

Advanced English Course

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During the writing of this course I have been extremely fortunate in being able to consult the files of the survey of English Usage at University College London. Without constant recourse to such a varied collection of specimens of actual English usage, I should have found it far more difficult to compose convincing examples suitable for use in a course such as this. Moreover, the insights I have been able to gain as Assistant Director of the survey of English Usage have convinced me that the examples are importantly representative of the varieties of English with which the foreign student most needs to become familiar; and the experience I have had of the analysis of survey texts has contributed much to the framework within which I have supplied the Language Notes.

Derek Davy

All the people, institutions, organisations, products, etc., mentioned in this course are entirely fictitious, and the practice has been to restate this fact at all the appropriate points in the Notes. The only departures from this principle concern a few people, institutions and organisations whose names are so well known as to be household words. These have been used in the interests of realism, as have the names of actual towns, places and geographical locations wherever possible.

Introduction

1. Aims

This Linguaphone Advanced English Course is intended for students who already have a good command of the basic grammar of English and are familiar with a reasonably wide selection of vocabulary, but who wish to increase their competence in the language. It will enable them to do so by finding out more about the many different kinds of usage that are all covered by the one deceptively simple word 'English'.

The course provides in an easily accessible form a wide selection of varieties of English. Each example is presented in both a spoken and a printed version, and is accompanied by a set of notes which call attention to some of its most important stylistic features and comment selectively on anything of particular interest or difficulty in the vocabulary and grammar.

2. Design

The material has been divided into three main sections.

Part One deals with the kind of English used in cultural situations and for the purposes of entertainment and leisure.

Part Two is concerned with the kind of English used in the world of business and the professions, and for the purposes of administration and information.

Part Three contains examples of the kind of informal English used by people in the course of everyday communication, when conversing, telephoning and writing letters.

These divisions have been adopted mainly in order to give the student some kind of general guidance through what might otherwise have appeared a rather formless mass of material. Their titles give a reasonable idea of what to expect in each case, but the student would be well advised to regard the titles as no more than the general guides they are meant to be. He should for instance, remember that Part One contains such widely different things as the language used in a spoken commentary on a football match, and that used when writing a book concerned with a highly academic subject—literary style; while Part Two includes,

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amongst other varieties, television advertisements and a legal document. Each of the three parts contains ten units. The specimen passages which form the basis of all the units have been specially written to give an accurate impression of the varieties of English they represent. In fact, each may be regarded as an imitation of one particular type or style of English, and in each a careful attempt has been made to include in the short space available as many as possible of the most distinctive linguistic features belonging to the variety. The examples have been composed in this way thus making possible the control of the vocabulary and grammar so as to ensure the inclusion of most of the distinctive stylistic features The specimen passages include types of English, such as the informal conversation and informal telephone conversation, which usually occur only in a spoken form, and are never written down. They also include others, notably written legal language, and the language of administration, which tend always to remain in print and very seldom get read aloud. Yet others, such as the informal letters, occur in a handwritten form, in language which preserves some of the characteristics of both speech and print, and are perhaps read only silently, but in a way that recalls the speech mannerisms of the people who wrote them. And some of the passages, for instance the news bulletin and the broadcast talk, have written and spoken existences which are of equal importance for the simple reason that they were written especially to be read aloud. In spite of all these differences it was considered best to include a written and a spoken version of each extract. The main reason for this decision was that it seemed to be dictated by the requirements of close study of the specimens: certainly the 'purely spoken' examples need to be written down before it is possible to examine them in detail. Those which have an equally important 'written' and 'spoken' existence must be presented in each form so that the correspondence between them can be looked at. And even the most 'purely written' examples may usefully be recorded in a spoken version, since some attention to the way in which they have been handled by the readers may help the student's own ability to read such language aloud—always a useful skill to acquire.

The collection of extracts, then, allows for study in a number of different ways: but during study it is important to recall the primary aim of the course as stated at the beginning of this Introduction: to provide material for those who wish to increase their competence in English by finding out more about different kinds of usage.

3. Presentation

The Units have been arranged in a straightforward way to enable the student to see immediately the purpose of the individual parts; but a few comments on the explanatory material which follows the printed version of each recorded passage may be helpful.

The Notes state briefly the variety of English which is represented by the passage and call attention to anything of interest about how and where it occurs. Then, if necessary, individual points which might pose difficulties as regards the general understanding of the passage are referred to by line number and commented on. (The number is always that of the line on which the *first word* of a reference is to be found).

The Language Notes are subdivided into three parts, General, Vocabulary and Grammar.

The General section gives a brief account of some of the main linguistic features belonging to the variety being exemplified, paying particular attention to those which distinguish it from other varieties of English. Under Vocabulary, points of particular interest or difficulty as regards the use of individual words and phrases are discussed. It is important to remember that this section is not intended to be a dictionary: in fact, the meaning of the term 'vocabulary' has been deliberately interpreted in a very wide sense to allow concentration on a wide range of features which raise special problems for the foreign learner of English. Many of the entries concern idioms, colloquialisms, and unusual or restricted uses which might be difficult— or in some cases impossible—to find in a dictionary; but the use of a reliable dictionary remains important if full benefit is to be obtained from the course. In many instances, attention is drawn to the characteristic ways in which vocabulary is used in different varieties of language.

The approach to the *Grammar Notes* has been very similar to that just outlined for Vocabulary, and it is again important that the notes should be supplemented by reference to a good English grammar.

Neither the *Notes* nor the *Language Notes* attempt to be exhaustive. They are selective, and intentionally leave a large number of things to be followed up by the student himself. It must not be assumed that any word, phrase, or grammatical construction that is mentioned in the notes has been fully dealt with: there may always be further instances, either in the same passage or in another part of the course. Cross-referencing has been

done at points where it seemed that useful comparisons could be made or interesting contrasts noted; but there is very much more that the careful student can do for himself.

Finally, a note on terminology. No extensive knowledge of linguistic theory is necessary in order to follow this course, and the terminology used is largely non-technical. A few terms have been used whose meaning is generally well known, such as 'subject', 'verb', 'adverbial', 'noun', and so on; but the attempt has been to make points clear by means of simple explanations supported by examples, and reliance on terminology has been reduced to a minimum. It is worth noting that the word 'phrase' has been used a great deal in a deliberately loose sense as a convenient means of referring to almost any bit of language which needed to be commented on.

Part 1

Contents

- 1 A news report.
- 2 A feature article.
- 3 Part of a news bulletin.
- 4 A broadcast talk.
- 5 Extracts from a football commentary.
- 6 Part of a lecture.
- 7 Part of a sermon.
- 8 Part of a political speech.
- 9 Part of a travelogue.
- 10 An extract from a book on literary style.

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Part 2

Part 3

- 1 An exchange of letters.
- 2 A telephone conversation.
- 3 A letter of application.
- 4 A company chairman's report.
- 5 Part of a stock-market report.
- 6 Extracts from two operating manuals.
- 7 Examples of advertisements from television and the press.
- 8 Part of the directions for filling in a tax-return.
- 9 Part of a lease.
- 10 An extract from a chemistry text-book.

- 1 About a football commentary.
- 2 About a washing-machine.
- 3 About a lecture.
- 4 About the directions for filling in a tax-return.
- About a sermon.
- 6 About an advertisement.
- 7 About a letter of application.
- 8 A letter about a lease.
- 9 An exchange of letters about a travelogue.
- 10 A letter about a broadcast talk.

Vocabulary

Part I Culture

The kind of English used in cultural situations and for the purposes of entertainment and leisure.



The language of the press:

A News Report

Blaze at charity bonfire damages warehouses

Two firemen were overcome by fumes and several bystanders slightly injured in a fire last night at Paxton, Kent.

The blaze was caused when flames from a Guy Fawkes night bonfire organised in support of local charities spread to nearby warehouses.

Firemen battled against the flames for several hours before getting them under control, and at one time there were ten fire-engines in attendance at the blaze—the largest in this part of Kent for more than five years.

Strong winds hampered operations, and at first there were fears that showers of sparks might reach other warehouses some distance away, one of which—a paint-store—could have exploded.

But firemen succeeded in confining the outbreak to warehouses containing less inflammable materials.

The injured were allowed home after treatment at the local hospital, but one of the firemen was detained for observation.

Early this morning a dense pall of smoke hung over the warehouses while firemen continued to damp down the still-smouldering debris.

Damage

According to the owner of the warehouses, local builders' merchant Mr. Arthur Peel, damage was 'difficult to estimate at this stage'.

'The warehouses worst affected contained a large quantity of timber and building materials,' said Mr. Peel. It seems unlikely that much of this can have escaped damage, in which case the cost is likely

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to run into several thousand pounds.'

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Interviewed at the scene last night, the Chief of the Paxton fire-brigade, 42 year old Mr. Fred Banks, who is responsible for bonfire-night safety measures in the district, said that he thought the fire was 'very unfortunate'.

The organizers had consulted him about the safety of the site, and he had approved it, 'provided the bonfire itself was kept in the centre of the site, and that only wood was burnt on it'.

It seemed, however, that someone had thrown paper on to the fire, and the strong wind had carried some of this to the warehouses.

There had also been reports that rival gangs of youths had been seen throwing fireworks at each other near the warehouses, and this might also have had something to do with the fire starting.

Asked about the advisability of allowing a fire at all so near to buildings, Mr. Banks pointed out that there was no other open space available, and that the risk involved was negligible—given that the safety regulations would be 'strictly observed'.

When told of the fire chief's remarks, the bonfire's organiser, local businessman Mr. Ron Green, denied that anyone had put paper on the bonfire.

'Aware of danger'

Mr. Green, 43, said that all the safety precautions suggested by the fire-brigade had been carried out in full—'We were well aware of the danger to the warehouses if these were not observed,' he added.

The wind, in his opinion, had been the cause of the fire spreading. It had been 'unexpectedly strong', and in spite of efforts by himself and his helpers some sparks had been blown on to the warehouse roofs.

When asked if he thought it was wise to go on using events in which there was an element of danger—such as bonfires—to raise money for charity, Mr. Green said that he could see no harm in it provided that the organizers took proper precautions.

Popular

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