

PLAIN SPEAKING

by Wendy Harris

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簡明英語會話 (初級)



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Preface

General aims

The material in this book is supplementary and is not intended to stand alone as a course although it does follow the approved Syllabus for Secondary Schools.

The objective is to present structural elements of the English language which the students have already met, in natural situations.

To achieve fluent conversational English, students should speak as much as possible during classes. This is often difficult because of lack of time. Choral drilling is useful to familiarize the whole class with the main structures, vocabulary items and idiomatic phrases in each unit, but as soon as the teacher feels that the students can manipulate these essentials, he should encourage small group or pair work to give each child the maximum opportunity to speak. Stronger students can work with weaker ones to help out while the teacher moves around monitoring groups and dealing with any difficulties that occur.

Unit breakdown

Each of the twenty units in this book is divided into four sections. The first section, *Dialogue*, consists of a short illustrated Situation paragraph which sets the scene for the dialogue itself. The short questions are to make sure that the situation has been fully understood. The dialogue comes next.

The second section, *Pronunciation*, deals with sound production, intonation or stress. Generally speaking, only one of these three is emphasized in each unit, but the others should not be completely ignored. If two contrasting vowel sounds are being taught, the teacher should make sure that when the students practise these sounds in the context of words and sentences, their stress and intonation patterns are acceptable.

The last two sections, *Language Practice 1* and *2*, highlight the main structural points in the dialogue and offer further practice of these in different situations. Teachers will notice that Language Practice 1 is generally more controlled than Language Practice 2. This is to ensure that the students have adequately consolidated the structures and will be comfortable when they try to manipulate them in freer conversational situations.

Suggestions for presentation and use of each section

1 *Situation* Either as a short reading comprehension or aural comprehension. The illustration can provide the basis for general questions and 'scene setting' before the students read or hear the text. After presenting the text, the teacher can then check that the Situation has been fully understood by using the Questions orally round the class. More questions can be added if the teacher feels particular vocabulary items are unfamiliar to the students. If the teacher decides to present the Situation orally, it is suggested that he allow the students to read the text silently after the Questions have been completed. Understanding the Situation is essential for the effective use of the dialogue which follows.

2 *Dialogue* If the dialogue is presented as an aural comprehension exercise on tape, the procedure might be as follows:

- Pre-teach necessary vocabulary items.
- Teacher plays tape all through while students look at the picture, *not* the text.
- Teacher asks check questions to make sure the students have the gist of the conversation.
- Teacher plays tape section by section — perhaps three or four lines at a time, breaking at an appropriate point — and asks more detailed check questions. Students should still *not* see the text.
- Teacher then plays tape line by line or sentence by sentence, and asks the class chorally and/or individually to repeat each section, copying the intonation and pronunciation.
- Teacher plays tape once more while students follow text in their books.
- Teacher allows students to read text silently in their own time and ask any questions they need to.

If a tape is *not* used, the teacher may read the dialogue himself or assign two students to read it after having prepared it for a home-work exercise. After the dialogue has been presented and the teacher is sure the students have fully understood it, the class can be divided into groups or pairs to practise by themselves. After a few minutes, the teacher might reproduce a skeleton dialogue on the board using only key words from the text. The students should close their books

and try to re-create the dialogue using the skeleton. A final rounding off exercise which is always fun and tends to stick in the students' minds is *acting out*. The teacher may choose one or two couples to re-arrange the furniture at the front of the class and then act out the scene with movements, appropriate gestures and facial expressions. Non-acting students can be involved as stage managers, directors, prompts (usually essential!) etc. This free stage activity is particularly valuable if the students can be encouraged to criticise each other's performances constructively and, needless to say, in English. At lower levels the teacher will have to be instrumental in this criticism by asking simple *yes/no* questions like 'Can you hear him?' 'Is he speaking slowly?' 'Is that right?'.

3 *Pronunciation* The elements of pronunciation, stress and intonation which are covered in this section of each unit are all based on problems likely to arise from the dialogue. The pronunciation point may be related to the structure, particular vocabulary items or the way words are linked together in connected speech. Examples are given from the Dialogue and/or Language Practice sections so that the teacher can refer back and give the exercise a meaningful context. Pairs practice is used frequently, both for the production of individual sounds and the formation of intonation patterns. It is suggested that, once the teacher has given two or three examples and drilled them thoroughly with the whole class, he should then divide the students into groups or pairs and let them practise at their own speed. Once the idea of self-help has been established, students will be eager to check their partners and will become much more able to spot mistakes in their own oral production. It is unreasonable to expect perfect pronunciation from anyone but a native speaker so teachers should not set their sights too high. They should insist on clarity and make sure that the students are comprehensible both to the teacher and each other. The Pronunciation section should take the least classroom time of all the sections.

4 *Language practice* The idea of these sections is to give the students plenty of manipulation of the structures which occur in the Dialogue. Again choral drilling for one or two examples will give the students a solid base. They can then practise together in groups or pairs, concentrating on accuracy, speed and good pronunciation. During lesson preparation, teachers might find it helpful to collect together some extra material appropriate to the particular unit, such as maps, flashcards, etc. This material can be introduced as an exam-

sion of the Language Practice exercises and form the basis for free-stage work once the teacher is sure that the students are able to cope adequately with the structures. The real test comes in free-stage work when students are encouraged to make up their own situations and dialogues. It quickly becomes apparent whether they have grasped the concept of the structure and are able to manipulate it comfortably or not.

Social register and idiom

The English language is not just a collection of words governed by complicated rules. It is a means of communication which also enables its speakers to express emotions and delicate shades of meaning. People decide how to behave towards each other in any social situation not so much by what they say but how they say it. The word 'yes' can express anger, impatience, joy, surprise, horror and many more emotions, simply by a change in the pitch and intonation of the speaker's voice.

Similarly, attitudes towards people, situations and ideas can be made very clear by the use of simple idioms. Without these idioms, the language sounds stilted and 'bookish'. It lacks a natural flow and warmth. Teachers will find idioms in some of the units in this book, phrases like 'what a mess' and 'what on earth's the matter?'. Students should be made aware that these idioms cannot be translated or understood word by word. They must be taken as a unit, treated, if you like, as one word. They can most effectively be presented to the students through simple situations.

At lower levels it is often useful to treat isolated examples of more complex grammatical structures as idioms. The students need to know what they mean and why they are used in one particular context, but they do not need, at this stage, to be able to manipulate the structure and use it elsewhere. An example of this idiomatic treatment of structure occurs in Unit One where Paul says 'I keep getting lost'. All the students need to know about this fairly advanced structure at this stage is that it means that Paul doesn't know where to go or where anything is because he is new to the school. The students do not need to be able to make negative, question and other forms using 'keep' with the 'ing' form of the verb.

Social register means being able to select the appropriate group of words from a selection of phrases or sentences which all basically mean the same thing. 'Shut the door!' 'I wonder if you'd mind shut-

ting the door, please,' and 'It's rather chilly in here, isn't it?' all mean 'I am cold and I want you to shut the door'. Which one you chose would depend on whom you were talking to and where you were. An example of social register which occurs in this book is the use of 'Mum' versus 'mother'. Children tend to address their parents familiarly as 'Mum' and 'Dad' but when they are talking to other people about them will refer to them as 'mother' and 'father'. Social register, like idiom, is another means of establishing relationships with people and attitudes towards things. It gives colour, warmth and above all fluency to the language. It is a very necessary part of English, which would sound rather like a talking computer without it.

PHONETIC SYMBOLS USED IN THE TEXT		
Vowels		
/i/	as in	sit
/i:/	as in	seat
/æ/	as in	above
/æ:/	as in	can
/e/	as in	part
/ɜ:/	as in	work
/ɔ:/	as in	door
Consonants		
/θ/	as in	this
/f/	as in	fat
/v/	as in	valley
/s/	as in	six
/ð/	as in	this
/w/	as in	week
/k/	as in	cat
/t/	as in	ten
/d/	as in	dog
/g/	as in	girl
/l/	as in	lot
/r/	as in	red
/z/	as in	goes
/h/	as in	hold

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UNIT

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PRONUNCIATION PRACTICE

Intonation for inversion questions

Intonation for WH questions

Intonation for *or* questions

/ð/ as in *this/that*

Importance of main stress

/f/ contrasted with /v/

/l/ contrasted with /i/

/s/ contrasted with /θ/

/w/ initially

/ə/ contrasted with /ɔ/

Alternative pronunciations of

can — /kən/ /kæn/ /kɑnt/

/t/ contrasted with /d/ initially and finally

weak /ə/

/g/ contrasted with /k/ initially and finally

Liaison

Intonation patterns for polite requests and offers

/s/ /z/ /ɪz/ endings for regular verbs in present simple

/l/ contrasted with /r/

/t/ /d/ /ɪd/ endings for regular verbs in past simple

weak and strong pronunciations of 'have' — /hæv/ /hæv/

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1 Paul's First Day

Dialogue

Situation

It's Monday. It's the first day of term. David's in the playground. He's talking to Paul. Paul's a new student. Today's his first day. He's nervous. David's friendly and helpful. He's helping Paul to settle in.



Questions

- 1 Is it Saturday?
- 2 What day of the week is it?
- 3 Is it the first day of term?
- 4 Is David in the classroom?
- 5 Where's David?
- 6 Is Paul there too?
- 7 Is Paul a new student?
- 8 How's he feeling?
- 9 Is David friendly?
- 10 What's David doing?

Dialogue

David: Hello. Are you new?

Paul: Yes. Today's my first day.

David: What's your name?

Paul: It's Paul Ho. What's yours?

David: David Tsui. Are you a Form One student?

Paul: Yes. Are you?

David: No. I'm in Form Two. Which class are you in?

Paul: 1C. My teacher's Miss Lam.

David: Do you know your way round?

Paul: Not yet. I keep getting lost.

David: I'll show you round. There's plenty of time before the next class.

Paul: Thanks.

Intonation Practice

Here are some of David's questions. Practise saying them aloud and make your voice rise at the end of each question.

Are you new?

Are you a Form One student?

Do you know your way round?

Now look at these pictures. Make *is* or *are* questions about each picture. Here are two examples:

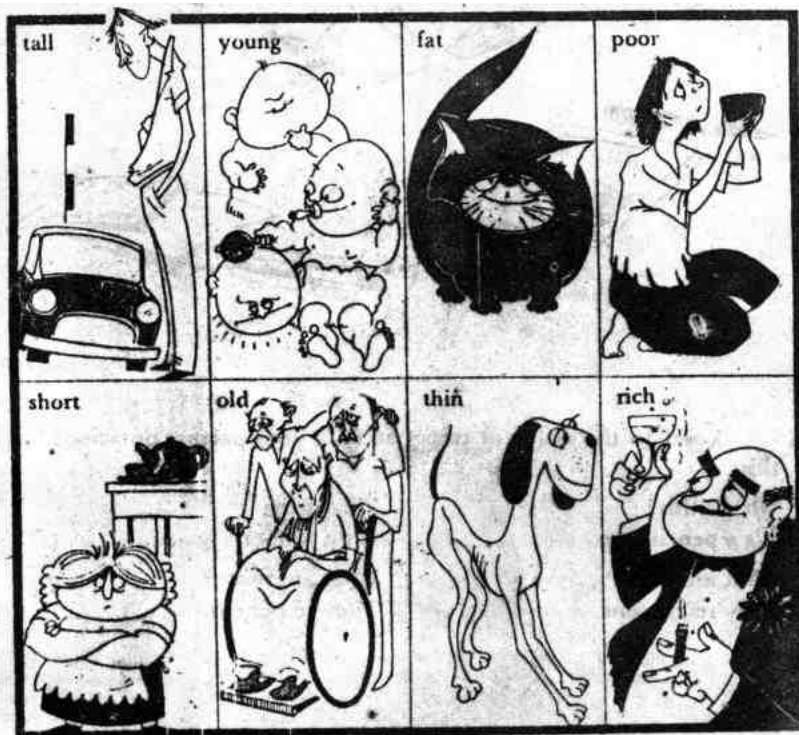
Picture 1 Is he tall?

Yes, he is.

Picture 5 Is she fat?

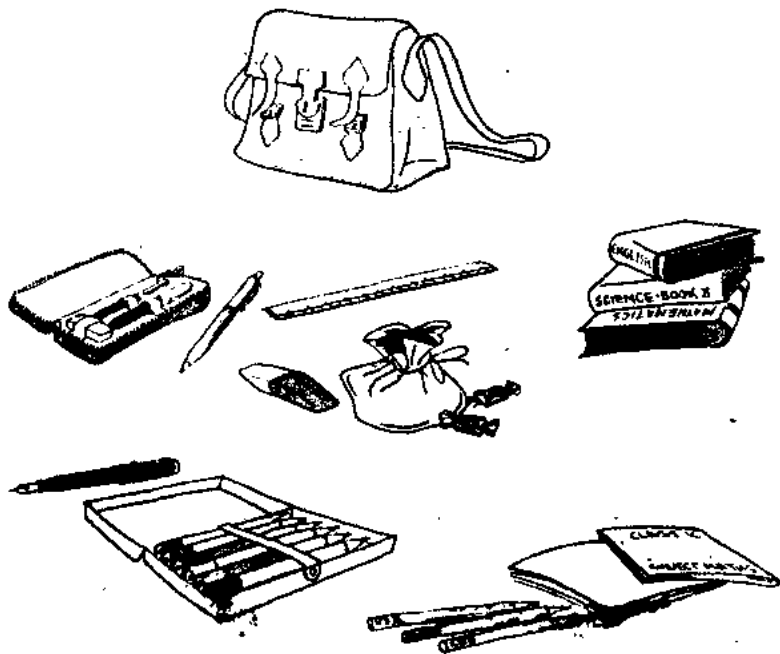
No, she isn't. She's short.

Remember, the question goes up and the answer goes down.
Now make two questions about each picture.



Language Practice 1

This is Paul's satchel. These are some of the things inside it.



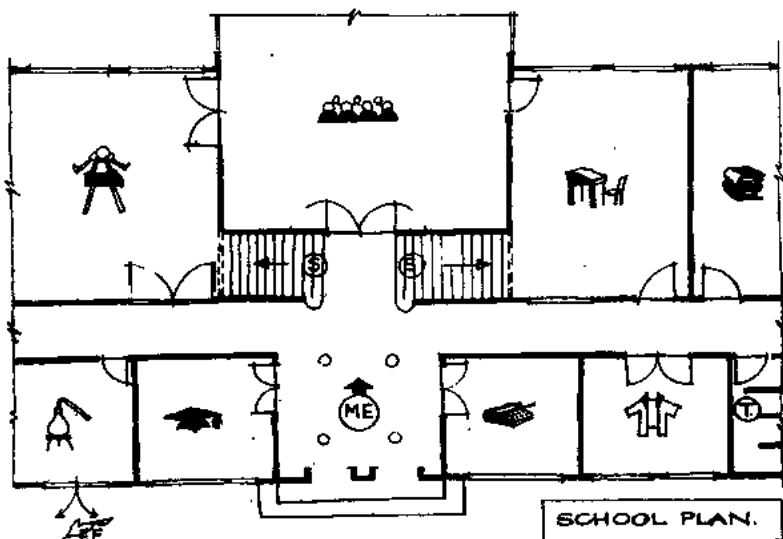
Point to the different things and ask your partner questions like this:

What's this?
It's a pencil case.
What are these?
They're crayons.

What's that?
It's a rubber.
What are those?
They're pencils.

Language Practice 2

This is a floor plan of David's school.



This is the key:

(ME) main entrance	(S) stairs	(T) toilets	(FE) fire escape	(CL) cloakroom	(SO) school office	(ST) staffroom	(SL) science laboratory	(CLAS) classroom	(LIB) library	(SH) school hall	(GYM) gymnasium
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Ask your partner what the different symbols stand for. Make questions and answers like this:

What does this stand for?

It stands for 'main entrance'.

What does that stand for?

It stands for 'classroom'.

Now look at the floor plan again. Imagine you are showing your partner round the school. Your partner will ask you questions about the different parts of the school and you will give him the answers, like this:

What's this?

It's the main entrance.

What's that?

It's a classroom.

Is that the gymnasium?

No, it isn't. It's the school hall.

Is this the staffroom?

Yes, it is.

2 The New Teacher

Dialogue

Situation

David's showing Paul round. They're in the school library. They're whispering. They're talking about the new English teacher. She's on duty in the library today. She's sitting at the desk checking books. The library is open at break-time and lunchtime every day. Students can borrow and return books then.



Questions

- 1 What's David doing?
- 2 Are David and Paul in the playground?
- 3 Where are they?
- 4 Are they talking loudly?
- 5 Why are they whispering?
- 6 Are they talking about the new English teacher?
- 7 Is she on duty in the library today?
- 8 Where's she sitting?
- 9 Is the library open every day?
- 10 Can students borrow and return books every day?

Dialogue

- Paul:* Who's that over there?
David: That's the new teacher.
Paul: Is she Chinese?
David: No, she comes from England.
Paul: What does she teach?
David: English, of course.
Paul: Is she your teacher?
David: Yes. She teaches my class three times a week.
Paul: Can she speak Chinese?
David: Not very much.
Paul: It's a good thing you can speak English!

Intonation Practice

Here are some questions about the new teacher. Practise saying them aloud and make your voice fall at the end of each question.

Who's that?

What does she teach?

Where does she come from?

Now look at the map and make some more *Wh* questions. Remember, *Wh* questions go *down*. Here are some examples:

Where does he come from?

He comes from France.

What's his nationality?

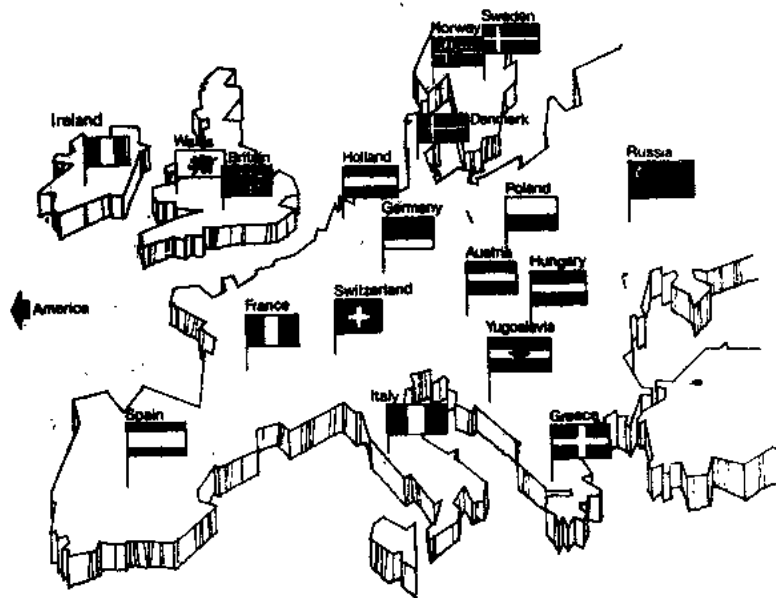
He's French.

Where do they come from?

They come from Britain.

What's their nationality?

They're British.



Language Practice 1

This is Studio 2 at RTV. Richard Dean is a television interviewer. He's making a programme about foreigners in Hong Kong. He's asking his guests about their nationalities and their occupations. Here's the first interview.



- Dean:** Good evening. Welcome to our programme.
Dupont: Thank you. Good evening, Mr. Dean.
Dean: Would you tell us your name, please?
Dupont: I'm Paul Dupont.
Dean: Where do you come from, Mr. Dupont?
Dupont: I come from France.
Dean: What do you do, Mr. Dupont?
Dupont: I'm a chef.
Dean: Thank you, Mr. Dupont.

There are four more guests on the programme tonight. Imagine you are Richard Dean. Interview each guest and ask about their nationalities and occupations.

Anna Schmidt Germany singer	James Walker America lawyer	Patricia Green Britain doctor	Manuel Plata Spain bullfighter

Here are some questions you can use:

What do you do?
What's your job?

Where do you come from?
What's your nationality?