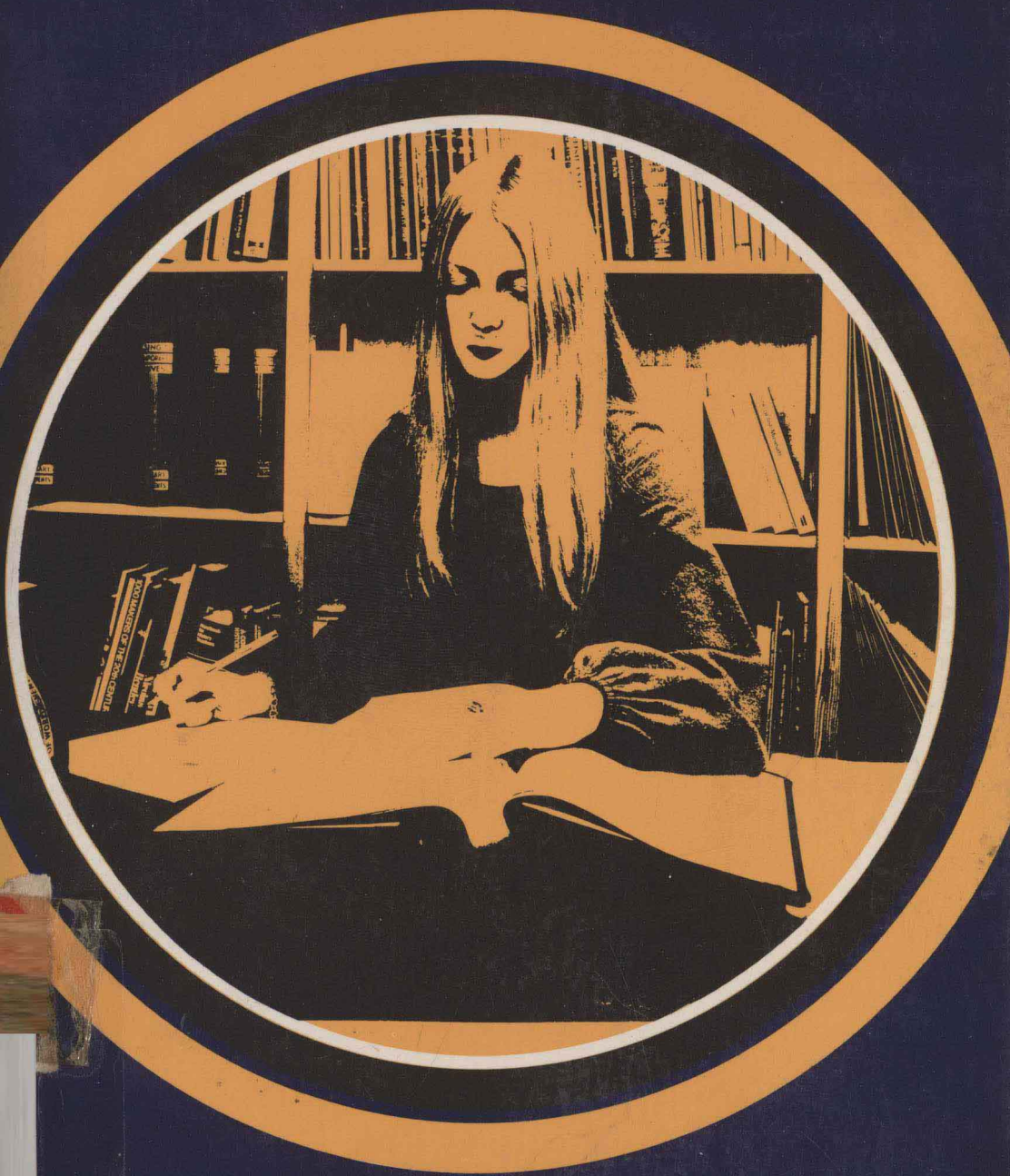


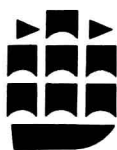
FUNCTIONAL COMPREHENSION

DONN BYRNE



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Donn Byrne



Longman

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INTRODUCTION

This book is designed to be used as supplementary material at a post-elementary level in classes where oral skills are still being consolidated but at the same time the emphasis is gradually shifting to a mastery, both receptive and productive, of the written form of the language. It has been written particularly with the needs and interests of young adult learners in mind and provides practice in the following areas.

First, *reading*. The texts have been produced in a variety of styles and registers, both for their intrinsic learning value and for the sake of interest. Although not strictly graded, they are presented on two levels of structural complexity (corresponding to the second and third levels of *Progressive Picture Compositions*, which may therefore be used in conjunction with this book). The texts move, topic-wise, from situations and themes of a personal nature (and of interest, it is hoped, to *both* sexes) to those of a wider appeal (ending with a rather whimsical view of the shape of things to come!). They have, moreover, been linked together in sets of twos or threes so that the same situation or topic can be explored from more than one angle. This in itself should encourage the students both to *read on* and *look back*, and thus increase their involvement with the material.

Secondly, *comprehension practice*. First, a battery of multiple choice questions has been provided, though not, primarily, to *test* understanding but to provide the learners with incentives to read the text carefully and indeed, if necessary, to read it several times. As such, this section provides an important if not essential preliminary step to Section B – specifically labelled *Comprehension Practice* – which in addition calls for the exercise of *productive* skills. Taken together, Sections A and B offer a searching test both of the students' understanding of the reading material and of their ability to talk about it – or *through* it – in a variety of ways.

Both *Guided Oral Practice* (Section C) and *Guided Writing Practice* (Section D) are functionally oriented. The micro-dialogue exercises in *Guided Oral Practice* are not rigidly controlled on a structural level but are designed to consolidate what the students have already learnt and to develop effective communication in a number of key areas (as listed below the titles in the table of contents). The material has been presented in such a way that, after appropriate help from the teacher, the students can practise *on their own* in pairs or small groups. The exercises in *Guided Writing Practice* are concerned with developing written ability on a practical level through, for example, the writing of paragraphs, letters, notes and reports. Particular attention has been paid to the use of linking and sequencing devices, which are needed to produce an acceptable written text even at a fairly simple level. At the same time, both *Guided Oral Practice* and *Guided Writing Practice* are related to the text (and sometimes to one another) both on a general conceptual level and linguistically. *Guided Oral Practice* picks up key language items from the text (and also, where appropriate, from previous

ones), while *Guided Writing Practice* frequently contains exercises which involve re-writing material either from the text or from *Guided Oral Practice*.

HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL

Teachers will no doubt wish to use this material in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes, but the following basic procedures are suggested:

1 Ask the students to read the text silently. They should then look through the multiple choice battery, read the text again and decide which items are correct. Set an appropriate time limit for this (i.e. one that will make the students read with concentration but not with undue haste). Generally answers may be discussed in class, but from time to time the students should be asked to write down the items they consider correct. Their answers may then be taken away and checked for individual reading comprehension. Alternative (or additional) reading objectives may be provided by selecting an appropriate exercise from Section B. The exercises that seem most suitable for this purpose are those with the rubrics *Say whether these statements are true or false (etc)* and *Explain why*. These exercises of course also involve *productive* ability.

2 Read the text to the students. They may participate if this is a dialogue or interview but normally time should not be spent on asking the students to read aloud. The purpose of reading the text aloud to the class is simply to make its meaning clearer. Any special difficulties may be discussed in passing. Where appropriate the students may be asked to provide synonyms for or explanations of key vocabulary items, but this should be done in an informal way. The main objective at this stage is to ensure that the students are thoroughly familiar with the text before the exercises in Section B are done orally in class.

3 Do the exercises in *Section B*. The students should not be allowed to keep referring back to the text at this stage because this slows up the tempo of oral practice. On the other hand, if an exercise seems likely to present some difficulties which would cause the students to hesitate, they may be given a few minutes to prepare their answers. Normally the 'best' answer can be built up with the participation of more than one student (which of course adds to the amount of practice to be derived from this type of activity).

While the exercises in this section are quite varied, a few types occur fairly frequently and examples of these (and the kind of responses to be expected) are given below.

a Give more details (in connection with each of these statements). See Exercise 1 on page 2.

There was a fire.

Here only one piece of information is available about the fire: where it broke out. The response to be expected, therefore, is:
There was a fire at a supermarket.

A policeman spoke to a boy.

Here much more information can be provided. *A police sergeant spoke to a boy. A police sergeant spoke to Alan Cobb.* (One student may of course give both these details.) But the answer may be further refined. *A police sergeant spoke to Alan Cobb about the fire. A police sergeant went to Alan Cobb's house and spoke to him about the fire. . . . A police sergeant went to Alan Cobb's house on Monday evening and asked him some questions about the fire.* The 'best' answer to be expected from the class must of course relate to their language proficiency.

b Say whether these statements are true or false. If they are false, give the correct statement. See Exercise 2 on page 2.

The Cobbs live in Raines Avenue, North London.

This is false. The correct statement, which may be given by another student, is: *The Cobbs live in Raines Avenue, Birmingham.* Again, the answer may be built up.

T: Is this true or false?

S1: It's false.

T (to another student): Do you agree?

S2: Yes.

T: Why?

S2: They don't live in London. They live in Birmingham.

T (to another student): What's the correct answer, then?

S3: The Cobbs live in Raines Avenue, Birmingham.

c Explain why. See Exercise 4 on page 6.

The inspector wanted to speak to Sergeant Pike.

The simplest answer here would be: *The inspector wanted to speak to Sergeant Pike about Alan Cobb.* On the other hand, it might be possible to elicit from the class: *Alan Cobb had run away from home. The inspector had seen Sergeant Pike's report. He wasn't satisfied, so he decided to ask him some questions.*

d Explain the references. See Exercise 2 on page 22.

Ten days of sheer agony.

The immediate answer to be expected here is: *Jim Turner is talking about his exams.* But the students may be encouraged to add some more comments. *His exams are now over. They were very difficult. He didn't even have time to sleep!*

After an exercise has been completed, it may be repeated very quickly. With large classes this will help ensure that everyone gets a chance to say something.

When a new type of exercise is encountered, the students should always be given examples of the kind of answers expected.

4 *Guided Oral Practice.* Each model dialogue should be carefully looked at beforehand to see what form of practice is involved. The dialogue should first be read to the students, who may then be asked to repeat it after you in chorus. Then select pairs of students for individual practice. Finally, practise some of the substitution items with the students before dividing them into pairs or small groups to work on their own. While they are doing this, carry out selective checking.

In some exercises (see, for example, C2 for the first text) the students are asked to invent parallel dialogues of their own about a situation outlined for them. In the early stages it is advisable to build up one or two possible situations on the blackboard with the participation of the students before asking them to work on their own (preferably in groups rather than pairs for this type of work).

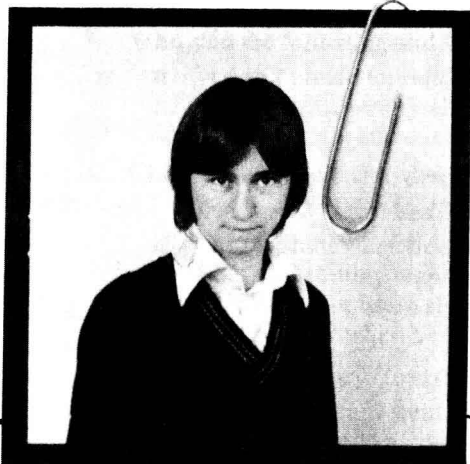
5 *Guided Writing Practice.* As for the dialogues in *Guided Oral Practice*, the students will often require some help with these. As a rule, at least in the early stages, exercises that require the production of parallel passages should first be done with the students orally. These exercises may then be assigned for homework. On the other hand, completion exercises, which involve reference to the text, need not be rehearsed in this way. Dialogue completion exercises (see C3 on page 7) may also be used for additional written practice.

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
1. Read all about it! (Newspaper reports) Describing events in the past. Asking for and giving reasons.	1
2. Behind the scenes (Dialogue) Stating beliefs (+ reasons). Expressing disagreement.	5
3. Alan Cobb: What do people think of him? (Reports) Evaluating people. Expressing approval and disapproval.	9
4. Parents! (Narrative) Making complaints and excuses.	13
5. See you at the party – with luck! (Letter) Asking for and giving directions.	17
6. Holiday jobs (Diary) Asking for and giving opinions.	21
7. A question of identity (Narrative) Asking for information. Making assertions and corrections.	25
8. From a landlady . . . to her lodger (Letters) Making complaints. Apologising and denying.	29
9. A friend in need (Dialogue) Making suggestions. Making objections and expressing approval.	33
10. Big decisions (Interview) Asking about intentions. Expressing degrees of certainty.	37
11. High flier (Descriptive) Expressing intentions firmly.	41
12. What some people said to Janet (Reports) Offering advice (+ reasons).	45
13. Lucky break! (Interview) Asking for and giving information about the past.	49
14. Top of the pops! (Descriptive) Expressing obligation.	53
15. Spare time (Reports) Expressing likes, dislikes and preferences.	57
16. Take your pick! (Advertisements) Stating intentions (+ reasons).	61
17. Get away from it all! (Advertisements) Persuading people.	65
18. Dropout or realist? (Interview) Asking for and expressing reasons.	69
19. Risks are their business (Descriptive) Giving explanations.	73
20. Future man: Like this . . . ? (Descriptive) Making predictions and comparisons.	77
21. . . . Or like this? (Narrative) Asking for and giving opinions.	81



READ ALL ABOUT IT!



BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLBOY MISSING

A 15 year old schoolboy, Alan Cobb, is missing from his home in north Birmingham. He did not return home on Tuesday evening and later his mother found a note in his bedroom. The police are looking for Cobb in the Birmingham area.

MISSING SCHOOLBOY

Alan Cobb, the 15 year old schoolboy, is still missing from his home in Raines Avenue, Birmingham.

His mother, Mrs Vera Cobb, told a reporter: "He's never done anything like this before. On Monday night he seemed upset about something and went to bed early. I don't understand it. He wasn't in any trouble." According to the boy's father, Alan wrote in the note: "I've decided to run away. Don't worry about me. I can look after myself."

MISSING SCHOOLBOY ACCUSES POLICE

The parents of the Birmingham schoolboy missing from his home since last Tuesday evening yesterday received a letter from their son. According to the boy's mother, Alan wrote: "A police sergeant came to the house on Monday evening. You were both out and I didn't tell you because I was afraid. The sergeant asked me a lot of questions about that fire at the supermarket. He tried to frighten me. But I don't know anything about the fire!"

The letter carried a London postmark and the police are now looking for Alan in that area. They are also investigating the statements in his letter.

MISSING SCHOOLBOY RETURNS HOME

Alan Cobb, the schoolboy missing from his Birmingham home for nearly ten days, returned home last night.

"Alan doesn't want to talk to anyone at the moment," his father told a reporter. "He is worn out. But this isn't the end of the matter. Someone frightened my son and I'm not satisfied."

The police have promised a full investigation.



A MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

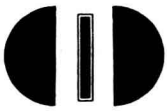
Choose the best answer.

1. These reports are about a boy who
 - a) set fire to a supermarket.
 - b) ran away from home.
 - c) wanted to go to London.
2. Alan wrote a letter
 - a) to his parents about the police.
 - b) to the paper about the police.
 - c) to the police about his parents.
3. The police looked for Alan
 - a) in his home.
 - b) all over England.
 - c) in Birmingham and London.
4. Alan's father complained about
 - a) the police.
 - b) his son.
 - c) the reporters.
5. The police intended to
 - a) punish Alan.
 - b) examine the matter.
 - c) forget about the fire.

B COMPREHENSION PRACTICE

1. Give more details in connection with each of these statements.*
 - a) There was a fire.
 - b) A policeman spoke to a boy.
 - c) The boy ran away from home.
 - d) The boy left a note.
 - e) The boy wrote a letter.
 - f) The boy came home.
 - g) The boy's father spoke to a reporter.
2. Say whether these statements are true or false. If they are false, give the correct statement.
 - a) The Cobbs live in Raines Avenue, North London.
 - b) A police sergeant came to Alan's house but his parents were not there at the time.
 - c) Alan went to bed early on Tuesday evening.
 - d) Alan often ran away from home.
 - e) Alan was in London but no one knew this.
 - f) Alan stayed away from home for more than a week.
 - g) The police found Alan and brought him home.

*See HOW TO USE THIS MATERIAL (pages vi–viii) for guidance for this and other types of exercise.



3. Who said the following and why?
 - a) "I don't understand it."
 - b) "I can look after myself."
 - c) "This isn't the end of the matter."
4. Choose the best word to describe each of these people.
frightened surprised angry frightening
 - a) The sergeant when he spoke to Alan.
 - b) Alan on Monday night.
 - c) Alan's mother when she read the note.
 - d) Alan's father when he talked to the reporter.
5. Reconstruct the story from these key sentences.
 - a) A police sergeant went to the Cobbs' house.
 - b) Mrs Cobb found a note.
 - c) Alan posted a letter in London.
 - d) Alan returned home.

C GUIDED ORAL PRACTICE

1. Read this dialogue.

- A: Why didn't you come to the party on Saturday night?
B: Well, as a matter of fact I wasn't feeling very well.
A: Oh? Why was that?
B: Well, I ate too much at lunch time.

Now use these ideas to form similar dialogues.

SITUATION	REASON 1	REASON 2
go on holiday this year	was working in my uncle's shop	needed to earn some money
phone me on Sunday	was too busy	my mother was ill
catch the bus this morning	got up late	went to a party last night

2. Read this dialogue.

- A: Why do you want to leave so early?
B: Because I want to get to town by nine.
A: But what on earth for?
B: Well, I've got a lot of shopping to do, you see.

Now make up similar dialogues about these situations. In each case you must invent the *second* reason yourself.

- a) B is moving into a new flat. He needs a bigger place.
- b) B is going to evening classes. He wants to learn Russian.
- c) B has drawn a lot of money out of the bank. He is going to buy some new clothes.



D GUIDED WRITING PRACTICE

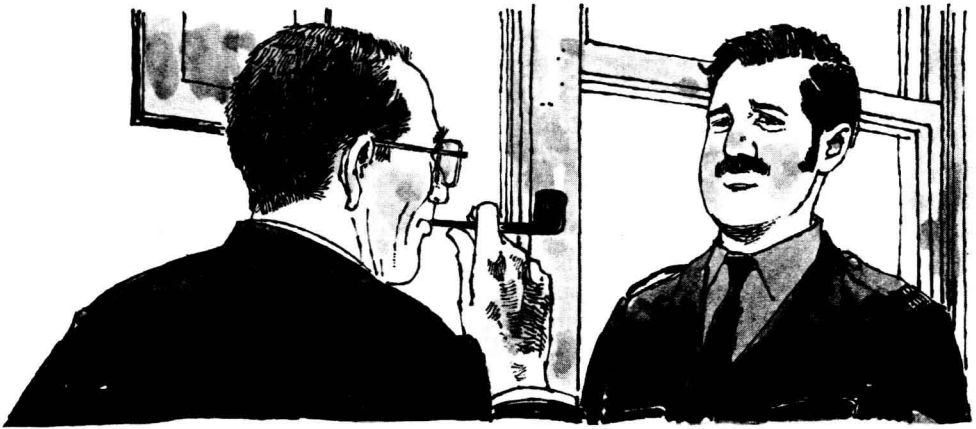
1. Read this note.

Sorry I wasn't able to come to the party on Saturday night. The fact is, I wasn't feeling very well because I ate too much at lunchtime!

Now use these ideas to write similar notes.

- a) send you a birthday present / hadn't enough money / am saving up to (get married).
- b) see you off at the airport / stayed in bed all day / had a terrible cold.
- c) lost my temper with you the other day / was feeling rather upset / . . .
- d) won't be able to meet you at the station / had to take the car to the garage / . . .

(2) BEHIND THE SCENES



INSPECTOR: Ah, do sit down, Sergeant Pike. I want a word with you.
It's about that boy Cobb.

SERGEANT: Oh, him!

INSPECTOR: You don't like Cobb very much, do you, sergeant?

SERGEANT: He's always in trouble, that boy. But *this* time . . .

INSPECTOR: Now you saw Cobb on Monday evening.

SERGEANT: That's right, inspector. About that fire at the supermarket. It's all in my report.

INSPECTOR: Yes, I've read it, of course. And you saw him alone, I see.

SERGEANT: Well, yes. It was really a sort of friendly visit. Just wanted to ask the boy a few questions.

INSPECTOR: But you knew the boy's parents weren't at home . . .

SERGEANT: Yes, they're never back before six-thirty. His mother works too, you see.

INSPECTOR: Hm. Now just why did you suspect Cobb?

SERGEANT: Well, not long ago he took a job in the supermarket. On Saturdays – just for pocket money. But the manager didn't like him. According to him, Cobb was lazy, so he got rid of him.

INSPECTOR: Lazy? But that isn't a crime.

SERGEANT: No, but young Cobb lost his temper, you see. He threatened the manager. "I'm going to burn this place down," he said.

INSPECTOR: Did he, indeed! And how do you know?

SERGEANT: Well, the manager himself told me.

INSPECTOR: And did anyone else hear him?

SERGEANT: Well, no. Just the manager.

INSPECTOR: In that case, we can't prove it, can we, sergeant?

SERGEANT: But Cobb's been in trouble before, sir. Remember that affair at the youth club?

INSPECTOR: Well, the manager's been in trouble as well. And so are you, sergeant! You see, Cobb's run away from home – and the papers have got hold of the story!

A MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Choose the best answer.

1. There was a fire at the supermarket. Sergeant Pike
 - a) hoped that it was an accident.
 - b) believed that Alan Cobb started it.
 - c) knew that Alan Cobb started it.
2. Sergeant Pike went to Alan's house before six-thirty because
 - a) he wanted to see Alan alone.
 - b) he was only paying a friendly visit.
 - c) he did not know Alan's parents.
3. According to the inspector
 - a) Alan did not start the fire.
 - b) there was no proof that he started the fire.
 - c) the manager did not speak the truth.
4. The inspector spoke to Sergeant Pike because he wanted to
 - a) punish the sergeant.
 - b) protect Alan Cobb.
 - c) find out the truth.

B COMPREHENSION PRACTICE

1. Say whether the following statements are true or false. If they are false, give the correct statement.
 - a) The inspector did not know about Sergeant Pike's visit to Alan's house.
 - b) Both Alan's parents worked.
 - c) Alan worked in the supermarket every day.
 - d) The manager of the supermarket lost his temper with Alan.
 - e) The sergeant believed the word of the manager.
 - f) The inspector was pleased with Sergeant Pike.
2. Give more details in connection with each of these statements.
 - a) I want a word with you.
 - b) It's all in my report.
 - c) They're never back before six-thirty.
 - d) He threatened the manager.
 - e) Cobb's been in trouble before.
3. Who said the following and why?
 - a) "You don't like Cobb very much, do you?"
 - b) "It was really a friendly sort of visit."
 - c) "I'm going to burn this place down."
 - d) "And so are you, sergeant!"
4. Explain why.
 - a) The inspector wanted to speak to Sergeant Pike.
 - b) Sergeant Pike went to Alan's house.
 - c) Sergeant Pike went before six-thirty.

- d) Alan worked in the supermarket.
- e) Alan lost his temper.
- f) Sergeant Pike was in trouble.

C GUIDED ORAL PRACTICE

1. Read this dialogue.

- A: Jane didn't really make that dress, you know.
 B: Oh, how do you know that?
 A: Well, my sister's got one just like it.
 B: But that doesn't prove anything, does it?

Now use these ideas to make up dialogues about other people.

STATEMENT	REASON
drinks too much	was singing on the bus last night
is afraid of flying	goes everywhere by train
can't spell	carries a pocket dictionary
isn't nice to his wife	they never go out together

2. Read this dialogue.

- A: According to Bill, Jack's very short of money.
 B: But he can't be sure, can he?
 A: Well, Jack *has* got rid of his car, hasn't he?
 B: Yes, but what does *that* prove?

Now make up similar dialogues of your own about someone who:

- a) doesn't drive very well
- b) is very unhappy
- c) hasn't got any friends

3. Imagine that a reporter is talking to Alan Cobb. Complete this dialogue from his point of view. Invent any suitable details.

- REPORTER: You worked at the supermarket, didn't you, Alan? Why did you leave?
 ALAN: _____
 REPORTER: The manager says you threatened him. Is that true?
 ALAN: _____
 REPORTER: What did you say? Can you remember?
 ALAN: _____
 REPORTER: I see. But you *have* been in trouble at the club. Was that serious?
 ALAN: _____
 REPORTER: The sergeant came to your house. Why didn't you tell your parents about it?
 ALAN: _____
 REPORTER: Anyway, you decided to run away. How did you get to London?
 ALAN: _____
 REPORTER: And why did you decide to come home?
 ALAN: _____

D GUIDED WRITING PRACTICE**1. Read this paragraph.**

I feel sure that Tom Jones is a spy! For one thing, he doesn't mix with people. As well as that, he always carries a camera. Besides, he has a lot of strange friends.

Now write similar paragraphs about these situations.

- a) X is the right place for a holiday (not many people go there / the weather is always good / hotels are cheap)
- b) A is the right man for the job (works very hard / very intelligent / . . .)
- c) A is in love with B (follows (her) around / . . . / . . .)
- d) The fire was not an accident.