

• DELTA • NATURAL • ENGLISH •

A HANDBOOK OF Spoken Grammar

STRATEGIES FOR SPEAKING NATURAL ENGLISH

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Includes audio CD



MAP OF THE BOOK

UNIT 1	Short questions for everyday conversations	Quite often we only use the endings of questions, or we use very short questions with <i>about</i> or with prepositions.	A: <i>More tea?</i> B: Yes, please. Half a cup is fine, though. A: I've been looking for a new job. B: Oh. <i>Any luck?</i>
UNIT 2	Common structures with <i>know</i> and <i>think</i>	Some short structures or patterns of words are used again and again in spoken English as a 'springboard' for sentences.	A: <i>I don't know what</i> to do today. B: Why don't we have a game of tennis? A: Who paid for the hotel? B: I'm not sure. <i>I think it was</i> Jaci.
UNIT 3	Modify meaning with <i>actually</i>, <i>really</i>, <i>of course</i>, etc.	In conversation we often do more than simply express a basic meaning. Sometimes, for example, we also show our 'attitude' to what we're saying.	A: Are you <i>actually</i> going out in that rain? B: <i>Of course</i> . I've got to get to work, haven't I? A: I shouldn't have criticised you like that in front of everyone. I'm sorry. B: It's alright, <i>really</i> . I don't mind. I'd rather people said what they thought.
UNIT 4	Improve your naming skills	There are three main ways of addressing people: by first name; by title (e.g. <i>Mr Smith</i>); and by general words such as <i>guys</i> .	A: Where are we eating, <i>guys</i> ? B: I'm not sure, <i>Mike</i> . They say the Italian place is good. A: Shall we meet at the cinema, <i>Jay</i> ? B: Alright, <i>Meg</i> . Is that okay with you, <i>Pete</i> ?
UNIT 5	Send signals with <i>I mean</i>, <i>you see</i>, <i>you know</i>, etc.	Sometimes, in conversation, we use a word or short phrase to 'signal' the type of thing we're about to say or we've just said.	A: ...and then in the afternoon, we're going to climb all three mountains. B: <i>Right</i> . That sounds like fun. A: But I thought you liked really spicy food. B: <i>Well</i> , I don't. I've told you before.
UNIT 6	Use <i>so</i> and <i>do</i> to make effective responses	<i>So</i> and <i>do</i> have many uses in English. They both play an important part, for example, in the business of 'connecting' bits of conversation together.	A: Olivia and Jack are getting married. B: <i>So</i> I heard. It's great news. A: Have you e-mailed your boss? B: Yes, I <i>have done</i> , but she hasn't replied.
UNIT 7	Sound more polite	Being polite means making your language less direct (often through past tenses) – and knowing how to respond to what other people say.	A: <i>Excuse me</i> , I think you've dropped your gloves! B: <i>Oh dear!</i> I'm always doing that. <i>Thanks very much</i> . A: <i>You're welcome</i> . Would you like a hand with your bags? B: Yes, <i>please</i> . <i>I'm afraid</i> they're quite heavy. Do you live round here?
UNIT 8	Be vague with <i>thing/thingy</i>, and <i>things (like that)</i>, etc.	Spoken language is often vague. We don't always have time to be precise – and being vague can be a more relaxed way of speaking to people.	A: Look. I've got this <i>thing</i> on my leg. B: You poor <i>thing</i> , Sam. Does it hurt? A: What do you do in the evenings? B: Play music, watch TV <i>and things like that</i> .
UNIT 9	Be vague with <i>sort of</i>, <i>kind of</i>, <i>a couple of</i>, etc.	As mentioned in Unit 8, spoken language is often vague. In this unit, we look at some more vague language.	A: What happened to you yesterday? B: I was feeling <i>kind of</i> ill, so I went home. A: Are you looking forward to the weekend? B: <i>Sort of</i> . I've got quite a lot of work to do, but I should get a break on Sunday.
UNIT 10	Say less	<i>Ellipsis</i> means leaving out (not saying) words when your meaning is clear without them. It is a natural part of conversation, not only because it saves time, but also because it 'links' what we say to what our partner has said.	A: Are you feeling okay? B: Got a headache again, I'm afraid. A: Where are you? B: On the train.

UNIT 11	Exaggerate	Exaggerated language (sometimes called <i>hyperbole</i>) is very common in informal conversation, particularly amongst teenagers, and when we're gossiping or telling stories.	A: How's it been? B: Really busy! <i>Hundreds of people rang</i> while you were out. A: <i>These shoes are killing me!</i> B: Don't worry. We'll be home soon.
UNIT 12	How to use <i>oh</i>, <i>ah</i>, <i>wow</i>, <i>ouch</i>, etc.	There are a number of words – sometimes called <i>interjections</i> – that we use regularly in conversation, but hardly ever write down.	A: The problem is that my flat's too small. B: <i>Oh</i> , I see. Well, Sue can stay with me, if you like. A: Anyway, I decided to treat myself to a new dress. What do you think? B: <i>Wow!</i> It's gorgeous.
UNIT 13	Make statements work as questions	To make a statement into a question, we normally change the word order, or use <i>do/does/did</i> or a question tag. But it isn't always necessary.	A: Scott's booked a table for 6p.m. B: We're eating before the play? A: We'll pick Mike up on the way. B: Mike's coming, too?
UNIT 14	Report speech in a more immediate way	Reporting speech normally involves a process of changing tenses, pronouns and time and place words. In this unit, we focus instead on a simpler way – and a special use of the past continuous.	A: How did it go? B: Not very well. I started by saying to him, ' <i>Look</i> , if we don't find a way of working together, we'll never get the product launch ready in time.' And he said, ' <i>Oh</i> , I didn't know we had a problem.' So I said, ' <i>Well</i> , you haven't replied to any of my last three e-mails.'
UNIT 15	Use <i>had better</i>, <i>have got to</i> and <i>be supposed to</i> correctly	Three modal verb phrases, which you will have seen before, are much more common in conversation than in written English: <i>had better</i> , <i>have got to</i> and <i>be supposed to</i> .	A: <i>Aren't you supposed to</i> be at work? B: It's okay. My boss gave me the afternoon off. I've <i>got to</i> do a presentation tomorrow for some clients. The phone was ringing all the time, so she said I'd <i>better</i> go home and finish it off there.
UNIT 16	Make short responses to agree or show interest	The way in which we respond to what people say is one of the most important parts of conversational English. In this unit, we look at using adjectives, adverbs and very short questions.	A: We can have a pizza before the film. B: <i>Great</i> . A: Tim's coming to the match. B: <i>Excellent</i> . I haven't seen him for ages.
UNIT 17	Add verb, adverb and adjective pairs	In conversation we sometimes like to use verbs, adverbs and adjectives in pairs, linked by <i>and</i> . With verbs and adverbs, it adds a sense of action and movement; with adjectives, it adds emphasis to a description.	Are you going to <i>come and get</i> this food while it's hot? <i>Try and do</i> some tidying while we're out. It's your turn. It's great here! All the shops are <i>nice and close</i> . There are a few mistakes <i>here and there</i> , but it's a good essay in general.
UNIT 18	Follow your partner	Conversation, unlike writing, is interactive. In this unit, we'll look at ways in which people link what they say directly to the sentence they've just heard in a conversation.	A: They shouldn't keep people waiting like this. It's terrible. B: <i>You're right</i> . It's awful. A: I'm full. That was a beautiful meal. B: <i>Gorgeous</i> , wasn't it? Do you want some coffee?
UNIT 19	Put important things at the front	In conversation, we can sometimes change the regular order of words to put emphasis on particular parts of the sentence. Here we look at 'heads': things we take from their normal place and put at the front of sentences.	A: <i>My new trainers</i> , I can't find them anywhere. B: Have you looked under the sofa? A: <i>This DVD player</i> , is it the cheapest one you've got? B: No, madam. But it's one of the most popular.
UNIT 20	Put important things at the end	In this unit, we look at 'tails': things we take from their normal place and put at the end of sentences.	A: They're rather good, <i>these sardines</i> . How's your curry? B: Actually, I'm not very hungry. I'm feeling a bit tense. A: Well, this is your chance to relax, <i>this meal with me</i> . I know you're worrying about your sister again. But try to be positive. She'll be okay, <i>Sophie will</i> .

REPORT SPEECH IN A MORE IMMEDIATE WAY

About the language

... but then she said, 'Oh, that's too expensive. You can't buy me that.'

Reporting speech normally involves a process of changing tenses, pronouns and time and place words. In this unit, we focus instead on a simpler way – and a special use of the past continuous.

1 Using direct speech

In conversation, we often want to tell friends about the things we or other people have said. If Holly says to Dave on a Saturday night: *I'm tired. I've had enough of this party*, he can tell a friend about it on Sunday, using the grammar of reported speech:

Then Holly said she was tired and that she'd had enough of the party.

But he doesn't have to. It's easier and more natural in an informal context just to use Holly's actual words (direct speech):

Then Holly said, 'I'm tired. I've had enough of this party.'

The only problem when we do this is that it's not always clear when our words end, and the direct speech begins. To solve this we sometimes use 'marker' words. These words, which may or may not have been used by the original speaker, act as speech marks.



Listen to the dialogue between work colleagues, and try to identify the three marker words that the speaker uses. Notice the stress they place on these words. Check your answers on page 61.

Elsa: I finally managed to get through to Tim on the phone today.

Jacob: Good. How did it go?

Elsa: Not very well. I started by saying to him, 'Look, if we don't find a way of working together, we'll never get the product launch ready in time.' And he said, 'Oh, I didn't know we had a problem.' So I said, 'Well, you haven't replied to any of my last three e-mails.'

Jacob: And how did he respond?

Elsa: He just told me to relax!

2 Seven marker words

The seven marker words that we sometimes use are: *but, hey, listen, look, oh, okay, and well*. As well as indicating when the direct speech begins, the one we choose can add drama to the report by revealing the attitude of the person who was speaking.

But, listen and *look* often introduce a different point of view:

... and then Tom said to Sue, '**Listen**, I'm not your servant, you know.'
She said to me, '**But** you can't go out dressed like that!'

Hey and *oh* sometimes express surprise:

- 1 Jane started to walk towards the door so Mark said, '**Hey**, where are you going?'
- 2 The shop assistant said it was only £10 and I said, '**Oh**, are you sure?'

Okay and *well* may suggest the speaker is hesitant or doubtful:

... and I said, '**Okay**, you can have a shower, but we're going to be late again.'
I didn't want to take my coat, but Bob said, '**Well**, it can be cold in Scotland.'

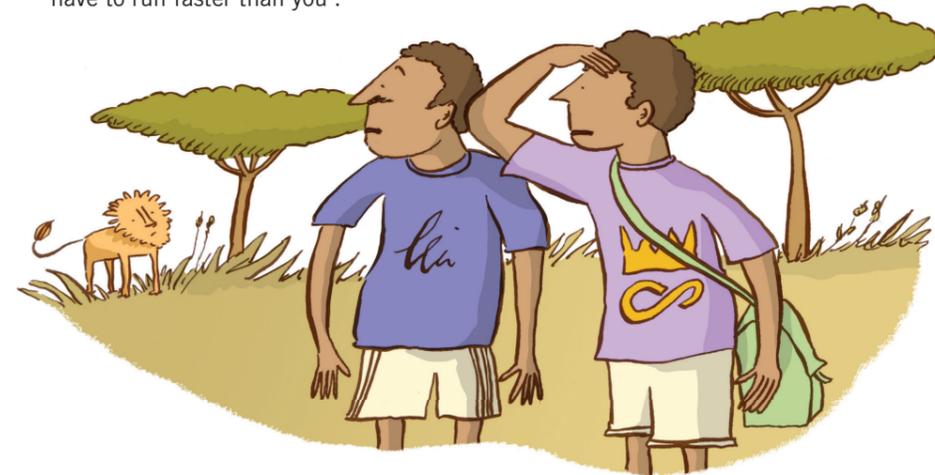
► Practice: Exercises 1–3 pages 62–63.

3 Telling jokes and stories

When we tell a joke or a story, it's normal to use a 'direct' way of reporting speech.

Read this joke, and as you do so, try to find one other typical grammatical feature of storytelling. Then check your answers below.

Two men are going for a walk, when they see the fastest man-eating lion in the world in the distance. The first man takes a pair of running shoes out of his bag, and begins to put them on. The second man says to him, 'Hey, why are you doing that? You can't run faster than the world's fastest man-eating lion'. But the first man says, 'Listen, I only have to run faster than you'.



► Practice: Exercise 4 on page 63.

4 Using *said, say(s), go(es)* and *went*

In the examples so far in this unit, we've introduced speech with the past verb form *said*. But it is also possible, but only in **very informal** contexts to use the present tense *says*, or a past or present form of *go*:

- 1 Then after class yesterday, Becky **says** to me 'What are doing tonight?' and I **go**, 'I'm revising', and she **says**, 'You're always working, you. Why don't you take a break?'
- 2 Dave shouted at me again this morning, so I **went**, 'Look, why are you in such a bad mood these and he said, 'Sorry, I'm a bit stressed out about the exams next week.'

Young people in the UK, and people in TV dramas or soap operas, often use *be like*, but this is considered extremely informal, or incorrect by many people:

So then we had a bit of a row. Steve **is like**, 'You should have texted me if you weren't coming,' and I **am like**, 'I told you already I'd forgotten to charge my mobile.'

5 Using the past continuous

We sometimes use *talk about* and *tell (someone) about* in the past continuous to introduce reports of recent conversations. Look at these examples:

- 1 Meg **was telling me about** her new dog yesterday. He's called Bruno and he's massive!
- 2 Ravi **was talking about** that new film with Johnny Depp. He says it's pretty good.
- 3 Anyway, I **was telling Chris about** my trip to Colombia, and he said he was planning to go there in the summer.

► Practice: Exercise 5 page 63.

Answers

- 1 look, oh, well.
- 2 It's also common in storytelling to use the present tense for dramatic effect.

Practice

1a Lizzie and Sanjeet are complaining about their flatmates. Put the dialogue in the correct order.

- a **Lizzie:** That's typical of Mel. She's so rude and arrogant. She never lifts a finger and neither does Sophie. *And* she's been helping herself to my CDs. _____
- b **Sanjeet:** And what did she reply? _____
- c **Lizzie:** No, she's done it before. So I said to her, 'Look, just ask next time, will you?'
- d **Sanjeet:** I said to Mel, 'Look, why don't you ever do any washing up?' and she said 'Listen, I'm hardly ever here. Why should I?' 1
- e **Lizzie:** She just said, 'Oh, I didn't think you'd mind.' Honestly, it drives you mad! I can't wait till we find a new flat.
- f **Sanjeet:** She hasn't, has she? Is it the first time?



b Listen to check your answers. Then listen and repeat, paying attention to stress.

2 Kate is talking to a friend on the phone. Complete what she says with the actual words she used a–e.

So I phoned John and said, 'What time do you think you can meet?' And he said, '1 _____' So I said, '2 _____' And do you know how long I was waiting? An hour and a half! Then when he finally turned up, I really shouted at him. I said, '3 _____' He didn't even say he was sorry. He just turned round and said, '4 _____' I could have killed him, you know. But in the end, I just went '5 _____' and I just came home.

- a Hey, calm down! It's not the end of the world!
- b Who do you think you are, making me wait like this?
- c Well actually it is— I'm not in the mood now.
- d Well, I should be able to get to the restaurant by 7p.m.
- e That sounds great.

3a Put the words in brackets in the correct order to complete these sentences.

- 1 I said, (up? / hurry / Look, / you / will) ' _____ I don't want to miss the start of the film.'
- 2 So I said, (keep / will you? / shouting, / don't / Listen,) ' _____ I don't want the whole street to hear us arguing.'
- 3 Hilary said, (you can / than 20kg. / Well, I / carry more / don't think) ' _____ They'll charge you for excess weight at check-in.'
- 4 I said, (more sweets. / have some / Okay, / you can) ' _____ But don't blame me if you're sick.'
- 5 So I said, (you / what / are / here? / doing / Hey,) ' _____? You should be at school!'
- 6 And then I said, (don't think / the right change / given me / you've / Oh, I) ' _____ I gave you a *ten* pound note.'

b Match the sentences 1–6 above with the responses a–f.

- a So did he stop eating then?
- b Did you get there on time in the end?
- c So did you manage to have a proper conversation after that?
- d And did he have a good excuse for being out of school?
- e Hmm, I think she's right about the 20kg limit.
- f So did you get the right change in the end?

“ Marker words always come at the beginning of the utterance and are always stressed!

4 Put the words in brackets in the correct place to complete the joke.



A bank robber goes to prison for stealing, but he ^{refuses} h to tell the police where he's hidden the money. His wife telephones him in prison [refuses] and, 'Darling, I need to plant the potatoes now. I suppose I'll have to dig the garden myself this year.' The robber replies, [says] 'don't touch the garden! That's where I buried the money!' [Hey,] A week later he's having his lunch and he another phone call [gets] from his wife, saying, 'you won't believe this, but yesterday seven policemen came to the house and dug up the garden! [Listen,] They didn't seem happy.' The robber for a minute or two, [laughs] and then says to his wife, 'now plant the potatoes!' [Okay,]

5 Complete the dialogues with the words in the box.

You've • Look • said • talking • telling • saying • having

Kay: I was ¹ _____ a chat with Sal this morning. She was ² _____ me about her new flat. It sounds really nice. Really spacious. What about you? Have you had a good day?

Jo: Actually, no. I had a horrible lunch date with that guy, Phil. He just kept staring at me, and then he said, '³ _____ got really beautiful eyes, Jo.' That's a bit strange, isn't it? So I just said, 'Oh, thank you!' Anyway, after that it got worse, because when the bill came he said, '⁴ _____ I'm sorry, but I've left my wallet at home' – and he'd promised to pay!

Sean: Dan was ⁵ _____ about that bomb scare at the station.

Kieran: Really? What was he ⁶ _____?

Sean: Well, apparently, a man's voice came over the loudspeaker and just ⁷ _____, 'This is an emergency, please leave the station immediately.'

Extension

Choose some of the topics below, and write them down using reported speech. Then record your piece. Make the intonation as dramatic as possible.

- 1 Report a real conversation you had yesterday.
- 2 Tell a joke.
- 3 Describe a complaint you made in a restaurant.
- 4 Describe an argument you had with an old friend or family member.
- 5 Describe a bad experience in a shop.
- 6 Describe a conversation that shocked or amazed you.