, Carrie Cesavice,  
Melissa K. Jester, Christin Swinford,  
Julia Trippetti

**Proofreader:** Melissa Cossell

**Indexer:** Ty Koontz

# Contents at a Glance

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Part I: Getting Started</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Chapter 1: You Already Know a Little English .....	9
Chapter 2: Basic English Grammar .....	21
Chapter 3: Getting to Know People .....	41
<b>Part II: English in Action</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Chapter 4: Shopping and Numbers .....	55
Chapter 5: Eating In and Out .....	75
Chapter 6: Out on the Town .....	99
Chapter 7: Hobbies and Free Time .....	115
Chapter 8: Talking on the Phone .....	131
Chapter 9: At the Office and Around the House .....	153
Chapter 10: Written English .....	177
<b>Part III: English on the Go</b> .....	<b>195</b>
Chapter 11: Money, Money, Money .....	197
Chapter 12: Finding a Place to Stay .....	211
Chapter 13: On the Move .....	225
Chapter 14: Handling Emergencies .....	253
<b>Part IV: The Part of Tens</b> .....	<b>267</b>
Chapter 15: Ten Ways to Speak English Quickly .....	269
Chapter 16: Ten Favourite English Expressions .....	277
Chapter 17: Ten (Actually 11) Holidays to Remember .....	283
Chapter 18: Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Fluent in English .....	291
<b>Part V: Appendices</b> .....	<b>299</b>
Appendix A: Phrasal Verbs .....	301
Appendix B: Common and Irregular Verbs .....	309
Appendix C: On the CD .....	323
<b>Index</b> .....	<b>327</b>

# Table of Contents

---

## **Introduction** ..... 1

What's Special about English? .....	1
About This Book .....	2
Conventions Used in This Book.....	2
Foolish Assumptions.....	3
How This Book Is Organised .....	3
Part I: Getting Started.....	3
Part II: English in Action.....	4
Part III: English on the Go .....	4
Part IV: The Part of Tens.....	4
Part V: Appendices .....	4
Icons Used in This Book .....	4
Where to Go from Here.....	5

## **Part I: Getting Started**..... 7

### **Chapter 1: You Already Know a Little English** ..... 9

Realising that You Already Know Some English.....	9
Avoiding False Friends across the Languages .....	10
Meeting Some Differences between British and American English .....	11
Using International Words in English .....	13
Perfecting Pronunciation and Stress.....	14
Sussing out sounds.....	14
Stressing words and sentences.....	15
Investigating Intonation.....	18

### **Chapter 2: Basic English Grammar** ..... 21

Constructing Simple Sentences .....	22
Working on More Complex Sentences .....	23
Forming Questions .....	23
Subject/object questions .....	25
Indirect questions .....	26
Question tags.....	27
Using Verbs and Tenses .....	29
Present tenses .....	29
The past .....	32
The future .....	35
Other expressions.....	37
Using Conditionals .....	38



<b>Chapter 3: Getting to Know People</b> .....	<b>41</b>
Chatting with Strangers .....	41
Talking about the Weather .....	43
My Family and Other Animals .....	45
Telling Jokes and Anecdotes .....	46

## ***Part 11: English in Action*** .....

53

<b>Chapter 4: Shopping and Numbers</b> .....	<b>55</b>
Shopping in the High Street .....	55
Shop opening times .....	58
Shopping for clothes and shoes .....	59
Going to the Supermarket .....	64
Visiting the Market .....	66
Buying fruit and vegetables .....	66
Buying meat and fish .....	66
Measuring up: weights and volumes .....	67
Practising Your Numbers .....	69
Money .....	70
Dates .....	71
Shop floors .....	72
<b>Chapter 5: Eating In and Out</b> .....	<b>75</b>
Taking a Look at British Meals .....	75
Breakfast .....	75
Lunch .....	76
Dinner .....	77
Eating In .....	77
Ordering takeaway food .....	77
Eating at a friend's house .....	78
Going Out to Eat .....	80
Choosing where to eat .....	80
Booking a table .....	85
Arriving at a restaurant .....	86
Ordering food and drink .....	87
Complaining about the food .....	89
Ordering dessert and coffee .....	91
Asking for the bill and tipping .....	92
<b>Chapter 6: Out on the Town</b> .....	<b>99</b>
Asking Someone Out .....	99
Arranging to Meet .....	101
Deciding Where to Go .....	104
The cinema .....	104
Concerts .....	106
Pubs .....	106

---

Visiting Friends .....	110
Knowing What to Talk About .....	112
<b>Chapter 7: Hobbies and Free Time .....</b>	<b>115</b>
Talking about Your Hobbies .....	115
I know what I like!.....	116
In my experience . . . ..	116
Not as often as I'd like . . . ..	117
Just in time . . . ..	117
Enjoying Yourself Indoors .....	119
On the box .....	121
Read all about it .....	123
Heading Outside .....	124
Getting Involved in Sports .....	124
Playing sports.....	125
Joining a gym or health club .....	126
Watching sports.....	127
<b>Chapter 8: Talking on the Phone .....</b>	<b>131</b>
Making Different Sorts of Phone Call .....	131
Social phone calls .....	133
Enquiry phone calls .....	135
Automatic answering services .....	139
Work phone calls .....	140
Conference calls.....	141
Getting the Message .....	142
Voicemail .....	142
Leaving and taking a phone message.....	143
Phone numbers and spelling.....	147
Text messages .....	148
Dealing with Communication Problems .....	148
<b>Chapter 9: At the Office and Around the House .....</b>	<b>153</b>
Working in an Office .....	153
Getting a job .....	154
Travelling to work.....	156
Arriving at reception .....	157
Talking about your work.....	158
Meeting work colleagues .....	159
Looking at Housing in the UK.....	160
Postal addresses .....	162
Email and web addresses .....	163
Typical British houses .....	166
Finding Somewhere to Live .....	167
Sharing a flat.....	168
Inviting guests and staying with other people.....	172

<b>Chapter 10: Written English</b> .....	<b>177</b>
Looking at Newspapers and Magazines.....	177
Understanding newspaper headlines.....	180
Getting personal.....	180
Reading your horoscope.....	182
Deciphering Signs .....	184
Filling in Forms.....	187
Writing Letters .....	189
Communicating Electronically.....	190
Differentiating between Spoken and Written English .....	191

## ***Part III: English on the Go*** ..... **195**

<b>Chapter 11: Money, Money, Money</b> .....	<b>197</b>
Splashing the Cash: Coins and Notes.....	197
Getting Your Money from a Cash Machine .....	198
Using Your Credit Card.....	200
Paying by card.....	200
Losing your card .....	201
Using a Bank.....	203
Changing Money .....	204
Sending and Receiving Money to and from Another Country .....	207
<b>Chapter 12: Finding a Place to Stay</b> .....	<b>211</b>
Finding Accommodation.....	211
Youth hostels .....	211
Guesthouses and B&Bs .....	212
Hotels .....	212
Booking Your Accommodation.....	215
Booking on the Internet .....	215
Booking over the phone.....	216
Checking In.....	219
Complaining about the Accommodation.....	220
Checking Out.....	221
<b>Chapter 13: On the Move</b> .....	<b>225</b>
Making Travel Plans .....	225
Travelling to the UK.....	226
Staying legal: Visa and passport requirements.....	226
Deciding what to pack.....	226
When in Rome . . . ..	227
Recommending places to visit .....	229

Booking a Flight .....	230
Checking in and going through security .....	232
Eating and shopping on board .....	235
Landing and leaving the airport.....	236
Getting Around.....	238
Using the Underground.....	238
Travelling by train .....	240
Going by bus.....	241
Taking a taxi .....	243
Renting a Car .....	243
Asking for Directions.....	245
Describing Towns and Cities.....	248
<b>Chapter 14: Handling Emergencies .....</b>	<b>253</b>
Getting Help Quickly .....	253
Dealing with Health Problems.....	254
Describing your symptoms .....	254
Visiting a dentist .....	257
Coping with Crime and Legal Problems .....	258
Getting into trouble .....	258
Reporting trouble.....	260
Visa and Residency Problems.....	263
 <b>Part IV: The Part of Tens.....</b>	 <b>267</b>
<b>Chapter 15: Ten Ways to Learn English Quickly.....</b>	<b>269</b>
Spending Time in the UK .....	269
Travelling to English-Speaking Countries.....	270
Tuning In to Radio and TV.....	270
Listening to Music and Podcasts.....	271
Watching Movies and DVDs .....	272
Surfing the Web.....	273
Chatting with a Keypal.....	273
Getting a Second Life.....	274
Reading Books.....	275
Playing Games .....	275
 <b>Chapter 16: Ten Favourite English Expressions .....</b>	 <b>277</b>
A Bit Much .....	277
At the End of the Day .....	278
Fancy a Drink? .....	278
Fingers Crossed .....	279
Good Weekend? .....	280
How's It Going? .....	280

See You Later .....	280
Tell Me About It! .....	281
Text Me .....	281
You Must Be Joking! .....	282
<b>Chapter 17: Ten (Actually 11) Holidays to Remember .....</b>	<b>283</b>
Multicultural Celebrations .....	284
Public (or Bank) Holidays .....	285
New Year (1 January).....	285
Chinese New Year (January or February) .....	286
Valentine's Day (14 February) .....	286
St Patrick's Day (17 March).....	286
Mother's Day (March) and Father's Day (June) .....	287
Notting Hill Carnival (London, August) .....	288
Halloween (31 October).....	288
Bonfire Night (5 November).....	289
Armistice Day (11 November).....	289
<b>Chapter 18: Ten Phrases That Make You Sound Fluent in English. ....</b>	<b>291</b>
Actually .....	291
Bless You! .....	292
Bon Appétit!.....	292
Come to Think of It . . . ..	293
Do You See What I Mean? .....	294
Hang on a Minute.....	294
Lovely Day! .....	295
Not Being Funny, But . . . ..	296
The Thing Is . . . ..	297
You Know What?.....	297
<b>Part V: Appendices .....</b>	<b>299</b>
<b>Appendix A: Phrasal Verbs. ....</b>	<b>301</b>
Defining Phrasal Verbs.....	301
Seeing Why Phrasal Verbs Are Special .....	303
Practising Phrasal Verbs .....	304
Meeting the Most Common Phrasal Verbs.....	305
<b>Appendix B: Common and Irregular Verbs .....</b>	<b>309</b>
Considering Common Verbs in English .....	309
Can / be able to .....	310
Do.....	311

---

Get.....	313
Have.....	314
Look.....	315
Make.....	317
Investigating Irregular Verbs in English.....	318
Meeting Modal Verbs.....	320
Possibility and probability.....	321
Obligation, permission and prohibition.....	321
<b>Appendix C: On the CD .....</b>	<b>323</b>
<i><b>Index.....</b></i>	<i><b>327</b></i>

# Introduction

---

Over the past few decades, English has become *the* global language. Approximately 470 million people around the world currently speak English, and that number is growing. More people speak English as a second or foreign language than monolingual English 'native speakers'. Many countries include the compulsory study of English as a foreign language from primary school, and many parents are aware that some knowledge of English will help their children get better jobs in the future. Countries are keen to improve their citizens' English skills so as to ensure entry into the global market. In short, these days English is a language of worldwide importance.

## *What's Special about English?*

When you talk about English-speaking countries, you may think of countries such as Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada or New Zealand. But in many other countries English is an official language and the citizens have high levels of English skills – think of India, Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria, Kenya and Mauritius, to name a few.

One of the interesting things about English as a global language is that it is increasingly being used as a 'lingua franca' (or common language) so that people from *non*-English-speaking countries can communicate with those who do speak English. For example, at a business meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, with participants from China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Indonesia, the common language is usually English. Likewise, a business meeting in Munich, Germany, with participants from Sweden, Greece, Italy, Germany and France, usually takes place in English.

Knowing some English is becoming increasingly important in today's global world. This is where *Learning English as a Foreign Language For Dummies* can help you. In this book we offer materials for communicating in social situations and in more formal situations such as at work, telephoning people and writing emails. We also show you how to deal with day-to-day situations such as ordering a meal, buying a train or bus ticket and renting a flat.

In *Learning English as a Foreign Language For Dummies*, we show you how to pronounce some of the more difficult words. Pronunciation and accents also

come alive on the audio CD that supplements the book. You are just as likely to use English to communicate with non-English speakers in other countries as to communicate with English speakers in the UK, and so we use a range of accents on the audio CD.

## About This Book

*Learning English as a Foreign Language For Dummies* provides you with useful words and phrases for short visits to the UK and longer work or study stays. The book contains phrases that you can use in a range of day-to-day situations, from a simple task such as buying something in the market to telling anecdotes in a pub. We help you communicate enough to complete basic tasks on a short visit to the UK, but also to interact with neighbours, new friends and colleagues if you plan to stay in the UK for a longer period of time. You can go through the book at your own speed and read the chapters in any order. Depending on your previous knowledge of English, you may want to skip some chapters and move directly on to other chapters where you feel you need extra support.

## Conventions Used in This Book

Here are the *For Dummies* conventions we use in this book to make it easier to read:

- ✓ You'll be speaking as well as reading and writing English, so we include dialogues throughout the book. The dialogues are called 'Straight Talking' and they show you how to use certain words and phrases in conversation. Most of these dialogues are also on the audio CD that comes with the book. Appendix C has a full list of the dialogues.
- ✓ Memorising words and phrases is important in language learning, so we collect all the new words in the dialogues on a blackboard, under the heading 'Words to Know'.
- ✓ Fun & Games sections appear at the end of each chapter so you can put your skills to the test (relax – we also provide the answers!).
- ✓ Web addresses appear in the book in monospace type.
- ✓ English terms are set in **boldface**.
- ✓ Pronunciations are set in *italics*, following the English terms. Stressed syllables are underlined.



## *Foolish Assumptions*

To write this book, we had to make some assumptions about who you are and what you want from a book called *Learning English as a Foreign Language For Dummies*. Here are some assumptions that we made about you:

- ✔ You already know a little English. Perhaps you studied English at school for a few years, or you've picked up a little English from pop songs, TV or films.
- ✔ You need a book to help you organise and review the English you already know. You want a book that shows you how to *use* English in real conversations.
- ✔ You want to learn real-life English that British people speak today. You plan to spend either a short time in Britain, for example on holiday or for a business meeting, or you want to spend a longer time in Britain working or studying.
- ✔ You like to study at your own pace, in your own time. You know where your strengths in English already lie, and which areas you need to review, or need some extra help with. You want to choose which chapters of this book to read and when.
- ✔ You want to have fun and review some useful English words and phrases at the same time.

If these statements apply to you, you've found the right book.

## *How This Book Is Organised*

This book is divided by topics into five parts. Each part is divided into chapters. The following sections show you what types of information you can find in each part.

### *Part 1: Getting Started*

In this part of the book we review some of the basics of English. If you already know quite a lot of English, you may want to skip this part and move directly on to the sections of the book dealing with communication. In Part I you find international words that you probably already know, the basics of English pronunciation and some survival phrases. You also find an overview of the main tenses in English (present, past, future and conditional), and see how to form questions and negatives.