English Conversation
For ESL Students

Jacqueline Melvin
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Introduction

What you will learn from this book.

This little conversation book will enable you to ask and answer questions in a natural way. There are several situations such as shopping, in the restaurant, at the bus stop etc. There are also job interview dialogues for those of you who would like to practise asking and answering questions before going for a job. The book rounds off with idioms and phrasal verbs used in natural conversation.
A BLIND DATE
*A blind date = when a man takes a chance and meets a woman he doesn’t know and vice versa, with the hope that the relationship can develop into a romance.

Paul and Anne made arrangements to meet in a London pub. It’s Saturday afternoon.

Fill the gaps with the correct word. When the verb is ‘be’ or another auxiliary verb, use the contracted form when it is possible to do so. Try to guess the meaning of the words marked with an asterisk*. There is a glossary at the end of the conversation which explains their meanings.

Anne: Hi, _____ you Paul?
Paul: Yes I ____. Hi Anne. Great to _____ you at long last.*
Paul: What _____ I get you to drink Anne?
Anne: I _____ just have a coke please. What are you _____ Paul?
Paul: I think I _____ have a shandy*.

Anne and Paul are now seated at the table
Anne: _____ you English Paul?
Paul: No I_____ not. I_____ Canadian.
Anne: Whereabouts in Canada _____ you from?
Paul: I _____ from Toronto.
Anne: _____ it very cold in Toronto?
Paul: It sure _____; especially in winter. _____ snows a lot.
Paul: _____ you from England Anne?
Anne: Yes I _____ . I_____ from London. I _____born within earshot* of the chimes of Big Ben. You know what they say. Anyone born within earshot of the chimes _____ a true cockney.*
Paul: Really! I didn’t know that. You learn something new every day, _____ you?
Anne: You sure do.
Anne: What brings you to London Paul?
Paul: I_____ here for work. I was posted here by the company I work for in Toronto.
Anne: Very interesting. May I ask you what you do?*
Paul: I’m _____ electronics engineer.
Anne: Do you like your job Paul?
Paul: I love it.
Anne: How old _____ you Paul, if you don’t mind my asking?* You look pretty young to be an electronics engineer.
Paul: I’m twenty seven. I graduated when I was 23. I’ve been _____ now for nearly 4 years. I was lucky enough to find a job soon after I graduated.
Paul: How old _____ you Anne?
Anne: I’m thirty; three years your senior.*
Paul: I would never have thought you were thirty. You look about 23.
Anne: Thanks Paul. Everyone tells me so. Youthful looks *run in the family. My mother’s fifty eight and she looks forty.
Paul: Do you have a job Anne?
Anne: Yes I _____. I’m an accountant with a well known London company.
Paul: Wow! You _____ be good with numbers then.
Anne: Yes Paul. I _____ a passion for this kind of work. As well as enjoying my job, I also _____ a good salary so I am happy with my life at the moment.
Paul: Great! Job satisfaction is very important and if you _____ a good salary, it is a real bonus.
Anne: Where _____ you live Paul?
Paul: I live _____ Chelsea.

Anne: Chelsea? How wonderful. It’s a really beautiful area.

Paul: And where _____ you live Anne?

Anne: I live close _____ Euston railway station. I live there because it’s a five minute walk to get to work in the morning. I save a lot of time on travelling and a lot of money on public transport. You know it’s very expensive to move around London. The only disadvantage to _____ close to the railway station is the noise of the trains. But on the whole, I _____ happy.

Paul: So you _____ live with your parents then?

Anne: No I don’t. I left home when I _____ twenty five. My parents live _____ Brighton. I visit _____ every Sunday. I have a younger brother. He lives with my parents.

Paul: How old _____ he?

Anne: He’s 22. He_____ studying to be a lawyer at the moment.

Paul: Wow! What’s _____ name?

Anne: _____ name’s James

Paul: Does he look like you?

Anne: No he doesn’t. I look like my father and James looks like my mother. I’m blonde with green eyes and James is the opposite. He’s got dark hair and dark brown eyes. He’s also much taller than I am. What about you Paul? Do you have _____ brothers or sisters?

Paul: I’ve got twin sisters. They are older _____ me. They’re 31. One of _____ is called Jennifer and the other’s called Janet.

Anne: Wow! Do they look alike?

Paul: Yes they do as a matter of fact. You can’t tell them apart. They _____ identical. Like two peas in a pod.*

Anne: What _____ they look like?

Paul: They’re both as tall _____ I am. They look quite like me but not exactly. They’ve got the same colour of hair as I have, though my hair’s a bit curlier _____ theirs. One difference is the colour of their eyes. Mine are
deep blue and theirs are light blue but we’ve got the same shape of eyes.

**Anne**: Do they dress in the same way?

**Paul**: They _____ to when they were younger but now they dress differently. They’ve got different tastes in clothes. Jennifer prefers casual clothes whereas Janet likes to wear smarter clothes.

**Anne**: Do they work?

**Paul**: As a matter of fact* they do. Believe it or not, they _____ work together. They work in a company in Toronto as graphic designers. They both went for the same job interview. This caused a bit of confusion. The company were looking for four graphic designers at the time and hired both of them.

**Anne**: How funny! Have they got the same personalities?

**Paul**: Almost the same, though Jennifer is a bit mean. Janet is the opposite. She’s very generous, but for the rest they _____ very similar. They both love reading and going for long walks with their three dogs.

**Paul**: Would you care for* another drink?

**Anne**: Thanks Paul. I’m alright for now. I’ve still got _____ coke left. What about you? Are you _____ another one?

**Paul**: I think I_____ have another shandy. I’m going to the bar. I_____ be back in a tick*.

***

**ANSWERS**

**Anne**: Hi, are you Paul?

**Paul**: Yes I am. Hi Anne. Great to meet you at long last.*

Paul: What can I get you to drink Anne?

**Anne**: I’ll just have a coke please. What are you having Paul?

**Paul**: I think I’ll have a shandy.

**Anne and Paul are now seated at the table**

**Anne**: Are you English Paul?
Paul: No I’m not. I’m Canadian.
Anne: Whereabouts in Canada are you from?
Paul: I’m from Toronto.
Anne: Is it very cold in Toronto?
Paul: It sure is; especially in winter. It snows a lot.
Paul: Are you from England Anne?
Anne: Yes I am. I’m from London. I was born within earshot of the chimes of Big Ben. You know what they say. Anyone born within earshot of the chimes is a true cockney.*
Paul: Really! I didn’t know that. You learn something new every day, don’t you?
Anne: You sure do.
Anne: What brings you to London Paul?
Paul: I’m here for work. I was posted here by the company I work for in Toronto.
Anne: Very interesting. May I ask you what you do?*
Paul: I’m an electronics engineer.
Anne: Do you like your job Paul?
Paul: I love it.
Anne: How old are you Paul, if you don’t mind my asking?* You look pretty young to be an electronics engineer.
Paul: I’m twenty seven. I graduated when I was 23. I’ve been working now for nearly 4 years. I was lucky enough to find a job soon after I graduated.
Paul: How old are you Anne?
Anne: I’m thirty; three years your senior.*
Paul: I would never have thought you were thirty. You look about 23.
Anne: Thanks Paul. Everyone tells me so. Youthful looks run in the
family. My mother’s fifty eight and she looks forty.

Paul: Do you have a job Anne?

Anne: Yes I do. I’m an accountant with a well known London company.

Paul: Wow! You must be good with numbers then.

Anne: Yes Paul. I have a passion for this kind of work. As well as enjoying my job, I also earn a good salary so I am happy with my life at the moment.

Paul: Great! Job satisfaction is very important and if you earn a good salary, it is a real bonus.

Anne: Where do you live Paul?

Paul: I live in Chelsea.

Anne: Chelsea? How wonderful. It’s a really beautiful area.

Paul: And where do you live Anne?

Anne: I live close to Euston railway station. I live there because it’s a five minute walk to get to work in the morning. I save a lot of time on travelling and a lot of money on public transport. You know it’s very expensive to move around London. The only disadvantage to living close to the railway station is the noise of the trains, but on the whole, I’m happy.

Paul. So you don’t live with your parents then?

Anne: No I don’t. I left home when I was twenty five. My parents live in Brighton. I visit them every Sunday. I have a younger brother. He lives with my parents.

Paul: How old is he?

Anne: He’s 22. He’s studying to be a lawyer at the moment.

Paul: Wow! What’s his name?

Anne: His name’s James

Paul: Does he look like you?

Anne: No he doesn’t. I look like my father and James looks like my mother. I’m blonde with green eyes and James is the opposite. He’s got
dark hair and dark brown eyes. He’s also much taller than I am. What about you Paul? Do you have any brothers or sisters?

**Paul:** I’ve got twin sisters. They are older than me. They’re 31. One of them is called Jennifer and the other’s called Janet.

**Anne:** Wow! Do they look alike?

**Paul:** Yes they do as a matter of fact. You can’t tell them apart. They’re identical. Like two peas in a pod.*

**Anne:** What do they look like?

**Paul:** They’re both as tall as I am. They look quite like me but not exactly. They’ve got the same colour of hair as I have, though my hair’s a bit curlier than theirs. One difference is the colour of their eyes. Mine are deep blue and theirs are light blue but we’ve got the same shape of eyes.

**Anne:** Do they dress in the same way?

**Paul:** They used to when they were younger but now they dress differently. They’ve got different tastes in clothes. Jennifer prefers casual clothes whereas Janet likes to wear smarter clothes.

**Anne:** Do they work?

**Paul:** As a matter of fact they do. Believe it or not, they both work together. They work in a company in Toronto as graphic designers. They both went for the same job interview. This caused a bit of confusion. The company were looking for four graphic designers at the time and hired both of them.

**Anne:** How funny! Have they got the same personalities?

**Paul:** Almost the same, though Jennifer is a bit mean. Janet is the opposite. She’s very generous, but for the rest they’re very similar. They both like reading and going for long walks with their three dogs.

**Paul:** Would you care for* another drink?

**Anne:** Thanks Paul. I’m alright for now. I’ve still got some coke left. What about you? Are you having another one?

**Paul:** I think I’ll have another shandy. I’m going to the bar. I’ll be back in a tick*.

***
GLOSSARY OF EXPRESSIONS USED IN THE CONVERSATION

At long last – finally – we use this expression when we are relieved that a long wait for someone or something is finally over.

Shandy – half beer and half lemonade. It is drunk a lot in the pubs in Scotland.

To run in the family – to go from one generation to the next and to the next again and so on.

A cockney is a person born in London – a true cockney is a person born within earshot of the chimes of Big Ben. This means at a distance that is close enough to Big Ben to hear the chimes.

May I ask you what you do? This is an indirect question. It is more polite than the direct equivalent ‘what do you do?’ Indirect questions are normally used when you don’t know a person or if you don’t know them very well.

If you don’t mind my asking – this is a very polite way of speaking. It shows the listener that you don’t want to be invasive.

I’m three years your senior – this is another way of saying – I’m three years older than you.

Like two peas in a pod – this is a common English simile. Since peas all look identical, we use this expression when comparing two people who are identical in appearance or in nature.

Would you care for another drink? – this is a very polite form of ‘do you want’ or ‘would you like’.

Would you care for + noun/would you care + infinitive – ‘would you care to dance?’ This expression is only used in first person singular. It cannot used in the future or the past.

I’ll be back in a tick – this means ‘I’ll be back very soon’.

***

QUESTION FORMATION

1. What ____________?

A coke
2. What _____________?
A Shandy

3. What nationality _____?
Canadian

4. Whereabouts in _____?
Toronto

5. Where _____________?
London

6. What’s _____________?
It’s cold and it snows a lot

7. Why _____________?
For work

8. What________________?
An electronics engineer

9. How old _____________Paul?
Twenty seven (27)

10. When _____________?
When he was twenty three (23)

11. How long _____________?
For nearly four years.

12. When _____________ a job?
Soon after he graduated.

13. How old _____________?
Thirty (30)

14. How old _____________?
She looks about twenty three (23)

15. How old __________?

She’s fifty eight (58)

16. Does she __________age?

No she doesn’t. She looks about forty (40)

17. What ____________?

She’s an accountant

18. Where ____________?

In Chelsea

19. Where ____________?

Close to Euston railway station

20. Why ____________?

Because it only takes me five minutes to walk to work.

21. When ____________?

When she was twenty five (25)

22. Where ____________?

In Brighton

23. When ____________?

Every Sunday

24. How old ____________?

He’s twenty two (22)

25. What ____________ at the moment?

To be a lawyer

26. What’s ____________?

James
27. Does __________ Anne?
No he doesn’t

28. Who __________?
She looks like her father.

29. Who __________?
He looks like his mother.

30. What __________?
She’s blonde with green eyes

31. What __________?
He’s got dark hair and dark brown eyes

32. Does __________?
Yes he does. He has two twin sisters?

33. How __________?
They’re thirty one (31)

34. What __________?
Jennifer and Janet

35. What __________?
They’re graphic designers

36. Where __________?
In a company in Toronto

37. How many ________?
Four

38. How ____________dress?
In casual clothes

39. How ____________ dress?
In smart clothes

40. What do the twins ______?
They both like reading and going for long walks with their three dogs.

***

ANSWERS

1. What does Anne drink? A coke
2. What does Paul drink? A Shandy
3. What nationality is Paul? Canadian
4. Whereabouts in Canada is he from? Toronto
5. Where’s Anne from? London
6. What’s the weather like in Canada? It’s cold and it snows a lot
7. Why’s Paul in London? For work
8. What’s Paul’s job/what does he do? (Both questions mean the same) He’s an electronics engineer
9. How old is Paul? Twenty seven (27)
10. When did he start to work? When he was twenty three (23)
11. How long has he been working? For nearly four years
12. When did he find a job? Soon after he graduated
13. How old is Anne? Thirty (30)
14. How old does he look? She looks about twenty three (23)
15. How old is Anne’s mother? She’s fifty eight (58)
16. Does she look her age? No she doesn’t. She looks about forty (40)
17. What’s Anne’s job/what does Anne do? Both questions mean the same. She’s an accountant
18. Where does Paul live? In Chelsea
19. Where does Anne live? Close to Euston railway station
20. Why does she live there? Because it’s a five minute walk to get to work in the morning.

21. When did she leave home? When she was twenty five (25)

22. Where do her parents and brother live? In Brighton

23. When does she visit them? Every Sunday

24. How old is her brother? He’s twenty two (22)

25. What’s he studying to be at the moment? To be a lawyer

26. What’s his name? James

27. Does he look like Anne? No he doesn’t

28. Who does Anne look like? She looks like her father.

29. Who does Paul look like? or What does Anne’s brother look like? He looks like his mother.

30. What does Anne look like? She’s blonde with green eyes

31. What does James look like? or What does Anne’s brother look like? He’s got dark hair and dark brown eyes

32. Does Paul have any brothers or sisters? Yes he does. He has two twin sisters?

33. How old are they? They’re thirty one (31)

34. What are their names? or What are they called? Jennifer and Janet

35. What are their jobs/what do they do? They’re graphic designers

36. Where do they work? In a company in Toronto

37. How many graphic designers were the company looking for? Four

38. How does Jennifer dress? In casual clothes

39. How does Janet dress? In smart clothes

40. What do the twins do the twins like doing (in their free time)? They both like reading and going for long walks with their three dogs.

***

EVERYDAY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Two ways of saying the same thing
Where are you from? I’m from France
Where do you come from? I come from France
Where is Luigi from? He’s from Italy
Where does Luigi come from? He comes from Italy
Where are Jan and Pete from? They’re from Holland.
Where do Jan and Pete come from? They come from Holland

How are you? I’m fine thank you
How is Pete? He’s very well thank you
How is Sharon? She’s not too bad thank you
How are your parents? They’re well thank you
How are we? We’re not so bad thank you

Three ways of saying the same thing
What’s your job? I’m a bus driver
What do you do? I’m a bus driver
What do you do for a living? I’m a bus driver

What’s his job? He’s a doctor
What does he do? He’s a doctor
What does he do for a living? He’s a doctor

What’s her job? She’s a secretary
What does she do? She’s a secretary
What does she do for a living? She’s a secretary

19
What are our jobs? We’re policemen
What do we do? We’re policemen
What do we do for a living? We’re secretaries
***
What are their jobs? They’re engineers
What do they do? They’re engineers
What do they do for a living? They’re engineers
***

CORRECT THE WRONG INFORMATION

The following sentences are incorrect. Correct the information. There is an example to get you started.

1. In the pub Anne drinks a beer.
   No she doesn’t. She drinks a coke.
2. Paul is French.

____________________

3. Anne’s from New York.

____________________

4. It’s very hot in Canada.

____________________

5. Paul’s on holiday in London.

____________________

6. Paul’s a lawyer.

____________________

7. Paul’s thirty three.

____________________

8. Paul started to work when he was twenty five.
9. Paul has been working for nearly ten years.

10. Paul found a job while he was still at university.

11. Anne’s twenty nine.

12. Anne looks older than her age.

13. Anne’s mother is sixty eight.

14. Anne’s a shop assistant.

15. Paul lives in Knightsbridge.

16. Anne lives near Victoria station.

17. Anne left home when she was eighteen.

18. Her parents and her brother live in Scotland.

19. She visits them every Saturday.

20. Her brother is twenty one.
2. Paul is French. No he isn’t. He’s Canadian.
3. Anne’s from New York. No she isn’t. She’s from London.
4. It’s very hot in Canada. No it isn’t. It’s very cold.
5. Paul’s on holiday in London. No he isn’t. He’s there for work.
6. Paul’s a lawyer. No he isn’t. He’s an electronics engineer.
7. Paul’s thirty three. No he isn’t. He’s twenty seven.
8. Paul started to work when he was twenty five. No he didn’t. He started to work when he was twenty three.
9. Paul has been working for nearly ten years. No he hasn’t. He’s been working for nearly four years.
10. Paul found a job while he was still at university. No he didn’t. He found a job after he graduated from university.
11. Anne’s twenty nine. No she isn’t. She’s thirty.
12. Anne looks older than her age. No she doesn’t. She looks younger.
13. Anne’s mother is sixty eight. No she isn’t. She’s fifty eight.
14. Anne’s a shop assistant. No she isn’t. She’s an accountant.
16. Anne lives near Victoria station. No she doesn’t. She lives near Euston station.
17. Anne left home when she was eighteen. No she didn’t. She left home when she was twenty five.
18. Her parents and her brother live in Scotland. No they don’t. They live in Brighton.
19. She visits them every Saturday. No she doesn’t. She visits them every Sunday.
20. Her brother is twenty one. No he isn’t. He’s twenty two.
Paul and Anne like each other. They are getting on really well. They decide to have dinner together. They have just entered a restaurant in London. The waiter approaches them.

Some words have been removed. Can you understand which ones?

Waiter: Just the two of _____?
Paul: Yes
Waiter: Where _____ you like to sit?
Anne: At that table over in the corner by _____ window.
Waiter: I’m_____ but that one_____ already booked. What about* the other table near _____ window? It’s free.
Anne: Yes that’ll do.
Waiter: Here’s_____ menu.
Paul: Thanks very ______.
Paul: What are you _____ Anne? I think I_____ some steak and chips.
Anne: I’ll have the same _____ you. I love steak and chips. Shall we get a bottle _____ wine?
Paul: Yes. Red or white?
Anne: Whatever you want. I’m not fussy.*I like both.
Paul: Let’s get white then.
Waiter: Are you ready _____ order Sir? Madam, and you?
Paul: Yes. We’d _____ two steaks and chips please.
Waiter: Would you like a starter?
Anne and Paul: No thanks. We’re only having the main meal.
Waiter: _____ you like anything _____drink?
Anne: Yes please; a nice bottle of Italian wine.

Waiter: Any preferences?

Paul: No. What do you _____?

Waiter: Castelli Romani from the Roman castles.

Paul: Great!

*The waiter brings the food and wine*

Anne: This looks delicious. I_____ really hungry now.

Paul: So _____ I.

Anne: *(Takes a sip of the wine)*. Mm this wine _____ good.

Paul: Yes. Italian wine _____ always good.

*The waiter comes back to the table*

Waiter: Anything for dessert?

Paul: *(looks at Anne)* Shall we get a dessert?

Anne: *(looks at waiter)* Have you got chocolate gateau?

Waiter: Yes we _____

Anne: A big slice for me then. I love gateau.

Paul: I’ll have a slice as well.

Waiter: Okay. That’s two slices of chocolate gateau.

*It’s the end of the evening. Paul and Anne are now about to leave the restaurant. Paul calls the waiter over.*

Paul: Waiter, could I _____ the bill please?

Waiter: I’ll _____ it to you right away.

Paul: Thanks

Waiter: Here you are.

***

**ANSWERS**
Waiter: Just the two of you?
Paul: Yes
Waiter: Where would you like to sit?
Anne: At that table over in the corner by the window.
Waiter: I’m sorry but that one is already booked. What about* the other table near the window? It’s free.
Anne: Yes that’ll do.
Waiter: Here’s the menu.
Paul: Thanks very much.
Paul: What are you having Anne? I think I’ll have some steak and chips.
Anne: I’ll have the same as you. I love steak and chips. Shall we get a bottle of wine?
Waiter: Would you like a starter?
Anne and Paul: No thanks. We’re only having the main meal.
Paul: Yes. Red or white?
Anne: Whatever you want. I’m not fussy.*I like both.
Paul: Let’s get white then.
Waiter: Are you ready to order Sir? Madam, and you?
Paul: Yes. We’d like two steaks and chips please.
Waiter: Would you like anything to drink?
Anne: Yes please; a nice bottle of Italian wine.
Waiter: Any preferences?
Paul: No. What do you suggest?
Waiter: Castelli Romani from the Roman castles.
Paul: Great!

The waiter brings the food and wine
Anne: This looks delicious. I’m really hungry now.
Paul: So am I.
Anne: *(Takes a sip of the wine)* Mm this wine’s good.
Paul: Yes. Italian wine’s always good.

*The waiter comes back to the table*

Waiter: Anything for dessert?
Paul: *(looks at Anne)* Shall we get a dessert?
Anne: *(looks at waiter)* Have you got chocolate gateau?
Waiter: Yes we have.
Anne: A big slice for me then. I love gateau.
Paul: I’ll have a slice as well.

Waiter: Okay. That’s two slices of chocolate gateau.
***

It’s the end of the evening. Paul and Anne are now about to leave the restaurant. Paul calls the waiter over.

Paul: Waiter, could I have the bill please?
Waiter: I’ll bring it to you right away.
Paul: Thanks

Waiter: Here you are.
***

Can/could you give me the menu please?
Can/could I have the menu please?
Can/could you bring me the menu please?
Can/could I see the menu please?
Can/could I have a look at the menu please?
***

I booked a table for two.
I reserved a table for two.
We have a booking for a table for two.
We have a reservation for a table for two.
***
What’s on the menu?
What’s the dish of the day?
***

Making suggestions

What about?
Shall we get a bottle of wine?
Shall we have a bottle of wine?
Shall we get a dessert?
Shall we have a dessert?
***

I’m not fussy = I don’t mind

A fussy person = a person who is pays too much attention to every little thing. Everything has to be the way they want it to be. If they are fussy about what they eat then they are very selective. If they are fussy about how they dress then many things they would never wear. This type of person is very demanding.
Ticket clerk: Good morning madam.
Anne: Good morning. I’d like a return ticket to Brighton please.
Ticket clerk: Here you are.
Anne: How much is that?
Ticket clerk: That’s £5.90 please for a day return.
Anne gives the ticket clerk £6
Anne: Here you are.
Ticket clerk: Here’s your 10p change. Have a pleasant journey.
Anne: Thanks. What time’s the next train?
Ticket clerk: There’s one in seven minutes.
Anne: Thanks. Which platform is it leaving from?
Ticket clerk: Platform two, southbound.
Anne: Thanks, bye.
Ticket clerk: bye.
***
On the train
Ticket inspector: Can I see your ticket please?
Anne: Yes, here you are.
Ticket inspector: Thanks. Have a nice journey.
***
A single ticket to + place (A ticket that can only be used for the outward journey)
A return ticket to + place (A ticket that can be used for the outward journey and also the return journey)
Can I have a return ticket to Brighton please?
Could I have a return ticket to Brighton please?
I’d like a return ticket to Brighton please.

What time’s the next train? (Direct question - normal)
Could you tell me what time the next train is at? (Indirect – very polite)

Which platform is it leaving from? (Direct)
Could you tell me which platform it is leaving from? (Indirect)
One

Rosemary has just arrived at the bus stop. She’s is asking a woman, who is waiting for the bus, some questions. These are the typical questions people ask at bus stops

Rosemary: Have you been waiting long?

Woman at bus stop: No. I just arrived a few minutes ago.

Rosemary: Do you know what number of bus goes to the city centre?

Woman at bus stop: Yes. You can get the nine three two (932) or the five four seven (547)

Rosemary: How long does it take?

Woman at bus stop: It all depends on the traffic. When there’s no traffic, it takes about a quarter of an hour (fifteen minutes). If there’s a lot of traffic it could take between half an hour and forty minutes.

Rosemary: Thanks. Let’s hope there’s no traffic. I’m in a bit of a hurry.

***

Two

Mr Munro has just arrived at the bus stop. He also asks some questions

Mr Munro: How long have you been waiting?

Rosemary: I’ve been waiting for about five minutes.

Mr Munro: Do you know if the nine three two (932) has arrived yet?

Rosemary: Not since I’ve been here.

Mr Munro: Do you know how often it runs?

Rosemary: Sorry but I’ve no idea. I’m new to this area.

Mr Munro now asks the woman who is waiting

Mr Munro: Do you know how often the nine three two runs?
Woman at bus stop: I think it runs every fifteen minutes, but I know sometimes it’s late if it gets held up in the traffic.

Mr Munro: Thanks

***

Three

The bus finally arrives. The people at the bus stop are not very happy. They’ve been waiting for over half an hour. Mr Munro is now on the bus speaking to the bus driver

Mr Munro: What’s going on? There haven’t been any buses in over half an hour.

Bus driver: Sorry sir but there was an accident a mile back. All the buses were held up. They’re all late.

Rosemary now speaks to the driver

Rosemary: Does this bus go to the centre?

Bus driver: Yes it does

Rosemary: I have to get off two stops before the centre so could you let me know when we get there?

Bus driver: Yes, I’ll give you a shout.

The woman who was at the bus stop now speaks to the driver

Woman: How much is it to Sunbank Road?

Bus driver: £1.90

Woman: Here you are. (She gives the driver £2)

Bus driver: Don’t pay me. You have to put the money in the machine but I’m sorry it doesn’t give you any change.

Woman: Why not?

Bus driver: Read the notice. “Please make sure you have the exact fare*. No change will be given” * fare = the cost of the ticket for buses, trains and undergrounds

Woman: It doesn’t matter. It’s only ten pence.
Mr Munro speaks to the driver three stops later

Mr Munro: Could you let me off at the bus stop just after the next set of traffic lights please?

Bus driver: No problem

Mr Munro: Thanks driver

***

Do you know if the nine three two (932) has been yet? (Indirect question)
Could you tell me if the nine three two has been yet? (Indirect question)
Has the nine three two (932) has been yet? (Direct question)
Do you know how often it runs? (Indirect question)
Could you tell me often this bus runs? (Indirect question)
How often does it run? (Direct question)

Remember: we use indirect questions as a polite way of asking questions to people we do not know.

***

How long have you been waiting? (For twenty minutes/since 2 o’clock)
How much is it to get to + place (Mill Street)
Does this bus go to + place (the city centre)

***

I’ll give you a shout = I will call you
Could you let me off at = could you stop the bus and open the doors so I can get off at + place

***

PAST CONTINUOUS VERSUS PAST PRESENT CONTINUOUS

There are three examples which illustrate the difference between the past continuous and the past perfect continuous. The first one has been done for you. Now do numbers two and three. Answers follow with the explanation.

1. When Rosemary arrived at the bus stop, a woman was waiting.
How long had she been waiting? She’d been waiting for a few minutes.

2. When Mr Munro arrived at the bus stop Rosemary was waiting.
   How long _________________? She’d ____________________

3. They were all waiting when the bus arrived.
   How long _________________? They’d ____________________

ANSWERS

2. How long had Rosemary been waiting when Mr Munro arrived?
   She’d been waiting for about five minutes. (The waiting started five minutes before Mr Munro arrived and progressed up to the moment he arrived)

   Rosemary was waiting when Mr Munro arrived. (The past continuous only refers to an action in progress (the waiting) in that moment and not before. The past perfect continuous on the other hand, does not refer to that moment but until that moment.

3. How long had they been waiting when the bus arrived? They’d been waiting for over half an hour. (The waiting started over half an hour before the bus arrived and continued right up until the moment the bus arrived)
DIRECT SPEECH VERSUS REPORTED SPEECH

When we use reported speech, we move back one tense

**Direct**: Have you been waiting long?

**Reported**: Rosemary asked the woman if she had been waiting long.

**Reported**: Rosemary wanted to know if the woman had been waiting long.

**Direct**: I just arrived a few moments ago.

**Reported**: The woman at the bus stop said she had just arrived a few minutes before.

**Reported**: The woman at the bus stop told Rosemary that she had just arrived a few minutes before.

**Direct**: Do you know what bus goes to the city centre?

**Reported**: Rosemary asked the woman if she knew what bus goes to the city centre.

**Reported**: Rosemary asked the woman if she knew what bus goes to the city centre.

**Direct**: You can get the nine three two (932) or the five four seven (547)

**Reported**: The woman told Rosemary/her that she could get the nine three two (932) or the five four seven (547)

**Reported**: The woman said (that) she could get the nine three two (932) or the five four seven (547)

**Direct**: How long does it take?

**Reported**: Rosemary asked the woman how long it took (to get to the centre)

**Reported**: Rosemary wanted to know how long it took (to get to the centre)

**Direct**: It all depends on the traffic.

**Reported**: The woman told Rosemary that it all depended on the traffic.

**Reported**: The woman said that it all depended on the traffic.

**Direct**: How long have you been waiting?
Reported: Mr Munro asked Rosemary how long she had been waiting.

Reported: Mr Munro wanted to know how long Rosemary/she had been waiting.

Direct: I’ve been waiting for about five minutes.

Reported: Rosemary told Mr Munro that she had been waiting for about five minutes.

Direct: Do you know if the nine three two (932) has arrived yet?

Reported: Mr Munro asked Rosemary if she knew if the nine three two (932) had arrived yet.

Reported: Mr Munro wanted to know if the nine three two (932) had arrived yet.

Direct: Sorry but I’ve no idea. I’m new to this area.

Reported: Rosemary said that she had no idea because she was new to the area.

Reported: Rosemary told Mr Munro that she had no idea because she was new to the area.

Direct: Do you know how often the nine three two runs?

Reported: Mr Munro asked the woman at the bus stop if she knew how often the nine three two ran.

Direct: I think it runs every fifteen minutes, but I know sometimes it’s late if it gets held up in the traffic.

Reported: The woman told Mr Munro that she thought it ran every fifteen minutes but she knew that sometimes it was late if it got held up in the traffic.

Direct: Thanks

Reported: Mr Munro thanked the woman

Reported: Mr Munro said thanks to the woman

Direct: What’s going on? There haven’t been any buses in over half an hour.

Reported: Mr Munro asked the bus driver what was going on because there
hadn’t been any buses in over half an hour.

**Direct:** Sorry sir but there was an accident a mile back. All the buses were held up. They’re all late.

**Reported:** The bus driver apologised to Mr Munro and told him there had been an accident a mile back and that all the buses had been held up. He said they were all late.

**Direct:** I have to get off two stops before the centre so could you let me know when we get there?

**Reported:** Rosemary told the driver she had to get off two stops before the centre and asked him if he could let her know when they got there.

**Direct:** Yes, I’ll give you a shout.

**Reported:** The driver told Rosemary he would give her a shout.

**Direct:** How much is it to Sunbank Road?

**Reported:** The woman asked the driver how much it was to Sunbank Road.

**Direct:** £1.90

**Reported:** He said it was £1.90

**Reported:** The driver told her it was £1.90

**Direct:** Don’t pay me. You have to put the money in the machine but I’m sorry it doesn’t give you any change.

**Reported:** The driver told her not to pay him and that she had to put the money in the machine. He told her that he was sorry because it didn’t give you any change.
CONVERSATION PRACTICE FIVE – SHOPPING FOR CLOTHES

Conversation one

Mike is shopping for a pair of trousers. He enters the shop

Shop assistant: Good morning can I help you sir?

Mike: Yes I’m looking for a pair of dark blue cotton trousers.

Shop assistant: Come this way sir. We have a new selection of trousers that just came in yesterday.

Shop assistant: Here we are. We’ve got this pair in navy blue or this other pair in royal blue. Which ones do you prefer?

Mike: They’re both very nice. I think I’ll try them both on and then decide.

Shop assistant: Ok. What size are you?

Mike: I’m a size 32 regular fit.

Shop assistant: Here you are, we have them in your size.

Mike: Where are the changing rooms?

Shop assistant: They’re over there behind the cash desks.

Mike: Thanks.

Shop assistant: You’re welcome.

Mike is now in the changing room trying on the trousers

Shop assistant: How’s it going?

Mike: Fine thanks. They’re a perfect fit. I’ll take them.

Shop assistant: Would you like anything else?

Mike: I’d like a red t-shirt.

Shop assistant: Hang on a moment and I’ll go and get you one.

Mike: Thanks
Shop assistant comes back with three red t-shirts

**Shop assistant:** We’ve got three different styles; one with a v-neck, one with a round neck and one with a slash neck. Do you have any preferences?

**Mike:** Not really. Can I try on all three?

**Shop assistant:** Of course

**Mike is now trying on the t-shirts**

**Shop assistant:** How’s it going?

**Mike:** I like all three. I think I’ll take them all. The red really goes with the colour of the trousers.

**Shop assistant:** Great.

**Mike is now out of the changing room**

**Shop assistant:** If you would like to just follow me to the cash desk sir.

*The cashier is now speaking to Mike*

**Cashier:** Would you like to pay in cash or by credit card sir?

**Mike:** In cash please.

**Cashier:** That’s £35.99 please.

**Mike:** Here you are. (He hands her £40)

**Cashier:** Here’s your change sir. Your receipt’s in the bag.

**Mike:** Thanks. Bye

**Cashier:** Thank you sir, goodbye and have a nice day.

***

**Conversation two**

_Jane is shopping for a new pair of shoes. She goes into the shoe shop_

**Shop assistant:** Good afternoon. What can I do for you madam?

**Jane:** I’m looking for a pair of black low heeled shoes.

**Shop assistant:** How about these ones? They’re quite popular at the
moment.

Jane: Yes they are quite nice. Can I try them on?

Shop assistant: Yes of course. What size are you?

Jane: A 39

Shop assistant: Here we are. Try them on.

Jane tries the shoes on

Shop assistant: How do they feel?

Jane: They don’t fit me very well. They’re a bit tight at the toes.

Shop assistant: Would you like to try on a bigger size?

Jane: Okay

Shop assistant: These ones are a size 40.

Jane: They’re a bit big. Have you got any other shoes similar to these ones?

Shop assistant: Yes but the other ones have a buckle.

Jane: Can I see them?

Shop assistant: Yes. Hang on a moment and I’ll get them for you.

Shop assistant comes back

Shop assistant: Try these ones on. I’ve brought you a size 39 and a size 40.

Jane: The 39 fits me perfectly. I’ll take them. The buckle is very nice as well. How much are they?

Shop assistant: £39.99

Jane: Okay thanks.

At the cash desk

Cashier: Are you paying in cash or by credit card?

Jane: By credit card

Cashier: Ok just sign your name here please.
Jane: Ok thanks.

Cashier: Your receipts in the bag. Thank you and goodbye

Jane: Thanks, bye

***

Useful language when shopping for clothes

Do the trousers fit you? Do they fit you? This refers to the size

Possible answers

No they don’t fit me. They’re too big. Have you got a smaller size?

No they don’t fit me very well. They’re a bit too short. Have you got a longer pair?

They don’t fit me. They’re too tight. I can’t get the zip up.

They fit me = they are the perfect size.

They fit like a glove = it seems as though they have been tailored made for me (tailored made = made to measure)

Does the t-shirt fit you? Does it fit you? No it doesn’t. It’s too big. Can I have a smaller size?

***

With the verb ‘suit’ there are two possibilities – this refers to the look and not the size

Do they suit me? Do the trousers suit me? No they don’t. You look better in black trousers. Blue is not your colour.

Do I suit them? = Do I suit the trousers? No you don’t.

Does the red t-shirt suit me? Does it suit me? No it doesn’t. You look better in green.

Does it suit me?

Do I suit it? Do I suit the red t-shirt? No you don’t. You look better in green.

***

This t-shirt doesn’t go with my trousers.
This bag doesn’t match my shoes.

***

Can I try this on? (Singular)
Can I try these on? (Plural)

Try on is a phrasal verb. It means ‘put someone on’ to see if it looks good on you or if it fits you.

***

The changing rooms are over there
The changing rooms are just in front of you
The changing rooms are behind the menswear section

***

Women’s wear – clothes for women
Men’s wear – clothes for men
Children’s wear – clothes for children
Baby wear – clothes for babies

***

TYPES OF SHOES

Footwear

Low heeled shoes – shoes with a low heel
High heeled shoes – shoes with a high heel
Flat shoes – shoes with no heel
Training shoes – shoes for walking or running
Trainers – the same as training shoes
Gym shoes – shoes you wear to the gym
Slippers – soft shoes you wear indoors (at home)
Boots – footwear that covers the lower part of the legs
BOOKING A ROOM

Mr Jones telephones the Sunshine hotel to book a room for himself and his wife

Reception: Good afternoon Sunshine hotel how can I help you?

Mr Jones: I’m calling to book a room for two starting from next Friday the 8\textsuperscript{th} September.

Reception: Would that be a double room with a bath?

Mr Jones: Yes

Reception: How long will you be staying?

Mr Jones: Until the 12\textsuperscript{th} so four nights.

Reception: Could you hold on a moment please while I check our availability?

Mr Jones: Okay

Receptionist comes back to the phone after three or four minutes

Receptionist: Sorry to have kept you waiting Mr Jones. We have a room available for that period. It’s on the fourth floor.

Mr Jones: That won’t be a problem. I see from your website that it costs £45 per night including breakfast. Is that right?

Receptionist: Yes that’s right.

Mr Jones: Okay. I’d like to book the room please.

Receptionist: Okay. Could I have your credit number please?

Mr Jones: Yes of course

Mr Jones gives his credit card details to the receptionist

Receptionist: Okay Mr Jones. I’ve booked a room for two starting from 8\textsuperscript{th} September until the morning of the 12\textsuperscript{th}. You should vacate your room
before 10am or you will be charged for an extra day.

**Mr Jones**: Yes of course. Thanks very much, goodbye

**Receptionist**: Goodbye. We look forward to your arrival.

You *should* vacate your room – we use ‘should’ for mild obligation.

Should + bare infinitive, is also use for giving advice and personal opinions.

***

**CHECKING IN**

*Today is the 8th September. Mr Jones and his wife have arrived at the hotel. They are just about to check in.*

**Receptionist**: Good morning can I help you?

**Mr Jones**: I booked a room for my wife and I a couple of days ago.

**Receptionist**: Could I have your names please?

**Mr Jones**: Mr and Mrs Jones

**Receptionist**: Let me see. Ah there you are. You booked a double room on the fourth floor. Is that right?

**Mr Jones**: Yes that’s right.

**Receptionist**: Here are your keys. Room number 403. Do you need any help with your suitcases?

**Mr Jones**: No thanks. They’re not very heavy.

**Receptionist**: The lift is over there behind the two large plants.

**Mr Jones**: Okay. Thanks very much. Oh sorry, I forgot to ask. What time’s breakfast?

**Receptionist**: Between 7 and 10 am.

**Mr Jones**: Okay. Thanks

***

**PROBLEMS**

Mrs Jones calls reception. She has a complaint to make
Reception: Good morning, reception. How can I help you?

Mrs Jones: It’s Mr and Mrs Jones from room 403. We checked in half an hour ago. I want to make a complaint. There’s no hot water.

Reception: I’m terribly sorry Mrs Jones. I’ll send someone up immediately.

The hotel maintenance man knocks on the door of the Jones’s room

Mr Jones: Who is it?

Maintenance man: It’s the hotel maintenance man: I’ve come to see why you have no hot water.

Mr Jones opens the door

Mr Jones: Come in.

Maintenance man checks out the hot water heater

Maintenance man: I’m so sorry sir and madam. The thermostat isn’t working. If you could just give me ten minutes or so and I will be back to replace it.

Mr Jones: Okay thanks.

***

CHECKING OUT

Mr and Mrs Jones are about to check out (formally leave the hotel)

Mrs Jones to receptionist: We’d like to check out please?

Receptionist: Could I have your names and room number:

Mrs Jones: Yes. Mr and Mrs Jones, room number 403.

Receptionist: Here is your itemised bill for the drinks you consumed.

Mrs Jones: Thanks. How much do we owe you?

Receptionist: £14.

Mr Jones: Here you are and here’s the key. Thanks very much, bye.

Receptionist: Thank you. Good bye and we hope to see you again in the future.
Find words in the previous conversation which mean

(1) A machine which takes you up and down. You use this when you do not want to use the stairs. In American English it is called an elevator. In British English it has another name.

(2) A verb which means ‘to reserve’. It has the same name as something you borrow from the library to read.

(3) A phrasal verb which means ‘wait’.

(4) A verb which means to cease to occupy a room or an apartment or a building in order to make it available for other people.

***

ANSWERS (1) a lift  (2) book  (3) hold on/hang on  (4) vacate

***

TEST YOUR JOB VOCABULARY

SALARY/PERMANENT/PART/EMPLOYS/EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYED/TEMPORARY.

(1) At the moment I’m __________. I’m looking for a job.

(2) There are 700 __________ in the company or 700 members of __________.

(3) The company __________ 700 people. This verb is synonymous with; hire and recruit.

(4) The __________ rate is currently at 4.6%. This means there are 39,000 fewer jobless people than there were in the same period last year.

(5) The company is offering an annual __________ of £45,000 for the successful __________.

(6) Candidates can __________ online where there is an __________ form to fill in.

(7) Full time __________ normally consists of a working week of 39 hours.

(8) __________ time work on the other hand, is normally in the region of about 20 hours per week.
(9) The __________ hours are from 9 am to 6pm.

(10) We offer either a __________ contract (indefinite time), or a __________ one which lasts for six months.

***

TEST YOUR JOB VOCABULARY - ANSWERS

(1) At the moment I’m unemployed. I’m looking for a job.

(2) There are 700 employees in the company or 700 members of staff.

(3) The company employs 700 people. This verb is synonymous with; hire and recruit.

(4) The unemployment rate is currently at 4.6%. This means there are 39,000 fewer jobless people than there were in the same period last year.

(5) The company is offering an annual salary of £45,000 for the successful applicant.

(6) Candidates can apply online where there is an application form to fill in.

(7) Full time employment normally consists of a working week of 39 hours.

(8) Part time work on the other hand, is normally in the region of about 20 hours per week.

(9) The working hours are from 9 am to 6pm.

(10) We offer either a permanent contract (indefinite time), or a temporary one which lasts for six months.
CONVERSATION – JOB INTERVIEW ONE

JOB: WAITRESS

The situation: Michelle, a French girl goes for an interview for a waitress job at a top London restaurant.

Michelle: Good morning. I have come for an interview. The appointment is at 11 am with Mrs Mackenzie.

Mrs Mackenzie: I’m Mrs Mackenzie. Nice to meet you. Are you Michelle?

Michelle: Yes I am. Nice to meet you Mrs Mackenzie.

Mrs Mackenzie: Come this way Michelle to my office.

In Mrs Mackenzie’s office

Mrs Mackenzie: Well I have your CV here and I can see that you have three years experience in a prestigious restaurant in Paris. Would that be right?

Michelle: Yes. I worked for three years serving many famous customers.

Mrs Mackenzie: Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

I’m 24 years old. I was born in Paris. I have a younger brother and an older sister. When I was at school I worked on Saturdays as a waitress in a Bistro in Paris and I loved it. I am a people person so I loved being in among all the customers who came and went. That’s why I decided to enrol in the a la carte school and continue with this kind of work. I wanted to make a career out of waitressing. It’s never boring. I see different faces all the time. If you are stuck in an office every day, you see the same faces, day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out and year in and year out.

Mrs Mackenzie: We are looking for waiters and waitresses who are passionate, enthusiastic and hard working. A good command of English is essential:

Michelle: I have references here which can be checked out. I am a very hard working person. I am passionate about my job and I love working with people. My command of English is also very good.
Mrs Mackenzie: Yes I see that. Where did you learn to speak English so well Michelle?

Michelle: My aunt, my mother’s sister, married an English man fifteen years ago. They live here in London. I’ve got three cousins who are half French and half English. In fact I’m staying with them at the moment. I spent many summers here in London with them and that is how I picked up the English language. I’ve never really had to study it that much although I did do English lessons at school in France.

Mrs Mackenzie: What are your strengths?

Michelle: My strengths! Well I have a genuine interest in hospitality and I pride myself on giving the best service possible. I leave my troubles at home and always keep a smile on my face for the customers.

Mrs Mackenzie: Yes that’s very important in a restaurant like this. We have members of parliament who often come in here for lunch. It is important to have a friendly face. We offer the finest quality food and service so we have a reputation to live up to.

Mrs Mackenzie: Is there anything you would change about yourself, in your job I mean?

Michelle: I think maybe I hover around the customers a little bit too much to make sure that everything is going well and they are happy and enjoying their meal. Maybe I should back off a little. This causes me great anxiety but I’m working on it at the moment.

Mrs Mackenzie: Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?

Michelle: Yes. What are the working conditions? You know, the pay, the working hours, etc.

Mrs Mackenzie: We pay above the average hourly rate in this restaurant. The *going rate here in London is between £8/£10 per hour. We offer £11.50 + staff meals on top of that. The working week consists of 39 hours. There are 28 days paid holiday per year. We also offer a full time permanent contract.

*The going rate = the rate that everyone pays in this period for a particular job

***
JOB LANGUAGE GLOSSARY

Apply for a job – formally request in writing

Application form – a document where you write your personal details and then submit to the necessary place

Applicant – the person who applies

To employ – hire for work

Employer – the person who gives you work and pays you

Employee – the person who is paid to work for a company

Employment – work

Unemployment – lack of work

Fill in – write your personal details on a form. Fill out – American English

To hire – synonym of ‘employ’

Position/post/vacancy – job

To resign – when the employee leaves the job of his/her own free will

To sack/to fire – when an employer terminates employment due to something the employee has done wrong; e.g. late time keeping.

Sign a contract – write your signature on a legally binding document

Shift work – when your working hours are not fixed. Sometimes you can work mornings, other time, afternoons, evenings or nights.

Night shift – work at night

Staff – a group of employees

Flexi hours – flexi is short for flexible; this means you do not have fixed working hours, your hours vary from day to day or from one week to another

To be responsible for someone or something

Examples:

What are you responsible for? I’m responsible for the marketing department
To be responsible to someone

Who are you responsible to? I’m responsible to my boss, Mr Adams.

To be in charge of – to be responsible for something or someone

Examples:

*What* are you in charge of? I’m in charge of the order department.

*Who* are you in charge of? I’m in charge of a team of six staff members.

I’m responsible for + noun

I’m responsible for + verb + ing – I’m responsible for checking the orders.

I’m in charge of + noun

I’m in charge of + adjective + noun
CONVERSATION – JOB INTERVIEW TWO

BUS DRIVER

Simon has applied for a job as a bus driver. The bus company are looking for a driver who is able to drive a double decker bus. He is just about to have an interview with the human resources manager of the bus company.

HR: = human resources

HR: Good morning. I’m Mr Peters. Thanks for coming.

Simon: Good morning Mr Peters. Nice to meet you. I’m Simon Green.

HR: Take a seat Mr Green.

Simons sits down

HR: I see from your CV that you have four years’ experience in driving double decker buses and that you are the holder of a UK PVC driving licence.

Simon: Yes, that’s right.

HR: Do you have any points on your licence?

Simon: No I don’t. I have a clean driving licence.

HR: That’s great. So you’re a responsible driver.

Simon: Yes. I pride myself on that. I’ve never been involved in an accident.

HR: Are you employed at the moment?

Simon: No I’m not. I worked for a bus company in Essex for four years and then I left to come to London. My wife is from London and she wanted to be near her family.

HR: I hope you realise that driving in London is more stressful than driving in Essex; especially during peak hours when the traffic becomes congested.

Simon: I’m used to driving in heavy traffic. There were days in Essex,
especially when it rained, that we were stuck in never ending traffic jams.

**HR**: Yes of course. Could you tell me a couple of reasons why you feel you may be the right person for the job?

**Simon**: Well, I’m extremely punctual and very reliable. I have excellent customer service skills and I always remain calm even with the most irate passengers. I really look after my passengers.

**HR**: Great! And what made you choose to apply to our company?

**Simon**: I read in the job advertisement that you encourage your workers to reach their full potential and that you also reward anyone who meets your goals. This is an excellent way to keep your drivers motivated.

**HR**: Yes, that’s right. We believe in rewarding our workers when they put their heart and soul into the job. This, in turn, keeps our passengers satisfied. Since customer satisfaction is at the heart of our company, it is important that we select the best possible members of staff. It’s the passengers who bring in the money. Without them, we wouldn’t exist.

**Simon**: I fully agree with you. They’re the ones who pay our salaries.

**HR**: Excellent. You do realise that the job entails shift work. The patterns of working hours change so you have to be flexible.

**Simon**: That’s not a problem. I love flexi-hours. They’re less boring than the usual 9 to 5 office job hours. I did flexi time in my job in Essex.

**HR**: Now let me just explain the working conditions. We offer a permanent contract after a three month trial period. When we are fully satisfied that you have the right requirements to join our team, then the benefits will be highly rewarding. We offer £11 per hour and we pay on a weekly basis. You will automatically join our pension scheme and start saving for the future. There is also a free Life Assurance for pension scheme members. You will be able to travel on any of our buses around London completely free of charge. What’s more, there are also special discounts for family members. You will also be eligible to buy shares in our company at excellent rates. Up until now you do have the right requirements for the job but there is one last test for you. Our inspector would like to see you driving. You will both go out on the bus together and he will take you around one of the most difficult bus routes. The last driver we hired was unable to judge the height of the bus and went under a low bridge ripping the roof off the bus. Luckily there were no passengers on
board at the time. It cost our company thousands in repair work. Anyway, the final test should take a couple of hours. The final decision will remain with him. If he gives you the ok, then you can start your three month trial period from Monday. We will supply you with two uniforms.

Simon passed the test and later started his three month trial period with the bus company.

Free of charge – no need to pay
CONVERSATION – JOB INTERVIEW THREE

JOB: NANNY

Maria is an Italian girl who was interviewed via Skype for a part time job as a nanny to a six year old boy in the North of London. The child’s mother advertised for someone with previous demonstrable experience of working with children. Mrs Watson interviewed many candidates but thought Maria was the right girl for the job. Maria’s English is good but she would like to perfect it. She has arrived at the family’s home. She has just rung the door bell.

Mrs Watson opens the door

Mrs Watson: Hello Maria. It’s very nice to meet you.

Maria: It’s very nice to meet you too Mrs Watson.

Mrs Watson: Did you have a pleasant journey?

Maria: Yes I did. I came on an Alitalia flight which was extremely comfortable. It just took two hours to get here from Milan.

Mrs Watson: I am so glad your English is good Maria. I need someone who can assist my child with his homework after school.

Maria: Well I was a kindergarten teacher for a few years in Italy. It was an international kindergarten so the children spoke English. We did some pre-school work with the four year olds.

Mrs Watson: Yes I see that from your CV. My child is only six years old so his homework is not so complicated. I’m sure you’ll manage. As I told you via Skype, food and board is included with the job. It’s only a part time position of 16 hours per week. My husband and I are offering £10.00 per hour. You will escort my child to school each morning between 8 and 9 o’clock. I also need you to attend after school activities. We have a cleaning lady so you only need to do light duties such as preparing snacks and putting his toys away.

Maria: What are the actual working hours?

Mrs Watson: Well as I said, between 8 and 9 am Mondays to Fridays to
take my son to school. And on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from 3.30 to 6pm, you will collect him from school, help him with his homework and accompany him to clubs and activities. He has swimming once a week and a few other activities. I need you on Tuesdays between 3.30 and 4.30 just to pick him up from school and bring him home. He doesn’t have any activities on a Tuesday afternoon. For the rest of the time you are free to do whatever you please. Do you have any questions to ask me?

Maria: Is the £10.00 per hour gross or net?

Mrs Watson: Gross; that is, before tax. You’ll receive a net income of about £120.00 weekly. I think that translates into about 150.00 euro.

Maria: I am happy with that. I’ll be able to spend some and save some.

Mrs Watson: You have no other expenses. You have your own room, bathroom and all meals are included.

Maria: You mentioned via Skype that I would have a one year contract. Is that right?

Mrs Watson: Yes. If I am happy with you and above all if my son is happy and you get on together, then we will most certainly renew the contract, that is, if you decide you want to continue staying in London with us.

Maria: Thanks. I will see. It all depends on how much I miss my bella Italia.

Mrs Watson: You’ll probably miss the food. Most Italians do. I’ve been to many countries including Italy and I’ve tried all kinds of food. I can assure you that the food I ate in Italy is the best. Anyway, feel free to cook Italian food here.

Maria: I want to blend in with the English culture so I will try to eat the English food. I think I am really going to love it here.
CONVERSATION – JOB INTERVIEW FOUR

JOB: HOTEL CHAMBERMAID

Monica is being interviewed by Mr Bennet for the job as hotel chambermaid

Mr Bennet: Good morning Monica I’m Mr Bennet. Thanks for coming. Glad to meet you.

Monica: Good morning Mr Bennet. It’s good to meet you.

Mr Bennet: I read all the CV’s a few days ago and if I can remember well you aren’t English are you?

Monica: No I’m not. I’m Bulgarian. I’m from Bulgaria.

Mr Bennet: And what brings you to the UK?

Monica: Well the truth is I love England and the English people but I can also earn a higher salary here. In Bulgaria the salaries are not very high.

Mr Bennet: The salaries are usually in line with the cost of living and of course the type of job counts as well.

Mr Bennet: How old are you Monica?

Monica: I’m twenty three

Mr Bennet: And how long have you been in the UK?

Monica: I’ve been here for fourteen months. I came last spring.

Mr Bennet: I see you’ve picked up the language quite well.

Monica: Yes I have, but I also studied English for four years before I came to England so I had a headstart.

Mr Bennet: I see from your CV that you have two years’ experience in the hotel sector. Please, tell me a bit about how you carried out your typical daily duties.

Monica: Well I underwent a training course two years ago on how to safely use cleaning products. You know detergents, bleach, floor wax etc.
Mr Bennet: That’s good to know. It could be lethal to mix two contrasting products. Some people have died due to inhaling the poisonous fumes of products that should never have been used together. Luckily it has never happened in this hotel.

Monica: It has never happened in any of the hotels I’ve worked in either. Well to answer your question, my daily duties were as follows: I made the beds every morning and vacuumed the floors and washed them. I then cleaned the toilets and tidied the rooms. I made sure that the blinds were free from dust. I emptied the ashtrays and the bins and made sure the bathrooms were stocked with toilet rolls, shampoo and clean towels. When the guests vacated the rooms I changed the bed linen and gave the rooms a thorough cleaning to prepare them for the arrival of the next guests. My duties also entailed taking stock of the cleaning products, toilet rolls, soap, shampoo and beverages for the rooms with a fridge. I also had to make sure the hallways, corridors, stairways and lifts were cleaned daily, often more than once a day.

Mr Bennet: Very well. Have you had a medical check up lately?

Monica: The last time I had a medical check up was about a year ago.

Mr Bennet: Well it is required that you repeat this check up. It’s a strenuous job you see. Here there are eighteen rooms to clean in a limited time frame. It is important that you are fit and healthy for this kind of work. We also have some heavy industrial mechanical machines for cleaning the floors. You need to have the strength to manoeuvre these machines into corners and such like.

Monica: If you want I can make an appointment with my family doctor and bring you the medical report as soon as possible.

Mr Bennet: Yes thanks. It’s company policy or I wouldn’t ask you. I also need references from the hotels you previously worked for. So could you provide me with those when you bring your medical report? This is also company policy.

Monica: I have them with me now.

Mr Bennet: Great

Mr Bennet reads the references

Mr Bennet: They’re very good references. Next step now is to check they
are valid. I’ll call the two hotels you worked at later on this afternoon. If we do decide to hire you, then you will have to complete a course on how to evacuate the guests safely in the event of fire. The safety of our guests is a priority at this hotel.

Monica: I did one of these courses when I lived in Bulgaria.

Mr Bennet: You will have to do it again as each hotel has its own procedure. All hotels have different layouts and the fire escapes are in different locations.

Mr Bennet: One more question Monica. Why did you leave your last job?

Monica: I haven’t left it yet. I can hand in my notice anytime I like. As long as I give them a fifteen day notice period.

Mr Bennet: Well why are leaving your present job then?

Monica: I saw from your advert in the newspaper that you can offer me more hours. More hours means more money. I want to start putting some money in the bank for the future. I don’t earn enough at the moment to do so. I pay quite a lot of money for the rented room I live in.

Mr Bennet: We offer a 40 hour working week here with the possibility of overtime. We pay £7.90 per hour so your salary will be in the region of £1,300 per calendar month. That is gross, before tax. You will also have free meals in the hotel so that can save you some money. If you do any overtime then we are looking at a minimum of £ 1,500. Not only. If you are courteous with the guests, very often they leave a tip for the chambermaids so that will be more money in your pocket. So with tax deductions etc, you could still be taking home quite a bit of money. You must prove to us during the trial period that you are a hard worker. There’s no room for laziness in this hotel.

Monica: I will do my best Mr Bennet. I’m a really hard worker and I’m sure my previous employers will verify that.

Mr Bennet: I’m sure you are. I will contact you by phone within the next three days. I have another few people to interview. The hotel has vacancies for two chambermaids. Meanwhile if you could bring me the medical report which states you are fit for this kind of work then we’ll go from there.

Monica: Okay. Thank you Mr Bennet. It was a great pleasure meeting you.
Good bye.

Mr Bennet: My pleasure. Good bye to you and I’ll be in touch soon.
CONVERSATION – JOB INTERVIEW FIVE

JOB: OFFICE MANAGER

Mr Devlin has just arrived for an interview for the job as office manager. He is speaking to the receptionist

Mr Devlin: Good afternoon. I have an appointment with Mrs Black from human resources.

Receptionist: Good morning. Are you Mr Devlin?

Mr Devlin: Yes I am.

Receptionist: Mrs Black is expecting you. Just take the lift to the third floor and as you exit the lift, Mrs Black’s office is the second room to the right. Her name is on the door.

Mr Devlin: Thanks very much.

Mr Devlin has just knocked on Mrs Black’s office door

Mrs Black: Come in

Mr Devlin: Hi. I’m Mr Devlin.

Mrs Black: It’s good to meet you Mr Devlin

Mr Devlin: It’s good to meet you Mrs Black

Mrs Black: Please take a seat.

Mr Devlin: Thank you.

Mrs Black: Did you find us without any difficulty

Mr Devlin: I had no problems getting here. I was lucky because there was no traffic on the roads this morning.

Mrs Black: Great! Well then, let’s get down to business.

Mrs Black: First of all tell me a little bit about yourself.

Mr Devlin: Well my name is Joseph Devlin. I’m 33 years old and I’m married with two children. I’ve been working as an office manager since
shortly after I graduated from university at the age of 24 with a degree in business management.

Mrs Black: And how did you hear about this position?

Mr Devlin: I saw the advert in the Business section of our local newspaper.

Mrs Black: I see from your CV that you have abundant experience in this line of work.

Mr Devlin: Yes. I’ve been in office management for over seven years. I am currently responsible for forty five employees

Mrs Black: Why do you want to leave your present job?

Mr Devlin: Due to the fact that I’m still in the same position that I was in when I first started with the company. I’m not going any further forward in my career. I’m looking for new challenges.

Mrs Black: That’s understandable.

Mrs Black: And what attracted you to the position in our company?

Mr Devlin: Well I read that your company offers the opportunity to progress within the company.

Mrs Black: Yes we do offer this opportunity to employees who we consider valuable to the company.

Mrs Black: Could you tell me what your duties entail in your current position?

Mr Devlin: Well I work in an extremely busy office. I have many tasks to perform daily. First of all I have to always be aware of the staff’s whereabouts. I’m in charge of buying office supplies and stationery. I manage and maintain social media accounts. I also manage the office keys and security. I plan, budget and execute various social events throughout the year. I provide assistance to various departments including the marketing and purchasing departments. I also assist the finance team with billing and payment queries. In short, I’m kept busy from the moment I arrive until the moment I go home.

Mrs Black: We are looking for someone just like you. Excellent organisational skills are a must for this kind of job. Good IT skills and knowledge of a range of software packages is also necessary. I see from
your CV that you are an expert with excel.

**Mr Devlin:** Yes that’s right.

**Mrs Black:** We also require that the successful candidate has strong written and oral communication skills as well as skills in problem solving and project management.

**Mr Devlin:** As you will see from my CV, I have extensive knowledge and experience in all those areas.

**Mr Devlin:** What would my duties entail, that is, if you were to consider me a suitable applicant?

**Mrs Black:** Well I see you carry out diverse activities at the moment; this job is multi-faceted but the primary role is to make it possible for other employees to function effectively and efficiently. You’ll be responsible for completing several administrative tasks as well as multi tasking in all directions. You'll also have to plan, take charge of mail processing and schedule and attend meetings. Another requirement for the job is to manage contract and price negotiations with office vendors, service providers and office lease. You will need to be able to work independently with no supervision.

**Mr Devlin:** That will be a real challenge. It’s exactly what I am looking for.

**Mrs Black:** What are your strengths Mr Devlin?

**Mr Devlin:** I’m highly organised and I have the ability to prioritise workload. I have excellent communication skills and I’m able to multitask. I’m personable and approachable as well. (*Strengths should be related to the job you are being interviewed for*)

**Mrs Black:** Excellent. Do you have any weaknesses?

**Mr Devlin:** Well I have to say that my greatest weakness is that I don’t take criticism very well but I’m working on this flaw.

**Mrs Black:** Okay. Now tell me what you like doing in your free time.

**Mr Devlin:** I love photography. When I am completely free I love heading to naturalistic spots and taking beautiful photographs. I also love cooking and reading good informative books.
Mrs Black: Thank you. Now before we end the interview, are there any questions you would like to ask?

Mr Devlin: Yes. What are the exact working hours that will be expected from me and is the salary of £45,000 gross or net?

Mrs Black: You’ll be expected to work Monday to Friday from 8.30 to 5.30 with a one hour break for lunch and a few coffee breaks in between. You will have 25 days paid holidays per year, excluding weekends of course, and you will have bonuses for good performance and luncheon vouchers are also included. We offer a full time permanent contract after the three month trial period. There will be an annual salary revision according to the cost of living. So your salary will steadily go up.

Mr Devlin: Great.

Mrs Black: We have some other candidates to interview but we will be in touch with you before the end of the week.

Mr Devlin: Thank you Mrs Black. I’ll await your reply. It was a pleasure meeting you. Good day.

Mrs Black: My pleasure. Good day to you Mr Devlin.

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Advertisement is often abbreviated to ‘ad’ or ‘advert’

A suitable applicant = the right person for the job

Let’s get down to business = let’s begin to speak about serious things/the main issue

We’ll be in touch = we’ll contact you
JOB: FINANCIAL PLANNER

The situation: Mr Smith is attending a job interview for the position of financial planner.

Mr Smith: (speaks to secretary) Good morning. I have an appointment at 9.30 am for a job interview with Mr Rankin.

Secretary: If you would like to take a seat please. He’ll be right with you.

Mr Rankin arrives

Mr Rankin: Good morning. Are you Mr Smith?

Mr Smith: Yes I am. And you must be Mr Rankin?

Mr Rankin: Yes, that’s right. Good to meet you Mr Smith. Thank you for coming.

Mr Smith: Good to meet you Mr Rankin.

Mr Rankin: Could you follow me please?

In Mr Rankin’s office

Mr Rankin: Could you just fill in this application form? It’ll only take a couple of minutes. I’ll be with you in a few moments.

Mr Smith: Yes thanks.

Mr Rankin: Okay. I have your CV here but before we begin, could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

Mr Smith: Yes. My name’s John Smith, I’m thirty five years old and I’m single. I’m originally from Ireland but I’ve been in London for sixteen years. I moved to London in 1999 to study business and finance. In fact I have a bachelor’s degree in business and finance. I also hold a Master of Science in Financial Planning. I’ve worked as a financial planner for two companies, each well known on a global level. I’ve also had practice in Estate Planning and Tax Planning.

Mr Rankin: Yes I see from your CV that you could be just the person we
Mr Rankin: Are you working at the moment?

Mr Smith: No. I left my last job two weeks ago.

Mr Rankin: What made you decide to leave?

Mr Smith: I needed to find a job with fresh challenges. By leaving the company I worked for, I have more time to dedicate to looking for a more challenging position.

Mr Rankin: We are looking for a dynamic, goal minded individual who has the ability to motivate team members.

Mr Rankin: How would you describe yourself? I mean your personality.

Mr Smith: I’m a dedicated person and I enjoy working as part of a team. I love problem solving and I am eager to both teach and learn new things.

Mr Rankin: How would you describe your strengths?

Mr Smith: My strengths are my excellent interpersonal, verbal and written communication skills. I’m also quantitative in my thinking.

Mr Rankin: And your weaknesses?

Mr Smith: I think I am a little bit too demanding with my co workers.

Mr Rankin: What were your duties in your previous position?

Mr Smith: I was responsible for internal consulting on developing financial planning tools. I was also part of the cash flow planning and debt management team and I have solid understanding of investment markets and products.

Mr Rankin: What attracted you to our company?

Mr Smith: Well first I saw the advert for the position in our local newspaper and then I did some research on internet. It seems to be exactly the type of company I would like to work for. I believe your company offers excellent opportunities for career advancement.

Mr Rankin: Yes. Our staff are more motivated when they feel they are working towards something. They perform much better

Mr Rankin: Do you have any experience in delivering complex financial
Mr Smith: I have modest experience but I’m a quick learner. I pick things up very fast.

Mr Rankin: In this company we need people who are on the ball. People who have the ability to stay focused on the project at hand.

Mr Smith: Yes I agree with you on that.

Mr Rankin: What sort of salary are you looking at?

Mr Smith: I was earning £55,000 p.a.

Mr Rankin: As you will have seen in the job advertisement, we offer a very competitive salary of £65,000 p.a. We also offer a company car and 30 days paid holidays per year. There is also a Christmas bonus according to performance. The successful applicant will be required to work with partners in our Aberdeen offices.

Mr Smith: I have plenty of experience in team working so I would be delighted to have the opportunity to work with your partners should you consider me for the job.

Mr Rankin: We have a few more applicants to interview and then we will reach a decision. Meanwhile I’ll be putting you on the shortlist. You have all the requirements we are looking for.

Mr Smith: Well I will look forward to hearing from you.

Mr Rankin: We’ll be in touch before the week is out.

Mr Smith: Okay Mr Rankin. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Mr Rankin: My pleasure Mr Smith. Thanks and good day.

Mr Smith: Good day to you Mr Rankin.

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Useful language

He’ll be right with you – he will be with you very soon

Thank you for coming – when we use a verb after a preposition, it takes the gerund form. “for” is a preposition, so the verb “come” changes to “coming”.

66
To be eager – to be very enthusiastic

Previous position – your last job

Your current position – your present job

Pick up a language – to learn a language usually in a natural way, usually by hearing the language on a regular basis.

To be on the ball – quick in understanding and highly aware of what is going on

p.a - per annum (yearly)

To be on the shortlist – this means that you are one of the applicants they are considering for the job. If there are 100 applicants on the list for the job/s, they could disqualify 90 and bring the list down to the 10 most suitable candidates then decide which from the ten has the most requirements. The ten could then be shortlisted to two. (To shortlist – is the verb)
CONVERSATION – JOB INTERVIEW SEVEN

JOB: English language teacher for ESL students

As you read, try to guess the meaning (by the context) of the shaded words and expressions. There is a glossary after the conversation where you can check to see if you guessed correctly.

*Mark is outside an English language school in Rome. He will shortly have an interview with the director of studies, Mr Marcus*

*Mark enters the school*

Receptionist: Good morning. What can I do for you?

Mark: I have an appointment with the director of studies, Mr Marcus.

Receptionist: Are you here to be interviewed?

Mark: Yes I am.

Receptionist: What time’s your interview at?

Mark: 9 o’clock.

Receptionist: Mr Marcus hasn’t arrived yet. Would you like to take a seat? He should be here soon.

Mark: Yes of course

Receptionist: Would you like anything to drink while you’re waiting?

Mark: If you’ve got any coffee that would be great.

Receptionist: Yes we have a coffee machine; if you would like to come this way please.

*The receptionist enters her prepaid key into the machine*

Receptionist: Do you take milk and sugar?

Mark: Yes I do thanks.

Receptionist presses the milk and sugar buttons on the coffee machine

Receptionist: Here you are.
Mark: Thanks. This will calm my nerves

Receptionist: There’s no need to be nervous. Mr Marcus is an extremely laid-back person.

Mark: That’s good to know.

Mr Marcus enters the school

Mr Marcus: Hi, are you Mark?

Mark: Yes I am. Pleased to meet you? (Mark holds out his hand to shake Mr Marcus’s hand)

Mr Marcus: Pleased to meet you Mark. I’m sorry I’m a bit late but I got held up in the traffic.

Mark: No problem Mr Marcus. This young lady kept me company.

Mr Marcus: (laughs). Let’s go to my office on the first floor.

Mr Marcus and Mark take the lift and go to Mr Marcus’s office

Mr Marcus: Where are you from Mark?

Mark: I’m from Reading which is not very far from London. You’re Irish aren’t you?

Mr Marcus: How did you guess? I’ve been here for nearly thirty years so I thought I had lost my Irish accent.

Mark: You’ve still got the Irish twang.

Mr Marcus: Yes I know. You can never really get rid of your accent.

Mark: You can say that again.

Mr Marcus: Anyway! I received your CV by email. I see you have a lot of experience. Tell me about some of the schools you have worked at.

Mark: I have worked in different countries. I’ve worked in schools in Spain, France and Portugal. I also worked in Japan for over a year. Great experience that was. I’ve just flown over from England where I taught English for about eight months. I’ve taught English on a one to one basis and I’ve also taught groups.

Mr Marcus: What age groups did you teach?
Mark: All age groups. I taught English to young children, privately at their homes and I did company courses. I taught many high level managers business English. I taught normal everyday English to groups in companies and I also did some legal English with the lawyers from each company. In short, I’ve taught all different ages and all types of English.

Mr Marcus: What levels did you teach?

Mark: All levels. I taught beginners through to advanced. I also did a lot of exam preparation for the various Cambridge exams.

Mr Marcus: Which level of English did you find was the most common?

Mark: Without any doubt intermediate

Mr Marcus: And why do think that is so?

Mark: Well many students feel that when they get to intermediate level, they know enough English to get by and they stop studying. That’s when their level begins to slowly go downhill.

Mr Marcus: Yes that is a problem. Not very many make the effort to really master the language; only those who are truly dedicated and motivated. Our school focuses greatly on student motivation. We are looking for a teacher who will make the lessons enjoyable and keep the students motivated.

Mark: I try to make them as enjoyable as possible, otherwise the lessons become contrived and students get bored; when they get bored they drop out of the course. They then take a disliking to English and only start to study again a couple of days before they have a job interview that requires knowledge of the English language. I get the students to do a lot of role play activities. This makes them happy because they get to use the language. The grammar exercises I set for homework. I do not want to use precious classroom time with the students sitting in silence doing grammar exercises. My lessons are focused mainly on speaking. Of course I do get them to do reading and listening tasks and some of my lessons are dedicated to improving writing skills.

Mr Marcus: Yes, indeed.

Mr Marcus: Do you have any formal training to teach English?

Mark: Yes I am a TEFL certified teacher. I was issued with my TEFL qualification in London in 1992.
Mr Marcus: May I ask how old you are?
Mark: I’m 46.

Mr Marcus: So you’ve been teaching English since 1992!
Mark: Exactly. I know the grammar inside out.

Mr Marcus: Well I think you’ll find that many of your students know the grammar inside out as well. Here in Italy grammar is important. Italian students are taught to analyse their own language from a young age. This makes them ‘grammar conscious’ so as to speak. That is why it is important that we hire qualified teachers. There have been some embarrassing cases in the school where the student knew more about grammar than the “teacher”.

Mr Marcus: Have you brought your teaching certificate with you?
Mark: No I haven’t

Mr Marcus: Why is that?
Mark: Because no school has ever asked me to produce it.

Mr Marcus: We only hire qualified teachers so we need to see your qualification. Until then let me just ask you a few questions. This is a little test to see if you really are a teacher.

Mark: Go ahead Mr Marcus. I can assure you I am more than qualified for the job.

Mr Marcus: How would you explain to an intermediate class the difference between, “I must go now, it’s late” and “someone is ringing the doorbell, it must be the postman”?

Mark: That’s an easy one

Mr Marcus: Easy if you are a teacher. It is not quite so easy if you have never taught before in your entire life. Ok, go ahead. Show me what you’re made of.

Mark: In your example “I must go”, we use ‘must’ for an obligation from the speaker, and in your second example, “it must be” the postman, “must” is used as a modal verb of deduction. We deduce the fact that the postman has rung the doorbell. We have strong reason to believe this because when the doorbell rings at this time in the morning, it is usually always the
postman.

**Mr Marcus**: Great. And in a lesson where the focus is on the main difference between ‘going to’ and ‘will’, how would you explain this to your students?

**Mark**: Another easy one. *I’m going to watch TV tonight* – I already planned this before speaking. *I’ll watch TV tonight* – a spontaneous decision.

**Mr Marcus**: And in a lesson where you are to teach your students the difference between ‘have to’ and ‘must’, how would you explain it.

**Mark**: Your questions get easier and easier Mr Marcus. *‘I have to go’* means there is an external obligation to do so. For example – I have to go. I have an appointment – somebody is waiting for me. *‘I must go’* on the other hand, is obligation from the speaker. That is the difference. Give me a more difficult question.

**Mr Marcus**: Okay. How would you explain to your students the difference between ‘thin’ and ‘skinny’ given the fact that if you look ‘thin’ up in the dictionary it will say ‘skinny’ and if you look ‘skinny’ up it will say ‘thin’.

**Mark**: You’re speaking to a qualified teacher Mr Marcus. Not some 18 year old who has just stepped off the plane.

**Mr Marcus**: Go ahead. Explain.

**Mark**: *‘Skinny’ can only be used for people and animals whereas ‘thin’ can be used for people, animals and things; “a thin sheet of paper” but not “a skinny sheet of paper.” “Skinny” implies ‘all bones and no flesh’.*

**Mr Marcus**: How would you explain the difference between “*I lived in England for two years*” and “*I have lived in England for two years*?”

**Mark**: The first one is the past tense so the person speaking does not live in England anymore. The second one is the present perfect which when used with ‘for’ or ‘since’ means that the person arrived in England two years ago and is still in England now.

**Mr Marcus**: You know your stuff Mark. Here is the final question. How would you explain these two sentences? “*I have worked as a teacher for many years*” and “*I have worked like a teacher for many years*”.

**Mark**: In the first case, you *are* a teacher, and in the second, with ‘like’,
you are not a teacher. You have worked in a similar way to a teacher. You are not going to catch me out Mr Marcus. I’ve been teaching these things for so long that it is now second nature to me.

**Mr Marcus:** But I still want to see that certificate. If you want you can stop by this afternoon with your TEFL qualification.

**Mark:** No problem. I’ve got it in my flat. Now could we speak about the English courses please?

**Mr Marcus:** We have just won a huge contract with a telecommunications company. We need about twenty English teachers to cover the courses. We can offer you ten courses - each comprising of 20 hours per course. So basically you would be doing ten x two-hourly lessons per week for ten weeks.

**Mark:** How much do the teachers get paid?

**Mr Marcus:** 18 euro per hour, making it 36 for each two hour-lesson.

**Mark:** Is that gross or net?

**Mr Marcus:** Gross

**Mark:** So really it wouldn’t be 36 for two hours then.

**Mr Marcus:** You’ll be required to pay 21 per cent tax or something like that, so you’ll be left with roughly 28 euro or so.

**Mark:** It’s not a lot of money Mr Marcus. I was earning double that per hour in England and triple in Japan.

**Mr Marcus:** The cost of living is more expensive in England and I believe it is so in Japan as well.

**Mark:** I’m not so sure. I’ve just rented a flat and I’m paying 850,00 monthly. I would never be able to survive on the hourly rate your school offers.

**Mr Marcus:** Take it or leave it. We offer more than the average English school.

**Mark:** Do we get holiday pay? What sort of contract do the teachers get?

**Mr Marcus:** There’s no holiday pay I’m afraid. You get a contract for the 20 hour courses and at the end we can offer you more, that is, if more
courses come in.

Mark: That is not such a good set up for the teacher. What about cancellations? If the student cancels does the teacher still get paid?

Mr Marcus: We have a 24 hour cancellation policy. Let’s imagine you have a lesson on Friday at 10 am. If the student cancels after 10 am on Thursday morning, you get paid. If he/she cancels before 10 am on Thursday morning then you don’t get paid.

Mark: So what you mean is that if the student cancels at 9.55 am on Thursday then the teacher doesn’t get paid.

Mr Marcus: I’m afraid so.

Mark: There is absolutely no advantage for the teacher Mr Marcus. Imagine if all the students cancelled in the same week. I wouldn’t get paid a cent. I’d end up under a bridge.

Mr Marcus: We have to offer the 24 hour cancellation policy to the companies otherwise we would get eaten up by the competition.

Mark: Sorry Mr Marcus. There is no way I can work under these conditions. It’s out of the question. I’d be much better off working for myself without a school. Good day to you and thank you for your time.

Mr Marcus: Good day to you.

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Glossary of useful expressions

To catch (someone) out = to try to detect an error by using trickery

To drop out = to abandon a course before completion

To get held up = something happened to cause a delay

To get held up in the traffic = the slow moving traffic caused a delay

*To get held up also means when robbers enter a bank and hold a gun at your head. In this case we would say: There was a hold up in the bank today/the bank got held up. Normally the bank robbers enter the bank and shout – “this is a hold up”

I got held up in the bank – this has double meaning – it could mean that there was a long queue in the bank and this caused a delay or robbers held
a gun at my head while they robbed the bank or possibly robbed me. The exact meaning is understood by context.

To get rid of = to be free of/free yourself from

To go downhill = to slowly deteriorate/to worsen

To know something inside out = to know something really well

To know your stuff = to be well informed and well prepared on a subject

To be laid-back = when we say a person is ‘laid-back’ this means they are very relaxed and easy to get on with.

To look (something) up = to search among a list

It’s second nature = it comes naturally due to experience

To stop by = to pay a short visit

To take a seat = to sit down

To be better off = to be in a better situation

To be worse off = to be in a worse situation

You can say that again = I completely agree with you/I couldn’t agree more

It’s out of the question = It’s completely unacceptable/it’s unthinkable
CONVERSATION – PETER’S CAR BREAKS DOWN

Phrasal verbs and idioms in natural conversations

On the phone

Peter: Hi Andy. Sorry I’m late but my car has just broken down.

Andy: How awful! Do you want me to come and pick you up?

Peter: If you don’t mind Andy. I’m in Newborn Road opposite the supermarket. I’m in a real jam. My car’s stuck right in the middle of the road. The other cars can’t get by. I’m holding up the traffic.

Andy: It won’t take me long to get there. I’ll just put on my jacket and I’ll be with you in about a quarter of an hour.

Peter: Okay Andy. Thanks a lot. See you soon.

Andy phones Peter back

I’ll be there in about twenty minutes. I’m about to run out of petrol so I need to stop off at the petrol station first to get some.

Peter: Don’t worry Andy. I’ve just phoned the AA* and they’re coming to pick up my car. They’re going to tow it away.

Andy: How long will it take them to get there?

Peter: They said they’ll be here in a jiffy.

Andy: Don’t worry Peter. If they’re not there by the time I get to you, I’ll wait with you.

Peter: I hope so or there’s no point in you coming. I need you to give me a lift to the meeting later this morning.

*The AA = a breakdown service which rescues you and your car if you become stranded. You just call their helpline number and they reach you as quickly as possible. Many people pay a yearly membership for this service.

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Phrasal verbs

To break down – stop functioning

To pick (somebody) up – go in a vehicle to fetch the person

To get by – they can’t get by = there is an obstacle preventing something or someone from moving forward

To give (someone) a lift - accompany in a vehicle from point A to point B

To hold up – block/cause to delay

To put on – wear

To run out of – to finish your supply of something

To stop off at – to stop briefly – for a short period

To tow away – usually used for vehicles. A vehicle is fixed to another vehicle and pulled away. You tow away cars which have broken down or are illegally parked such as on a double yellow line. (Double yellow lines in the UK indicate that it is prohibited to park)

Idiomatic expressions

To be in a jam – be in trouble/ encounter problems

In a jiffy – super fast/very soon

There’s no point – it is not worth it/it is a waste of time/there is no sense in you coming
CONVERSATION – TWO FRIENDS BUMP INTO ONE ANOTHER

The situation

Two friends bump into one another after not seeing each other in a long time.

Jeff: Hi Terry. Long time no see.

Terry: You can say that again. Where have you been hiding?

Jeff: I’ve been working in Australia but now I’m back home for good.

Terry: What were you doing down under?

Jeff: I was buying up some property to resell. My uncle lives there and we did this project together. There’s stacks of dosh to be made out of it.

Terry: Good on you mate! It’s good to hear that one of us has had some success in life.

Jeff: What about yourself Terry. What have you been up to?

Terry: Nothing much Jeff. I was on the dole for a while but now I’ve found a job. I’m working as a care assistant in an old folks’ home. The money isn’t all that great but it’s good to be back in the land of the living again.

Jeff: What about that job you had the last time I saw you? The one you had before I went to Australia. You liked that. I remember the pay was good as well.

Terry: I left that. I had to put up with a lot of crap from my boss. He was always flying off the handle.

Jeff: What a pity! I know you liked that job. That’s why I prefer to be my own boss. I wouldn’t take any crap from anyone.

Jeff: What are you up to tomorrow night?

Terry: I’m going to the cinema with my girlfriend. Why?

Jeff: I thought it would be nice to meet up for a drink for the sake of old times.
Terry: What about Thursday night? Are you free?
Jeff: Yes I am. Do you fancy going to that nice pub on the corner of Cheltham Road.
Terry: Great mate! What time?
Jeff: About 9?
Terry: Ok. I’ll see you then.
Jeff: Ok Terry, see you on Thursday then. It was great to see you again.

***

Bump into = unexpectedly meet
Long time no see – this is a common expression that English people use when they haven’t seen each other for a long time.
In a long time = for a long time
You can say that again = I completely agree
For good = forever
Down under = another way of saying ‘Australia’
Stacks of dosh (very colloquial) = lots of money
What have you been up to = what have you been doing?
To be on the dole = you have no job and you sign each week at the unemployment benefits office to qualify for unemployment benefits (money)
It isn’t all that great = it’s nothing special
To be back in the land of the living = to be part of society again
To put up with = tolerate
To put up with a lot of crap = tolerate a lot of unacceptable behaviour
To fly off the handle = to suddenly become very angry – usually for no apparent reason
To meet up = to meet – this is used between friends. When we say ‘meet up’ it implies for a friendly chat. It should never be used for formal
meetings.

For the sake of = for the benefit of

Do you fancy going (fancy + gerund) – Would you like to go/does the idea appeal to you?
CONVERSATION – TELEPHONING

Telephone dialogue one

Janet: Good morning, Could I speak to Mrs. Sullivan please?
Receptionist: *Hold the line* please and I’ll *put you through* to her.
Janet: Ok. Thanks.
Receptionist: I’m so sorry but I can’t *get through* to Mrs. Sullivan at the moment. Her line is busy. If you leave me your name I’ll get her to *call you back*.

Telephone dialogue two

*John phones his friend Robert. Robert’s father answers the phone*

John: Is that you Robert?
Robert’s father: No it’s not. It’s his dad. Who’s calling?
John: It’s me, John.
Robert’s father: Oh hi John. I didn’t recognize your voice. *Hang on* a sec and I’ll *put him on*.

*John got cut off so he calls Robert back*

Robert: Hi John. What happened?
John: I *got cut off*. The line just went dead all of a sudden.
Robert: I think my dad *hung up* by accident.
John: Not to worry. I just wanted to know if you fancy hitting the town tonight.

Robert: I don’t half. What time shall we meet?

John: What about 8.30 outside the Bull and Bush pub?

Robert: Okay, see you then.

John: Okay mate, see you later, bye.

*The boys both put the phone down*

***

Phrasal verbs used in telephone language

**Call back** – call again

**Hang on** – wait

**Hold on** – wait

**Hold the line** – wait (Formal)

**Get back to you** – contact again

**Get through** – successfully connect – I can’t get through – Fail to connect/no success in connecting

**Get cut off** – become disconnected

**Put (somebody) through** – connect a person from one phone to another

**Put (somebody) on** – call a person to come to the phone

**Put the phone down** – end the call

Other expressions used in the conversation

I don’t half = I definitely want to do this

Hit the town = go out with the intention of really enjoying yourself

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