



# **EVERYDAY ENGLISH**

**Kay Mathias**

# **Everyday English**

**A progressive English Course**

by

**KAY MATHIAS M.A.**

**Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd.**

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## Preface

This book sets out to help people develop their ability to communicate in a variety of situations occurring in adult life.

It is intended for all those studying English Language up to the standard of G.C.E. Ordinary Level, including B.E.C. General Level module, "People and Communication". (The last two chapters and the assignments in the appendix are specifically designed to complete the course for B.E.C. students.) Although written primarily for students in Colleges of Further Education, the contents of the book should prove equally suitable for use by 15-16 year olds in Secondary Schools.

Each chapter relates an event or problem in the lives of the Jackson family, at the same time illustrating the use of a particular communication skill or an aspect of grammar or punctuation. This is followed by an explanation of and exercises on that technique. The course is comprehensive and includes plenty of practice in the usual English examination exercises (summaries, comprehensions, essays, letters, etc.) but always these are related to the narrative or the communication demands of real life.

In conclusion, I would like to thank my husband, David, for his patient reading and sound advice, which usually I have acted upon. I am also indebted to the assistance of Lawrence Birch, Engineering Co. Ltd., of Leek, Mrs. P. Banerjea, lecturer at Cauldon College of Further Education, and the following people at Leek College of Further Education: Mr. A. Backhouse (Head of Business Studies Department), Ms. J. Seago (librarian), Miss L. Shufflebotham (lecturer), Mr. G. Fishburn (technician), and the students who have kindly allowed me to use their work as examples.

KAY MATHIAS

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## Excitement for Jean

One evening in early Spring, George Jackson was sitting by himself in his living room, dozing in front of the dying fire. The room was dark and cosy with just the light from the television and the flickering flames.

Suddenly George gave a nervous start, as the door was flung open and Jean Jackson entered the room. Her air of energy and excitement transformed the quiet atmosphere.

JEAN: Hallo, dad. Has the television sent you to sleep again?

GEORGE: Where's Tony? Hasn't he come in for supper?

JEAN: No. We stopped at the chip shop on the way home. We decided to have an early night because we're going to view some houses tomorrow. Look! We've all these to go and see. (Jean shows her father some estate agents' leaflets.) We could get a mortgage up to about £6,250. That's about two and a half times Tony's salary. But Tony wants to keep the price below £6,000. Here's one that sounds really good for £5,500.

GEORGE: It sounds all right. But isn't it rather small for that much money?

JEAN: Oh, dad, you've no idea how much houses cost these days! There's hardly anywhere for less than £6,000. Some of the houses for that price haven't anything modern in them, although you can get council grants for modernisation. This one has got an immersion heater, a modern sink and a garden.

GEORGE: Does it matter what the garden's like?

JEAN: Yes. Tony wants a garden big enough to grow our own vegetables. It doesn't give the size, so we'll have to wait and see. We're going to drive around and have a look at the outside of the houses first of all. Then



For Sale By Private Treaty"Dunromin," 51 Burton Road, NewtownThe ideal home for a newly married couple or a retired couple

This pleasant terraced home has a petite character with a shared pedestrian access flanked by the walled and lawned front garden. The accommodation is ready for immediate occupation and offers scope for modernisation at a reasonable cost.

ACCOMMODATION:

ENTRANCE HALL With coloured tile floor.

LIVING ROOM (15'0" into bay x 12'3") with quarry tiled floor, modern tiled fireplace.

Storage PANTRY off.

PART TILED KITCHEN (12' x 6'6") with quarry tiled floor. Single drainer stainless steel sink unit.

On the First Floor

FRONT BEDROOM ONE (13'9" into bay x 12'3") with

NURSERY BEDROOM off (9'6" x 5'0" average)

REAR BEDROOM TWO (9' x 9'3")

BATHROOM with bath, wash hand basin, airing cupboard, housing hot water cylinder. Immersion heater.

OUTSIDE: Concreted rear yard. Lean to fuel store. W.C. Vegetable garden. Side entry, shared path approach, walled front garden with lawn with shrub/flower borders.

SERVICES: Mains electricity, water and drainage are connected.

LOCAL AUTHORITY: Newtown Borough Council

RATEABLE VALUE: £110

VIEWING: Key available at the Agent's Office.

we'll go to the estate agents and ask to view the ones we like best. Oh, dad, just imagine, this time tomorrow we might have chosen our very own house! But now I'd better go to bed. I don't want to be late getting up.

**GEORGE:** Good night then, Jean. Your mother will wake you up in the morning if you do oversleep. She went to bed at ten o'clock.

(Taking her estate agents' leaflets with her, Jean went to bed, to dream of her ideal home.)

## Phrases and Sentences

### A phrase

A phrase is a group of words which does not make a complete statement.

- e.g.
- (a) was sitting in the living room
  - (b) the living room
  - (c) was flung open
  - (d) entered the room
  - (e) her air of energy and excitement
  - (f) stopped at the chip shop
  - (g) to have an early night
  - (h) going to view some houses tomorrow
  - (i) taking her estate agents' leaflets with her
  - (j) to dream of her ideal home

### A sentence

A sentence is a group of words which expresses a complete thought or statement. It consists of a subject and a predicate.

*The subject* is the person, thing or idea that the sentence is about.

*The predicate* is the rest of the sentence which tells us something about the subject.

- e.g. *George Jackson* was sitting in the living room  
(the subject is added to the phrase so that it makes complete sense).

The living room *was dark and cosy*  
 (the predicate is added to the phrase so that it makes complete sense).

### Exercise 1

Try adding subjects, predicates or sentences to phrases (e) – (j) given above, so that they make sentences which express complete statements or thoughts.

### Exercise 2

- 1) Say which of the following are phrases and which are sentences.
- 2) Make the phrases into sentences by adding subjects or predicates.
  - (a) One evening in early Spring
  - (b) He was dozing in front of the fire
  - (c) With just the light of the television
  - (d) George gave a nervous start
  - (e) Transformed the quiet atmosphere
  - (f) Has the television
  - (g) Where's Tony
  - (h) On the way home
  - (i) Tony wants a garden
  - (j) We'll go to the estate agents

## Punctuation

A *sentence* always begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, unless it is a question, which ends with a question mark, or an exclamation, which ends in an exclamation mark. Study the conversation between Jean and George before the estate agents' leaflet for examples.

*Full stops* are also used at the end of any abbreviated word.

e.g. Mr. Dr.  
 Mrs. R.A.F.  
 Ltd. Nos. 4 – 10.

---

*Capital letters* are used to begin names of people, places, days, months, and titles of books, films, ships, institutions, etc.

e.g.	Jean Jackson	Christmas
	Newtown	A Midsummer Night's Dream
	Friday	The Royal Society
	March	

**Exercise 3** \_\_\_\_\_

Divide the following paragraphs into sentences, putting in all necessary full stops and capital letters.

brenda jackson was usually the first of the jacksons to get up she started cooking breakfast for george at 7 am george had to be at work for 8 am he liked a big fried breakfast he took sandwiches with him for lunch brenda cooked dinner for all the family at 6 pm

**Exercise 4** \_\_\_\_\_

Rewrite the estate agent's leaflet in this chapter so that it describes the house, Dunromin, in complete sentences.

## A Discussion About Housing

At five o'clock on Saturday afternoon the family was waiting for Jean and Tony to arrive. Even George Jackson and his son, Alan, dragged their eyes away from the wrestling match on television, as Jean and Tony, looking rather tired, entered the room.

**BRENDA:** Well, how have you got on? Have you found a house you want?

**TONY:** Not much luck, unfortunately.

**BRENDA:** Oh, no! Wasn't there anywhere suitable? What about Dunromin?

**JEAN:** That was one of the worst! It needed complete re-decoration and the vegetable garden was tiny. Most of the houses weren't nearly as good as the estate agents' descriptions.

**GEORGE:** You didn't expect them to be, did you, our Jean? The estate agents are trying to sell the houses, after all.

**TONY:** A good point. But I think we've learnt how to read their leaflets now. You just have to ignore the adjectives and concentrate on the facts. They do give quite a lot of facts really, such as the number of rooms and their measurements. If they don't give measurements, then you know it's inevitably going to be small.

**ALAN:** What sort of house are you looking for?

**TONY:** A fairly small old house, probably in need of decoration but without woodworm or damp, with a garden big enough to grow a lot of vegetables.

**ALAN:** You don't want a new house then?

**TONY:** It's not a matter of choice, Alan. New houses are completely out of our price range.

GEORGE: It will be a lot of work for you, you know, Tony. You don't do up houses for nothing. Paint's very expensive these days.

TONY: Yes, I know that, but at least we shan't have such big monthly payments as with a mortgage on a new house.

GEORGE: Well, then, you carry on looking, lad. There's no need to rush into buying a house. You could always rent a place for a while, couldn't you?

JEAN: Oh, dad! Don't you know it's nearly impossible to get a flat? Marie and John looked for ages before they found one and they pay £50 a month plus rates and electricity. That's nearly as much as a mortgage which would buy them their own house.

BRENDA: But what about the Moores? They pay only £5 a week to rent a whole house.

JEAN: But they've been there for years, Mom! With the price of houses now landlords can't let houses that cheaply any more.

BRENDA: What about putting your names down on the council housing list?

TONY: I did phone up the Housing Department this week and someone explained their points system. We'd be put on the bottom of their list and then be given so many points according to our accommodation and number of children and such. If, for instance, we lived in one room with six children, we'd be given a lot of points. But I don't fancy doing that just to get a council house!

GEORGE: What about the high rise flats? There's not such a waiting list for them, is there?

TONY: Well, I think a lot of families with young children don't want them. They're ten pounds a week, anyway. We might just as well put our money into buying a house from the start.

GEORGE: I suppose so, though we're quite happy with our council house. It's not as cheap as it used to be but it's a fair rent and the council look after it and pay for repairs.

BRENDA: What about all the decorating and jobs you do yourself?

- GEORGE: Now what peace would I get, if I waited for the council to do them?
- TONY: Anyway, Mr. Jackson, even if the rent is cheap, if you added up all you've ever paid, you must have paid for the place by now but it still isn't yours and you'll go on paying rent forever. So in the end the house buyer wins.
- GEORGE: True enough, Tony, but then we've never had financial worries like some young couples these days who can't keep up their mortgage payments. But you carry on your road, lad. You've got your mind made up and if you want something badly enough, you'll get it in the end, you'll see. Now come on, let's have some tea, shall we? Go and put the kettle on, Brenda! All this discussion has given me a thirst.

## **Vocabulary Work**

### **Vocabulary extension**

Wide reading is the best and most enjoyable way of extending your vocabulary i.e. increasing the number of words you know. However, if a conscious effort is made to look up and learn words, you can increase your vocabulary from even a limited amount of reading. It is helpful to write new words in a vocabulary notebook, with perhaps a page for each letter of the alphabet. Then you should read your list regularly and try to use new words in your own written work.

### **Use of the dictionary**

The regular use of a good dictionary will also help to increase your vocabulary and improve your spelling. A good dictionary will give not just the meanings of words but also their pronunciation, derivation (where the words have originated from), derivatives (other words formed from the original words) and expressions in which the words are used. Sometimes all this may seem confusing but when you look up a new word it will help you to absorb the word into your own vocabulary if you study all the dictionary has to say about it. To understand a dictionary definition you must study the preface or introduction to your dictionary, especially the list of abbreviations used to describe words in the dictionary.

Of course, it is not much help to know that *a.* stands for adjective and *adv.* for adverb unless you know what these parts of speech are, but parts of speech are explained in this book and this should help you in using your dictionary.

Sometimes you may find the word you are looking for as a derivative of another word. For instance, the word, *galvanisation* (alternative spelling: galvanization) may be found at the end of the definition under *galvanise* (or galvanize), the verb which means "stimulate by or as if by electricity." The meaning of 'galvanisation' may not, in fact, be given but it can be deduced that it means *stimulation* by or as if by electricity.

### Writing dictionary definitions

Writing dictionary definitions is a useful exercise in expanding your vocabulary and practising concise expression. When you are asked to give a dictionary definition of a word you should be as precise and brief as possible. It is not necessary to give abbreviations or derivatives as the dictionary does. Usually you will be asked to explain a word as used in a particular sentence.

Often simple objects are harder to define than difficult words which may be explained by the use of words with similar meanings (called synonyms). For instance, the word, 'discussion', can be explained by "exchange of opinions", whereas 'a table' is a piece of furniture but its use must also be given and some idea of what it looks like. There are, in fact, about a dozen different uses of the word 'table,' e.g. mathematical tables and plateaux, but just describing the piece of furniture is difficult, for a table can be almost any shape, size, material and it often does not have four legs. Here is a possible dictionary definition of a table: a table is a piece of furniture with a flat top and at least one vertical support on which meals are laid and articles kept or used.

### Exercise 1

---

Write a definition in one sentence of the following things that have been mentioned in this chapter. Then compare your definitions with your dictionary's:

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1) a house  | 3) a leaflet |
| 2) a garden | 4) a room    |



- |               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 5) a mortgage | 8) a family        |
| 6) a flat     | 9) a council house |
| 7) a landlord | 10) a kettle       |

## Exercise 2 ---

Explain the following words as used in this chapter with the help of your dictionary where necessary:

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1) unfortunately | 6) inevitably    |
| 2) suitable      | 7) completely    |
| 3) expect        | 8) rent          |
| 4) ignore        | 9) accommodation |
| 5) concentrate   | 10) financial    |

## Parts of Speech

Words have special names to show the different types of work they are doing in a sentence. Some words name the things around us and the ideas in our heads (nouns). Some describe the colour, size or quality of these things (adjectives). Some tell us what action a person or thing is doing (verbs), while others describe these actions more precisely (adverbs). We need joining words (conjunctions) to link words and ideas, otherwise we would communicate very abruptly. Also, there are words that stand instead of nouns (pronouns), so that we are not forever repeating their names.

All these words, called parts of speech, make up a sentence rather like fitting a jigsaw together. If you use a wrong part in a particular place, it makes the whole picture seem odd. It is not important to know the names of all the parts of speech but try to use the right ones in the right places. An understanding of parts of speech will help you to write grammatically correct and varied sentences.