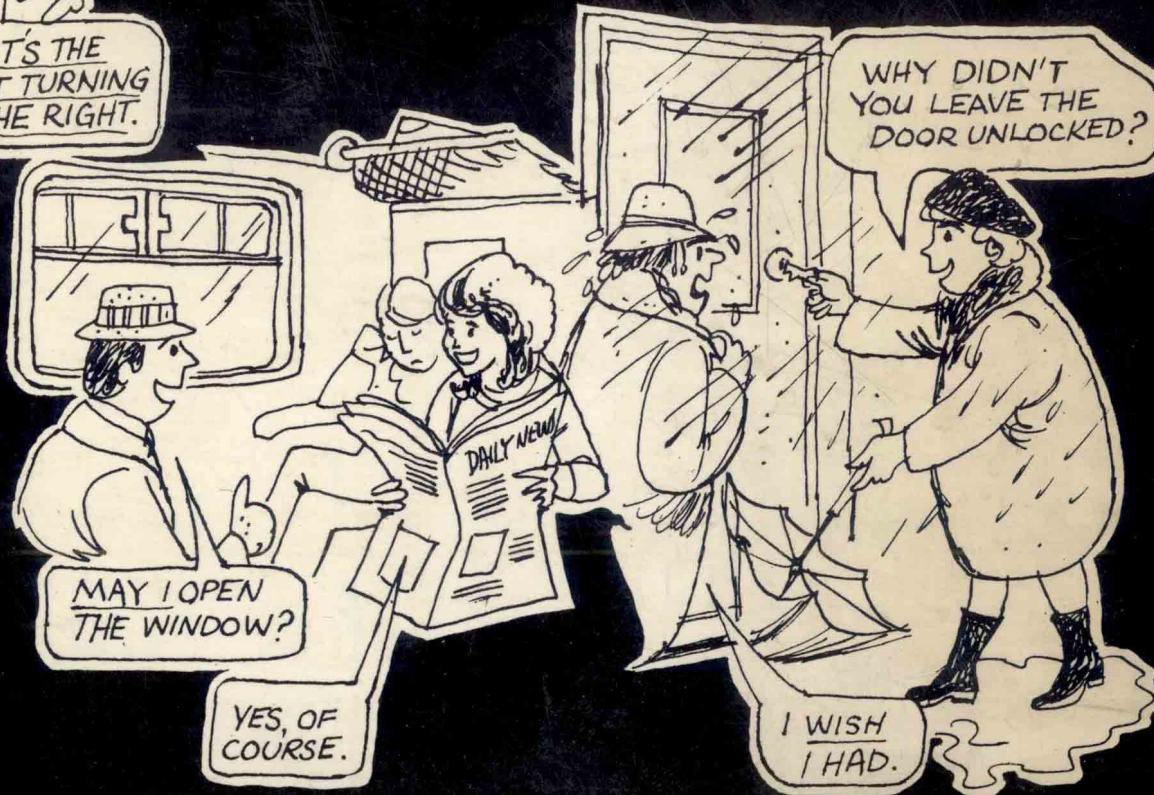


# Survival English

J. F. de Freitas



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*J. F. de Freitas*

Practice in everyday  
communication

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I should like to acknowledge my debt to the three inspirers of this book:  
1 H.E. Palmer, whose challenging books first led me into the teaching of oral English;

2 Helen Monfries, for having turned drills into an art;

3 and David Wilkins, for having liberated us from the rigours of the grammatical syllabus.

To them, in equal parts, my humble thanks.

To Howard Davies, without whose help and encouragement the book would not have been written, my special thanks are due.

J. F. de Freitas

# Introduction

## WHO THE BOOK IS FOR

The book is intended for:

- 1 the learner who has a good formal knowledge of the language but is not always able to apply this in everyday speech; this includes
- 2 learners both at the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency, such as those preparing for the Cambridge examinations, the Arels oral tests or examinations of a similar standard.

## WHAT THE BOOK IS FOR

The book is a practical handbook for:

- 1 classroom work
- 2 private study
- 3 reference

It aims to:

- 1 focus the learner's attention on the spoken language;
- 2 provide him with a handbook of important notional categories and their use;
- 3 help him 'survive' wherever current English is required.

## ABOUT THE BOOK

This book comprises materials used over several years with adult learners of English as a foreign language in London. The students came from all over the world, from very different social backgrounds and with wide-ranging levels of ability in English. A 'speech workshop' was established, aimed to give students of all levels practice in spoken English. As its classes were voluntary, extra-curricular and of very mixed grades, it was necessary to devise materials not geared to a syllabus but arising spontaneously from students' needs and requests. Their inability to apologise effectively on arriving late, for example, was the source of the sections on *Apology* and *Cause*; their charming but often awkward ways of expressing thanks led to the unit on *Gratitude*. Thus, in the course of time, a series of units were evolved, dealing with those categories of expression where the lack of colloquial fluency was most felt.

These categories are now arranged alphabetically, and under each heading will be found the commonest expressions in current use. It is hoped that the selection of categories is comprehensive, but it cannot pretend to be exhaustive. Within each category only those expressions

likely to be most useful to the learner have been included, and language too formal or subtle to be of relevance to non-native speakers has been avoided. Since the book is intended to be a handbook for practice, and not a course book, language has not been graded. The teacher and/or student is free to select categories wherever the need arises. It will of course surprise no student of language to see that some of these expressions appear in several categories: language after all varies in meaning according to context, and cannot always be confined within fixed boundaries.

For the sake of clarity and easy reference, the 'expressions' are shown in clear contexts. It is left to the teacher to clarify further if necessary. He is likewise free to add or omit expressions as he sees fit. Intonation marks have been avoided as these have been found to be less a help than a hindrance to all. Detailed suggestions for classroom procedure are given in the next section.

Whether the book is to be used in the classroom or by the student on his own for study or reference, the accompanying tape will be an indispensable aid to the mastery of correct pronunciation and intonation.

## TO THE TEACHER

Each unit consists of a **Presentation and practice** section followed by **three exercises**:

- 1 Further practice
- 2 Dialogue
- 3 Free practice

A unit takes about an hour to complete in the classroom. The use of a tape recorder is recommended wherever possible. For the presentation of these units, let us take as an example Unit 1: *Accusal and defence*.

### **Presentation and practice (BOOKS SHUT)**

(a) Ensure that the students know the vocabulary that features in the **accusal** section (Section A).

(b) Introduce the topic. **Accuse** students of things you know they haven't done (e.g. being late; not doing homework; missing class, etc). Allow them to **defend** themselves as best they can. They may simply deny the accusation ineffectually, smile, or just look puzzled. Reassure them that what they have said is possible, but that they need to learn to defend themselves more effectively, in different ways and situations. Stimulate motivation by explaining that they must learn to stand their own ground without sounding unnecessarily rude, etc.

**(c) Oral presentation and practice:** The students respond either chorally, in groups, or individually.

TEACHER You left the lights on.

CLASS You left the lights on.

TEACHER I don't think I did. (*polite*)

CLASS I don't think I did.

TEACHER Of course I didn't. (*assertive*)

CLASS Of course I didn't.

Continue in the same way through the list of expressions denoting **Defence** (Section B). The class should imitate as closely as possible the tone of voice used by the teacher (or tape) to indicate the particular mood. Meaning and mood can be conveyed by the teacher with the aid of gesture and facial expression. It is imperative that the learner should:

- 1 understand what he is saying
- 2 appreciate the link between tone and meaning
- 3 acquire the appropriate intonation

(The use of the recording is an obvious advantage for classwork and essential for the student working on his own.)

**(d) Practice in pairs (BOOKS OPEN)** The learners are now prepared to practise on their own, role-playing in pairs. The teacher monitors the class discreetly, interfering as little as possible. Only when there are genuine difficulties or gross mispronunciations should the teacher correct. The learners are free to practise in as relaxed and natural a fashion as possible. At this stage they begin to feel that they are conducting a normal dialogue and not merely going through a drill. Learners wishing to use variations or alternatives to those on the printed page are encouraged to do so.

#### **Exercise 1: Further practice (BOOKS OPEN)**

This section is an extension of the **Presentation and practice** section. The students practise in pairs, or in groups, changing partners and roles. The teacher continues to guide them but only when necessary. This exercise is intended to take the learner one step closer to 'free' communication, so the less interference from the teacher the better.

#### **Exercise 2: Dialogue (BOOKS SHUT/OPEN)**

The language that the learners have been practising in varied contexts is now placed in a situation. The main object of this is to introduce variety into the learning process and also to relate the language to a realistic incident. It should not be thought that the situation is any more than one of innumerable settings that could be used to contextualise the language. The learner will understand that he might have to 'defend'

himself in all sorts of unforeseeable situations and that linguistic adjustments might be necessary.

**To present the dialogue: (BOOKS SHUT)**

- 1 Teach new vocabulary, if any, in suitable contexts (e.g. fares; Oxford Circus).
- 2 Promote interest in topic: (e.g. D'you travel by bus? D'you like it? Are the fares high? Have you ever been given the wrong change? etc). Use visuals and other aids if necessary.
- 3 In the absence of the tape, role-play the dialogue – the students listening.  
Play it again, in short utterances – the students repeating in chorus or individually.  
Explain the importance of intonation. If necessary, exaggerate these features for more effective mimicry.
- 4 (BOOKS OPEN)  
The students are now ready to work in pairs, changing partners and roles whenever they wish, with the options in italics. In some dialogues no options are given. In others there are gaps for the students to fill in as they wish.

### **Exercise 3: Free practice**

The 'freer' the practice in this last section the better. Learners should be encouraged to converse uninterruptedly, with little or no interference from the teacher.

The written dialogues are versions of their own conversations. These can be corrected at home by the teacher and returned to the learners for possible renderings in class later.

*J. F. de Freitas*

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**1** Tell someone that he or she:

- 1 told you a lie
- 2 stole your gloves/handbag/passport
- 3 didn't pay the rent/fare/bill
- 4 didn't renew his/her visa
- 5 owes you some money

He or she will respond by using one of the expressions in Section B. (You may need to change the verb tense.)

EXAMPLE

- A You owe me some money.  
B No, I don't. I paid you back last month.

on the bus



**2** A Any more fares?

B Oxford Circus, please.

A The fare's 30p now, sir.

B Yes, I know.

A But you only gave me 10p.

B No, . . . . . I . . . . .

A Look, here's the 10p you gave me.

B Are . . . . .?

A Absolutely sure.

B I'm sorry, but I don't think . . . . . But anyhow here's another 20p.

A You still owe me £10, you know.

B No, I don't . . . . . (right)

A Oh, yes I am.

B . . . . .?

A Absolutely.

a debt



**3** Accuse someone of something. The person will defend him/herself. When you have finished talking write down in dialogue form the conversation you have had.

# Advice

Here are some ways of giving advice in English.



## A

I've got a terrible cold.  
a bad headache.  
an awful toothache.  
an earache.

I've failed all my exams.

I've lost my passport.  
wallet.  
handbag.  
cheque book.  
umbrella.

I don't feel at all well.

I don't know where to go for my holidays.

I don't know whether to take up law or medicine.

## B

Why don't you . . . . . ? (I would if I were you.)

If I were you I'd . . . . .

(I think) you should . . . . .

(I think) you'd better . . . . .

I advise you to . . . . .

You must . . . . .

*formal  
emphatic*

If I were you I wouldn't . . . . .

I don't think you should . . . . .

You'd better not . . . . .

I advise you not to . . . . .

Don't . . . . .

You mustn't . . . . . }

*emphatic*

- 1 Advise me to:**  
work harder/worry less/eat more/eat less/get married  
**Advise me not to:**  
go to bed so late/waste my time/spend so much money/be rude to  
a policeman

*friendly advice*



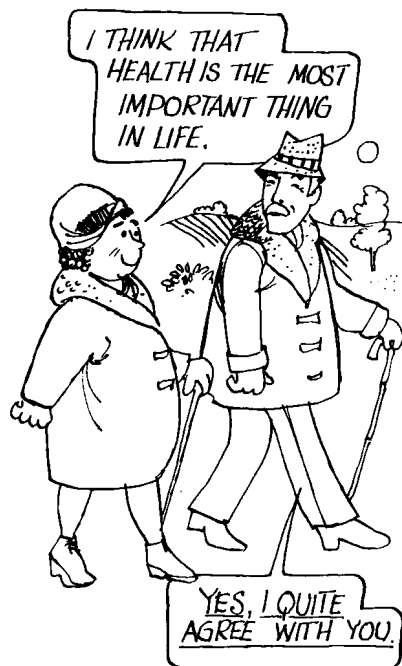
- 2** A I'm afraid I've had a terrible row with my . . . . . (1) What shall I do?  
B (2) . . . . . apologise. (?)  
A Oh, but I can't. It wasn't my fault.  
B Maybe, but . . . . . (2) say it was your fault.

- |            |                                |
|------------|--------------------------------|
| (1)        | (2)                            |
| parents    | Why don't you . . . . . ?      |
| boyfriend  | If I were you I'd . . . . .    |
| girlfriend | I think you should . . . . .   |
| husband    | I think you'd better . . . . . |
| wife       | I advise you to . . . . .      |
| daughter   | You must . . . . .             |
| son        |                                |
| boss       |                                |
| partner    |                                |

- 3** A friend of yours asks you for advice. He/She doesn't like his/her job; is short of money; doesn't like the place where he/she lives. Advise your friend. When you have finished talking write down in dialogue form the conversation you have had.

# Agreement and disagreement

Ways of expressing agreement or disagreement with someone's views.



**A** I think (that) . . . . .

health  
love  
money  
education

is the most important thing in life

television  
the cinema  
the theatre

is the best entertainment in the world

nearly all

policemen  
politicians  
officials

are corrupt

tea is nicer than coffee  
travelling is always pleasant  
all wars are evil

**B** (Yes,) . . .

I agree.  
I (quite) agree (with you).  
It is. They are.  
So do I.  
I think so too.  
I (certainly) agree (with you).  
It (certainly) is.  
They (certainly) are.  
I suppose so. }  
If you say so. }

*weak*

(No,) . . . . . (Sorry,) . . . . .

I don't think so.  
I don't agree.  
I'm afraid I don't agree.  
I think you're mistaken (there).  
I couldn't agree with you less.  
Nonsense.  
Rubbish.  
That's ridiculous. }

*strong*

*colloquial*

at the movies



at the cinema



- 1** Tell someone that you think:
- 1 English food is excellent
  - 2 blondes are prettier than brunettes
  - 3 winter is nicer than summer
  - 4 fish is better than meat
  - 5 hard work is very pleasant
- He/She will agree or disagree with you.

- 2** Sue and her boyfriend John have been to see a film. He liked it. She didn't. They're close friends so they talk to each other casually.

HIM Now that really was a great film.

HER *Couldn't agree with you less. (I don't agree)*

HIM The best we've seen this year, surely.

HER *Nonsense! (Rubbish)*

Margaret and a friend of hers have also been to see a film. They both liked it. They're not close friends so they don't talk to each other very casually.

MARGARET I thought that quite a good film, didn't you?

FRIEND *Yes, I did. (I did too)*

MARGARET It's one of the best that have come out this year, I think.

FRIEND *I quite agree with you. (Yes, it is)*

- 3** Make any statements you like. Someone will either agree or disagree with you.

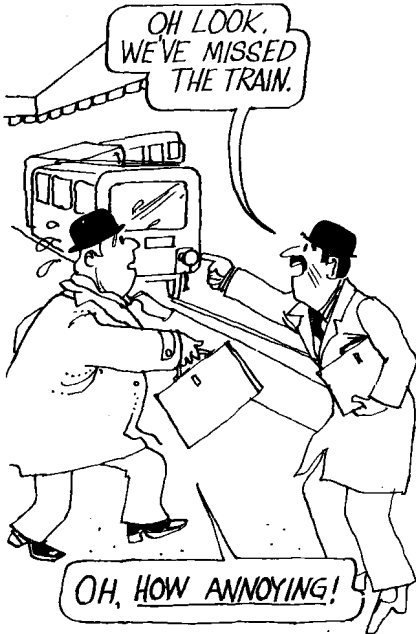
EXAMPLE

A I think English is terribly easy, don't you?

B No, I don't agree. I think it's hard.

# Annoyance

What do you say when something annoys you (= irritates you)? Here are some of the ways in which you might respond.



## A

We've missed | the train.  
| the boat.  
| the plane.

Somebody has | hit your car.  
| stolen your bicycle.  
| taken your coat.

You're too late. The (film/play/programme/show) has already started.  
The last train has just left.  
The shops are all closed today.  
I'm sorry, we're sold out./There are no tickets left.

## B

(Oh)...

No!

How annoying!

How very annoying!

Isn't that annoying!

How infuriating!

Isn't that infuriating!

How maddening!

Isn't that maddening!

What a nuisance!

What a bore!

Hell!

Damn!

Blast!

*colloquial*

at the airport



- 1** What might you say if:
- 1 you lost your car keys?
  - 2 you burned the dinner?
  - 3 your electric lights fused?
  - 4 your boyfriend/girlfriend was late?
  - 5 you locked yourself out of your flat or house?

EXAMPLE

- A I've lost my car keys.  
B How very annoying!

- 2** A Flight BE 407 to Rome is delayed. Will passengers please wait in the lounge.  
B Oh, how annoying!  
A The time of departure will be announced as soon as possible.  
B It's infuriating! I had to be in Rome by five.
- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Paris    | Oh no!  |
| Madrid   | How irritating!                                       |
| Prague   | Isn't that maddening!                                 |
| Lisbon   | What a bore!  |
| Athens   | What a nuisance!                                      |
| Bonn     | Damn!   |
| Istanbul | Just my luck! (can also be used to express annoyance) |

- 3** Tell someone something annoying, for example: 'You've got ink all over your jeans.' He or she will respond by using an expression of annoyance. When you have finished talking, write down in dialogue form the conversation you have had.

# Apology

There are various ways of apologising if you feel you have offended or upset someone. Usually, the other person accepts your apology and reassures you.



**A**

You've | taken my pen/seat.  
| forgotten to return my book.  
| dropped some ash on my new carpet.

You're late. I've been waiting for an hour.  
You're late for class again.  
Why were you so rude to me?  
Why did you lie to me?  
You gave me the wrong change.  
You jumped the queue.  
You've hurt my feelings.

**B**

(Oh) Have I?/Am I?/Did I?/Was I? . . . .

I'm sorry.  
I'm (so/very/terribly/awfully) sorry.  
I apologise.  
I do apologise.  
Sorry. (I didn't mean to./I didn't mean to be.)  
Sorry. It was wrong of me.  
(Please) forgive me.

**A**

Reassurance

(That's/It's) all right/OK.  
All right./OK.  
Never mind.



**1** Practise with someone using expressions of apology and reassurance in the following situations:

- 1 You accidentally step on someone's foot
- 2 You accidentally take someone's drink
- 3 You are rude to a friend and wish to apologise
- 4 You are late for an appointment
- 5 You forget to telephone a friend

*forgive me, darling.*



**2** HER You didn't ring me last night. You said you would.

HIM *I'm sorry. (I'm so sorry/I do apologise)*

HER And why were you so rude to me at lunch?

HIM Was I? *Sorry. I didn't mean to be. (Sorry. It was wrong of me/ Sorry)*

HER And why are you yawning now? Are you bored?

HIM *Forgive me, darling. I'm very tired. (I'm terribly sorry/I'm awfully sorry)*

**3** Someone has said or done things that offend or upset you. Tell him/her so. The person will **apologise**. You will **accept the apology**. When you have finished talking, **write down** in dialogue form the conversation you have had.