Dialogs for Everyday Use

Dean Curry, Editor

More Dialogues for Everyday Use

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With
Cassette
Recording

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FOREWORD

The 30 dialogs included in this booklet appeared originally in the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM (Vol. X, May–June 1972, No. 3) and are reprinted with very slight changes.

DIALOGS FOR EVERYDAY USE are situation-based, the emphasis being on realism and naturalness to the extent that these are possible within the limitations imposed by a short, self-contained text. The speakers express themselves naturally in the way native American speakers might speak in certain everyday situations. Speech is at normal speed and with "standard" pronunciation and intonation.

The *Language Notes* provide information on grammar and intonation patterns, give cross-references to similar patterns in other dialogs, and suggest additional examples that can be used for drills on the structure in question.

A cassette recording accompanies the booklet and is a necessary component of the audio-study unit.

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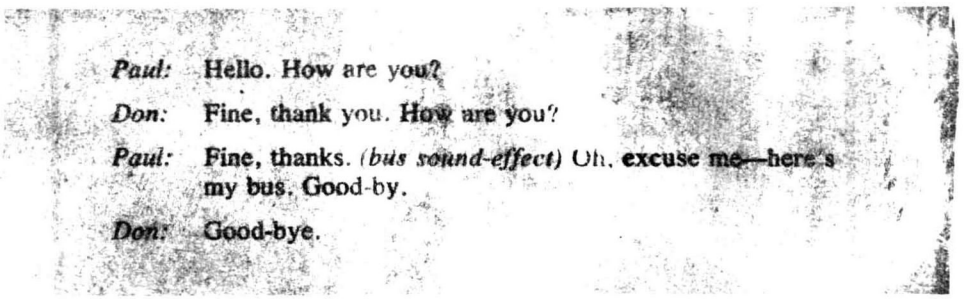
FORMAL GREETINGS AND FAREWELLS



Paul: Hello. How are you?

Don: Fine, thank you. How are you?

Paul: Fine, thanks. *(bus sound-effect)* Oh, excuse me—here's my bus. Good-by.

Don: Good-bye.

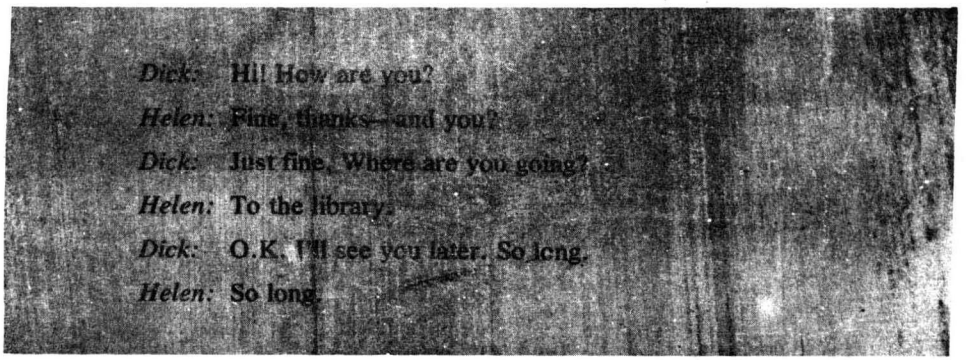
LANGUAGE NOTES

● **Hello.** *Good morning* or *good afternoon* might also be used. They are somewhat more formal. **How are you?** Notice the intonation. This *how*-question is one of the few instances in which a form of BE receives the primary sentence stress. (This phenomenon normally occurs in "question word" questions in which the form of BE stands at the end or is followed by a non-demonstrative pronoun: *What IS it? Where IS he? When WAS it? Where will it BE? Where have you BEEN?*) Sometimes, however, speakers stress the *you*, so that the intonation is identical to the "response question" described below.

● **How are you?** Notice that the responding speaker uses a different intonation for this question than the first speaker used. The shift of stress onto *you* points to that word as carrying the new or changed bit of meaning in this question, which is otherwise identical to the question in the first line—for now the *you* refers to a different person than it did in the original question. (Sometimes the responding speaker will answer simply, "Fine, thank you—and you?" omitting all the words of the "understood" question except the one word *you*, which, uttered with a strong stress, carries the new meaning. For an example, see Dialog 2.)

● **Thanks** is slightly less formal than *thank you*. Notice the contraction **here's** (= *here is*).

INFORMAL GREETINGS AND FAREWELLS



LANGUAGE NOTES

● **Hi** is an informal equivalent of *hello*. For the intonation of **How are you?** see Dialog 1.

● **Fine, thanks—and you?** *See* Dialog 1. Notice the rising intonation on *and you?*

● Notice that the normal response to *Where are you going?* is simply **To the library**—not *I'm going to the library*. It is unnatural and unusual to repeat the information already supplied by the question.

● **O.K.** is a less formal equivalent of *all right*. The common saying **I'll see you later** is often shortened to *See you later* (with the *I'll* understood). **So long** is an informal equivalent of *good-by*.

DIALOG 3

FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

Margaret: Mr. Wilson, I'd like you to meet Dr. Edward Smith.

Mr. Wilson: How do you do, Dr. Smith.

Dr. Smith: How do you do.

Margaret: Dr. Smith is an economist. He's just finished writing a book on international trade.

Mr. Wilson: Oh? That's my field, too. I work for the United Nations.

Dr. Smith: In the Development Program, by any chance?

Mr. Wilson: Yes. How did you guess?

Dr. Smith: I've read your articles on technical assistance. They're excellent.

LANGUAGE NOTES

● Notice the rising intonation on the words **Mr. Wilson.** A falling intonation on a name used in direct address is unusual in American English and tends to sound brusque and impolite. Listen for the *d* in **I'd.** It is important to include the *d* in this expression in order to differentiate it from *I like*, which has a different meaning. (*I'd like=I would like=I want.*)

● **How do you do** has the form of a question (and is sometimes followed by a question mark), but it is not a question in meaning. It is simply a polite formula used in formal introductions.

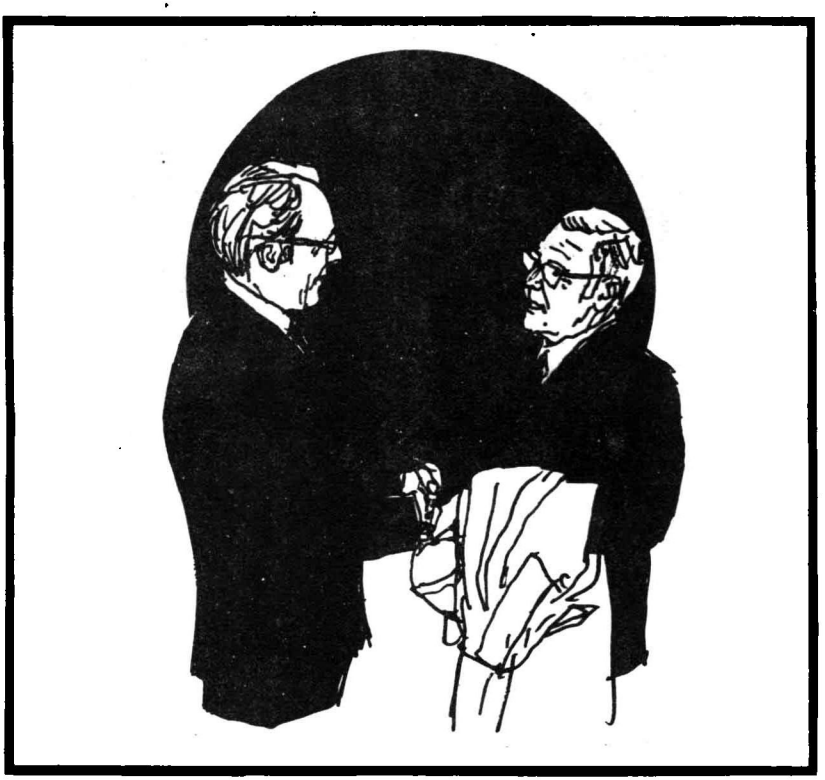
● The response to **How do you do** is simply the same phrase uttered with the same intonation by the other speaker. In fact, lines 2 and 3 are not strictly statement and response but rather statements uttered by the two speakers independently and, possibly, simultaneously.

● **He's just finished writing...** A useful pattern indicating an action recently completed. (*Just* is frequently used with the present perfect tense.) You may find it helpful to conduct a drill on this

pattern in conjunction with the teaching of the present perfect, using variations of this sentence, such as *I've just finished reading . . .*, *I've just finished cleaning . . .*, *She's just finished correcting . . .*, *They've just finishing putting . . . .*, The same pattern, with *start* or *begin*, is commonly used for an action recently initiated: *He's just started writing . . .*, *I've just started reading . . .*, *She's just started correcting . . .*, etc. A somewhat simpler form of this pattern (*just* + present perfect), to indicate an action recently completed, is of even broader usefulness: *He's just written . . .*, *I've just read . . .*, *We've just eaten . . .*, *I've just heard . . .*, *They've just returned . . .*, etc.

● **Development program.** Since these two words constitute a compound noun, the principal stress falls on the first word.

● **I've read . . .** Listen for the /v/ in *I've*. It is important to include the /v/ in this expression in order to differentiate it from *I read*, which has a different meaning.



DIALOG 4

INFORMAL INTRODUCTIONS

(Sound of background conversation)

Jim: Who's the tall girl next to Barbara?

Charles: That's Mary Anderson. Didn't you meet her at Steve's party?

Jim: No, I wasn't at Steve's party.

Charles: Oh! Then let me introduce you to her now . . . Mary, this is my cousin Jim.

Mary: Hi, Jim. I'm glad to meet you.

Jim: I'm glad to meet you. Can't we sit down somewhere and talk?

Mary: Sure, let's sit over there.

LANGUAGE NOTES

● **Who's** is the contracted form of *who is*. It should not be confused with the possessive *whose*, which, although pronounced the same (/huwz/), has a different meaning.

● **Didn't you meet her . . .?** Notice the use of the negative question. While generally used to indicate the expectation of an affirmative answer, here it expresses surprise that the answer to the question will probably—and unexpectedly—be negative.

Notice that in this sentence, the strongest stress, and the high point of the intonation, falls on *at*—although prepositions normally receive weak stress. It is as if *at*, in this case, were equivalent to *present* or *there*, as in *I wasn't present* or *I wasn't there*—in which the adjective and adverb, respectively, would normally receive the strongest sentence stress.

● **Mary, this is my cousin Jim.** Notice that the introducer mentions the girl's name first, and introduces the young man to her (not vice versa). This is the normal, courteous manner of introduction among speakers of American English. Notice the rising intonation

on *Mary*, a name used in direct address. *See* note in Dialog 3.

● **Hi.** *See* note in Dialog 2.

● **I'm glad to meet you.** Notice that the second speaker says this sentence with a different intonation than the first speaker used. The second speaker emphasizes *you*. (Compare 1*b*. *How are you?*) **Can't we sit down . . .?** = *Would you like to sit down . . .?*

● **Sure** is often used in informal conversation as a strong affirmative response equivalent to *yes, certainly, of course*, etc.

TIME

Margaret: What time is it?

Tom: It's a quarter to five.

Margaret: Aren't we supposed to be at Jim's house by five o'clock?

Tom: Five or five-thirty. He said it didn't make any difference.

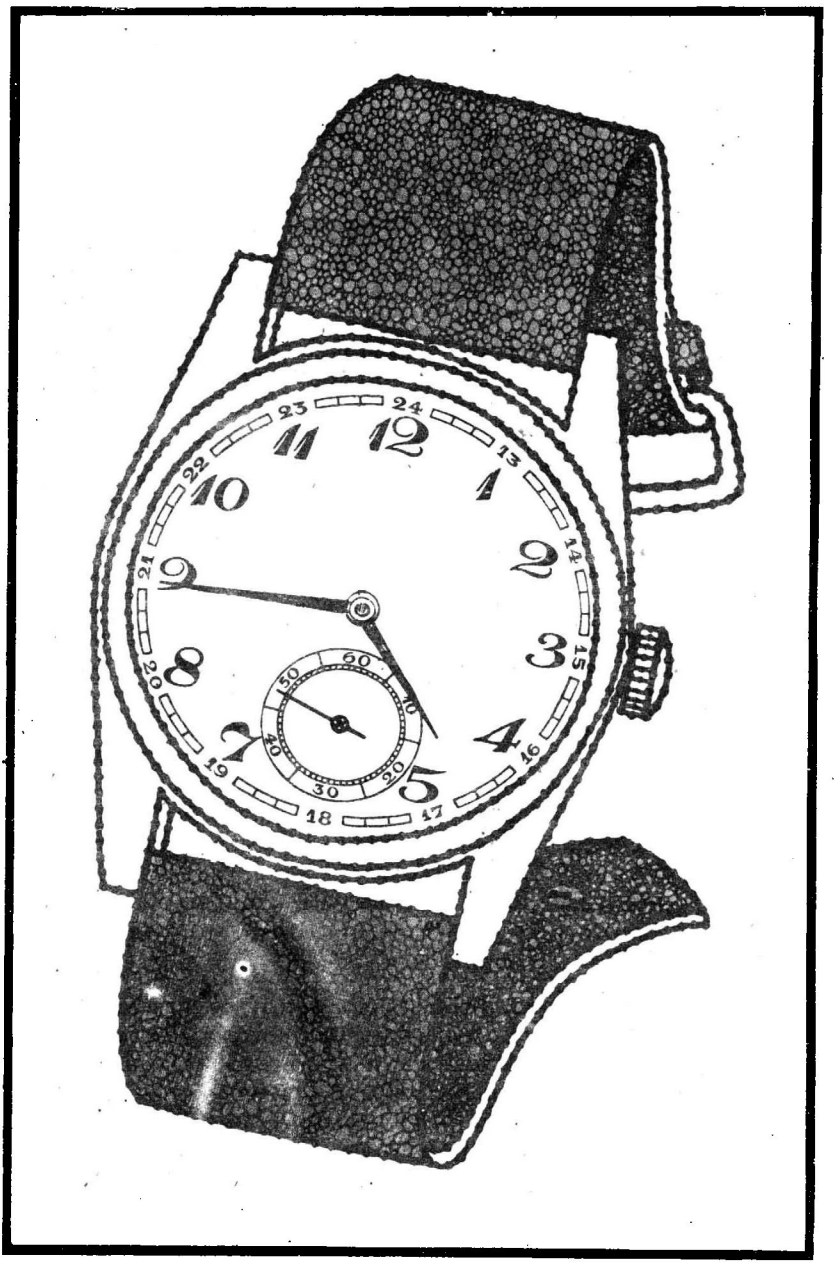
Margaret: Then maybe we could pick your suit up at the cleaners.

Tom: Sure, we have plenty of time.

LANGUAGE NOTES

● **It's a quarter to five.** This is probably the most common way of stating this time. Other possibilities are *It's a quarter of five* or *It's fifteen till five. (It's four forty-five* is rarely heard in casual conversation.) Fifteen minutes after the hour would usually be expressed thus: *It's a quarter after five* or *It's a quarter past five.* We also hear *It's five-fifteen* (though this is less frequent in casual conversation). An alternative form for *five-thirty* is *half-past five.* For times other than the quarter-hours or half-hour, numbers are used: *twenty past five* or *twenty after five, ten to five* or *ten till five,* etc. Frequently the speaker will omit the *It's* or *It's a* and answer simply *A quarter to five* or *Quarter to five.* Some speakers omit or obscure the *a: It's (a) quarter to five.*

● **Aren't we supposed to be . . .?** Notice that the negative question here indicates, as it usually does, the speaker's belief that his assumption is true. He expects an affirmative response, a confirmation of his assumption. **Supposed to** = *expected to; obliged to* (not as strong as *required to*). This meaning of *suppose* occurs only in the passive. Other examples: *I'm supposed to prepare a program for our English Club meeting next week. They were supposed to be here an hour ago—I don't know where they can be. We're supposed to practice the dialogues at home, too. Children are*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supposed to obey their parents. Notice the difference in intonation between the yes-no question in line *c* (rising intonation) and the *wh*-question in line *a* (falling intonation). **By five o'clock** = *no later than five o'clock*.

● **He said it didn't . . .** In conversation the conjunction *that (He said that it didn't . . .)* is generally omitted in reported speech, as here. Notice the sequence of tenses: *said . . . didn't*. Where the verb in direct speech would be in the present tense ("Shall we come at five or five-thirty?" "Either one. It *doesn't* make any difference."), it is past tense (*didn't*) after a past tense introductory verb (*said*): ***He said it didn't make any difference***.