

Healthy English

Language, culture and effective communication

www.consultationskills.com

Healthy [hel-thee] adjective, healthy or enjoying good health; healthy to discharge all functions of health; wholesome, salutary. Denoting or characteristic of health (and figurative); opposed to ill health. pertaining to or characteristic of a healthy and vigorous mind: a healthy mind. conducive to good health; healthy business. Fairly large (as a number of books). **English** [ing-glish] adjective, of, relating to, or characteristic of England or its inhabitants; of institutions, etc. belonging or relating to, or spoken or written in, the English language: a school English class; an English translation of a Spanish novel. noun (used with a plural verb), the people of England collectively, especially as distinguished by language.



Introduction

Healthy English

For the vast majority of English speakers in the world, English is not their native or mother tongue.

For years, many of these people have chosen to make the UK their home, or to train or work here for a limited amount of time. The NHS is fortunate to have a significant number of them working in its hospitals, as well as in care homes and other medical or care facilities.

It is one thing to study and to train as an expert or facilitator in any discipline; but it is altogether something else to have to do this in a language that is not your own.

Imagine, for a moment, that you have studied and trained in your chosen disciplines, and have reached the appropriate level of English Language needed to train and to work in the UK.

Finally, you find yourself working in a region of the UK where the local accent and dialect are nothing like the Standard English and Received Pronunciation that you studied for so many years. To make things more difficult, some of your patients are not native speakers. They, like you, have other mother tongues, and speak English with strong accents or with limited vocabulary.

Added to this, you find yourself in a very different culture, which has a different approach and attitude to healthcare and the relationship between patients and practitioners from those that you are used to.

It is for all of these reasons that the “Healthy English” website has been created.

Its aim is to support non-native speakers of English, their colleagues (some of whom will also have different mother-tongues) and their patients.

The site is not exclusively for the use of non-native speakers. We are all responsible for making sure that communication – speaking, listening, reading and writing – is optimal at all times. Native speakers, too, can learn how to help and support their colleagues and to make adjustments in the way they communicate with them. Understanding how your own language works, and how other languages are different from it, should be a continuous learning process for everyone.



The following problems have been experienced and shared by trainers who have had GP Registrars with English language or communication difficulties:

- Patients sometimes experience difficulties understanding the GPR, leading to confusion and the need for further patient contact to clarify matters.
- Sometimes, patients have been reluctant to go back to see the GPR because they haven't understood.
- There has been inadequate rapport with patients due to poor understanding, or cultural differences.
- The GPR sometimes can't understand patients, especially those with heavy accents and local dialects.
- Cultural differences in expression/behaviour lead to patient or staff conflict e.g. the perception of an abrupt manner, inappropriate laughter or smiling.
- Excessive speed of language, or low volume can sometimes be very difficult to understand.
- The GPR might have a poor understanding of the NHS system, having just arrived from overseas.
- Some GPRs come from a culture of doctor-centred consultations which can be difficult to change.
- Difficulty with written English leads to problems with spelling and accurate written clinical note-keeping.
- Concern from trainers about the GPR making the grade to pass the summative assessment video, MRCP oral and video due to English language problems has been expressed.
- Problems with social isolation in the peer group and community can be significant.
- Problems with seminars and teaching due to cultural differences and poor understanding have been reported.
- Prejudice from patients and staff due to English language problems and poor understanding of the GPR has occurred on occasions.

What can Trainers and Educators do?

From the outset, a trainer and the trainee can agree to **a communication and language support contract**. The empathy here centres on understanding that coming to work in a different culture and in another language is by no means easy. So, asking the trainees to explain how they would describe their cultures and how their languages work, and how those languages are different from English is a useful way to start. For a trainer to have these insights is invaluable.

Permission can then be obtained from the trainee for the trainer to highlight language and communication weaknesses and suggest ways to deal with them. Equally, the trainee can be encouraged to ask for help, correction or clarification.

Non-native English speakers may keep quiet when they do not understand something out of fear of appearing incompetent, failing examinations and assessments or even losing their jobs, so keeping an open line of communication is crucial. Most importantly, trainees need to know from the outset that everyone is there to help and support them.

Using the Healthy English website

The communication skills required by the healthcare professional are many and complex. For those who come from another culture and speak English as their second or third language, the challenges can be immense. Many trainers themselves are from other cultures, too, and English is not their native language. They will be acutely aware of what it feels like to work and live in a new environment and system.

Trainers and trainee supervisors (clinical or educational supervisors, managers, specialty educational leads) should acquaint themselves with the content of the website. It is important that if they are to recommend that trainees focus on specific linguistic and communication skills, they need to have a good working knowledge of each section of the site. If the trainer is already acquainted with the content of the site, the trainee can be helped to understand what communication skills need to be improved. This can be supported by line-managers and colleagues, too. For example, “You need to work on your pronunciation, regulate your speed (you are speaking too quickly), focus on certain sounds, work on your question techniques, practise your signposting/normalising skills...”.

If the trainee is already aware of his/her weaknesses (e.g. I know I have problems with the pronunciation of certain sounds or sound clusters) it is relatively easy to direct oneself to the relevant section using the site map.

Sometimes, of course, someone (trainer, colleague, friend) can help the trainee highlight and analyse what the problems or weaknesses are, and give direction appropriately.

Encourage non-native speakers to listen actively and ask for clarification when it is needed. Encourage other colleagues to do the same. Before each section, there is a note to trainers and educators about what to look out for when observing the communication of the trainee in action, and how to point out areas that need working on.



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How else can trainers help?

- If necessary, encourage GPR to enrol in additional local English language course such as that offered by the British Council: www.learnenglish.org.uk.
- Plan an early seminar or informal chat about their English language skills early in the first GPR attachment to identify learning needs and discuss early ways in which the trainer can help the GPR.
- Encourage increased social mixing to help with possible social isolation e.g. Joining sports group, local community group.
- Plan a video session/seminar specifically to look at language skills/cultural behaviour and rapport building.
- With the agreement of GPR, correct spoken English and written English mistakes early on – obviously impossible to do all the time, but every little bit helps.
- Encourage the GPR to introduce themselves early to the practice staff with details of their background and culture. This helps to improve communication with staff and route out any prejudice as a result of poor understanding due to English language problems.
- Have a clear in-house equal opportunities policy, with clear statements about zero tolerance to racism/prejudice.
- Allow longer consultation lengths especially at the beginning of the attachment, and possibly for longer than allowed for other GPRs.
- If necessary, refer for speech therapy classes; one trainer found this very useful for a GPR who had difficulty with pronunciation of English words.
- Encourage the GPR to challenge or question trainer if they don't understand.
- Encourage the GPR to develop consultation skills early, e.g. checking patient understanding.
- Joint telephone consultations to assess language skills on the telephone can be helpful.
- Joint out-of-hours sessions can be useful in assessing language skills especially when the GPR is under stress/pressure.
- Use a local dialect dictionary if available to help GPRs who have problems with understanding accents/dialects. One GPR used an A- Z logbook/ dictionary to record new words that she had learnt, in order to remember more easily and provide an easy way to look them up again when required. This can also be done across the practice, resulting in a useful list of words, expressions, idioms, ways of pronouncing often used by patients.
- Include a specific question in appraisal or feedback in order to encourage discussion about English language skills.

Section 1

Working and communicating with non-native speakers of English

Section overview

This section is designed to provide a detailed introductory exploration of the **linguistic and cultural challenges** faced by anyone coming from overseas to work in the UK. It consists of a 6-part article examining the challenges of communicating in English which highlights many of the difficulties and problems encountered, and offers solutions and tips about how to deal with them.

Its main purpose is to raise awareness of the relevance of the materials on this site. The 6 parts of the article are accompanied by audio recordings for those who would like to read and listen at the same time, or just listen. Both Trainers and Trainees can be encouraged to read and/or listen. It can then be used as the starting point for conversations about communication problems and cultural differences. The earlier these take place, the better.



Section 1 (i)

Working with native and non-native speakers of English

Each part of this section has an accompanying audio file on the website. Wherever indicated, open up the audio file and listen to the spoken text as you follow with the written text.

Working with native and non-native speakers of English – Part 1

The most obvious definition of a non-native speaker is someone who speaks a language other than English; someone who, as an infant, learned a different language as his or her first language, and then later in life began learning English.

Usually such a person will speak English with an accent. Generally the older you are when you start to learn a language, the more accented your speech will be. However, there are exceptions. If someone learns English at a very young age, he or she will probably sound like a native speaker, but technically isn't. In general, many English learners will retain an accent that marks them as non-native speakers.

Another factor to consider in defining a non-native speaker, is the increasing number of world Englishes. Different varieties of English have differing norms for pronunciation, for grammar, and for vocabulary. You may perceive some varieties as more standard than others. And you may find it difficult to understand English speakers who use a nonstandard variety of English, or who speak in a dialect or accent you're not familiar with. English really is an international language. In fact, there are now more non-native speakers of English in the world than there are native speakers of English.

Throughout this article, the term non-native speaker will be used to encompass all of these possible situations. Whether the person you communicate with has a strong accent or none at all, you'll be able to use many strategies to improve your communication with people from different cultures.

In our increasingly globalised world, it's becoming more and more common to interact with people who speak English as a second or third or fourth language. Communication, being a social interaction, involves give and take from all participants. So, let's start by exploring things that you can do to help that interaction go more smoothly.



Click here to download the audio file
'Working with NNS – Part 2'

Working with native and non-native speakers of English – Part 2

In most interactions, you do some talking and some listening. When you're talking to a non-native speaker of English, there are several things you can do to be more clearly understood. Non-native speakers were asked what native speakers can do to help improve communications. Here are some of their responses.

Speaker 1: It helps me when native speakers talk slower.

Speaker 2: Slow down. I understand more if they slow down their speaking speed.

Indeed, the most common response we hear from non-native speakers is to slow down. But be careful when you're slowing down that you don't also talk down to them, making them feel inferior or embarrassed. There's a difference between slowing your speech and talking down. Just speak a little more slowly.

Speaker 1: It's helpful when you use clear speech.

Speaker 2: It helps if you use clear intonation.

You can enunciate more clearly. It's important to understand that speech is a steady stream of connected sounds. We tend to think in individual words. And we certainly read and write in individual words. But when we're speaking, all of our sounds are really connected into a steady stream. This is easier to notice in a language you're less familiar with. This can even happen when you are familiar with the language. In fact, this happens with native speakers and song lyrics all the time, which is what is known as Mondegreens. One famous example is from the Beatles' song *"Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"*. The line "the girl with kaleidoscope eyes", has been famously misheard as "the girl with colitis goes by". It's really a similar combination of sounds but with a totally different meaning.

Speaker 1: Sometimes they use really short words, which confuses me.

Speaker 3: It's helpful when you use full words instead of short words.

To help you to be understood better by non-native speakers, use fewer reductions. Now, we naturally use these in our speech to save time and to maintain the rhythm and the cadence of English. But these can be hard for non-native speakers to hear. There are several different examples of reductions that we naturally use in our speech. One is trimming sounds. An obvious example of this is in contractions where we'd say "he's" instead of "he is" or "can't" instead of "cannot" or "shouldn't've" instead of "should not have". And these are even visually noted with an apostrophe to show that something has been dropped from this word.

There are other patterns where we also drop sounds and it's not noted by any marking or apostrophe. For example, the phrase "act nicely" tends to drop that T sound. And we would pronounce it more like "acnicely" at normal speed. Or, in the word "friendly", we tend to drop that D sound and pronounce it more like "frienly" when we're speaking at a normal speed.

A common thing we do is to drop H sounds in some words. A sentence such as "she gave him her pen", sounds more like "she gave 'im 'er pen." This helps us maintain the rhythm. But we're losing some of the sounds that are really present in the words.

We also drop entire syllables. In a word like family, we tend to really make that two syllables – "fam-ly." The same thing with "corporate". We make that two syllables – "cor-prate."

We also blend sounds together. If we take the phrase "did you", in normal speech we would tend to say, "didjou." And we're actually introducing a totally new sound, "jou", that isn't present in the word "did" or in the word "you." But as we combine those sounds together, they blend, and our tongue and mouth muscles are preparing for the next sound so that this extra sound is produced in the phrase. This happens with a lot of phrases like "aren't ya" or "where'd ya" instead of "aren't you" or "where did you".

Additionally, we shorten verbs in general, saying "wanna" to instead of "want to", "gonna" instead of "going to", or "hafta" instead of "have to." Now, any one of these isn't that problematic. But in regular speech, we tend to build a lot of these into our sentences. And over time, this can cause problems for a non-native speaker to understand us.



Click here to download the audio file
'Working with NNS – Part 3'

Working with native and non-native speakers of English – Part 3

Vocabulary is an important issue to keep in mind when speaking to someone from another culture. Once again, let's see what advice international students have for native speakers.

Speaker 1: Don't use a lot of idioms.

Speaker 2: Using fewer idioms will help.

Idioms are notoriously difficult for non-native speakers. An idiom is a phrase that has its own meaning separate from the individual words making up that phrase. Let's take an example, the idiom, "to get cold feet."

A non-native speaker might know what the verb, "to get" means. And they may know what cold means. And they probably know what feet are. But if you put that phrase together, "to get cold feet," they have no way of knowing that it means to become nervous.

We have a lot of idioms in English. And a lot of them come from sports: "right off the bat," meaning instantly or immediately, "out in left field," meaning something very strange or out of the ordinary, "throw in the towel," meaning to quit or to give up.

Something like, "level the playing field" is a little easier to understand the connection. If we level the field, we make things even and fair for everyone involved. But some idioms are really difficult to understand, for example, "hit it off with someone." Actually, this sounds rather violent.

But of course, it's a positive thing. If you hit it off with someone, you get along with them. You have a good relationship.

There are several other idioms in English that don't come from sports; for example "down the road," meaning later, or "up in the air," to signify uncertain or unknown, "a rule of thumb," meaning a general rule, and also, "foot the bill," meaning to pay for something. Idioms are very common. So it's important if you're talking to someone from another culture to try to avoid idioms or be prepared to explain them or reword them if necessary.

Speaker 3: Use easier words.

Speaker 4: Expect first that some kinds of words are hard for us to understand.

One example of a type of word that can be difficult for non-native speakers is a multi-word verb. Now you can probably guess that a multi-word verb is a verb that has more than one word. But it acts as one unit, as one word.

We can take "to break" as an example of a regular single-word verb. And we probably understand what that means. Now a multi-word version of that word is "to break down," which we usually use to describe a machine or a process, something that stops working.

We have another version in "to break up," which we can use to mean crumble. We break up a biscuit. Or we break up a chunk of ice. To break up can also be applied to relationships, as in to break up a meeting or to break up with a significant other.

And for non-native speakers, these slight differences and difference in uses can cause some misunderstandings and problems. In an academic setting in particular, we can see a lot of examples of common multi-word verbs; but consider a single-word substitute; for example, "submit" a report rather than "hand in" a report. We might "distribute" a paper rather than "pass out" or "hand out" the paper. We might ask students to "listen" rather than "listen up" or to "solve" a problem rather than "figure out" a problem.

Speaker 5: Use less slang and local jokes.

Speaker 2: It would be nice if people could realise they are using slang sometimes.

Slang can be really difficult for non-native speakers. And one of the reasons is because it's constantly changing. It's always new. Slang is meant to be something that distinguishes a subgroup from another group. It evolves constantly. We see that a lot with generational differences. But it also comes across in cultural differences.

Even common slang or something you might think of as relatively old or not really new or changing can be difficult for non-native speakers. A phrase like, "to go out," meaning to date someone can be difficult for non-native speakers. That's still slang to them.

Be prepared to avoid it or rephrase it if necessary.

Speaker 4: I know it's boring, but repeat difficult words and difficult phrases.

Speaker 6: It is helpful if you rephrase or re-explain what you say.

Be willing to reword, rephrase what you say, or use synonyms. Especially if you're using idioms, multi-word verbs, or slang, this is going to be helpful to the non-native speaker. Be prepared to explain what you mean or use a different word.

Perform comprehension checks. Check that the person you're talking to understands what you say. You can say things like, "does that make sense?" or "do you understand?" or "OK?". Be aware that you should often try to check that the other person understands you.



[Click here to download the audio file 'Working with NNS – Part 4'](#)

Working with native and non-native speakers of English – Part 4

Most interactions involve both speaking and listening. There are several things that you as a listener can do to better understand accented or non-native English. The first thing is to listen actively. Don't just pretend to understand something, but make sure that you do understand it. But do this politely.

You can do things like confirming that you understood correctly. We typically do this by taking part of the previous utterance and forming it into a question. So if someone is telling you where they're from, and you're not sure you understood correctly, you can confirm it by saying, "you're from Nigeria?" Ask a question about it.

Another thing that you can do is request clarification. This includes explicit questions, such as "could you repeat that?", or "I don't understand". Or it could be taking a piece of what you did understand to get more information of what you were missing. "You went where?"

You can also use body language. If you're confused and you look confused, hopefully the person you're talking with will pick up on that and re-explain or re-word what they're saying. You can also nod or agree if you are understanding to give them a signal.

Focus on what you can understand. Don't get too flustered or upset about missing any one individual word. But if you get the general meaning or if you understand some words, use those to form a question to further clarify what the person is saying.

Usually people are happy to reword or rephrase or re-explain what they mean, because they want to be understood. Keep in mind that non-native speakers can usually comprehend more than they can produce. So if they're struggling with pronouncing a word or they can't quite think of the right vocabulary, they might recognise that if you supply it for them, and they will probably understand what you're saying even if they can't produce it themselves.

One student said, "I've always found that people with a lot of experience in foreign countries are easy to communicate with".

If you've been in that situation, if you know how frustrating it is to try to communicate in a different language, or to not be understood in a different situation, you tend to be more sympathetic to a non-native speaker. So think about putting yourself in their shoes. Be patient. Demonstrate a willingness to communicate with them. Don't look nervous. Try to relax, and they'll try to relax. Smile, use welcoming body language, and be more understanding.

You can also openly address the issue. It's OK to discuss language and culture differences.

Someone said that he likes it when a native speaker shows enthusiasm about mutual learning, not that he or she is doing him a favour by talking with him. So be willing to explore and share with a non-native speaker, and you can also benefit from that interaction.



[Click here to download the audio file](#)
'Working with NNS – Part 5'

Working with native and non-native speakers of English – Part 5

You may have wondered what makes English so difficult for people to master. Grammar, spelling, and vocabulary all contribute to the complexities of English. But let us focus on English pronunciation to get a better understanding of why this can be a difficult language to speak. When we look at specific sounds, we can find people have problems if they have to start producing a sound they're not used to, a sound that doesn't exist in their native language. For English speakers, you might think of the French R or the Spanish R. Those don't exist in our language. So it's difficult for us to start saying them correctly.

Vowels are a very common problem for non-native speakers exactly because of this reason. English has 12 vowel sounds, 8 diphthongs and 5 triphthongs. That's a lot of vowel sounds! Other languages have fewer. And some languages, like Spanish or Japanese, have about five vowel sounds. So someone coming from a different language into English is suddenly faced with a lot of new vowel sounds, many of which they're unfamiliar with, and many of which can be very similar to one another, for example, the "eh" and "ah" sound, as in left and laughed. If I take the sentence "I left when I saw the clown", versus "I laughed when I saw the clown", it completely changes the meaning of the sentence based on that one vowel sound.

Another common vowel difficulty is the "i" and "e" sounds, as in "lid" and "lead." Some languages have one or the other of these sounds. But we often find that non-native speakers confuse or replace or have difficulties with these two sounds.

Another vowel sound that's difficult for a lot of people is what we call schwa. This is the most common vowel sound in English. And it sounds like "uh." It's always a short, quick, reduced sound. And it's never stressed. It's always unstressed. So if we take a word like "syllable", it actually has two schwa sounds. The last two sounds are both schwa. And the first vowel sound is "i", that other difficult sound mentioned a little earlier. So what we tend to see with non-native speakers when they're having difficulties with some of our vowels is that they replace them, sometimes with a fuller or stronger vowel.

So they might say something more like "Seel-ah-bull".

A reason that people can have difficulty with English sounds is when two sounds are different in English, but they're not differentiated in that person's native language. A common example of this is L and R. Of course, in English, L and R are separate sounds or separate phonemes. And they can make a difference between two words – "lot" versus "rot." But in Korean, for example, L and R are not separate phonemes. They can be interchanged in a word, and it doesn't change the meaning of the word. So Korean speakers, as well as Japanese speakers or Chinese speakers, often have problems with the L and R distinction in English.

Two consonants that are difficult for people are L and N. So you might hear confusion between "lot" and "not" or "evil" and "even." This is particularly common for people from southern China, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Another pair of consonant sounds that are difficult are V and W. And we see this in German speakers, Turkish speakers, people who speak Chinese, Hindi, and Persian, among others. So you might hear something more like "ve vill visit the city this weekend" where they're making all V sounds and none of the W sounds, or all W sounds and none of the V sounds, or interchanging the two.

The TH sounds in English are notoriously difficult for non-native speakers. And part of this is because we stick our tongue between our teeth to make the TH sound. It's called an interdental. There aren't a lot of sounds in the world's languages that require a person to move their tongue outside of their mouth. So for many people, this is something very strange and uncomfortable to do. So you may see that a non-native speaker has some kind of substitute for the TH sound in English. They might use an S or a Z combination as in "I sink zis is hard." They could use a T or D substitution as in "I tink dis is hard." Or sometimes F or a V sound to substitute – "I fink vis is hard."

English consonants are often consonant clusters, when you have two or more consonants together in a word or phrase. Now different languages allow different combinations of what consonant sounds you can put together. And if a language uses a consonant combination you're not familiar with, there are a couple of strategies that speakers use to try to pronounce that combination.

One strategy is to add a sound. And we see this a lot with Spanish speakers in S clusters. In English, of course, we can use S and another consonant at the beginning of a word – words like “school” or “study.” But in Spanish, it’s not allowed to have an S cluster at the beginning of a word. There’s always an E in front of it. So what you may find if you’re talking to a native Spanish speaker in English is that he or she says things like “estudy” or “eschool.” They’re inserting that extra sound that they’re used to in their language to make it an easier combination of sounds to say.

Another thing people might do is to delete sounds. So if we take a word like “belts” that has an L, a T, and an S all together at the end of the word, they could say “bels”, “bets”, “bet.” They’re dropping some of the sounds to make it easier for them to say.

Stress and intonation is a further factor in English pronunciation that can cause difficulties for non-native speakers in speaking it. Research has shown that this can be even more important than individual sounds. The rhythm, the cadence, the melody of all language is something that we use strongly to identify the language and understand what a person is saying, more so sometimes than individual sounds. Many languages are syllable timed, which means that every syllable is even. Each syllable has equal stress and an equal amount of time devoted to it.

English isn’t like this. Some words carry stress. They form the peaks. They’re the strong words. While other words, tending to be our grammatical little linking words, are shortened or reduced. And they fill in the space between the more stressed, peaked words. So if we take a sentence like “This hospital is located in Macclesfield, Cheshire”, “is” and “in” are very, very short and soft. They’re not stressed at all. Other words like nouns verbs, adjectives, and adverbs tend to have more stress.

A non-native speaker who comes from a syllable-timed language is going to tend to give more even distribution to that stress. So they might say something like “Maccles- field hos-pi-tal” because they’re trying to make the syllables more even like they’re used to.

What we typically see with a non-native speaker is a combination of all of these factors. They have some difficulties with specific sounds as well as difficulties with the general stress and rhythm patterns of English. But if you’re more familiar with some of these factors, if you’re aware of the more common stress, consonant, and vowel difficulties that non-native speakers face, you might find it easier to understand accented English.



[Click here to download the audio file 'Working with NNS – Part 6'](#)

Working with native and non-native speakers of English – Part 6

We have been talking a lot about language. But it’s not just linguistic factors that can cause problems when talking to a non-native speaker of English. Sometimes misunderstandings occur because of cultural differences. By culture, we mean the beliefs, the values, and the behaviours that a person holds based on the society that they grew up in or their home culture, the norms that were common in their home group. When your assumptions or expectations about these beliefs or behaviours don’t match another person’s, misunderstandings can occur.

Culture is still a tricky word to define. We can talk about UK culture, and we find subcultures within that culture. There’s a lot of variation even within a culture. But we can still generally classify UK culture and compare it to general classifications of other cultures. Researchers have identified several different classifications or categories for doing this.

One of these is individualist and collectivist cultures. An individualist culture values personal freedom, independence, and privacy. However, a collectivist culture values the group; relationships, cohesion, and cooperation are important.

If we look at these two cultures on a spectrum, we can see that the UK is pretty far on the individualist end of things. We can see this in common phrases or proverbs in UK culture. If you want it done well, do it yourself. Good fences make good neighbours. And if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em, with beating them being the preference.

How can this cause a misunderstanding? Here is a good example. Some years ago, a British student was studying Spanish in Mexico. She chose to live with a host family, which consisted of a host mum and her son. He was 35. And he still lived at home with his mum.

She thought that was a little bit weird. She didn’t understand why he was still living at home. And later, when she was talking with her Mexican language partner, she found out that in Mexican culture it’s common for children to live with their parents at home until they get married. And if they never get married, they continue to live at home.

When you look at this in terms of individual and collective cultures, this makes a lot of sense. Mexico has a very collectivist culture, where the family and group cohesion is important. And she was looking at it from a very individualist UK culture, where she valued self-sufficiency, being on her own in college, being on her own after she graduated, not living with her parents. She was misunderstanding that relationship because her expectations were different from the general culture in Mexico.

A further category we can use to classify cultures is high context and low context. A high context culture uses a lot of things implicitly. A lot is understood. You're indirect. You read between the lines. Non-verbal signals can carry a lot of meaning.

In a low context culture, the context isn't as important because people are direct. They're explicit and to the point.

Now, if we view these again on a spectrum, we can see that the US, for example, is more on the low context side of things. They tend to cut to the chase. They don't beat around the bush. They say what they mean and mean what they say.

An example of a misunderstanding resulting from this sort of a comparison happened to a colleague when she was teaching English in China. She wanted to do some baking. So she asked the officials at her school if she could use the school kitchen to do some baking. And she was told that they didn't have eggs.

My friend saw eggs in the market. She saw them in the grocery store. She sometimes saw them delivered to the school. So she didn't understand why they were telling her they didn't have eggs.

What she later found out was that the school didn't have an oven, which is, incidentally, pretty common in China. They don't do a lot of baking. So not a lot of people have ovens. But she didn't know this at the time.

So she had been offering to bring her own supplies. She'd buy her own eggs. She just wanted a place to be able to bake.

The Chinese officials gave her an indirect response. They were trying to save face. They didn't want to directly admit that they didn't have an oven and risk embarrassing themselves or disappointing their foreign visitor. So they indirectly told her no by saying there were no eggs.

My friend, of course, coming from a very direct culture, was confused by this. And thought, well, why didn't you just tell me? If you had said there was no oven a long time ago, I would have stopped pestering you. So there we see a conflict between high context and low context, direct and indirect communication styles.

There are several other categories for different cultures that can also lead to misunderstandings. How a culture views time, if it's very strict and controlled or if it's more relaxed. How you consider your control over the environment. If you have an internal locus of control, you can manipulate and control a lot. If it is external, you can't do much about things.

Another cultural factor is something called speech acts. So, for example, how we apologise and what we apologise for varies from culture to culture. The same with compliments – whom you compliment, what's an appropriate compliment; how you begin or end a phone conversation, how you agree with someone, how you disagree with someone; all of these are culturally bound.

The important thing to remember about culture overall is that it's always present, so much so that, most of the time, we don't notice it or think about it until something goes wrong.

When we're talking with someone who has accented English, that's a cue to us right away that they're from a different background. They're from a different language. You're going to be expecting some differences.

But this can be particularly problematic for a non-native speaker who has a very high level of English, someone who doesn't have much of an accent, who has a great command of their vocabulary, and grammar, and speed. We might mistakenly think they're more similar to us than they really are. So don't always assume similarities between people.

If you're in an uncomfortable situation, you can question if culture has something to do with it. Our tendency is to attribute an uncomfortable situation or problem to the specific person we're working with, that there's a flaw in their personality or something is wrong with that person. But it could also be the bigger issue of culture, that your expectations or assumptions don't match.

It's important to remember that this advice will vary for each non-native English speaker. You may encounter people who have a very advanced command of English. Maybe you know someone who sounds like a native speaker, with no discernible accent. He or she may still have difficulties with more obscure vocabulary or slang. Other non-native speakers may have an intermediate or novice level of English speech. This will also vary depending on how much time the person has been studying and speaking English, what their native language is, and what their educational backgrounds are.

No matter the speaker's level, remember that your attitude can go a long way in making the interaction more successful. Be patient and friendly. Put yourself in the other person's shoes, and try not to get flustered. Communication is a two-way street. You both need to negotiate the interaction to effectively listen to and speak with one another.

Section 2

Cultural differences

Section overview

Living and working in a different culture and using a language that is not your first language can be a challenge. This section examines what those challenges are, and suggests ways of dealing with them.

Using the Country Comparison tool on the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions website (and on the downloadable app) has proven to be a very productive way to get everyone to think and talk about how inextricably language is bound to cultural differences. Many patients, too, will be non-native speakers and from different cultures. Trainers are sometimes reluctant to raise the topic of culture and any perceived weaknesses in their trainees' communication skills and use of English. They fear that they will cause their trainees to lose confidence or become dispirited.

But with care, and sensitivity, these topics can be broached in a very supportive way from the outset. Everyone will make mistakes in approach, grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary and so on. Those that need prioritising are the ones that are vital for establishing and maintain a good relationship and making meaning clear.

Patient safety and confidence in their health professional are at the heart of everything.



Section 2 (i)

Moving cultures

We all communicate with others all the time – in our homes, in our workplaces, in the groups we belong to, and in the community. No matter how well we think we understand each other, communication is hard. Just think, for example, how often we hear things like, “He doesn’t get it,” or “She didn’t really hear what I meant to say.” “Culture” is often at the root of communication challenges. Our culture influences how we approach problems, and how we participate in groups and in communities. When we participate in groups we are often surprised at how differently people approach their work together.

Culture is a complex concept, with many different definitions. But, simply put, “culture” refers to a group or community with which we share common experiences that shape the way we understand the world. It includes groups that we are born into, such as gender, race, or national origin. It also includes groups we join or become part of. For example, we can acquire a new culture by moving to a new region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly, we realise we all belong to many cultures at once.

Our histories are a critical piece of our cultures. Historical experiences – whether of five years ago or of ten generations back – shape who we are. Knowledge of our history can help us understand ourselves and one another better. Exploring the ways in which various groups within our society have related to each other is key to opening channels for cross-cultural communication.

Moving to another country and culture can be a challenge.

Loneliness

If someone moves abroad alone, loneliness can be the biggest challenge. Making friends in a new place can take time and be very difficult especially if the new culture is quite different. You will be missing your loved ones back home. That is why making new friends quickly should be a top priority. Owning a pet can be a good way not to feel lonely as well. Having constant contact with loved ones back home is another great way not to feel alone. The first few months can be the most difficult time, and after you adopt to the new culture and make new friends, loneliness should not be a major problem.

Cultural differences

If someone is not prepared well enough to cope with the new culture, he or she will find adapting to the new culture as one of the biggest challenges in his or her expat life. Even a harmless comment in one culture can be regarded extremely rude in another culture. Knowing about the new culture beforehand and trying to adapt as quickly as possible are good ways to face this challenge. If you are moving to the UK from Asia or Africa for example, you should find significant cultural differences. So, prepare for that.

Making new friends

It is definitely tough to make new friends quickly in a foreign land. You can’t trust people too quickly and share your feelings and personal stuff. While making friends should be a top priority, you have to be very careful making friends. Making friends in the same organisation can be the safest for someone who has just started living as an expat.

Language barriers

If you speak English, you should be doing well in most countries. But there may be big differences between the English you learned in your home country (accent, vocabulary, pronunciation) and the English spoken in the UK. Additionally, there are very many accents and dialects spoken in the UK. Almost nothing will prepare you for that. You will be on a steep learning curve! Moreover, many of your patients will be speaking English as their second or third language. They might not speak English at all!

New weather

Weather is not a big challenge when the temperature of the new country is not much different from your country. Moving from the Middle East, India or Africa to the UK can be a difficult weather challenge to face for an expat.

Food

For some people, not having their favourite food daily is a great discomfort. If you are one of those and the food you eat is not readily available in the new country, you need to cook at home, or you need to adapt to new foods.

Six fundamental patterns of cultural differences – ways in which cultures, as a whole, tend to vary from one another – are described below. The descriptions point out some of the recurring causes of cross-cultural communication difficulties. As you enter into multicultural dialogue or collaboration, keep these generalised differences in mind. Next time you find yourself in a confusing situation, and you suspect that cross-cultural differences are at play, try reviewing this list. Ask yourself how culture may be shaping your own reactions, and try to see the world from others' points of view.

1. Different communication styles

The way people communicate varies widely between, and even within, cultures. One aspect of communication style is language usage. Across cultures, some words and phrases are used in different ways. For example, even in countries that share the English language, the meaning of “yes” varies from “maybe, I’ll consider it” to “definitely so,” with many shades in between.

Another major aspect of communication style is the degree of importance given to non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance, and sense of time. In addition, different norms regarding the appropriate degree of assertiveness in communicating can add to cultural misunderstandings. For instance, some people typically consider raised voices to be a sign that a fight has begun, while some black, Jewish and Italian Americans often feel that an increase in volume is a sign of an exciting conversation among friends. Thus, some people may react with greater alarm to a loud discussion than would members of another culture.

2. Different attitudes toward conflict

Some cultures view conflict as a positive thing, while others view it as something to be avoided. In the UK, conflict is not usually desirable; but people often are encouraged to deal directly with conflicts that do arise. In fact, face-to-face meetings customarily are recommended as the way to work through whatever problems exist. In contrast, in many other countries, open conflict is experienced as embarrassing or demeaning; as a rule, differences are best worked out quietly. A written exchange might be the favoured means to address the conflict.

3. Different approaches to completing tasks

From culture to culture, there are different ways that people move toward completing tasks. Some reasons include different access to resources, different judgments of the rewards associated with task completion, different notions of time, and varied ideas about how relationship-building and task-oriented work should go together.

When it comes to working together effectively on a task, cultures differ with respect to the importance placed on establishing relationships early on in the collaboration. Some cultures tend to attach more value to developing relationships at the beginning of a shared project and more emphasis on task completion toward the end. Others tend to focus immediately on the task at hand, and let relationships develop as they work on the task. This does not mean that people from any one of these cultural backgrounds are more or less committed to accomplishing the task, or value relationships more or less; it means they may pursue them differently.

4. Different decision-making styles

The roles individuals play in decision-making vary widely from culture to culture. Decisions, for example, can frequently be delegated; that is, an official assigns responsibility for a particular matter to a subordinate. By contrast, in other countries, there is a strong value placed on holding decision-making responsibilities oneself. When decisions are made by groups of people, majority rule is a common approach in some countries; whereas in others, consensus is the preferred mode. Be aware that individuals' expectations about their own roles in shaping a decision may be influenced by their cultural frame of reference.

5. Different attitudes toward disclosure

In some cultures, it is not appropriate to be frank about emotions, about the reasons behind a conflict or a misunderstanding, or about personal information. Keep this in mind when you are in a dialogue or when you are working with others. When you are dealing with a conflict, be mindful that people may differ in what they feel comfortable revealing. Questions that may seem natural to you – What was the conflict about? What was your role in the conflict? What was the sequence of events? – may seem intrusive to others. The variation among cultures in attitudes toward disclosure is also something to consider before you conclude that you have an accurate reading of the views, experiences, and goals of the people with whom you are working.

6. Different approaches to knowing

Some may want to do library or internet research to understand a shared problem better and identify possible solutions. Others may prefer to visit places and people who have experienced challenges like the ones they are facing, and get a feeling for what has worked elsewhere.

Guidelines for multicultural collaboration

Keep in mind these additional guidelines:

- Learn from generalisations about other cultures (like the Hofstede Theory of Cultural Dimensions), but don't use those generalisations to stereotype, "write off," or oversimplify your ideas about another person. The best use of a generalisation is to add it to your storehouse of knowledge so that you better understand and appreciate other interesting, multi-faceted human beings.
- Practise. That's the first rule, because it's in the doing that we actually get better at cross-cultural communication.
- Don't assume that there is one right way (yours!) to communicate. Keep questioning your assumptions about the "right way" to communicate. For example, think about your body language; postures that indicate receptivity in one culture might indicate aggressiveness in another.
- Don't assume that breakdowns in communication occur because other people are on the wrong track. Search for ways to make the communication work, rather than searching for who should receive the blame for the breakdown.
- Listen actively and empathetically. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Especially when another person's perceptions or ideas are very different from your own, you might need to operate at the edge of your own comfort zone.
- Respect others' choices about whether to engage in communication with you. Honour their opinions about what is going on.
- Stop, suspend judgement, and try to look at the situation as an outsider.
- Be prepared for a discussion of the past. Use this as an opportunity to develop an understanding from "the other's" point of view, rather than getting defensive or impatient.
- Awareness of current power imbalances – and an openness to hearing each other's perceptions of those imbalances – is also necessary for understanding each other and working together.
- Remember that cultural norms may not apply to the behaviour of any particular individual. We are all shaped by many, many factors – our ethnic background, our family, our education, our personalities – and are more complicated than any cultural norm could suggest. Check your interpretations if you are uncertain what is meant.

Section 2 (ii)

Cultural barriers – The Hofstede Theory of Cultural Dimensions

Tips

When using the Hofstede Insights site (www.hofstede-insights.com) scroll down to the bottom of the home page to find the 'Country Comparison Tool'. It is possible to compare two or more countries at the same time for each of the six indices. Start with the UK. Think about and discuss how the findings might apply to life in general **and** working in the health sector (as a doctor, nurse or other health professional – clinical and non-clinical). Then, add the other country or countries and study the differences. Trainees can first be asked if they agree with the profile of their own country. This will give everyone the opportunity to consider how language and approach might need to be adapted. Trainees can reflect on their responses and can help to guide trainers during the process of prioritising what needs to be worked on.

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede identified six categories that define culture:

- Power Distance Index
- Collectivism vs. Individualism
- Uncertainty Avoidance Index
- Femininity vs. Masculinity
- Short-Term vs. Long-Term Orientation
- Restraint vs. Indulgence

LOW		HIGH
Egalitarian	← Power distance →	Embraces hierarchy
Collectivist	← Collectivism vs. Individualism →	Individualist
Comfortable with uncertainty	← Uncertainty avoidance index →	Uncomfortable with uncertainty
Nurture important	← Femininity vs. masculinity →	Power important
Traditional and short-term	← Short-term vs. long-term orientation →	Futuristic and long-term
Normative repression	← Restraint vs. indulgence →	Satisfaction is good

Please note that culture is defined as the collective mental programming of the human mind which distinguishes one group of people from another. This programming influences patterns of thinking which are reflected in the meaning people attach to various aspects of life and which become crystallised in the institutions of a society.

This does not imply that everyone in a given society is programmed in the same way; there are considerable differences between individuals. It may well be that the differences among individuals in one country culture are bigger than the differences among all country cultures. We can, nevertheless, still use such country scores based on the law of the big numbers, and on the fact that most of us are strongly influenced by social control. Please realise that statements about just one culture on the level of "values" do not describe "reality"; such statements are generalisations and they ought to be relative. Without comparison, a country score is meaningless.

Power Distance Index

The power distance index considers the extent to which inequality and power are tolerated. In this dimension, inequality and power are viewed from the viewpoint of the followers – the lower level.

High power distance index indicates that a culture accepts inequity and power differences, encourages bureaucracy, and shows high respect for rank and authority.

Low power distance index indicates that a culture encourages organisational structures that are flat and feature decentralised decision-making responsibility, participative style of management, and place emphasis on power distribution.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

The individualism vs. collectivism dimension considers the degree to which societies are integrated into groups and their perceived obligations and dependence on groups.

Individualism indicates that there is a greater importance placed on attaining personal goals. A person's self-image in this category is defined as "I."

Collectivism indicates that there is a greater importance placed on the goals and well-being of the group. A person's self-image in this category is defined as "We".

Uncertainty Avoidance Index

The uncertainty avoidance index considers the extent to which uncertainty and ambiguity are tolerated. This dimension considers how unknown situations and unexpected events are dealt with.

A high uncertainty avoidance index indicates a low tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. The unknown is minimised through strict rules, regulations, etc.

A low uncertainty avoidance index indicates a high tolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity, and risk-taking. The unknown is more openly accepted, and there are lax rules, regulations, etc.

Femininity vs Masculinity

The masculinity vs. femininity dimension is also referred to as "tough vs. tender," and considers the preference of society for achievement, attitude towards sexuality equality, behaviour, etc.

Masculinity comes with the following characteristics: distinct gender roles, assertive, and concentrated on material achievements and wealth-building.

Femininity comes with the following characteristics: fluid gender roles, modest, nurturing, and concerned with the quality of life.

Long-Term Orientation vs. Short-Term Orientation

The long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation dimension considers the extent to which society views its time horizon.

Long-term orientation shows focus on the future and involves delaying short-term success or gratification in order to achieve long-term success. Long-term orientation emphasises persistence, perseverance, and long-term growth.

Short-term orientation shows focus on the near future, involves delivering short-term success or gratification, and places a stronger emphasis on the present than the future. Short-term orientation emphasises quick results and respect for tradition.

Indulgence vs. Restraint

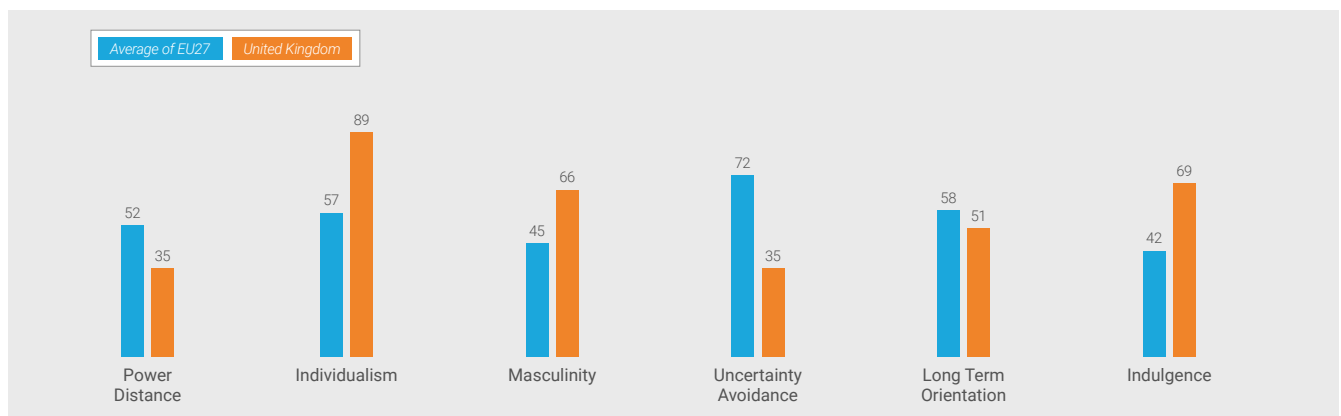
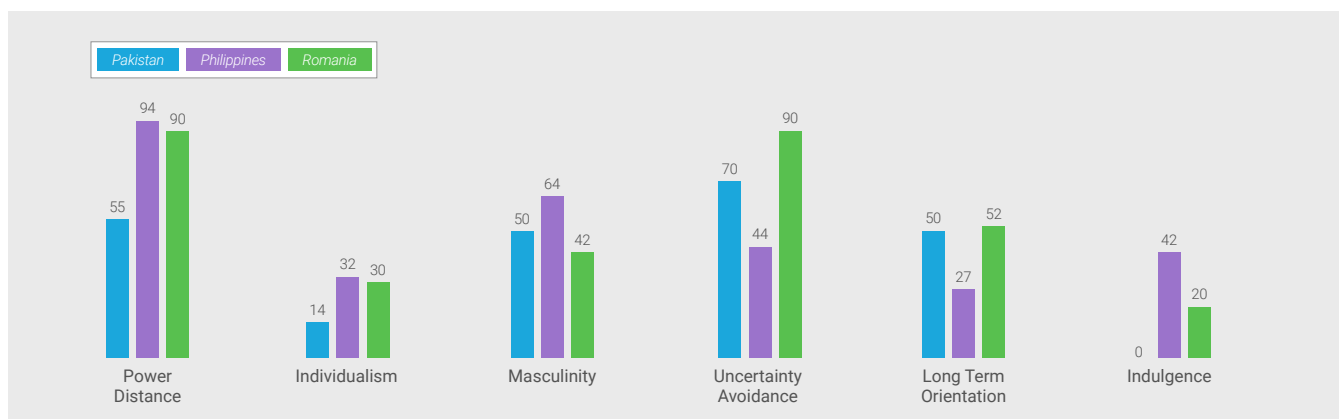
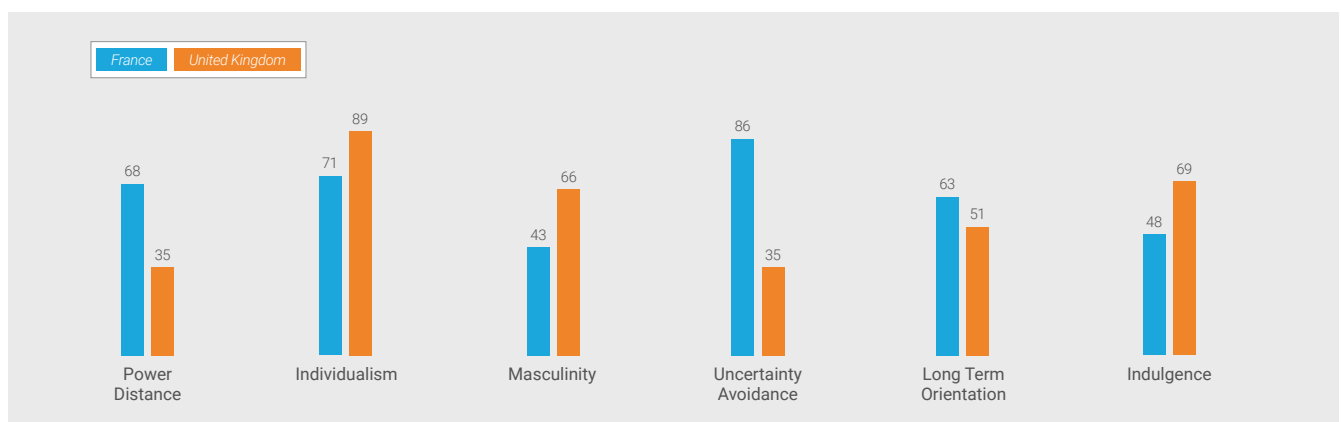
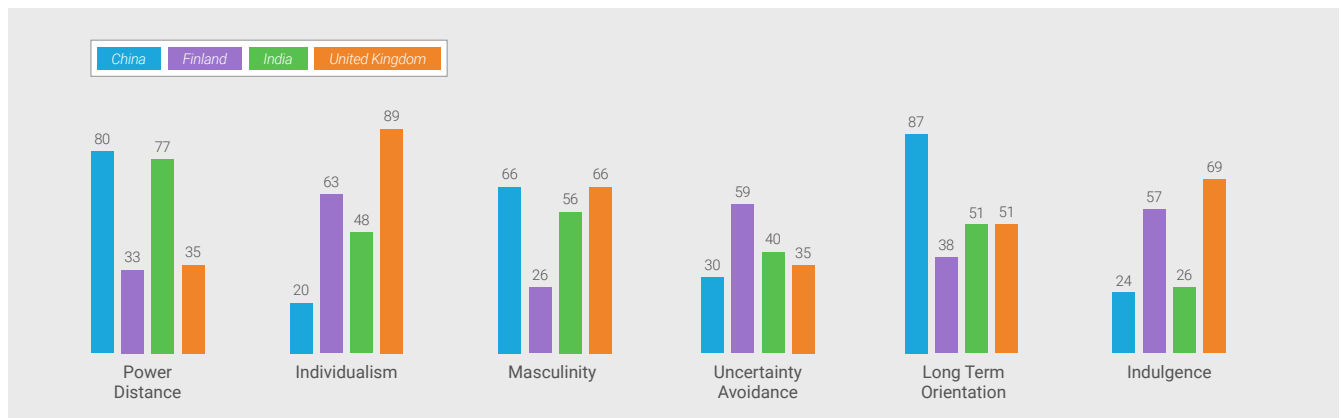
The indulgence vs. restraint dimension considers the extent and tendency for a society to fulfil its desires. In other words, this dimension revolves around how societies can control their impulses and desires.

Indulgence indicates that a society allows relatively free gratification related to enjoying life and having fun.

Restraint indicates that a society suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it through social norms.

Hofstede theory domain	Explanation	Examples of countries	Example in clinical practice
Power distance	In large organisations which commonly have hierarchical structures, authority and power, actual or perceived, is almost by definition distributed unequally, those at the top having most. Such inequality is accepted by the leaders and the led.	High 'power distance' countries are France and India. Low 'power distance' countries are Austria and Israel.	In a societal culture of high 'power distance', the patient perceives the doctor to be in a superior position; the doctor in turn accepts this, directs the consultation, which then becomes unidirectional. In a culture of low 'power distance', however, the patient and doctor regard themselves as equals; hence, consultation becomes a bi-directional discussion.
Uncertainty avoidance	Members of a group commonly react, or as perceived to an outsider to react, to unexpected or unforeseen situations in accordance with prevailing culture.	Strong 'uncertainty avoidance' countries are Japan and Greece. Weak 'uncertainty avoidance' countries are Denmark and Hong Kong.	An example of 'uncertainty avoidance' is time made available per patient during clinics or ward rounds. In a strong 'uncertainty avoidance' culture, a rigid time management structure prevails, thus each patient is given precisely the same time and approached in the same manner. Doctors from countries with a high 'uncertainty avoidance' profile may find building a relation with a patient through empathy and non-verbal communication, such as eye contact, difficult.
Individualism versus collectivism	Cultures where 'individualism' is the norm are characterised by loose connections, thus allowing a person to act on his/her own initiative. In 'collectivism', by contrast, individuals in the group prefer to be instructed on what they can and cannot do. The emphasis in individualism is on being a good leader, while in 'collectivism' culture it is about being a good member.	'Individualistic' cultures are found in the USA and UK, while 'collectivism' is found in Peru and Iran.	Doctors from countries with high 'collectivism' may appear to be less assertive, which may become obvious when working in a country like the UK.
Masculinity versus femininity	This dimension reflects less the gender <i>per se</i> and more the culture associated with it. In 'masculine' countries assertiveness and competitiveness are acceptable, whereas in 'feminine' cultures the preferences are more on caring and improving the quality of life. The 'feminine' society treat male and female gender equally.	'Masculine' countries are Japan and USA. 'Feminine' countries are the Netherlands and the Nordic countries.	Consultation and communication with patients and relatives are guided by societal perception of the role of men and women – whether both are treated equally or differently.

Comparison of Countries – Examples



Section 3

Colloquial and informal language

Section overview

Spoken English includes a great deal of informal, colloquial language. This section focuses on vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. A native speaker will use a wide variety of these every day and will bring them to the consultation. Individuals and all members of the practice team can be encouraged to draw up lists of these – many of which might be unique or special to the local area.

Of course, becoming knowledgeable and fluent in informal and colloquial “everyday” language takes time. Nevertheless, many trainees should be encouraged to “collect” words, expressions and idioms that patients use. By echoing and matching the patient’s language and, at times, reinforcing with more formal, precise words (not medical jargon) they can develop a stronger relationship and deepen rapport.



Section 3 (i)

Medical idioms

Below are some medical idioms (non-literal expressions) and their meanings, along with some example sentences of their use.

Idiom	Meaning
To be on the mend	To be getting better
Out cold	Unconscious but still breathing
To feel on top of the world	To feel extremely well
Splitting headache	To have a terrible headache
A flare up	When an illness or issue begins again suddenly
Throw up	To vomit
To run some tests	To check your health
To feel under the weather	To feel a bit ill in general

And here is a much longer list of common medical idioms used by patients and their health professionals

Idiom	Meaning	Examples
alive and kicking	to be well and healthy	My aunt is ninety years old and she is very much alive and kicking.
alive and well	to be well and healthy	The worker was alive and well after the accident.
as fit as a fiddle	to be healthy and physically fit	My grandfather is ninety years old but he is as fit as a fiddle.
as pale as a ghost	extremely pale	My grandfather was as pale as a ghost when he entered the hospital.
as pale as death	extremely pale	The woman in the hospital waiting room was as pale as death.
at death's door	very near death	The sales manager was at death's door after his heart attack.
back on one's feet	physically healthy again	My mother is back on her feet after being sick for two weeks.
bitter pill to swallow	an unpleasant fact that one must accept	Losing the election was a bitter pill to swallow for the candidate.
black-and-blue	bruised, showing signs of having been physically harmed	My arm was black-and-blue after falling down the stairs.
black out	to lose consciousness, to faint, to pass out	The football player blacked out after being hit by the other player.
break down	to lose control of one's emotions, to have a nervous collapse	The woman broke down while the lawyer questioned her at the trial.
break out in a cold sweat	to perspire from fever or anxiety	I usually break out in a cold sweat when I have to make a speech.
break out in (something)	to begin showing a rash or other skin disorder	I broke out in a rash after eating the shrimp at the restaurant.
breathe one's last	to die	The man breathed his last after a long illness.
bring (someone) around	to restore someone to health or consciousness, to cure someone	The medical workers were able to bring the man around after the accident.
bring (someone) to	to restore someone to consciousness after anaesthesia/hypnosis/fainting	We tried hard to bring the woman to, after the car accident.
bundle of nerves	a very nervous or anxious person	The woman is a bundle of nerves after looking after her three children.
burn (oneself) out	to become very tired and almost sick from doing something for a long time or from working too hard	After working long hours for many months the woman finally burned herself out.
catch a cold	to get a cold	I caught a cold last week and had to miss four days of work.
catch one's death of cold	to become very ill (with a cold/flu etc.)	The little boy was told to be careful in the rain or he would catch his death of cold.
check-up	an examination of a patient by a doctor	I plan to have my annual check-up next week.
clean bill of health	a report or certificate that a person or animal is healthy	My doctor gave me a clean bill of health when I visited him last month.
come down with (something)	to become sick with something, to catch an illness	My niece came down with a cold and was unable to visit me last week.
crick in one's neck	a cramp in one's neck that causes pain	I woke up this morning with a crick in my neck.

Idiom	Meaning	Examples
die a natural death	to die by disease or of old age and not by an accident or by violence	My grandfather was very old and he died a natural death.
a dose of one's own medicine	the same treatment that one gives to others (usually this has a negative meaning)	We gave the boy a dose of his own medicine after he bullied us.
draw blood	to make someone bleed, to get blood from someone	The doctor decided to draw blood from the patient in order to check his blood sugar level.
drop dead	to die suddenly	The bus driver dropped dead while driving the bus.
fall ill	to become sick or ill	The man fell ill last winter and has not recovered yet.
feel fit	to feel well and healthy	I feel fit so I plan to go for a long walk this weekend.
feel on top of the world	to feel very healthy	I have been feeling on top of the world since I quit my job.
flare up	to begin again suddenly (an illness or a disease)	My mother's skin problem flared up when she started to use the new hand soap.
a flare-up	a sudden worsening of a health condition	There was a flare-up of my father's sickness last week.
get a black eye	to get a bruise or darkened eye after being hit or after bumping into something	The boy got a black eye when he fell in the playground.
get a stitch	to develop a cramp in one's side/muscle of the torso	The man got a stitch after running for the bus
get a check-up	to receive a physical examination from a doctor	I go to the doctor every year to get a checkup.
get over (something)	to overcome a difficulty, to recover from an illness or shock	The woman is having trouble getting over her father's death.
get sick	to become ill	I got sick yesterday and did not go to the movie.
get (something) out of one's system	to get rid of the desire to do something; or recover from an infection of the side effects of drugs etc.	I went on a short holiday so that I could get travelling out of my system.
get well	to become well, to become healthy again	The boy was sick but now he is getting well.
give birth	to have a baby	The woman gave birth to a baby boy last night.
go under the knife	to have an operation in surgery	The woman went under the knife at the hospital last evening.
green around the gills	to look sick	My colleague was looking a little green around the gills when he came to work today.
have a physical (examination)	to get a medical check-up	Our company sent all the employees to have a physical last week.
have one foot in the grave	to be near death (usually because of old age or illness)	My uncle is very sick and has one foot in the grave.
in the family way	pregnant, going to have a baby	Our new secretary is in a family way and plans to stop working soon.
in good shape/condition	in good physical condition, functioning or working well	My grandfather is in very good shape.
in labour	a woman going through childbirth	The woman was in labour for three hours.
in remission	a disease that seems to be getting better	The cancer of my neighbour's mother has been in remission for several months.
in surgery	undergoing surgery, doing surgery	The patient was in surgery for several hours this morning.
in the best of health	very healthy	My father has been in the best of health for many years.
in the pink	in very good health	My grandmother is in the pink and is doing very well.
just what the doctor ordered	exactly what is needed or wanted	A nice hot bath was just what the doctor ordered after my long day at work.
kick a habit	to break or stop a bad habit	The man used to smoke but he was able to kick the habit.
lapse into a coma	to go into a coma	The woman lapsed into a coma soon after the accident.
look the picture of health	to be in good health, to look very healthy	My uncle looked the picture of health when I saw him last week.
nothing but skin and bone	to be very thin or emaciated	The young man was nothing but skin and bones when he returned from the long camping trip.
nurse (someone) back to health	to give someone care to restore him or her to good health	My mother spent several weeks with my grandmother trying to nurse her back to health.
on medication	taking medicine for a current medical problem	The woman has been on medication for many years.

Idiom	Meaning	Examples
on the mend	becoming better, becoming well, healing	My grandfather is on the mend after he broke his leg last week.
out cold	unconscious, to have fainted	The patient was out cold because of the anaesthesia when he entered the operating room.
out of condition	not in good physical condition	I am out of condition and I need to exercise more.
out of shape	not in good physical condition	My mother is out of shape and cannot walk for a long distance.
out of sorts	not feeling well, in a bad mood	Our boss is out of sorts today so you should wait until tomorrow to speak to him.
over the worst	recovering from an illness	The man is over the worst since his skiing accident last month.
pale around the gills	to look sick	My colleague was looking a little pale around the gills when he came to work today.
pass away	to die	The man's father passed away when he was 96 years old.
pass on	to die	My grandmother passed on when she was 92 years old.
pass out	to faint	Three teenage girls passed out at the rock concert.
pick up a cold/influenza	to acquire an illness	The boy picked up a cold during the weekend.
picture of health	a perfect example of health	The man is feeling very well and is the picture of health.
prevention is better than cure	it is easier to prevent something bad than to deal with the results	Prevention is better than cure, so I decided to stay home and rest rather than go out in the cold with my sore throat.
pull through	to recover from a serious illness	The car accident was very bad and I do not think that the driver will pull through.
put one's foot in one's mouth	to embarrass oneself through a silly mistake	The man has foot-in-mouth disease and is always saying stupid things.
rub salt in (someone's) wound	to deliberately make someone's unhappiness or shame or misfortune worse	My supervisor rubbed salt in my wound when he continued to criticize me for my mistake.
run a fever/temperature	to have a higher than normal body temperature	The girl has been running a fever this week. The little boy is running a temperature and should stay in bed all day.
run down	to be in poor condition/has a compromised immune system	My father worked very hard last month and now he is run down.
run in the family	to be a common family characteristic	The serious illness runs in the family of my friend.
run some tests	to do some medical tests on a patient	The doctor decided to run some tests on the patient.
show signs of an illness	to show indications or hints of an illness	The man was beginning to show signs of some kind of illness.
sick in bed	to remain in bed while you are ill	My father was sick in bed for three days last week.
spit up (something) or spit (something) up	to cough/spit something out, to vomit something	The dog spit up the button that he had swallowed.
splitting headache	a severe headache	I have been suffering from a splitting headache all morning.
susceptible to (something)	to easily get some kind of illness, to likely to become sick with something	The young boy is very susceptible to getting a sore throat.
take a sick day	to be absent from work and still receive pay	I did not feel well yesterday so I decided to take a sick day.
take a turn for the better	to begin to improve or get well	The medical condition of my uncle has recently taken a turn for the better.
take a turn for the worse	to become sicker	My aunt took a turn for the worse last week and she is now in the hospital.
take one's medicine	to swallow one's medicine	The boy had to take his medicine before he went to bed.
take sick	to become ill	The little boy took sick early last night.
take (someone's) pulse	to measure the beats of a person's pulse	The doctor took the patient's pulse when she arrived at the hospital.
take (someone's) temperature	to measure someone's body temperature	The nurse took my temperature when I went to the hospital yesterday.
a taste of one's own medicine	the same treatment that one gives to others (usually this has a negative meaning)	Our boss got a taste of his own medicine when people began to treat him badly like he treats others.
throw up	to vomit	The woman threw up after eating the bad shellfish.
under the weather	not feeling well	My boss has been under the weather all week and has not come to work during that time.
up and about	healthy and moving around, not sick in bed	My uncle has been up and about for a couple of days since he left the hospital.

Section 3 (ii)

What is a phrasal verb?

What is a **phrasal verb**? Phrasal verbs consist of a combination of a **verb** and another word, usually a **preposition**. Some examples are come over, look (something) up. The first word in a verb-preposition combination can be just about any verb. The verbs that most commonly appear in such combinations are listed below:

- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| • go | • bring | • find |
| • come | • look | • give |
| • take | • put | • work |
| • get | • pick | • break |
| • set | • make | • hold |
| • carry | • point | • move |
| • turn | • sit | |

The second words in such combinations are a bit trickier to label. Many textbooks call the second words particles. A few traditional books call them adverbs. Many contemporary linguists identify them as prepositions. We follow contemporary linguistic practice and call them prepositions. Regardless of what you call these words, the most common examples are listed below:

- | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|
| • out | • back | • off |
| • up | • down | • over |
| • on | • in | |

With the above 20 verbs and 8 prepositions, you can construct most of the English language's common phrasal verbs. In addition to the above combinations, there are over 10,000 phrasal verbs in English. Studies show that the 100 most common phrasal verbs account for over half of phrasal verb usage in real life. That means that if you're familiar with the 100 most common phrasal verbs, you're more than halfway to the goal of understanding all of the cases of phrasal verbs that you encounter on any given day.

A phrasal verb may or may not be followed by a **noun phrase**.

- This usually took place when the factory machine *broke down*.
- Composting is a process that *breaks down* fresh organic matter into a brown, crumbly stuff that looks rather like nice soil.

In the first example above, the verb-preposition combination *broke down* isn't followed by a noun phrase.

In the second example, the verb-preposition combination *break down* is followed by the noun phrase *fresh organic matter*.

Sometimes, the noun phrase that follows the phrasal verb can't be moved.

- And he walked out the door and down Oxford Street. ✓
- And he walked the door out and down Oxford Street. ✗

When a **phrasal verb** is followed by a **pronoun**, additional rules apply. Consider the following examples:

- She *put down* the coffee cup and *picked it up*. ✓
- She *put down* the coffee cup and *picked up it*. ✗

The second example here is ungrammatical. As you can see, a pronoun like **it** is not acceptable after the preposition in a phrasal verb, but a pronoun **can** be placed between the **verb** and **preposition** of a phrasal verb.

Phrasal verbs: Three categories

Non-native speakers are often told that their only option is to memorise each **phrasal verb** individually. Is it really necessary to do all that work? No. Not only is it unnecessary, it's inefficient. And it's inefficient for three reasons:

- Memorising phrasal verbs is inefficient because there are over 10,000 phrasal verbs in the English language. Memorising each one independently would be unreasonably time-consuming.
- It's inefficient because memorising phrasal verbs isn't nearly as productive as analysing meanings and using words in context.
- Memorisation isn't efficient because a huge number of phrasal verbs can be understood from their component parts.

In order to understand phrasal verbs more clearly, we can divide them into three categories:

- Transparent phrasal verbs
- Idiomatic phrasal verbs
- Aspectual phrasal verbs

1. Transparent phrasal verbs can be fully decoded by recognising the meanings of each word: the **verb** and the **preposition**.

Generally speaking, a common sense of the verb is combined with a directional sense of the preposition. In the first example below, the meaning of *put* combines with the directional meaning of *on* to indicate that the helmet is *placed over* the head:

Now, if you'd like to *put on* your helmet.

Now let's consider another example:

They never *send back* all mail from these college places.

In this example, the meaning of *send* combines with the meaning of *back*. *Send* expresses the concept that the mail can be delivered, and *back* indicates that it can be delivered in a reverse direction, or returned.

In the next example, below, the meaning of *sit* combines with the directional meaning of *down*. The phrasal

verb shows that Amy is lowering her body into a sitting position.

"Nobody tells me anything", Amy said slowly as she *sat down* again.

Finally, in the next example, the meaning of *take* combines with the meaning of *out*. *Take* indicates that the speaker is transferring the notepad from one place to another, and *out* indicates the outward direction of that transfer.

I opened my briefcase and *took out* a notepad.

This link is to The British Council Website:

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/grammar/b1-b2-grammar/phrasal-verbs>

2. Idiomatic phrasal verbs. These phrasal verbs **cannot be understood from the individual meanings of the verb and preposition**. These phrases are idioms, which means that their meanings are unpredictable, or opaque – they can't be guessed. In a way, these phrases are similar to individual vocabulary words: the verb-preposition pair has a unique meaning, and we learn that unique meaning the way we learn individual vocabulary words. In the next example, *carry out* means 'accomplish' or 'perform', a meaning that has no clear connection to the words *carry* or *out*.

I should be grateful if Smith would *carry out* these investigations.

In the next example, *give up* means surrender, and doesn't appear to connect to the meaning of *give* or *up*.

I learned last season not to *give up*.

Finally, in the example below, *went off* means 'transpired', and again, it doesn't relate to the meanings of *went* or *off*.

The jury was told the event *went off* well.

As you can see in the above examples, most idiomatic phrasal verbs have a synonym that is one word. This one-word synonym is usually more formal than the phrasal verb, and is therefore more useful when you're speaking or writing in a formal context.

3. Aspectual phrasal verbs. Grammatically, we use the term *aspect* to refer to the nature of a verb as completed or ongoing. **These phrasal verbs can, like the transparent category, be understood by examining each word.** However, the particle in aspectual phrasal verbs has a different meaning to the one you may be used to. These particles indicate either that the verb action has been completed, or that it is ongoing. For this reason, we call these examples ‘aspectual’ phrasal verbs. Most commonly, a completed verb is indicated by the prepositions *up*, *out*, *off*, or *down*, and an ongoing verb is indicated by the particle *on* or *away*. In the example below, *up* relates to *use* by indicating that the oxygen is used in its entirety, i.e. that it has been used to the point of completion.

Oxygen is *used up* by organisms faster than it can be replaced.

In the next example, *up* relates to *fill* by conveying that the dish is filled entirely, to the point of completion.

The ideal place for a soap tray is under the shower so it doesn’t *fill up* with water.

In the final example below, *on* communicates that *play* should continue, that it is ongoing.

Referee waves *play on*.

As you can see, many phrasal verbs can be understood by looking at their component parts. But in order to understand phrasal verbs based on their components, you must be sure that you understand the three categories that phrasal verbs can belong to.

So, for English learners, is it really necessary to memorise every phrasal verb? Not at all. Do you still have to memorise the meanings of idiomatic phrasal verbs? Unfortunately, yes. But that’s not so bad in the end, because most phrasal verbs aren’t idiomatic.

Section 3 (iii)

Phrasal verbs in action

Natural, informal English conversation includes many phrasal verbs. These are verbs composed of a verb and a preposition (or occasionally two prepositions!). It is not possible to understand the meaning of the phrasal verb by looking at the component parts of it. You need to learn phrasal verbs as complete units and understand the contexts in which they are used.

- **hand in** (submit) the report
- **pass out** or **hand out** (distribute) the paper.
- **figure out** (solve) a problem

Often they begin with a simple verb such as 'get':

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| • get across | convey |
| • get on with | be friendly; have good relationship with |
| • get at | try to say |
| • get away with | avoid punishment |
| • get down to | to begin (to focus) |
| • get on | to continue |
| • get by | manage (financially) |
| • get over | to recover |
| • get through | to survive a difficulty |
| • get around | to move about |

Here is a conversation in which the two speakers use phrasal verbs when enquiring about each other's health:

Mrs Smith: How are you these days? Have you managed to *throw off* (recover from a slight illness) that cold you had when we last met?

Mr Jones: Well, yes, it *cleared up* (resolved itself) after a couple of days, but I'd no sooner *got over* (recovered from) that than I *picked up* (caught; contracted) another one. It's horrible. I keep *breaking out in* (suddenly appearing or occurring) a sweat and my nose is completely *bunged-up* (blocked).

Mrs Smith: Well, I hope you don't *pass it on* (transmit) to me. I'm feeling bad enough as it is. My arthritis has *flared up* (returned; become worse) again. And you know I fell and cut my hand a week ago? It's only just started to *heal up* (become covered by new skin or scar tissue) and the swelling hasn't *gone down* (returned to its normal size) yet.

Mr Jones: I think we should both go to the doctor's again, don't you?

Here is a doctor, speaking to his or her patient:

Don't worry. There's a lot of it *going around* (a lot of people are complaining of this). I'll *put you on* (prescribe you) some tablets to help you sleep. They should *knock you out* (make you sleep heavily). Keep taking them for at least a fortnight – you shouldn't *come off* (stop taking) them until I say so. This particular bug *takes a lot out of you* (makes you feel very weak), so when you begin to feel better, make sure you eat lots of fruit and vegetables to *build yourself up* (make yourself stronger).

Feeling tired

There are many phrasal verbs in English relating to the idea of sleep and feeling tired. For example, *drop off* and *nod off* are both informal and both mean fall asleep, but *nod off* is used particularly about situations when you did not intend to fall asleep.

Here some more phrasal verbs relating to being very tired:

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
wear out sb or wear sb out	make someone very tired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Going round the shops all day has <i>worn/tired/wiped me out/done me in</i>. • What a day I've had! I am <i>worn out/tired out/done in/wiped out</i>!
tire out sb or tire sb out		
do in sb or do sb in (informal)		
wipe out sb or wipe sb out (informal)		
burn out / burnt-out (noun = <i>burnout</i>)	become so ill or tired that you can't work creatively, because of overwork	Don't work too hard – or you'll <i>burn out</i> before you're 30!
washed out	tired, pale and ill	What's the matter with Kay? She looks <i>washed out</i> .

Healthy life style

These phrasal verbs are often used when talking about leading a healthy life style:

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
put on weight / put weight on	increase how much you weigh, to get fatter or heavier	I really need to go on a diet. I put so much weight on over the holidays.
take up something / take something up	start doing an activity, hobby or job	I'm going to take up tennis this summer. I've never played it before but I think I'll like it.
cut out something / cut something out	stop eating or drinking something, usually to improve your health	He's cut out sweets and chocolates and has already lost quite a bit of weight.
give up something / give something up	stop doing something or using something that you were in the habit of doing or using, usually to improve your health	I gave up meat 10 years ago and feel so much healthier now that I'm a vegetarian.

More phrasal verbs used in a medical context

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
break down	to start to cry and become upset	She broke down when she heard the news about her father's diagnosis.
bring up something / bring something up	vomit or to cough up material such as mucus from the lungs or throat; also cough up (to cough hard to expel a substance from the trachea)	The fish wasn't cooked properly. And as soon as she ate it, she brought it up.
build your strength up / build up your strength	increase or become larger or stronger, or to make someone or something to do this	She's had the flu and hasn't eaten for days. She needs to build up her strength before she goes back to work.
come down with something	become ill with an illness that's not very serious	I think I'm coming down with a cold.
get over something	become better after being ill, recover from being sick	When he gets over the flu, he'll go back to work.
give up	not to do something any more	She has given up smoking after being told to do so by her doctor.
knock out	to hit someone so hard that he or she is no longer conscious	She was knocked out by being hit on the head by a falling tree branch.
look after	to take care of a person and attend to his or her needs	He looks after his mother now that she has dementia.
pack up	stop working or functioning	He smoked so much for so many years it was no surprise when his lungs packed up.
pass out	faint, lose consciousness	— The room was so hot and stuffy that he passed out. — He passed out as his blood pressure dropped very suddenly.
patch someone up	give basic medical care to someone that helps them temporarily	When he cut himself on the broken glass, I patched him up before we took him to the hospital.
pick up	to catch a disease	It is easy to pick up a cold from my grandson; he picks them up from his nursery school.
prop up	to support a person, e.g. with pillows	It was easier for him to breathe if he was propped up in bed.
take after	to be like one or other parent	He takes after his father as he has frequent migraines.
take off	(to remove something, especially clothes)	She took off her shoes so that she could show the doctor the extent of the toe deformity.

Test yourself

Complete these sentences with phrasal verbs from the box below (answers below)

takes after	looking after	broke down	drops off	take off	got over	bringing up	coughing up
got around	give up	knocked out	picked up	propped up	go down	passed out	

1. He _____ his cold.
2. The nurses are _____ her very well.
3. He must have _____ the disease when he was travelling in Africa.
4. She often _____ in front of the TV.
5. When we told her that her father was ill, she _____.
6. She _____ and cried as she described the symptoms to the doctor.
7. He _____ his father.
8. The doctor asked him to _____ his shirt.
9. He was _____ mucus.
10. Since she had the accident she _____ using crutches.
11. I was advised to _____ smoking.
12. He was _____ by a blow to the head.
13. The nurse _____ the patient with pillows.
14. The swelling has started to _____.
15. She became worried when the girl started _____ blood.

Answers

1. He got over his cold.
2. The nurses are looking after her very well.
3. He must have picked up the disease when he was travelling in Africa.
4. She often drops off in front of the TV.
5. When we told her that her father was ill, she passed out.
6. She broke down and cried as she described the symptoms to the doctor.
7. He takes after his father.
8. The doctor asked him to take off his shirt.
9. He was bringing up mucus.
10. Since she had the accident she got around using crutches.
11. I was advised to give up smoking.
12. He was knocked out by a blow to the head.
13. The nurse propped up the patient with pillows.
14. The swelling has started to go down.
15. She became worried when the girl started coughing up blood.

Section 3 (iv)

Complete phrasal verbs list

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
act like (inseparable)	behave in a way that's like ... (note: this phrasal verb is very informal)	What's wrong with John? He's acting like an idiot.
act up (no object)	misbehave (for people); not work properly (for machines)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The baby sitter had a difficult time. The children acted up all evening. – I guess I'd better take my car to the garage. It's been acting up lately.
add up	(make sense)	His evidence just doesn't add up.
add up (1. no object)	logically fit together (note: this phrasal verb is often negative)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – His theory is hard to believe, but his research adds up. – His theory seems, at first, to be plausible, but the facts in his research don't add up.
add up (2. separable)	find the total	What's the total of those bills? Could you add them up and see?
add up to (inseparable)	to total	The bills add up to £734.96. That's more than I expected!
ask after	(inquire about)	Jim was asking after you.
ask out (separable)	ask for a date	Nancy has a new boy friend. Joe asked her out last night.
back down (no object)	not follow a threat; yield in an argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tom was going to call the police when I told him I'd wrecked his car, but he backed down when I said I'd pay for the damages. – Sheila was right, so Paul had to back down.
back off (no object)	not follow a threat	Tom was ready to call the police when I told him I'd wrecked his car, but he backed off when I said I'd pay for the damages.
back up (1. no object)	move backward; move in reverse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – You missed the lines in the parking space. You'll have to back up and try again. – The people waiting in line are too close to the door. We won't be able to open it unless they back up.
back up (2. separable)	drive a vehicle backwards (in reverse)	You're too close! Back your car up so I can open the garage door.
back up (3. separable)	confirm a story, facts, or information	If you don't believe me, talk to Dave. He'll back me up.
back up (4. separable)	make a 'protection' copy to use if there are problems with the original	When my computer crashed, I lost many of my files. It's a good thing I backed them up.
bargain for	(take into account)	We hadn't bargained for there being so much traffic, and we missed the plane.
be off (1) usually used in the present tense (of an event / an arrangement etc.)	to be cancelled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The lead singer of 'The Rolling Beatles' pop group is ill, so tonight's concert is off. – The concert is off.
be off (2) (of food)	to have gone bad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nick decided to have a fried egg for breakfast, but there was a terrible smell when he cracked the egg. 'This egg is off,' he thought. – I can't eat it. The egg is off.
be over	to be finished	The storm is over; it has stopped raining and the sun is shining.
be taken aback used in the passive	to be surprised and confused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jeff was taken aback when he opened the door and discovered an elephant. – Jeff was taken aback by the discovery of an elephant. – Jeff was taken aback.
bear out	(confirm the truth)	Helen's alibi was borne out by her sister.
beat up	to hurt someone badly by hitting and punching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Two men beat Fred up and left him lying unconscious on the pavement. – They beat up Fred. – They beat Fred up. – They beat him up.
beg off (no object)	decline an invitation; ask to be excused from doing something	At first Lily said she would be at the party. Later she begged off.
blow up (1)	to destroy (something or someone) by explosion; to explode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr Trent hated his house, so he blew it up with dynamite and built a new one instead. – Mr Trent blew up his house. – Mr Trent blew his house up. – Mr Trent blew it up. – The house blew up.
blow up (1. separable)	inflate	We need lots of balloons for the party. Will you blow them up?

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
blow up (2)	a balloon/a tyre /a football etc. to fill with air; to inflate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Uncle Joe blew up the balloons for the Christmas party. – Uncle Joe blew up the balloons. – Uncle Joe blew the balloons up. – Uncle Joe blew them up.
blow up (2. separable)	explode; destroy by exploding	A: "That old building really came down quickly!" B: "That's because the construction company used dynamite to blow it up."
blow up (3. no object)	suddenly become very angry	When I told Jerry that I'd had an accident with his car, he blew up.
bone up on (inseparable)	review / study thoroughly for a short time	If you're going to travel to Peru, you'd better bone up on your Spanish.
break down (1) (of machinery)	to stop working	Tom's car broke down on the way to the airport, and he had to get a taxi. His car broke down.
break down (1. separable)	separate something into component parts	We spent a lot of money at the supermarket. When we broke the total cost down, we spent more on cleaning supplies than food.
break down (2)	to lose control emotionally or mentally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Alec broke down and cried when his mother died. – Alec broke down. – David broke down and wept when he heard the news.
break down (2. no object)	stop working / functioning	Sharon will be late for work today. Her car broke down on the freeway.
break in (1. often no object; with an object, break into-- inseparable)	enter by using force (and breaking a lock, window, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jane's apartment was burglarised last night. Someone broke in while Jane was at the movies. – Somebody broke into Jane's apartment while she was at the movies.
break in (2. separable)	wear something new until it's / they're comfortable	These are nice shoes, but they're too stiff. I hope it doesn't take too long to break them in.
break in (3. separable)	train; get someone / something accustomed to a new routine	I hope I can learn my new job quickly. The manager hasn't scheduled much time for breaking me in.
break into a building / a bank / a house etc.	to enter somewhere (e.g. a house) illegally, especially by force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Last night a burglar broke into my house and stole my television set. – A burglar broke into my house. – A burglar broke into it.
break off talks / negotiations / an engagement / a relationship / an agreement etc.	to end; to interrupt; to discontinue, stop talking	Peace talks have broken off after three days of serious disagreement.
break out (of unpleasant things e.g. wars, epidemics, fires, violence etc.)	to start, usually suddenly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Second World War broke out on 3 September, 1939. – In 1939 World War Two broke out. – World War Two broke out in 1939. – World War Two broke out on 3 September, 1939.
break out in spots / a rash / a cold sweat -a physical reaction (and also to show signs of nervousness or fear)	to become covered by (something)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cyril broke out in spots this morning. – He broke out in spots. – He broke out in them.
break up (1. no object)	disperse; scatter; come to an end	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What time did the party break up last night? – The party finally broke up at 3.00 am.
break up (2) (of a marriage / a family / a relationship etc.)	to end; to separate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Greens' marriage broke up in 1985 after only two years. – Their marriage broke up. – They broke up. – Money trouble broke up their marriage. – Money trouble broke it up.
break up (2) an activity	to stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The headmaster broke up the fight between Roger and Clive. – The headmaster broke up the fight. – The headmaster broke the fight up. – The headmaster broke it up. – The fight broke up.
break up (2. usually no object; with an object, break up with [inseparable])	end a personal relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tim and Julie aren't going steady any more. They got really angry with each other and broke up. – Have you heard the news? Julie broke up with Tim! – I'm sorry to hear that their marriage broke up. I'm sure the divorce will be difficult for the children.
bring / take back (separable)	return something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, you can borrow my pen, don't forget to bring it back to me when you're finished. – This book is due tomorrow. I guess I should take it back to the library.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
bring about	cause to happen	The crisis was brought about by Brenda's resignation.
bring off	succeed in doing something	The team tried for a few years to win the competition and they finally brought it off.
bring off (separable)	accomplish something difficult; accomplish something people had considered impossible or unlikely	No one thought Chuck could get an A in that course, but he brought it off.
bring on (1)	cause the onset of an illness	Sitting in the damp brought on his rheumatism.
bring on (2)	cause trouble to happen to oneself	You have brought this on/upon yourself.
bring round	influence someone to your point of view	After much discussion, I brought the committee round to my point of view.
bring up (1. separable)	mention (as a topic of discussion)	— We planned to discuss overtime pay in the meeting. Why didn't someone bring that topic up? — I feel I ought to bring up another small matter.
bring up (2. separable)	raise; rear; to take care of a child until it is fully grown and able to care for itself; to train and prepare a child for adult life. Note: children are educated at school.	— Lucy's parents died when she was a baby. Her grandparents brought her up. — Joe's mother brought him up well. She loved him, cared for him and taught him how to behave himself. Now he is a polite young man and his mother is proud of him. — She brought up Joe.
brush up	to improve your knowledge, skill, or memory of (something you used to know, or do, but have now partly forgotten)	— Frank's visit to the international business conference in Paris was a disaster because his French was so bad. His boss said, "When you get back to England you must brush up your French by enrolling in an evening class." — Frank must brush up his French.
brush up on (inseparable)	review / study thoroughly for a short time	If you're going to travel to Peru, you'd better brush up on your Spanish.
burn down (no object)	become destroyed / consumed by fire (note: for upright things – trees, buildings, etc. – only)	Lightning struck Mr. Kennedy's barn last night. It burned down before the fire fighters arrived.
burn down (usually of buildings)	to destroy by burning.	— My house burned down last night. In the morning it was just a pile of ashes. — My house burned down. — Someone burned down my house. — Someone burned my house down. — Someone burned it down.
burn up (1. no object)	become destroyed / consumed by fire (note: for people and non-upright things only)	All of Mr. Kennedy's hay burned up when his barn burned down.
burn up (2. separable)	cause someone to become very angry	Did you hear how rudely Fred talked to me? That really burned me up!
butt in (no object)	impolitely interrupt (a conversation, an action)	Hey, you! Don't butt in! Wait for your turn!
butter up (separable)	praise someone excessively with the hope of getting some benefit	I guess Martin really wants to be promoted. He's been buttering his boss up all week.
call off an event / an arrangement / an activity etc. often used in the passive (separable)	cancel something that has been scheduled; to abandon something that has already begun.	— The Football Association called off the match between England and Greece because of bad weather. — The Football Association called off the match. — The Football Association called the match off. — The Football Association called it off. — The match was called off.
call on (inseparable)	ask someone for an answer in class	I don't know why the teacher never calls on you. You always know the answer.
call up	mobilise for military service	Mark was called up when the war broke out.
calm down a person / a difficult situation etc. (with or without an object; with an object, separable)	become calm / less agitated or upset; help someone become calm / less agitated or upset	— Why are you so upset? Suzie didn't intend to spill orange juice on you. Calm down! — I know Ralph is upset, but can you calm him down? He's making so much noise that he's irritating everyone in the office. — My father was very angry and it took him ten minutes to calm down.
care for (1. inseparable) Note. used with (not)	like; want Note: this phrasal verb is usually negative, though it may be used affirmatively in questions	A: "Would you care for something to drink? We have coffee, tea, or orange juice." B: "Could I have water, please? I don't care for coffee, tea, or juice."

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
care for (2. inseparable)	take care of; supply care to; attend / watch.	Amy's father got out of the hospital last week. The family is caring for him at home.
carry off	complete successfully – perhaps despite a problem	Jane had a difficult role to play, but she carried it off.
carry out	complete a plan	The attack was successfully carried out.
carry out instructions / a duty / an order / a threat / a test etc.	to fulfil or perform (something).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sergeant Jones ordered Private Wilson to push the wagon across the field. The wagon was very heavy but Private Wilson carried out his orders without complaining. – He carried out his orders. – He carried his orders out. – He carried them out.
cash in	obtain cash for	He cashed in his insurance policy.
catch on	to become popular (colloquial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – David's strange new hair style is really catching on; all the young boys in the neighbourhood are copying it. – David's new hair style is catching on. – This new hair style is beginning to catch on.
catch on (no object)	develop understanding or knowledge of something	Bill had never used a computer until he took this class, but he caught on very quickly and is now one of the best students.
catch up (with) (often without an object; with an object, inseparable)	stop being behind	Terry stopped to rest for a few minutes. He'll catch up / catch up with us later.
check in(to) at a hotel, an airport etc. (inseparable)	to report one's arrival; register for / at a hotel, conference, etc.; let someone know officially that you have arrived	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jack took a taxi to the hotel and checked in. – Jack checked in. – Jack checked in at the hotel. – Jack checked in to the hotel. (note: when Jack left the hotel he checked out.) – My plane will arrive around 5:00 PM. I should be able to check into the hotel by 6:00.
check off (separable)	make a mark to indicate that something on a list has been completed	Here are the things you need to do. Please check each one off when you've finished it.
check out (2. separable)	follow procedures for borrowing something (usually for a limited period of time)	I'm sorry, but you can't take that encyclopedia home. The library won't allow you to check reference books out.
check out (of) (1. inseparable)	follow procedures for leaving (a hotel, etc.)	Don't forget to take your room key to the front desk when you check out (when you check out of the hotel).
cheer up (separable)	to become happier; help someone feel less worried / depressed / sad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jack was feeling unhappy, but he cheered up when he heard that he had passed his exam. – Jack cheered up. – The good news cheered Jack up. – The good news cheered up Jack. – The good news cheered him up.
chew out (separable)	scold someone severely; berate	Tom's father was really angry when Tom didn't come home until 3:00 AM. He chewed Tom out and then said Tom had to stay at home for two weeks.
chicken out (no object)	lose the courage or confidence to do something – often at the last minute	Sam said he was going to ask Lulu for a date, but he chickened out.
chip in (inseparable)	contribute / donate (often money) to something done by a group	We're going to buy a birthday cake for our boss and I'm collecting donations. Do you want to chip in?
clam up (inseparable)	suddenly become quiet / refuse to talk about something	Lila wouldn't talk about the accident. When I asked her what happened, she clammed up.
come about	happen	Let me explain how the situation came about.
come across something or someone (inseparable)	to find (unexpectedly) or meet by chance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A lucky tramp came across a wallet full of money as he was walking down the street. – He came across a wallet. – He came across it. – I've lost my extra car keys. If you come across them while you're cleaning the room, please put them in a safe place.
come down to	be in the end a matter of	It all comes down to whether you are prepared to accept less money.
come down with _____ (inseparable)	become ill with _____	George won't be at the office today. He came down with the flu over the weekend.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
come in for	receive – especially criticism, blame	The government has come in for a lot of criticism over the decision.
come into money / property / a fortune etc	to receive something (usually money or property) after someone's death.	– Peter came into a fortune when his father died. – Peter came into a fortune. – Peter came into it.
come off	take place successfully	I'm afraid that deal didn't come off after all.
come out	appear	All the flowers have come out. When the news came out, everyone was shocked. My photos didn't come out very well.
come round or come to	to regain consciousness	– James fainted when the air-conditioning stopped working. Two of his colleagues took care of him until he came round (came to). – James came round. – James came to.
come to (1. inseparable)	total	Your charges come to \$124.38. Will you pay by cheque, in cash, or with a credit card?
come to (2. no object)	regain consciousness	When I told Gina that she'd won a million dollars, she fainted. When she came to, I told her it was a joke and she almost hit me!
come up	occur (usually a problem (colloquial))	Look, something has come up, and I can't meet you.
come up against	meet a difficulty	We've come up against a bit of a problem.
come up to	equal (especially expectations, standard)	The play didn't come up to expectations.
come up with an idea/a plan/a suggestion etc.	to think of; to produce; think of (especially an answer, a plan, a solution)	– Arnold and his girlfriend were separated by a deep ravine. Eventually, Arnold came up with the idea of cutting down a tree and using it as a bridge. – He came up with the idea. – He came up with it. – We still haven't come up with a solution to the problem.
count on (inseparable)	depend on; rely on; trust that something will happen or that someone will do as expected	– I'm counting on you to wake me up tomorrow. I know I won't hear the alarm. – Don't worry, you can count on me.
crop up	happen unexpectedly (colloquial)	I can't come to your party, something has cropped up.
cross out (separable)	show that something written is wrong or unnecessary by making an X across it	We can't afford to buy everything on your shopping list, so I've crossed all the unnecessary things out.
cut back (on) (often without an object; with an object, cut back on [inseparable])	use less of something	– You drink too much coffee. You should cut back. – You should cut back on the amount of coffee that you drink.
cut down on smoking / cigarettes / drinking / spending / production etc.	to reduce in size or amount	– Last year Peter was very ill and his doctor told him to cut down on the number of cigarettes he smoked. This year Peter smokes much less and feels a lot better. – Peter cut down on cigarettes. – Peter cut down on them. – Peter cut down on smoking.
cut off (often used in the passive)	This verb can refer to either: a) the service or supply that is cut off e.g. water, electricity, etc. or b) the person who is cut off to disconnect, interrupt or discontinue something or someone	– Paul was talking to Anna on the telephone. Suddenly they couldn't hear each other. Paul phoned Anna again immediately. 'What happened?' Anna asked him. 'We were cut off,' replied Paul. – The operator cut them off. – The operator cut off their call. – They were cut off.
die out	to disappear completely; to become extinct	– The great dinosaurs died out millions of years ago. – The dinosaurs died out.
do away with (1)	abolish (colloquial)	Dog licences have been done away with.
do away with (2)	murder (colloquial)	What if they do away with the old man?
do in (1. separable)	cause to become very tired	The Ajax and Tip-Top Banks have decided to merge. Their lawyers will draw all the official documents up sometime this month.
do in (2. separable)	to kill; to murder	He said that the murdered man was done in between 10 and 11 o'clock last night.
do over (separable)	do something again	Oh, no! I forgot to save my report before I turned the computer off! Now I'll have to do it over!

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
do up (1) a house / a room / a flat / an old car etc.	to repair; to improve the condition and appearance of something; decorate (colloquial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We are having our living room done up. – When Bob and Sally bought their house it was in a bad state, so they spent six months doing it up. The house looked beautiful by the time they finished. – They did the house up. – They did up the house. – They did it up.
do up (2) a shoelace / a zip / a dress / a coat etc.	to fasten; to button; to zip; to tie.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It was a very cold day, so Brian did up all the buttons on his overcoat. – He did up the buttons. – He did the buttons up. – He did them up.
drag on (no object)	last much longer than expected or is necessary	I thought the meeting would be a short one, but it dragged on for more than three hours.
draw out (separable)	prolong something (usually far beyond the normal limits)	I thought that speech would never end. The speaker could have said everything important in about five minutes, but he drew the speech out for over an hour!
draw up (1)	come to a stop	A white sports car drew up outside the door.
draw up (2. separable)	organise — especially a document; create a formal document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The contract is being drawn up at the moment. – The Ajax and Tip-Top Banks have decided to merge. Their lawyers will draw all the official documents up sometime this month.
drop by (inseparable)	visit informally (and usually without scheduling a specific time)	If you're in town next month, we'd love to see you. Please try to drop by the house.
drop in	to pay a short visit, often without warning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Laura was shopping near her friend, Lynn, and decided to drop in and see her. – Laura dropped in to see Lynn. – Laura dropped in to see her. Laura dropped in on Lynn. – Laura dropped in on her. – Laura dropped in.
drop in (on) (inseparable)	visit informally (and usually usually without scheduling a specific time); pay a visit (colloquial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you're in town next month, we'd love to see you. Please try to drop in. – Please try to drop in on us. – Drop in any time you're passing.
drop off (1) something or someone	to stop a vehicle and let someone get out; to take something (or someone) to a place and leave it there.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – David drove his wife, Sue, into town and dropped her off in the cinema. – David dropped off his wife. – David dropped his wife off. – David dropped her off.
drop off (2)	to fall asleep (often unintentionally).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The baby has just dropped off. – John sat in his favourite armchair and dropped off. Five minutes later, his young son came into the room and woke him. – He dropped off.
drop off (separable)	deliver something; deliver someone (by giving him/her a ride)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yes, I can take those letters to the post office. I'll drop them off as I go home from work. – You don't have to take a taxi. You live fairly close to me, so I'll be happy to drop you off.
drop out	to withdraw from, or stop taking part in (a competition, a social group, a school, a university, a job etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sam dropped out of the race because he felt tired and ill. – He dropped out of the race. – He dropped out.
drop out (of) (inseparable)	stop attending / leave school or an organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No, Paul isn't at the university. He dropped out. – He dropped out of school.
eat out (no object)	have a meal in a restaurant	I'm too tired to cook tonight. Why don't we eat out?
egg on (separable)	urge / encourage greatly toward doing something (usually something negative)	At first Bob and Chuck were just having a mild argument, but Bob's friends egged them on until they started fighting.
end up (1. no object)	finish in a certain way, or place; finally arrive at; arrive at an unexpected place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We got lost last night and ended up in the next town. – We ended up staying there for lunch. – The car ended up in a ditch.
end up (2. no object)	arrive somewhere as a result or consequence	You're working too hard. If you don't take it easy, you'll end up in the hospital!

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
face up to (inseparable)	have courage to deal with – especially responsibilities; admit to; take responsibility for	– You have to face up to your responsibilities. – You can't pretend that you're doing OK in this course, Joe. Sooner or later, you'll have to face up to the fact that you're failing it.
fall about	show amusement (especially laughing (colloquial))	Every one fell about when Jane told her joke.
fall back on	use as a last resort	If the worst comes to the worst, we've got our savings to fall back on.
fall for (1)	be deceived by (colloquial)	It was an unlikely story but he fell for it.
fall for (2)	fall in love with (colloquial)	I fell for you the moment I saw you.
fall out	to quarrel	– George and Sam went out for dinner together. The evening ended badly because they fell out over who should pay the bill. – George fell out with Sam over the bill. – George and Sam fell out. Note. fall out <i>with</i> a person, fall out <i>over</i> something
fall out with	quarrel with	Peter has fallen out with his boss.
fall through	fail to come to completion	The plan fell through at the last minute.
fall through	to fail to happen or be completed (of plans, arrangements, schemes etc.)	– Eric's plan to go on a skiing holiday fell through because he broke his leg. – His plan fell through.
fall through (no object)	not happen (note: describes something that was planned but didn't happen)	We had originally intended to go to Mexico for our vacation, but our trip fell through when I got sick.
feel up to (inseparable)	feel strong enough or comfortable enough to do something	Old Mr Smith didn't feel up to walking all that way. I know the accident was a terrible shock. Do you feel up to talking about it?
figure out (1. separable)	logically find the answer to a problem; solve a problem by thinking about it carefully	For a long time I couldn't understand the last problem, but I finally figured it out.
figure out (2. separable)	understand why someone behaves the way she/he does	I can't figure Margie out. Sometimes she's very warm and friendly and sometimes she acts as if she doesn't know me.
fill in (1. separable) a form / a questionnaire etc.	add information to a form; to complete (a form)	– The office needs to know your home address and phone number. Could you fill them in on this form? – It took me an hour to fill in the application form. – It took me an hour to fill in the form. – It took me an hour to fill the form in.
fill in (on) (2. separable)	supply information that someone doesn't know	– I wasn't able to attend the meeting yesterday, but I understand that it was important. Could you fill me in? – Could you fill me in on what was discussed?
fill in for (inseparable)	temporarily do someone else's work; temporarily substitute for another person	Professor Newton is in the hospital and won't be able to teach for the rest of the term. Do you know who's going to fill in for her?
fill out (1. separable)	complete a form by adding required information	Of course I completed my application! I filled it out and mailed it over three weeks ago!
fill out (2. no object)	become less thin; gain weight	Jerry used to be really skinny, but in the last year he's begun to fill out.
find out (about) (inseparable)	learn / get information (about)	I'm sorry that you didn't know the meeting had been canceled. I didn't find out (find out about it) myself until just a few minutes ago.
find out the truth / a secret / an address / the time / when / what / why / where / who / which etc.	to make an effort to discover or get to know (something)	– Mr Jones wanted to catch the train to London. He was late and he didn't know which platform the London train left from. He found out which platform by asking a ticket collector. – He found out which platform the train left from.
follow up (1)	act upon a suggestion	Thanks for the information about that book. I'll follow it up.
follow up (2)	take more action	We'll follow up this lesson next week.
get across (separable)	make something understood; communicate something understandably; be understood – especially get an idea across	Alan is really intelligent but sometimes he has problems getting his ideas across. I had the feeling I wasn't getting across.
get along (with) (inseparable)	have a friendly relationship (with); be friendly (toward)	Why can't you and your sister get along? Everyone else gets along with her just fine!
get around (1. inseparable)	avoid having to do something	Teresa got around the required math classes by doing well on a math proficiency test.
get around (2. no object)	move from place to place	She doesn't have a car. She gets around by bicycle, bus, or taxi.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
get around to (inseparable)	do something eventually	I really should wash the dishes, but I don't feel like it. Maybe I'll get around to them tomorrow morning.
get at	imply – about personal matters (colloquial)	What are you getting at exactly?
get away	to escape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The prisoner got away from his guards and ran into the forest. – The prisoner got away from his guards. – The prisoner got away from them. – The prisoner got away.
get away with	to do something wrong or illegal without being punished (usually without even being discovered or caught)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Last year Jack robbed a bank and got away with it; the police didn't even find his fingerprints. Nowadays Jack lives a life of luxury on a beautiful tropical island. – Jack got away with the bank robbery. – Jack got away with robbing the bank.
get by (no object)	survive, financially, in a difficult situation	It's going to be hard to pay the rent now that you've lost your job, but somehow we'll get by.
get down	make to feel depressed (colloquial)	This cold weather really gets me down.
get down to	begin to seriously deal with	It's time we got down to some real work.
get in (1. inseparable)	enter a small, closed vehicle	I don't know where Carole was going. She just got in her car and drove away.
get in (2. no object)	arrive	Do you know what time Fred's plane gets in?
get off (1. inseparable)	leave a large, closed vehicle	When you get off the bus, cross the street, turn right on Oak Street, and keep going until you're at the corner of Oak and Lincoln Boulevard.
get off (2. separable)	be excused (for a period of time) from work, class, or other regularly scheduled activities	Some schools got President's Day off but ours didn't. We had classes as usual.
get off (3. separable)	make it possible for someone to avoid punishment	Everyone knew he was guilty, but his lawyer was clever and got him off.
get off with	avoid punishment	They were lucky to get off with such light sentences.
get on	make progress – especially in life	Sue is getting on very well in her new job.
get on (inseparable)	enter a large, closed vehicle	I'm sorry, but you're too late to say goodbye to Angela. She got on the plane about 20 minutes ago.
get on for	approach a certain age/time/number	He must be getting on for seventy.
get out of (1. inseparable)	leave a small, closed vehicle	There's something wrong with the garage door opener. You'll have to get out of the car and open it by hand.
get out of (2. inseparable)	escape having to do something	Lisa said she had a terrible headache and got out of giving her speech today.
get over	be surprised	I couldn't get over how well she looked.
get over (1. no object)	finish (note: for individual activities, not ones that happen again and again)	What time do your classes get over?
get over (2. inseparable) an illness / a failure / a difficulty / a shock etc.	recover from an illness or painful experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Katy was really upset when she failed the test. She thought she would never get over feeling so stupid. – Sam has got over his operation and expects to leave hospital tomorrow. – He has got over his operation. – He has got over it.
get over with	come to the end of something, usually unpleasant	I'll be glad to get this awful business over with.
get rid of (1. inseparable)	dispose of; give away or throw away	That shirt is really ugly. Why don't you get rid of it?
get rid of (2. inseparable)	dismiss someone; fire someone from a job; cause someone to leave	The treasurer of the XYZ company was spending too much money so the company president got rid of him.
get round (1)	a problem / a difficulty etc. to solve or avoid a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brian and Dan couldn't move the wardrobe because it was too heavy. They got round the problem by putting the wardrobe on a trolley and pushing it. – They got round the problem. – They got round it.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
get round (2) someone	to persuade someone to do what you want; to persuade someone to let you do what you want	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tim wanted some sweets, but his father told him they were bad for his teeth. After five minutes of persuasion, Tim managed to get round his father and they both went into the sweet shop. – Tim got round his father. – Tim got round him.
get round to	find time to do – also around	Sorry, but I haven't got round to fixing the tap yet.
get through (1)	to contact someone (usually by telephone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jim (phoning his friend Roger): Hello, Roger. I've been trying to get through to you for hours! Roger: Sorry, Jim. I had to make a lot of calls this morning. – Jim tried to get through to Roger. J – im tried to get through to him.
get through (2) some work / at ask / a book etc.	to finish; to complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Roger had a lot of work to do yesterday, but he got through it all by five o'clock. – Roger got through his work. – Roger got through it.
get up (usually no object; with an object, separable)	leave bed after sleeping and begin your daily activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – You'll have to get up much earlier than usual tomorrow. We have to leave by no later than 6:00 AM. – I know I won't hear the alarm tomorrow morning. Can you get me up at 6:00 AM?
get up to	do something – usually bad when about children (colloquial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The children are getting up to something in the garden. – What have you been getting up to lately?
give away	betray	His false identity papers gave him away.
give in	to stop resisting; to surrender	The fight between Tom and Dick stopped when Tom hurt his hand and had to give in. Tom gave In.
give off	send off a smell – liquid or gas	The cheese had begun to give off a strange smell.
give out	be exhausted	When our money gave out we had to borrow.
give out books / examination papers / pills etc	to give (some thing or things) to each person in a group of people; to distribute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The teacher gave out the books, so that the pupils could read the story. – The teacher gave out the books. – The teacher gave the books out. The teacher gave them out.
give over (1)	abandon, devote	The rest of the time was given over to playing cards.
give over (2)	stop (colloquial)	Why don't you give over! You 're getting on my nerves!
give up (1. separable)	stop doing something (usually a habit)	He knows smoking isn't good for his health, but he can't give it up.
give up (1. separable) / give (oneself) up	to surrender oneself (usually to someone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The police surrounded the criminal's house and ordered him to give himself up. After a few minutes, he came out and they took him to the police station. – The criminal gave himself up to the police. – The criminal gave himself up.
give up (2)	to stop trying to do something (often because it is too difficult)	One day a hungry dog saw a bunch of juicy grapes hanging from a vine. The dog tried very hard to get the grapes, but it couldn't jump high enough to reach them. After ten frustrating minutes, the dog gave up the attempt and walked home angrily.
give up (2. no object)	decide not to try (unsuccessfully) to solve a problem; believed to be dead or lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – After ten days the ship was given up for lost. – A: "What's black and white and red all over?" B: "I give up. What?" A: "An embarrassed zebra!"
give up (3) (of an habitual activity, smoking / drinking / a job etc.)	to stop doing or having (something)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Howard decided to give up cigarettes after seeing a poster on the dangers of smoking. – Howard gave up cigarettes. Howard gave cigarettes up. – Howard gave them up. – Howard gave up smoking.
go back on	break a promise	The management has gone back on its promise.
go down	to become less swollen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Phil's cheek became swollen because he had a bad tooth ache. The dentist treated his bad tooth and his swollen cheek soon went down. – His swollen cheek went down.
go for	a person, an animal to attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The dog went for Joe and hurt his arm. – The dog went for Joe. – The dog went for him. <p>Note: this verb is not used in the passive.</p>

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
go in for (1)	make a habit of	I don't go in for that kind of thing.
go in for (2)	enter a competition	Are you thinking of going in for the race?
go off	become bad – food	This milk has gone off.
go off (of explosive devices e.g. bombs, guns etc.)	to explode or fire; (of alarms or alarm clocks) to ring suddenly	Many people were killed when the bomb went off. The bomb went off.
go on	happen (usually negative)	Something funny is going on.
go out with (inseparable)	have a date with	You went out with Sharon last night, didn't you?
go round	be enough	There weren't enough life-jackets to go round.
go through	to examine (something)	– When Ben entered this country, a custom's officer went through his suitcase. The officer took all of Ben's clothes out of his suitcase and looked at them very carefully. – A custom's officer went through Ben's suitcase. – A custom's officer went through it.
go through with	complete a promise or plan – usually unwillingly	When it came to actually stealing the money, Nora couldn't go through with it.
go with (1. no object)	to match or suit (something); look pleasing together (note: for clothes, furniture, etc.)	– You should buy that shirt. It will go well with your dark brown suit. – Tom wanted to see if checked trousers go with a striped jacket; he looked in a mirror and thought they looked horrible together.
go with (2. no object)	date regularly and steadily	Is Gina going with Jim? I see them together all the time.
goof off (no object)	be lazy; do nothing in particular	Do you have any special plans for your vacation? No. I'm just going to stay home and goof off.
grow on	become more liked (colloquial)	This new record is growing on me.
grow up (1. no object)	to develop from a child into an adult; spend the years between being a child and being an adult	– Joe has grown up into a fine young man. – Joe has grown up. – Did you know that Frank grew up in Malaysia?
grow up (2. no object)	behave responsibly; behave as an adult, not a child	A: "Lee really irritates me sometimes. He's really silly and childish." B: "I agree. I wish he would grow up."
hand in (separable)	submit homework, an assignment, etc.	You'd better get started on your report. You know that you have to hand it in at 8:30 tomorrow morning!
hand out (separable)	distribute	Why don't you have a course description and list of assignments? The teacher handed them out on the first day of class.
hand over	pass on	He handed over the money to the cashier. She handed over the responsibility to her colleague.
hang onto	keep (colloquial)	I think we should hang onto the car until next year.
hang up (no object)	end a phone conversation by replacing the receiver	I'd like to talk longer, but I'd better hang up. My sister needs to make a call.
have it in for	be deliberately unkind to someone (also as have got)	My teacher has (got) it in for me.
have it out with	express feelings so as to settle a problem	I put up with the problem for a while but in the end I had it out with her.
have someone on	deceive (colloquial)	I don't believe you. You're having me on.
have to do with (inseparable)	be about	This class has to do with the behavior of people in groups.
hit it off	get on well with (colloquial)	Mark and Sarah really hit it off at the party.
hit upon/on	discover by chance – often an idea	They hit upon the solution quite by chance.
hold on	to wait (especially on the telephone)	– George phoned his office because he wanted some information. "Hold on a minute and I'll get it for you," said his assistant. – His assistant asked him to hold on.
hold out	offer – especially with hope	We don't hold out much hope that the price will fall.
hold up (1. separable)	raise; lift to a higher-than-normal position	The winner of the race proudly held his trophy up for all to see.
hold up (2)	use as an example – i.e. a model of good behaviour	Jack was always held up as an example to me.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
hold up (2) a person / a bank / a vehicle etc.	to rob, especially using a weapon (e.g. a gun)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Earlier today a masked robber with a gun held up the bank and escaped with a hundred thousand pounds. – A robber held up the bank. – A robber held the bank up. – A robber held it up.
hold up (2. separable, usually used in the passive)	to stop; to delay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I'm sorry I'm late. There was an accident on the freeway and traffic held me up. – Sorry I'm late, I was held up in the traffic. – The traffic was held up for a few hours because of an accident that blocked the road. – The accident held up the traffic.
hold up (3. separable)	rob; threaten someone with harm unless he/she gives her/his money or other valuable things	Sarah is very upset. When she was walking home last night, two men held her up and took her purse and jewellery.
hold with	agree with (an idea)	I don't hold with the idea of using force.
iron out (separable)	mutually reach an agreement; mutually resolve difficulties	Yes, I know we disagree on lots of things, Susan, but we can iron them out.
jack in	abandon	We need to iron out the difficulties in our relationship.
jack up (1. separable)	raise / lift by using a jack	We'll have to jack the back of the car up before we can change the tyre.
jack up (2. separable)	raise (used for prices)	The car dealer bought my old Ford for \$750 and jacked the price up to \$1,500 when they sold it.
jump all over (inseparable)	severely scold someone; berate someone	Arthur is really upset. His boss jumped all over him because he's been late for work three times this week.
keep on (1. inseparable – followed by an -ing verb)	continue	I'm not ready to stop yet. I think I'll keep on working for a while.
keep on (someone) (2. inseparable)	continue to remind someone to do something until he/she does it (even if this irritates her/him)	Bill's very forgetful. You'll have to keep on him or he'll never do all the things you want him to do.
keep up	continue	Well done – keep up the good work.
kick out (separable)	expel; force someone to leave because of his/her poor performance or unacceptable behavior	Jim's club kicked him out because he didn't pay his dues or come to meetings.
knock oneself out (separable)	work much harder than normal or than what is expected	We completed the project on time because of Chuck. He knocked himself out to be sure we didn't miss the deadline.
knock out (separable)	make unconscious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The boxing match ended when one boxer knocked the other one out. – That medicine really knocked me out. I slept for 14 hours straight!
lay down	state a rule – especially lay down the law	The company has laid down strict procedures for this kind of situation.
lay off (separable; often passive)	to stop employing (a worker), often for a short time because there is not enough work (not because of poor performance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Last year the manager of Bloggs Ltd laid off a hundred workers because business was very bad. – He laid off a hundred workers. He laid a hundred workers off. – He laid them off. – They were laid off. – I feel really sorry Sally's family. Her father was laid off yesterday.
leave out (separable)	forget; omit	Oh, no! When I made the list of those who attended the meeting, I left your name out!
let down (separable)	to disappoint someone (often by breaking a promise or an agreement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sorry to let you down, but I can't give you a lift today. – Julia promised to meet Rick outside the cinema at eight o'clock, but she let him down. He waited for two hours and then he went home angrily. – Julia let Rick down. – Julia let him down.
let in on	allow to be part of a secret	We haven't let Tina in on the plans yet.
let off	to excuse (someone) from (a punishment, a duty, or doing something)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – As Dave was young, the judge let him off with a fine. – Bill should have been sent to prison for six months, but the judge decided to let him off so that he could stay out of prison and take care of his family. – The judge let Bill off going to prison.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
let on	inform about a secret (colloquial)	We're planning a surprise for Helen, but don't let on.
let out	to allow (a person or an animal) to leave (a place); to release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – They let Fred out of prison after five years. – They let Fred out of prison. – They let Fred out. – They let him out.
let up (no object)	become less intense or slower	It's been raining hard for a long time. Will it ever let up?
live down – used with (not)	suffer a loss of reputation	If City lose, they'll never live it down.
live up to	reach an expected standard	The play quite lived up to my expectations.
look after someone or something	to take care of someone or something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Looking after a baby is a full-time job. You have to bath it, dress it and feed it. – She looks after the baby. – She looks after it.
look back on (inseparable)	to remember and think about the past; reflect on / consider something in the past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When they looked back on their many years together, they realised that their marriage had been a very happy one. – The Blacks have been married for many years. They like talking about the past and looking back on old times.
look down on (inseparable)	hold in contempt; regard as inferior	It's not surprising that Fred has few friends. He seems to look down on anyone who doesn't like the same things that he does.
look down on someone or something	to think that someone (or something) is inferior, low or worthless; to disapprove of (someone or something)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sir Douglas is a very rich aristocrat. Fred is a very poor tramp. Sir Douglas thinks that he is a much better person than Fred – he looks down on Fred. – Sir Douglas looks down on Fred. – Sir Douglas looks down on him.
look for something or someone	to try to find (something or someone), often a thing or person that is lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fred wanted to open his front door but he couldn't find his key. He looked for it everywhere. – He looked for his key. – He looked for it.
look forward to a future event (inseparable)	anticipate pleasantly; to think with pleasure about a future event that you expect to enjoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I'm really looking forward to vacation. I can't wait for it to begin! – Bill Bloggs has been in prison for the last ten years. Next year he'll be released from prison and he'll be a free man. Bill is looking forward to next year.
look in on (inseparable)	visit in order to check something's / someone's condition	My father just came home from the hospital. I plan to look in on him today after I finish work.
look into a situation / a crime / a problem / a complaint etc. (inseparable)	investigate / get more details about something; to carefully examine a situation or event and try to discover the reasons for it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The police have promised to look into the problem. – Someone said there was a meeting at 9:30 but I haven't heard anything about it. Shall I look into it? – The police are looking into the death of Mr James. They want to know how he was murdered.
look like (inseparable)	resemble (in appearance)	Does he look like his father or his mother?
look on	consider	We look on this town as our real home.
look over some work / a car / a house / a document / a suggestion / an applicant etc. (separable)	check; review; to examine (someone or something) carefully and fully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I think I may have some typos in this report. Could you look it over? – Joe wanted to buy a second-hand car. 'That one looks good,' he said to the salesman. 'Give me some time to look it over. If it's in good condition, I'll buy it.' – He looked the car over.
look round a house / a shop / a town / a factory / an exhibition etc.	to visit and tour round a place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr and Mrs Smith wanted to buy a house. The estate agent took them to see a house in the centre of town and said, 'Look round the house and see if it's what you want.' T – hey looked round the house. – They looked round it. – They went into the house and looked round.
look up (1. separable) a word / a telephone number / an address / a train time/a date etc.	to find (or try to find) something (e.g. a telephone number) in a book (e.g. a telephone directory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – "I'm sorry, but I don't know what that word means. I'll have to look it up." – While Peter was reading he found a word that he didn't understand. 'This is a difficult word,' he thought. I'll look it up in the dictionary and see what it means.
look up (2. separable)	visit when in the area; find where someone lives or works and visit him/her	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – If you're passing through Athens, look me up. – Thanks for giving me your brother's address. When I'm in Chicago next month, I'll be sure to look him up.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
look up to someone (inseparable)	to respect (someone); to admire (someone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Everyone looks up to Joyce because she always makes time to help others. – Young Jimmy's favourite footballer is Ted Ross of Arsenal. Jimmy looks up to Ted and he tries to be like him. – Jimmy looks up to Ted Ross. – Jimmy looks up to him.
luck out (no object)	be unexpectedly lucky	Gloria was worried because she wasn't prepared to give a report at the meeting, but she lucked out because the meeting was postponed.
make for (1. inseparable)	go to or toward	Her teen-aged children are always hungry. As soon as they arrive home from school, they make for the refrigerator.
make for (2. inseparable)	result in; cause	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Many hands make for light work. (If many people work together, there's less work for everyone.) – The power steering makes for easier parking.
make fun of (inseparable)	make jokes about (usually unkindly)	I agree that Bob looks ridiculous since he shaved his head, but don't make fun of him. You'll hurt his feelings.
make off with	run away with	The thief made off with a valuable necklace.
make out (1)	pretend	Tim made out that he hadn't seen the 'no smoking' sign.
make out (1) often used in the negative with can't and couldn't	manage to see or understand; to see, hear, or understand (something or someone), often with difficulty; see / hear something well enough to understand what it means. (Note: often negative.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I couldn't quite make out what the notice said. – Bob saw something on the horizon as he was looking through his binoculars. At first he couldn't make out what it was, but after a few minutes he could just make out the shape of a yacht.
make out (2) a cheque	to write (a cheque)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I made out a cheque for ten pounds. – I made out a cheque. – I made a cheque out. – I made it out.
make someone out	(understand someone's behaviour)	Janet is really odd. I can't make her out.
make up (1)	to become friends again after a quarrel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Yesterday Joan and Jack had a big argument about politics. Earlier today they decided to forget their differences and make up. – Joan and Jack made up. – Joan and Jack made up their quarrel. – Joan and Jack made it up. – Jack made up with Joan. – Jack made it up with Joan.
make up (1. separable)	invent / create (imaginary) information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Judy's story is hard to believe. I'm sure she made it up. – I think you made up the whole story.
make up (2) a story / a poem / an excuse / an explanation etc.	to invent, sometimes with the purpose of deception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Colin overslept and was late for work. It was the third time he had overslept that month, so he decided to make up an excuse. He told his boss that the engine of his car had exploded. – He made up an excuse. – He made an excuse up. – He made It up.
make up (2. separable)	compensate for something missed or not done by doing extra or equivalent work	I'm sorry I missed the test. May I make it up?
make up (with) (3. inseparable)	re-establish a friendly relationship by admitting guilt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Jack and his girlfriend were very angry with each other, but last night they finally made up. – Jack and his girlfriend were very angry with each other, but last night they finally made up with each other.
make up for a mistake /doing or not doing something etc.	to compensate for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Our success makes up for all the hard times. – June and Ron arranged to meet outside the cinema at 7.30 p.m. June was very upset when Ron arrived an hour late. Ron made up for being late by apologising to June and giving her a big bunch of flowers.
mark down (separable)	reduce the price (as an incentive to buy)	These shoes were really a bargain! The store marked them down by 40%!
mark up (separable)	increase the price (for resale)	Mrs. White's import shop is profitable because she buys things inexpensively and then marks them up.
miss out (1)	fail to include	You have missed out a word here.
miss out (2)	lose a chance (colloquial)	Five people got promoted, but I missed out again.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
mistake for	to think wrongly that (one thing or person) is (another thing or person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I frightened myself last night when I mistook a piece of old rope for a dangerous snake. – I mistook a piece of old rope for a dangerous snake. – I saw a piece of old rope and I mistook it for a dangerous snake.
mix up (separable)	cause to become confused	I didn't complete the assignment because I didn't know how. The directions mixed me up.
nod off (no object)	fall sleep (usually unintentionally)	The speech was so boring that several people in the audience nodded off before it was finished.
own up	confess (colloquial); to tell (someone) that you have done something wrong, or that you are at fault	James owned up to drawing a silly picture of his teacher on the board. None of the children would own up to breaking the window.
pack in	stop an activity (colloquial)	John has packed in his job.
pan out (no object)	succeed; happen as expected (for plans). (note: almost always negative when in statements.)	I'll be here next week after all. My trip to Chicago didn't pan out.
pass away, pass on, pass over (usually of a person) (no object)	to die	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fred Bloggs passed away (passed on/passed over) in 1985 after a long illness. – Fred passed away. – Fred passed on. – Fred passed over. – I was very sorry to hear that your grandfather passed away.
pass out (1. no object)	faint; lose consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When Ella heard that she'd won a million dollars, she was so shocked that she passed out. – When the air-conditioning stopped working, James found it difficult to breathe and passed out. – He passed out.
pass out (2. separable)	distribute	Everyone in the room needs one of these information sheets. Who will help me pass them out?
pay back	take revenge (colloquial)	She paid him back for all his insults.
pick on (inseparable)	bully; intentionally try to make someone upset	You should be ashamed of teasing your little brother, Bob! Pick on someone your own size!
pick out (separable)	choose; select	Billy's grandmother especially liked her birthday card because Billy had picked it out himself.
pick up (1. separable)	lift; take up	Those books don't belong on the floor. Will you help me pick them up?
pick up (2. separable) something or someone	arrange to meet someone and give her/him a ride; to collect someone or something (sometimes in a vehicle)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Of course we can go there together. What time should I pick you up? – Jeff was driving home when he saw a hitchhiker. He stopped the car and picked the hitchhiker up. – Jeff picked up the hitchhiker. – Jeff picked the hitchhiker up. – Jeff picked him up.
pick up (3. separable)	get; buy	The children just drank the last of the milk. Could you pick some more up on your way home this evening?
pick up (4. separable)	refresh; revitalise; improve (colloquial)	The weather seems to be picking up. He was feeling a little tired, so he drank a glass of orange juice. It picked him up enough to finish his work.
pin (someone) down	force to give a clear statement	I asked Jim to name a suitable day, but I couldn't pin him down.
pitch in (no object)	help; join together to accomplish something	We'll be finished soon if everyone pitches in.
play up	behave or work badly	The car is playing up again. It won't start.
point out something or someone	to draw attention to something or someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I pointed out that I would be on holiday anyway. – My uncle showed me the building he used to work in and he pointed out his old office on the sixth floor. – He pointed out his office. – He pointed his office out. – He pointed it out.
pull off	manage to succeed	It was a tricky plan, but we pulled it off.
pull over (no object)	drive a vehicle to the side of the road	When the policeman indicated that I should pull over, I knew he was going to give me a ticket.
push on	continue with some effort (colloquial)	Let's push on and try to reach the coast by tonight.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
put (someone) out (separable)	inconvenience someone	I hate to put you out, but I need a ride to the train station and hope you can take me.
put across	communicate ideas	Harry is clever but he can't put his ideas across.
put away (separable)	return something to the proper place	I just took these clothes out of the dryer. Will you help me put them away?
put back (separable)	return something to the proper place	I've finished with these books. Do you want me to put them back on the shelves?
put down to	explain the cause of	Diane's poor performance was put down to nerves.
put forward a proposal / a plan / a suggestion / an idea etc.	to offer (a proposal / a plan etc.) for consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr Smith put forward the idea of introducing traffic lights at the crossroads as a way of preventing traffic jams. The planning committee thought his idea was very good. – He put forward the idea. – He put the idea forward. – He put it forward.
put in for	apply for a job	Sue has put in for a teaching job.
put off (1) an event / doing something etc.	to delay doing something until a later date; to delay an event or arrangement until a later date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Martin was very unhappy when he saw the huge pile of dirty dishes in the kitchen. He felt a little happier after deciding to put off the washing-up until the next day. – Martin put off the washing-up until the next day. – Martin put the washing-up off till the next day.
put off (1. separable)	postpone; delay; avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I can't put this work off any longer. If I don't do it soon, it'll be impossible to finish it in time. – When will Mr. Smith agree to a meeting? I keep asking for an appointment, but he keeps putting me off.
put off (2) / put (someone) off (2)	to discourage, or distract, (someone) from doing doing, upset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The crowd put the gymnast off, and he fell. – Ron was trying to read, but the noise from the television put him off and he had to stop. – The noise from the TV put Ron off his book. – The noise from the TV put him off his book. – The noise from the TV put Ron off.
put on (1. separable) clothes / glasses / a ring / a necklace etc.	begin to wear; don; to dress oneself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – It's a little bit chilly outside. You'd better put a sweater on. – Perry put on his new sweater because he wanted to wear it for work. – Perry put on his sweater. – Perry put his sweater on. – Perry put it on.
put on (2. separable)	try to make someone believe something that is ridiculous or untrue	Don't believe a word of what Jim was saying. He was just putting us on.
put oneself out	take trouble – to help someone	Please don't put yourself out by making a meal. A sandwich will do.
put out a cigarette / a light / a fire etc.	to extinguish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Steve put out the light in the lounge before going upstairs to bed. – Steve put out the light. – Steve put the light out. – Steve put it out.
put through	to connect a telephone caller to the number he or she wants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Mr Pratt phoned the offices of Gunn and Company. "Who would you like to speak to?" asked the switchboard operator. "Put me through to Mr Gunn please," Mr Pratt replied. – She put Mr Pratt through to Mr Gunn. – She put him through to Mr Gunn.
put up (1. separable)	return something to the proper place	Your toys are all over the floor, Timmy. Please put them up.
put up (2. separable)	offer accommodation; provide someone with a place to sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There's no need for you to check into a hotel. I'll be happy to put you up. – We can put you up for a few days.
put up with	to suffer (a difficult situation or person) without complaining	When Uncle Mike comes to visit us, the children behave very badly. They hit him, they play tricks on him and they make a lot of noise. Uncle Mike must love them very much because he puts up with everything they do, and he never gets annoyed with them.
put up with (inseparable)	tolerate; bear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I can't put up with all this noise! It's really important to come to work on time. – The boss won't put up with tardiness.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
rip off (separable)	cheat; take advantage of; charge too much; charge too much (colloquial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Don't even think about buying a car there. They'll rip you off. – You paid £50? They really ripped you off!
round off (separable)	change from a fraction to the nearest whole number	Round all prices off to the closest whole-dollar amounts. For example, round \$33.73 off to \$34.00.
run down (1)	criticise	She's always running down her husband.
run down (2)	lose power, allow to decline	I think the batteries are running down.
run in a motor cycle / a new car / a machine etc.	to use a new (or reconditioned) engine carefully until it is ready for normal use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – George is running in his new car so he can't drive fast. – George is running in his new car. – George is running it in. – Running in, please pass (a notice sometimes seen on new cars).
run into (inseparable) someone	meet by chance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Guess who I ran into at the supermarket! – Yesterday at the supermarket, Jan ran into her former roommate. Before yesterday, they hadn't seen each other for nearly five years. – I was on my way to work when I ran into Jeremy Thomas. It was a lovely surprise.
run out of (inseparable) coffee / sugar / money / patience / time etc.	to use all of (something) and have no more left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – On the way home from work, Art ran out of petrol. – Howard has run out of bread, so he can't make himself a sandwich. If he wants a sandwich, he'll have to go to the baker's shop and buy some more bread. – Howard has run out of bread. – Howard has run out of it.
run over	check – also run through	Let's run over the plan once more.
run to	have enough money	I don't think we can run to a holiday abroad this year.
run up	a bill – let a bill get longer without paying	I ran up a huge telephone bill at the hotel.
run up against	encounter – usually a problem	We've run up against a slight problem.
see someone off	to say goodbye to someone who is going on a journey at the place (e.g. airport, station etc.) where the journey begins; go to station, airport, etc. to say goodbye to someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bill arranged to go to Scotland to stay with his grandmother for a few days. His father, Frank, drove him to the railway station and saw him off. – Frank saw Bill off. – Frank saw him off. – I went to the station to see them off.
see through	realise the truth about	I saw through his intentions at once.
send up	make fun of by imitating	Jean is always sending up the French teacher.
set about	start working	We must set about re-organising the office.
set back (1. separable)	cause a delay in scheduling	We've had some problems with the project that have set us back at least two days. We'll give you a progress report tomorrow.
set back (2. separable)	cost	I wonder how much Bill's new car set him back?
set in	establish itself – especially weather	I think this rain has set in for the day.
set off	to start a journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Barry set off on his camping holiday at six o'clock in the morning and reached the camp site, in France, at midday. – Barry set off. – Barry set off at six o'clock. – Barry set off on a camping holiday. – Barry set off for France.
set on / set (up) on	attack	We were set upon by a gang of hooligans.
set out (1)	give in detail in writing	This document sets out all the Union demands.
set out (2)	arrange	I've set out the refreshments in the hall.
set out (3)	start an action	Sue set out to write a biography but it became a novel.
set up (separable)	make arrangements for something; establish	An inquiry into the accident has been set up. You'll see Mr. Thomas tomorrow. I've set a meeting up for 9:30 AM.
show up (1. no object)	arrive; appear	The boss was very upset when you didn't show up for the meeting. What happened?
show up (2. separable)	do a noticeably better job (often unexpectedly) than someone else	Everyone thought Marsha would win, but Jean did. Actually, Jean really showed Marsha up.
sink in	realise slowly (colloquial, intransitive)	Slowly the realisation that I had won began to sink in.
slip up (no object)	make a mistake (colloquial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Someone slipped up and my application was lost. – You slipped up here. The amount should be \$135.28, not \$132.58.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
soak up a liquid / information / knowledge / punishment etc.	to absorb; to become filled with (something)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The sponge soaked up the spilt milk. – The sponge soaked up the milk. – The sponge soaked the milk up. – The sponge soaked it up.
sort out	find a solution (colloquial)	Don't worry, Mary will sort out your problem.
speak up (often used in the imperative)	to speak louder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Terry was talking to his grandfather. "Speak up, Terry," his grandfather said. "I'm a bit deaf and I can't hear you." – Grandfather told Terry to speak up. – Grandfather said "Speak up".
stand by	keep to an agreement	The company agreed to stand by its original commitment.
stand for (1)	to represent or mean; to be a sign or short form of something else; initials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The letters B.B.C. stand for the British Broadcasting Corporation. – B.B.C. stands for British Broadcasting Corporation. – What do the letters B.B.C. stand for? – E.g. stands for <i>exempli gratia</i>, it's Latin.
stand for (1. no object)	represent	These letters seem to be an abbreviation. Do you know what they stand for?
stand for (2)	tolerate	I will not stand for this kind of behaviour in my house!
stand for (2. inseparable)	tolerate; permit (usually negative)	I'm not surprised that Mrs. Johnson rejected your report. She won't stand for shoddy work.
stand in for	take the place of	Carol has kindly agreed to stand in for Graham at the monthly meeting.
stand out (no object)	be noticeably better than other similar people or things	Good job, Ann! Your work really stands out!
stand up (1. no object)	rise to a standing position	When the Chairperson entered the room, everyone stood up.
stand up (2. separable)	make a date but not keep it	Angela was supposed to go to the dance with Fred, but she stood him up and went with Chuck instead.
stand up to	resist, bear stress	The engine won't stand up to the strain.
step down	resign (colloquial)	The Chairman has stepped down after criticism from shareholders.
step up	increase	Production at the Leeds plant has been stepped up.
stick up for	defend – especially yourself, your rights (colloquial)	You must learn to stick up for yourself.
take (it) out on	make someone else suffer because of one's own sufferings	I know you are unhappy, but don't take it out on me!
take / bring back (separable)	return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – This book is due tomorrow. I guess I should take it back to the library. – "Yes, you can borrow my pen, but don't forget to bring it back to me when you're finished."
take after (inseparable)	resemble; favor (in appearance) Note: used for people	Both my sister and I take after our father.
take after someone	to look or be like an older relative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Little Christopher takes after his father. He has black hair, big feet and a bad temper just like his dad. – Christopher takes after his father. – Christopher takes after him.
take care of (1. inseparable)	provide care for; watch one's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lois has been taking care of her father since he returned home from the hospital. – You've been working too hard lately. You'd better take care of yourself!
take care of (2. inseparable)	make arrangements (for something to happen); take responsibility for	Will you take care of making reservations for our flight to Boston?
take down a statement / a telephone number / some information etc.	to record in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – When the policeman arrived at the scene of the accident he took down the witness's statement. – He took down the statement. – He took the statement down. – He took it down.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
take in (often used in the passive)	to deceive (someone); to cheat (someone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Don't be taken in by her apparent shyness. – The hungry wolf had a problem: all the sheep in the neighbourhood knew him and ran away when they saw him. After some thought he decided to disguise himself as a sheep. The neighbourhood sheep were taken in by the disguise.
take off (1) (of an aeroplane)	to rise from the ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – At the beginning of a journey an aeroplane takes off. At the end of a journey an aeroplane lands. – The aeroplane took off.
take off (1. separable)	remove (something you're wearing)	Please take your hat off when you go inside a building.
take off (2)	to remove anything that is worn on the body (especially clothes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Nick took off his jacket because he was feeling very hot. – Nick took off his jacket. – Nick took his jacket off. – Nick took it off.
take off (2. no object)	leave; depart (often suddenly or quickly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Was something wrong with Jill? She took off without saying goodbye. – When does your plane take off?
take off (3. separable)	make arrangements to be absent from work	Susan isn't here today. She's taking today and tomorrow off.
take off (4)	imitate (colloquial)	Dave takes off the Prime Minister really well.
take on (1)	acquire a new characteristic	My grandmother has taken on a new lease of life since her operation.
take on (2)	do something extra	She has taken on too much with a full-time job as well.
take out	insurance – sign an insurance agreement	Ann has taken out life insurance.
take over	gain control of; to assume responsibility for, or control of (something or a situation) from someone else	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The army tried to take over the country. – Simon took over the manager's job from Mr Jones when he retired. – Simon took over the manager's job from Mr Jones. – Simon took over the manager's job. – Simon took the manager's job over. – Simon took it over.
take to someone	develop a liking for	You'll soon take to your new boss, I'm sure.
take up	time – occupy time	The meeting took up a whole morning
take up (separable)	begin (a hobby or leisure-time activity)	I've never been skiing, but I think I'd like to take it up.
take up a hobby / a sport / a job / a habit etc.	to begin to study, practice, or do (something)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tim wanted to take up painting, so he joined an evening class at the local College of Art. – He took up painting. – He took painting up. – He took it up. – He took up a new hobby.
talk out of or into	dissuade from, persuade into	Paul talked me into going skiing, against my better judgement.
tear up a piece of paper / a letter / a newspaper etc.	to destroy completely by tearing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brian tore up the letter angrily. – Brian tore up the letter. – Brian tore the letter up. – Brian tore it up.
tell (someone) off (separable)	speak to someone bluntly and negatively, saying exactly what she/he did wrong; to speak angrily to someone who has done something wrong; to find fault with someone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Our teacher told us off for being late. – Julie was really angry at Bob; she told him off in front of all of us. – Howard told his son off for breaking a window with his football. – Howard told off his son. – Howard told his son off. – Howard told him off.
think over a problem / a proposal / a situation etc.	to consider (something) carefully	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Owen is playing chess with a friend. At the moment he is thinking over his next move. – He is thinking his next move over. – He is thinking it over.
throw away (separable)	discard; put in the garbage	You shouldn't throw those newspapers away; they're recyclable.
throw out (1. separable)	discard; put in the garbage	This food smells bad. You'd better throw it out.
throw out (2. separable)	forcibly make someone leave (usually because of bad behaviour)	Those people are drunk and making everyone uncomfortable. The manager should throw them out.
throw up (usually no object; with an object, separable)	vomit	Paul was so nervous about his job interview that he threw up just before he left for it.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
tick off (1. separable)	irritate someone; make someone upset or angry	It really ticks her off when someone is late for an appointment.
tick off (2. separable)	show that something has been completed by putting a tick (check) beside it	Here are the things you need to do. Tick each one off when you finish it.
tie in with	be in agreement with	I'm afraid your party doesn't quite tie in with our arrangements.
track down	trace the whereabouts of	The police tracked down killer and arrested him.
try on (separable)	wear something briefly to check its fit, how it looks, etc.	I'm not sure that jacket is large enough. May I try it on?
try on a hat / a new pair of shoes / a dress etc.	to put on an article of clothing to see if it fits and how it looks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Last week I went into a shop and tried on three hats. The first hat was too big; the second one was too small; but the third one fitted me perfectly and looked good, so I bought it. – I tried on three hats. – I tried three hats on. – I tried them on.
try out (for) (inseparable)	try to win a place on a team or other organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I know you want to be on the football team. Are you going to try out? – If you like to sing, you should try out for the choir.
try out (separable)	test – a machine; use a machine briefly to determine how well it works	I really like the way this car looks. May I try it out? Let's try out the new washing machine.
try out something or someone	to test something (or someone) by using it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Angela saw an advertisement for a new soap powder called 'Zap'. She decided to try it out because she wanted to see if it was better than her usual soap powder. – Angela tried out new 'Zap'. – Angela tried new 'Zap' out. – Angela tried it out.
turn around (1. usually no object)	move so that you are facing the opposite direction	Everyone turned around and stared when I entered the meeting late.
turn around (2. separable)	move so that someone / something is facing the opposite direction	I don't want this chair facing the window. Will you help me turn it around?
turn around (3. separable)	make changes so that something that was unprofitable is profitable	The company was doing poorly until it hired a new president. He turned it around in about six months and now it's doing quite well.
turn down (1. separable)	decrease the volume	Your music is giving me a headache! Please turn it down or use your headphones!
turn down (2. separable) a request / an offer / an applicant / an application etc.	to refuse or reject (something or someone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Another company offered me a job but I turned them down. – I thought I could borrow some money from Joe, but when I asked, he turned me down. – Jeff was interviewed for the job at Bloggs Ltd but they turned him down because he was too young.
turn in (1. separable)	give / deliver / submit to someone	I've written my report, but I haven't turned it in.
turn in (2. no object)	go to bed	I'm pretty tired. I guess I'll turn in.
turn in (3. separable)	report or deliver wrongdoers to the authorities	Two days after the robbery, the thieves turned themselves in.
turn into something or someone	to change; to become	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The beautiful princess kissed the frog and it turned into a handsome prince. – The frog turned into a prince. – The kiss turned the frog into a prince.
turn off (1. separable)	stop by turning a handle or switch	I'm cold. Do you mind if I turn the air conditioner off?
turn off (2. separable)	bore; repel (very informal)	That music turns me off. Please play something else!
turn on (1. separable)	start by turning a handle or switch	It's cold in here. I'm going to turn the heater on.
turn on (2. separable)	interest very much; excite (very informal)	What kind of music turns you on?
turn out	happen to be in the end	He turned out to be an old friend of Helen's.
turn out	come to a meeting or to form a crowd	Thousands of fans turned out to welcome the team.
turn up (1. separable)	increase the volume	I can barely hear the TV. Can you turn it up a little?
turn up (2. no object)	appear, arrive unexpectedly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We were all surprised when Pam turned up at the party. We didn't even know she was in town. – Not many people turned up for the lesson.

Phrasal Verb	Meaning	Examples
turn up (3)	be discovered by chance	Don't worry about that missing book, it's bound to turn up sooner or later.
wait for (inseparable)	wait until someone / something arrives or is finished with something else	– When will Kenny be finished with work? I've been waiting for him for almost an hour! – I'm tired of waiting for the bus. I guess I'll take a taxi instead.
wait on (1. inseparable)	serve (usually customers in a restaurant, shop, etc.)	I want to make a complaint. The person who just waited on me was very impolite.
wake up (1. no object)	stop sleeping	I usually wake up around 5:00 AM each day.
wake up (2. separable)	rouse someone; cause someone to stop sleeping	I have an important meeting tomorrow and I'm afraid I won't hear my alarm. Will you wake me up at 6:00 AM?
watch out for (inseparable)	be careful of; beware of	– There's a school at the end of this block. Watch out for children crossing the street. – If you take that road, watch out for ice during the winter.
wear off (1)	to disappear gradually	– The pain in Jim's foot wore off after he took some painkiller. – The pain wore off.
wear off (2)	lose effect – especially a drug	These painkillers wear off after about two hours.
wear out (1)	to use (something) until it becomes unfit for further use; to become unusable after excessive use	– Paul wore out his favourite jumper after wearing it every day for ten years. – Paul wore out his jumper. – Paul wore his jumper out. – Paul wore it out. – The jumper wore out.
wear out (1. separable)	wear something / use something until it can no longer be worn / be used	– I need a new pencil sharpener. I wore this one out. – I suppose I should get some new shoes. I've almost worn this pair out.
wear out (2) often used in the passive	to tire greatly; to exhaust	– Carrying the heavy box across the street wore Fred out. When he got home he went straight to bed. – Carrying the heavy box wore out Fred. – Carrying the heavy box wore Fred out. – Carrying the heavy box wore him out. – Fred was worn out by carrying the heavy box.
wear out (2. separable)	cause to become exhausted; cause to become very tired	I had four different meetings today. They wore me out.
work out (1. no object)	exercise (usually in a gym, etc.) to build muscles, body tone, etc	Instead of eating lunch on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Sheila goes to the recreation centre to work out.
work out (2. separable) a problem / a plan / a method etc.	solve a problem / resolve a difficult situation (usually by working together); to produce a way of dealing with a problem or situation by thinking	– I know we disagree on many points, but I believe we can work things out. – Jimmy is busy doing his homework. At the moment he is working out the answer to a sum. – He is working out the answer. – He is working the answer out. – He is working it out.
work out (3) a sum	calculate – also work out for a specific amount; to solve a problem by calculation or study	The hotel bill worked out at over \$500.
wrap up (1. no object)	wear enough clothes to keep warm	It's really cold today. Be sure you wrap up when you leave the house.
wrap up (2. separable)	finish something; bring something to a conclusion	We've been talking about the problem for nearly three hours. I hope we'll be able to wrap the discussion up soon.
write down (separable)	record something in writing	Could you tell me your e-mail address again? I want to write it down.
write up (separable)	record; report in writing	You'll need to make a report on your business meetings. Be sure you write them up as soon as possible after you return from your trip.
zonk out (no object)	fall asleep quickly because of exhaustion	I intended to go shopping after work, but I was so tired that I zonked out as soon as I got home.

Section 3 (v)

Lay terms

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Abdominal	Referring to the body cavity which contains stomach, intestines, liver, and other organs
Ablation	Remove
Absorb	Take up fluids, take in
Abrasion	Area where skin or other tissue is scraped away
Absorption	The way a drug or other substance enters the body
Abstain	Avoid
Acid taste	Sour taste
Accommodate	Meet/agree to
Acuity	Clearness, keenness, esp. of vision – airways
Acute	New, recent, sudden
Adenopathy	Swollen lymph nodes (glands)
Adhesion	Being stuck together
Adjuvant	Helpful, assisting, aiding
Adjuvant treatment	Added treatment
Adrenal gland	Gland found over each kidney
Adverse effect	Negative side effect
Adverse events	Injuries; bad reactions
After the delivery of treatment	After you've been treated
Agent	Drug, medication
Albumin	Protein found in blood
Allergic reaction	Rash, trouble breathing
Alopecia	Loss of hair
Alternative	Choice
Ambulate-Ambulation- Ambulatory	Walk, able to walk
Amend	Change
Amnesia	Loss of memory; inability to remember
Amniocentesis	Removal of some of the water from around an unborn baby for laboratory testing
Analgesic	Pain relieving medication
Anaphylaxis	Serious, potentially life threatening allergic reaction
Anaemia	Decreased red blood cells; low red blood cell count
Anaesthesia	Loss of sensation or feeling
Anaesthetic (general)	A drug or agent used to decrease the feeling of pain or eliminate the feeling of pain by putting you to sleep
Anaesthetic (local)	A drug or agent used to decrease the feeling of pain or by numbing an area of your body, without putting you to sleep
Anaesthetise	To numb; put to sleep
Angina (angina pectoris)	Pain resulting from insufficient blood to the heart
Angioplasty	Operation to open up a narrow blood vessel
Anomalies	Physical defects
Anorexia	Condition in which a person will not eat; lack of appetite
Anoxia	No oxygen
Antacid	Drug used to decrease acid in the stomach
Antibiotic	Drug that kills bacteria and other germs
Antibody	Natural chemical made in the body that fights infection
Antiemetic	Medication to prevent nausea/vomiting

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Antihistamine	Drug used to treat allergic reactions
Antilipidemic	A drug that decreases the level of fat(s) in the blood
Antimicrobial	A drug that kills bacteria and other germs
Antiretroviral	Drug that inhibits certain viruses
Antiseptic	Substance used to stop or slow down the growth of germs
Antitussive	A drug used to relieve coughing
Aphasia	Not able to speak or write and not able to understand spoken or written words
Arrhythmia	Any change from the normal heartbeat (abnormal heartbeat)
Artery	Type of blood vessel that carries blood and oxygen from the heart to the rest of the body
Arterial catheter	Small tube placed in an artery
Arthritis	Swelling of one or more joints
Asphyxia	Suffocation, unable to get enough oxygen
Aspiration	Fluid entering lungs
Assay	Lab test
Assent	Agreement
Assess	To learn about
Assay	Lab test
Assent	Agreement
Assess	To learn about
Assist	Help
Asthenia	Loss of energy; weakness
Asthma	A lung disease associated with tightening of the air passages
Atrophy	Wasting away or decrease in size
Asymptomatic	Without symptoms
Audiogram	Report of a hearing test
Audiology	The study of hearing
Audiometer	Tool used to measure hearing
Audit	Review; inspect; look at
Authorization	Your written permission; your written approval
Authorizing disclosures	Allowing us to share information
Autonomy	Being able to make one's own decisions
Axilla	Armpit
Bacteria	Germs; Microscopic creatures that live in and around us; they sometimes cause disease
Barrier method (for birth control)	Birth control such as a diaphragm, condom, cervical cap, or sponge
Benefit	A valued or desired outcome; an advantage
Benign	Something that has no bad effects or does not spread; not cancerous
Beta blocker	Drug used to slow down the heart
Bilateral	Having to do with both sides (of the body)
Biopsy	Removal and examination of a small part of tissue
Blood profile	Series of blood tests
Bone density	Bone thickness; hardness of bone
Bone marrow	Soft tissue inside bones that makes blood cells
Bone mass	The amount of calcium in a given amount of bone
Bronchitis	Inflammation of the lungs
Bronchospasm	Breathing distress caused by narrowing of the airways
Bronchus	Tube that carries air from the windpipe to the lungs
Bulimia	Eating disorder in which a person cannot stop eating and often vomits to make room for more food
Calcipenia	Low in calcium
Cancer radiotherapy	Treatment of cancer using X rays

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Capillary	Tiny blood vessel
Carcinogenic	Capable of causing cancer
Carcinoma	Type of cancer
Cardiac	Heart; Having to do with the heart
Cardiovascular	Heart and blood vessels
Carpal bones	Wrist bones
Cataract	Clouding of the lens of the eye
Catheter	Small tube for withdrawing or introducing fluids
Catheter (indwelling epidural)	A tube placed near the spinal cord used for anaesthesia during an operation
Central nervous system (CNS)	Brain and spinal cord
Cerebral trauma	Damage to the brain
Collaborating with	Working with
Collect and maintain	Get and keep
Colon	Large intestine; bowel
Colonoscopy	Procedure to look at the large intestine that uses a special camera at the end of a long tube that is inserted in the rectum
Coma	Unconscious state
Complete response	Total disappearance of disease
Comply with the rule	Obey the rule; doing what it tells us to do
Congenital	Occurring prior to birth, due to parent's genetic input
Conjunctivitis	Irritation and redness of the thin membrane covering the eye
Consent	Agreement
Consolidation phase	Treatment phase intended to make a remission permanent,
Contraindications	Medical reasons that prevent a person from using a certain drug or treatment
Contrast material	A fluid that is given into the vein or an area of the body to highlight the blood vessels or body area under x-ray examination
Contusion	Bruise
Convulsions	Seizures, epileptic fit
Cornea	Clear tissue covering the front part of the eye
Coronary	Pertains to the blood vessels that supply the heart
CT (cat) scan	Computerized (axial) tomography; computerized series of x- rays; special type of x-ray
Culture	Test for the presence of bacteria or viruses that could cause infection
Cumulation	Increased action of a drug when given over a period of time
Cutaneous	Relating to the skin
Debilitation	Weakened condition
Deceased person	Dead person; someone who died
Defecate	Bowel movement; to pass stool
Defibrillation	A procedure that uses electricity to stimulate the heart and make it return to its normal rhythm
Dehydrate	Lose water or body fluids
Depressant	Drug that slows down the action of the central nervous system
Dermatologic	Pertaining to the skin
Deteriorate	To get worse; to lose function
Determine (s)	Decide(s)
Diagnostic (Procedure)	Tests used to identify a disorder or disease in a living person
Diastolic blood pressure	Lower number in blood pressure reading; pertaining to resting or relaxation phase of heart beat
Disclosure Information	Share information; give; tell
Disclosures we will make	Information we will share
Diplopia	Double vision
Distal	Toward the end, away from the centre of the body

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Distension	Bloated; swollen; inflated
Diuretic	“Water pill” or drug that causes increase in urination
Duct	Tube that carries a body fluid
Duodenum	Beginning of the small intestine that is attached to the stomach
Duration	Length of time involved
Dysfunction	Not functioning properly
Dyspepsia	Gas; upset stomach
Dysphagia	Difficulty in swallowing
Dysplasia	Abnormal cells
Dyspnoea	Hard to breathe; short of breath
Echocardiogram	Procedure that uses sound waves for examination of the heart
Edema	Swelling (fluid or water retention)
EEG or Electroencephalogram	Measurement of electrical activity of the brain
Effective date	Takes effect on
Efficacy	Effectiveness
Electrocardiogram (ECG)	Electrical tracing of the heartbeat or heart rhythm
Electrolyte imbalance	Imbalance of salts or chemicals in the blood
Electrophysiology study	Heart rhythm study
Elevation of liver function tests	Evidence of liver or kidney damage
Embolus	Blood clot
Embryo	Unborn baby
Emesis	Vomiting
Empiric	Based on experience
Enable	Allow; make possible
Endorphin	Substance made by the body to stop pain
Endoscopic examination	Examination of the internal part of the body with a lighted tube; looking at a part of the body with a lighted tube
Enema	Medication given through the rectum that cleans out the bowel
Ensure	Make sure
Enteral	By way of the intestines
Entities	Facilities; institutions; organizations
Enzyme	A chemical in the blood that causes chemical changes
Enzyme abnormality	blood test result that suggests abnormal organ function or injured cells
Epidermal	Having to do with the outer layer of skin
Epidermis	Outer layer of skin
Epidural	Outside the spinal cord
Eradicating	Getting rid of (such as a disease)
Oesophagus/Oesophagus	Tube that goes from the throat to the stomach
Established protocols	Has rules
Evaluate	Measure; rate
Evaluated	Assessed; examined for medical condition
Examination	Exam
Exceptions, restrictions, and limits	Limits
Excrete	Discharge, pass
Extravasate	To leak outside of a blood vessel, spills
Fast	A required period to go without food; do not eat or drink
Fatigue	Feeling tired
Foetal material	The placenta, amniotic fluid, foetal membranes, and umbilical cord
Foetus	Unborn baby

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Flatulence	Gas passed through the anus / rectum
Fibrillation	Irregular beat of the heart or other muscle
Fibrosis	Scars
Fibrous	Having many fibres (such as scar tissue)
Fluoroscope	X-ray machine
Fracture	Break
Fungus	Form of infection
Gait	Walk
Gastric	Of the Stomach
Gastrointestinal	Stomach and intestine
General anaesthesia	Pain prevention by induction of drugged sleep, as in surgery
Genetic screening	Tests to identify persons who are at risk of producing offspring with inherited diseases or disorders
Genotype	The genetic makeup of an individual.
Gestational	Pertaining to pregnancy
Glucose	Type of sugar found in the blood
Graph	Chart, records
Guardian	An individual who is authorized under state or local law to give permission on behalf of a child or an adult who is not able to make decisions.
Gynaecologist	Doctor who specializes in treating a woman's organs that are related to pregnancy and childbirth
Gynaecology	The study of the reproductive system of women
Healthcare professionals	People who care for you: doctors, nurses; and others who care for you
Health record is physical property	Health record belongs to
Haematocrit	Amount of red blood cells in the blood
Haematologist	Doctor who treats blood disorders
Haematoma	A bruise, a black and blue area, blood clot
Haemodynamic measurement	Test to measure blood flow
Haemolysis	Breakdown in red blood cells
Haemorrhage	Loss of blood (heavy bleeding)
Heparin lock	Needle placed in the arm with blood thinner to keep the blood from clotting inside the needle or tubing
Hepatic	Liver
Hepatitis	Inflammation of the liver
Hepatoma	Cancer or tumour of the liver
Heritable disease	A disease which can be transmitted to one's offspring resulting in damage to future children
Histopathologic	Pertaining to the disease status of body tissues or cells
Holter monitor	A portable machine for recording heart beats
Hormone	A chemical in the blood
Human subjects	People who take part in a research study by letting an investigator gather information about how they answer questions, respond to certain situations react to an experimental product.
Hypercalcemia	High blood calcium level
Hyperkalemia	High blood potassium level
Hypernatremia	High blood sodium level
Hyperopia	Farsightedness
Hypertension	High blood pressure
Hypocalcemia	Low blood calcium level
Hypodermic	Under the skin
Hypoglycaemia	Not enough sugar in the blood
Hypotension	Low blood pressure
Hypokalaemia	Low blood potassium level
Hyponatremia	Low blood sodium level

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Hypotension	Low blood pressure
Hypothermia	Low body temperature
Hypoxia	Low oxygen level in the blood
Hysterectomy	Removal of the womb
Identifiable information	Personal information that can identify you
Idiopathic	Of unknown cause
Immobilisation	Unable to move
Immunisation	Administration of a substance to prevent disease
Immunoglobulin	A combination of antibodies from proteins in the blood
Immunological	Related to the body's ability to fight infection
Immunosuppressive	Drug which suppresses the body's immune response, used in transplantation and diseases caused by disordered immunity
Immunotherapy	Given of drugs to help the body's immune (protective) system; usually used to destroy cancer cells
Impaired function	Not working properly
Implanted	Placed in the body
Incapacity	Refers to a person's mental status and an inability to understand information presented, to appreciate the consequences of acting (or not acting) on that information, and to make a choice. Often used as a synonym for incompetence (See also: Incompetence).
Incision	To cut open
Incompetence	Technically, a legal term meaning inability to manage one's own affairs. Often used as a synonym for incapacity. (See also: Incapacity.)
Incomplete	Lacking; unfinished
Incorrect	Wrong
Incumbent upon	Must
Indicate	Tell us
Induction phase	Beginning phase or stage of a treatment
Induration	Hardening
Indwelling	Tube left in a vein
Inert	Not active; substance that doesn't affect you
Infarct	Death of tissue because of lack of blood supply
Infectious disease	Disease which is transmitted from one person to next
Inflammation	Swelling which is generally painful, red, and warm
Inflation	To put air in
Influenza	The flu
Infusion	Introduction of a substance into the body, usually into the blood
Ingestion	Eating; taking by mouth
Inject	To put into by way of a needle or other device
Insomnia	Unable to sleep
Intermittent	Occurring (regularly or irregularly) between two time points; alternately ceasing and beginning
Intestine	Stomach (belly)
Intracatheter	Small tube in a vein
Intramuscular	Into the muscle; within the muscle
Intraperitoneal	Into the abdominal cavity
Intracatheter	Small tube in a vein
Intramuscular (IM) injection	Injection of a substance into a muscle (e.g., upper arm or backside)
Intraperitoneal	Into the abdomen cavity
Intrathecal	Into the spinal fluid
Investigational new drug	A new drug which has not yet been approved by the FDA
In vitro	Literally, "in glass" or "test tube" used to refer to processes that are done outside the living body, usually in the laboratory, as distinguished from in vivo.

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
In vivo	Literally, "in the living body" processes, such as the absorption of a drug by the human body, carried out in the living body rather than in a laboratory (in vitro).
Irradiation	X-ray
Ischemia procedure	Decreased oxygen in tissue (usually because of decreased blood flow)
Jaundice	Yellowing of the skin
Judicial administrative proceeding	Legal proceeding such as a court case
Lactating	Nursing
Lactation	Period of time during which a woman is providing her breast milk to an infant or child
Laparotomy	A procedure in which an incision is made in the abdominal wall to enable a physician to look at the organs
Lateral	Toward or having to do with one side (of the body)
Lesion	Abnormal area of tissue, such as a wound, sore, rash, or boil
Lethargy	Sleepiness
Leucocyte	Blood cells that fight infection
Leukopenia	Low white blood cell count
Libido	Sexual desire
Licensure	Being licensed
Lipid	Fat
Lipid profile (panel)	Fat and cholesterol levels in the blood
Local anaesthesia	Creation of insensitivity to pain in a small local area of the body
Localized	Restricted to one area; limited to one area (of the body)
Lumbar puncture	Spinal tap; a needle inserted between the bones of the spine to put in a drug or take a sample of fluid
Lumbosacral	Lower back
Lumen	Cavity of an organ or tube (e.g. inside of blood vessel)
Lymphangiography	An X-ray of the lymph nodes or tissues after injection of dye in lymph vessels (e.g. in feet)
Lymphocyte	A type of white blood cell important in the body's defense against infection
Lymphoma	A cancer of the lymph nodes (or tissues)
Macro	Large or long
Magnetic Resonance Imaging	Produces multiple images of organs and structures within the body by using a large magnet to attract electrons within the body used as a diagnostic tool (See also MRI).
Maintained	Kept
Malaise	A vague feeling of bodily discomfort, feeling bad
Malfunction	Condition in which something is not functioning properly
Malignancy	Cancer or other progressively enlarging and spreading tumour, fatal if not successfully treated
Mastectomy	Surgery to remove a breast
Material change	Significant change
Medical device	A product, such as crutches, an x-ray machine, pacemaker, toothbrush, bandage, contact lenses, etc., that is used in treatment, prevention, or diagnosis of a medical condition and does not act on the body through chemical action.
Medications	Drugs; medicines
Meningitis	Infection or irritation around the brain
Metabolism	Chemical changes which provide energy
Metabolise	Process of breaking down substances in the cells
Metastasis	Spread of cancer cells from one part of the body to another
MI (myocardial infarction)	Heart attack, death of heart muscle
Minimal	Slight
Minimise	Reduce
Mobility	Ease of movement; ability to move around
Monitor	Check on, keep track of, watch carefully
Morbidity	Undesired result or complication; serious disease

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Mortality	Death or death rate
MRI (magnetic resonance imaging)	Magnetic resonance imaging, body pictures created using magnetic rather than x-ray energy
Mucoid	Slimy
Mucosa, mucous membrane	Moist lining of digestive, respiratory, reproductive, and urinary tracts
Myalgia	Muscle aches
Myocardial infarction	Pertaining to the (muscle of the) heart
Myopia	Near-sightedness
Nasal	Nose
Naso-gastric tube	Tube that goes through the nose and into the stomach
Nausea	Feel sick to the stomach
Necrosis	Death of tissue or skin
Negligible	Small or unimportant
Neoplasia	Tumour, may be non-cancerous or cancerous
Neurological	Pertaining to the nervous system
Neurological exam	Test of the brain, spinal cord and reflexes
Neurologist	Doctor who treats disorders of the central nervous system and nerves
Neurosis	Mental and emotional disorder
Neutropenia	Decrease in the main part of the white blood cells
Next of Kin	Close relatives
Non-invasive	Not breaking, cutting or entering the skin
Not required to agree	Don't have to agree
Notify	Tell you/tell us
Nuremberg Code	A code of research ethics developed during the trials of Nazi war criminals following World War II and widely adopted as a standard during the 1950s and 1960s for Protecting human subjects.
Observations	Reports
Obtain a copy	Get a copy
Obtaining	Getting
Occlusion	Closing; obstruction
Occult blood test	A sample of stool taken and tested for tiny amounts of blood
Oncology	The study of tumours or cancer
Ophthalmic	Pertaining to the eye
Ophthalmologist	Doctor who treats eye disorders
Optimal	Best, most favourable or desirable
Oral administration	Giving a drug by mouth
Origin	Beginning cause
Orthodontist	Dentist who treats teeth and jaw disorders
Orthopaedic	Pertaining to the bones
Orthopaedist	Doctor who treats bone and joint disorders
Osteopetrosis	Rare bone disorder characterised by dense bone
Osteoporosis	Softening of the bones
Otologist	Doctor who treats disorders of the ear
Otorhinolaryngologist	Doctor who treats disorders of the ear, nose, and throat
Otoscope	Tool used to look into the ear
Ovaries	Female sex glands; female organs which release eggs
Palpitation	Rapid heart beat
Pap test	Microscope test used to detect virus infection of the cervix or cancer of the vagina, cervix, or lining of the uterus (Also called Pap Smear).
Parenteral	Administration by injection
Partial seizure	Seizure

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Patency	Condition of being open
Pathogenesis	The initial cause of a disease
Pathogenic	Causing disease
PER OS (PO)	By mouth
Percutaneous	Through the skin
Perforation	Puncture, tear or hole
Peripheral	Not central
Peripheral blood	Vein blood
Phalanx	Finger or toe bone
Pharmacokinetics	Study of the way the body absorbs, distributes and gets rid of a drug
Pharmacological	Effect of the drug
Pharynx	Throat
Phlebitis	Irritation of inflammation of a vein
Physical property	Property of; belongs to
Physician	Doctor
Placebo	An inactive substance which may look like an active medication, but has no medical value (such as a sugar pill)
Placebo effect	Symptom or change of condition seen when a placebo is given
Placenta	Afterbirth
Plan for future care or treatment	Care plan
Plasma	Fluid found in the blood
Platelets	Small particles in the blood that help with blood clotting
Pneumonia	Lung infection
Pneumothorax	Collapsed lung
Podiatrist	Foot doctor
Policies, procedures, practices	Our rules and standards
Polydipsia	Too much thirst
Polyps	Abnormal lumps that can sometimes be cancerous
Postpartum	After childbirth
Potential	Possible
Potentially endangering	Possibly hurting
Potentiate	Increase or multiply the effect of a drug or toxin by administration or another drug or toxin at the same time
Potentiation	Increase in drug action from using two drugs together instead of using each drug alone
Prenatal	Before birth
Proctologist	Doctor who treats disorders of the rectum and anus
Prognosis	Outlook; probable outcomes
Prone	Lying on the stomach
Prophylaxis	A drug given to prevent disease or infection
Prosthesis	Artificial body part
Protected health information	Personal medical information that is protected by the rule
Protocol	The plan of study. The protocol includes a description of what the research hopes to prove, how the study will be carried out, etc.
Protocols	Rules
Provide your treatment	Treat you
Provided consent	Given consent/permission
Provider	Doctor, nurse, or other provider of health care
Providing assistance with your health care	Helping you (with your health care)
Provisions	Arranging for

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Proximal	Closer to the centre of the body, away from the end
Pruritus	Itchiness
Psychologist	Doctor who helps people understand interested in the workings of the mind, thought, and behaviour
Psychological test	Test of your behaviour
Psychosis	Severe mental disorder; craziness
Psychosomatic	Having a connection between the mind and physical symptoms
Pulmonary	Pertaining to the lungs
Pulmonary neoplasm	Lung tumour
Puncture	To make a hole
Pyelogram	A series of x-rays of the kidneys
Radiation therapy	X-ray or cobalt treatment
Radioactive isotope	A chemical or substance that gives off radiant energy rays similar to X-rays
Random	By chance, like the flip of a coin
Randomization	Assignment of treatment group by chance, similar to tossing a coin (when there are two treatment choices)
RBC	Red blood cell
Rebuttal	Response; answer; contradict
Recombinant	Formation of new combinations of genes
Reconstitution	Putting back together the original parts or elements
Recur	Happen again
Refractory	Not responding to treatment
Regeneration	Regret of a structure or of lost tissue
Regimen	Pattern of administering treatment
Regulation	Rule
Relapse	The return or reappearance of a disease
Release information	Give out your information
Remission	Disappearance of evidence of cancer or other disease
Renal	Having to do with the kidney
Replicable	Capable of being duplicated
Request a correction/amendment	Ask us to change; ask us to correct
Request a restriction	Ask us not to
Research	A systematic investigation (i.e., the gathering and analysis of information) designed to develop or contribute to general knowledge
Resect	Remove or cut out (surgically)
Respiratory	Breathing
Restrictions	Limits
Retrospective	Looking back over past experience
Revised	New; changed
Revoke your written authorisation	Withdraw; take back; tell us not to
Risk	The probability of harm or injury (physical, psychological, social, economic) occurring as a result of taking part in a research study
Saline	Salt water solution
Sarcoma	A type of cancer
Scapula	Shoulder blade
Screening	Examination, test
Secretion	Release
Sedative	A drug to calm or make less anxious
Sequentially	In a row
Serum	Clear liquid part of blood
Shunt	Artificial or natural channel running between two other channels

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Simultaneous	At the same time
Single-blind	Typically, a study design in which the investigator, but not the subject, knows the identity of the treatment assignment. Occasionally the subject, but not the investigator, knows the assignment.
Sleep apnoea	Breathing problems while sleeping
Software	Computer program
Somatic	Having to do with the body
Somnolence	Sleepiness
Spirometer	An instrument to measure the amount of air taken into and exhaled from the lungs
Staging	A determination of the extent of the disease
Standard of care	The usual treatment for the disease
Stenosis	Narrowing of a duct, tube, or one of the heart valves
Stent	A metal (or plastic) tube placed inside a blood vessel that keeps it open to prevent blockage
Sternum	Breastbone
Stimuli	Something which causes a change
Stomatitis	Mouth sores; inflammation of the mouth
Stratify	Arrange in groups of analysis of results (e.g., stratify by age, sex, etc.)
Stupor	Stunned state in which it is difficult to get a response or the attention of the subject
Subclavial	Under the collarbone
Subcutaneous (SC)	Under the skin
Sublingual	Under the tongue
Submandibular gland	Gland responsible for secreting saliva
Submit your request in writing	Write a letter
Superficial	Near the surface
Supine position	Lying on the back
Supplement	Add
Supportive care	General medical care aimed at symptoms, not intended to improve or cure underlying disease
Suture	Stitches
Symptom	Signs of disease or illness
Symptomatic	Having symptoms
Syncope	Fainting or light-headedness
Syndrome	A condition characterized by a set of symptoms
Systemic	Distributed throughout the body
Systolic blood pressure	Top number in blood pressure; pertaining to contraction phase of heartbeat
Tachycardia	Fast heart rate
Teratogenic	Capable of causing malformations in unborn fetuses
Testes	Male sex glands; male organs which produce sperm
Therapeutic dose	The amount of medication needed to treat the condition
Thorax	The chest
Thrombosis	Blood clotting within blood vessels
TID	Three times a day
Tinnitus	Ringing in the ears
Titration	Gradual alteration of drug dose to determine desired effect or most beneficial strength of drug
T-lymphocytes	Type of white blood cells involved in immune reactions
Tolerance	Decrease in response to a fixed dosage of drug; over time, higher and higher doses of a drug are needed to get the desired effect
Topical application	Applied to the surface of the skin
Toxicity	Side effects or undesirable effects of a drug
Trachea	Windpipe
Tranquilliser	Drug used to control anxiety
Transdermal	Through the skin

Medical term Instead of this term/phrase...	Lay terminology ...use this term/phrase
Transiently	Temporarily
Trauma	Injury; wound
Treadmill	Walking machine often used to determine heart function
Treatment alternatives and options	Treatment choices
Tremor	Shakiness
Trial	Study
Triglyceride	Fat in the blood
Unable to agree to a requested restriction	Can't agree with your request
Under the custody of law enforcement	In legal custody
Upon your request	If you ask
Uptake	Absorption and incorporation of a substance by living tissue; absorb and incorporate a substance, taking in of a substance by living tissue
Ureter	The tube that carries urine from the kidneys to by bladder
Urethra	The tube that carries urine from the bladder outside the body
Urinalysis	Urine exam, test of the urine
Urologist	Doctor who treats disorders of the urinary tracts of men and women
Use or disclose	Use or give out; share; release
Utilise	Use
Valvuloplasty	Plastic repair of a valve, especially of the heart
Varices	Enlarged veins, usually in legs or lining of tube between mouth and stomach
Vasospasm	Narrowing of blood vessels due to spasm of vessel walls
Vector	A carrier, usually an insect, that carries and transmits disease- causing microorganisms
Vehicle preparation	Lotion that contains the drug
Vein	Blood vessel
Venipuncture	Entering vein with a needle, generally through the skin
Verbal	Speak or talk
Vertical transmission	Spread of disease
Voluntary	Free of coercion, duress, or undue inducement. Used in the research context to refer to a subject's decision to take part (or to continue to take part) in a research activity.
Waive	Give up
Washout period	Wait until a particular medication is no longer present in the body
WBC	White blood cell
We are required to	We must

Section 3 (vi)

A note about false friends (false cognates)

False friends (false cognates) are pairs of words that look or sound the same in two languages, but have different meanings.

For example the word *expérence* in French, means *experiment* in English; *blesser* in French, means *to wound* in English; *chair* in French means *flesh* in English; and *sensible* in French means *sensitive* in English.

The false friends in the English language will often be different in different languages. As an example, let's look at some *English* and *Spanish* false friends.

If you have caught a cold and go to a Chemist and ask for something for your constipation you will be given a laxative.

Constipated (English) = Estreñido (Spanish)

"I am constipated"

Constipado (Spanish) = Cold (English)

"I have caught a cold"

"The actual President of Spain is Sanchez." "Sorry, I think you mean the present President".

Actual (English) = Real (Spanish)

"This is the actual case"

Actual (Spanish) = Present (English)

"The present President of Spain is Pedro Sanchez"

The Doctor assisted the Congress on AIDS. The nurse attended the patient.

Assist (English) = Atender (Spanish)

"The nurse assisted the patient"

Asistir (Spanish) = Attend (English):

"The Doctor attended the Congress on AIDS"

"Can you pass me the carpet please?" "It is under your feet. Don't you mean the folder?"

Carpet (English) = Alfombra (Spanish)

"The carpet is under your feet"

Carpeta (Spanish) = Folder (English)

"Can you pass me the folder please?"

"You look very embarrassed." "No, I am 8 months pregnant."

Embarrassed (English) = Avergonzada (Spanish)

"I am very embarrassed"

Embarazada (Spanish) = Pregnant (English)

"I am 8 months pregnant"

"Was the operation an exit?" "The operation went very well; it was a great success."

Exit (English) = Salida (Spanish)

"The exit is over there"

Éxito (Spanish) = Success (English)

"Was the operation a success?"

"You look very sane." "I hope so! I hope I don't need to visit the psychiatry department. I feel healthy."

Sane (English) = Cuerdo, en su sano juicio (Spanish)

"He is sane, he doesn't need to go to the psychiatrist"

Sano (Spanish) = Healthy (English)

"I feel very healthy"

As you can see, it can often be very confusing. Sometimes, it can be extremely important **not** to make this mistake. For example, the word **gift** (a present or donation in English) means **poison** in German!

So, you need to find out what the false friends are between your native language and English, especially when you are talking about medical issues, health and compliance.

Section 3 (vii)

Informal ways of describing emotional states

Typical questions:

- Can you describe your mood at the moment?
- How long have you been feeling like this?
- Do you take pleasure in anything?
- How are your energy levels?
- What's your appetite like?
- Have you noticed any change in your weight?
- How are you sleeping?
- Can you keep your mind on things?
- What do you feel the future holds for you?
- Have you ever felt that you don't want to go on?

Patients will often use these words to describe their moods:

- Anxiety:** agitated, restless, anxious, worried, wound up, panicky, frightened, tense
- Depression:** low, down, sad, depressed, dejected, unhappy, miserable

- I get very confused about time.
- People make me angry. They are so irritating.
- I'm too embarrassed by my appearance.
- I get muddled when I'm shopping.

The phrases below are common expressions that patients might use to describe their emotional state:

Feeling irritable

- I'm on a short fuse all the time
- I tend to fly off the handle for no reason
- I'm prone to outbursts for no particular reason
- I get very snappy/ratty

Moody

- I'm up and down like a yo-yo at the moment
- I have big mood swings

Depressed in general

- I'm down in the dumps
- I'm on a bit of a downer / I feel very down
- I feel very low

Depressed as a result of an event

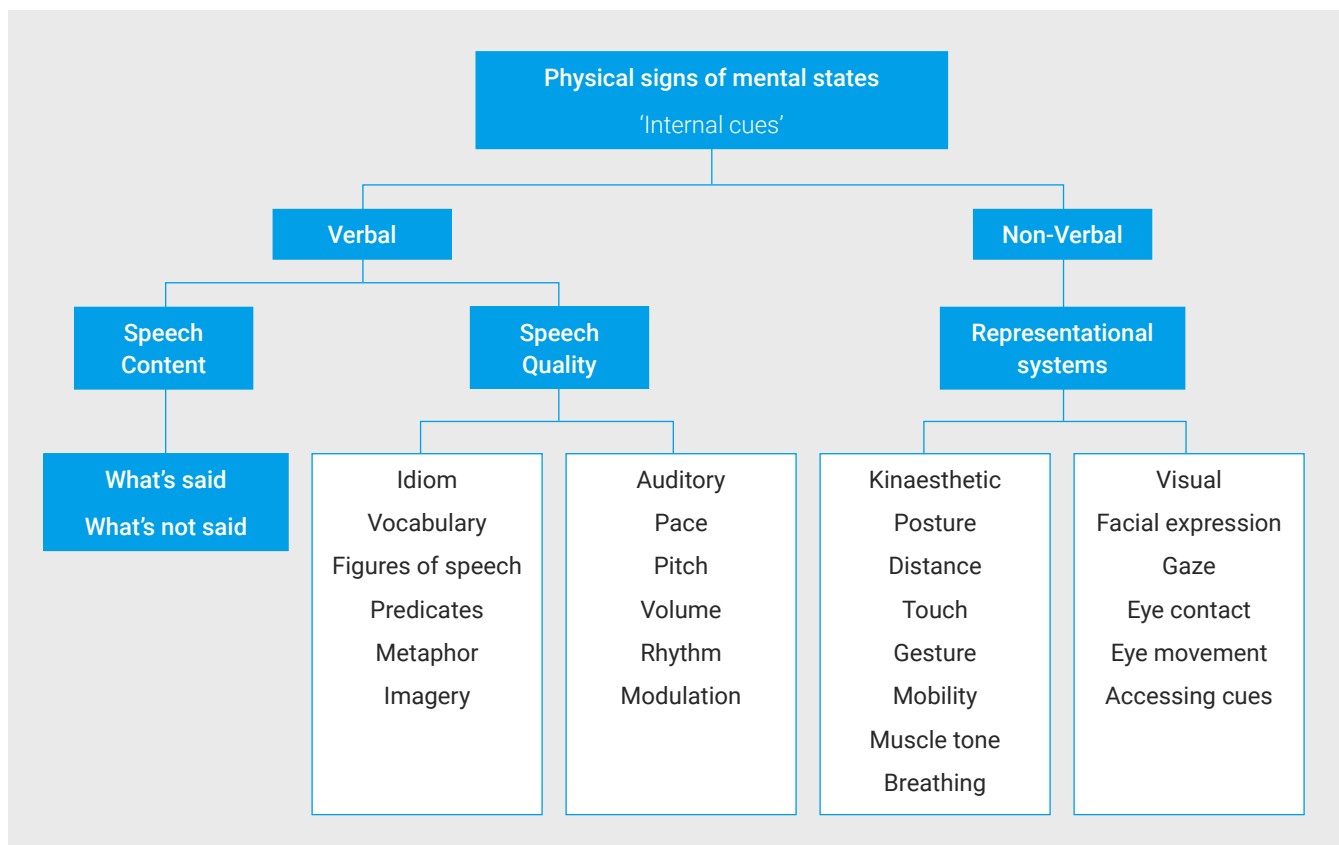
- It's been a real blow (for me)
- I'm really cut up about... (something)
- I'm finding it very hard to come to terms with... (something)

Anxious

- I'm a bundle of nerves
- I just keep going to pieces
- I feel het up!
- I feel very uptight
- I feel on edge / I feel edgy
- I'm a nervous wreck

Some of the first things that a patient says or does in a non-verbal way might be prove to be very significant.

Pay close attention to the exact content and manner of the patient's first remarks. Try to let nothing escape your attention. Of course, if the consultation is on the phone, all of the non-verbal cues will not be there. This makes it even more essential that the elements of verbal communication – both speaking and listening – are skilfully employed.



What is said and what is not said.

Hesitations, omissions, vagueness, and non-sequiturs (a conclusion or reply that doesn't follow logically from the previous statement) are the signs that speech is being censored, and that the speaker is saying less than he or she might.

Patient: "I've been getting some bleeding from my rectum; I thought it might be piles, or constipation, er, or something I was eating, or..."

Doctor: "Maybe you were also worried that it might be something more serious...?"

Patient: "Well, you know how it is, when you've been married a long time. I mean, men and women are very different aren't they, and, er, of course, we're very happy in all sorts of other ways, so I mustn't complain..."

Doctor: "Sometimes, when people talk like that, it's because they're having some difficulty in their relationship."

Section 3 (viii)

More 'patient speak'

Symptoms can be described using imagery:

- I **feel like** I have been hit over the head with a hammer
- My head **feels like** it has been clamped in a vice
- I felt **as though** I was looking down a long tunnel
- It felt **as though** the room was whirling/spinning/tipping

You might hear patients talk in **very general terms** about their health using these expressions:

- off colour
- off
- under the weather
- poorly
- out of sorts
- run down
- low

Patients might also use the following construction:

not + that/too + positive adjective (such as brilliant/clever/fantastic/good/great/hot) or *a bit* to describe how they feel

- I've been (feeling) out of sorts for a while now
- I've not been feeling too great lately
- He's not been that good these last few weeks
- I have been a bit off colour recently
- I feel a bit poorly
- I feel a bit under the weather

Other expressions (for an exhaustive list, see the phrasal verb list in Section 1) e.g. playing me up (my knee is 'playing me up' means that it is painful/the range of movement is restricted). Patients might also use "...is troubling me" to mean the same thing.

Other phrasal verbs using **up**:

- Blow up – swell
- Clear up – heal
- Clog up – block
- Bung up – block
- Ease up – improve
- Flare up – erupt; get worse
- Throw up (intransitive) – vomit; be sick
- Shoot up – rise dramatically; inject
- Puff up – swell
- Play up – cause a problem
- Dry up – dehydrate
- Cough up (transitive) – eject from the lungs by coughing
- Bring up (transitive) – vomit; be sick; produce phlegm
- Build up – increase

Look at the answer to this question:

Question: What's the pain like?

Answer: There's this sharpish twinge every so often.

(The suffix *-ish* means the pain is very/quite painful.)

Patients might use expressions such as these:

- My hearing / memory is going / is not what is used to be / is playing (me) up / is troubling me
- My memory is going / is not what is used to be / is playing (me) up / is troubling me
- My waterworks are playing (me) up / are troubling me
- I have/had a bit of: arthritis / indigestion / a dizzy spell / a funny turn / gout / rheumatism
- I have the odd / occasional pain / spasm
- I've got a touch of arthritis / indigestion / gout / rheumatism

Practise clarifying the expressions to be sure you have understood your patient:

- Sorry, can you just tell me what you mean by a funny turn?
- When you say your waterworks are playing up, can you describe the symptoms to me?
- Sorry, just so I'm sure, by (bunged up), do you mean...?

Section 3 (ix)

BBC resources

1. Pronunciation

Tim's Pronunciation Workshop

Do you want to improve your English pronunciation? Well, you've come to the right place. Tim's Pronunciation Workshop shows you how English is really spoken. It'll help you become a better listener and a more fluent speaker.

Link to the BBC website: *Tim's Pronunciation Workshop* (75 episodes):

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/pronunciation>

The Sounds of English

Scroll down to the bottom of the page for *The Sounds of English*, our video guide to all the consonant and vowel sounds in the English language. Watch, listen and repeat. It's as simple as that!

2. Idiomatic English

The English We Speak

https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/the-english-we-speak_2022/ep-221107

3. Topical discussion and new vocabulary

6-Minute English

https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english_2022

4. BBC English language podcasts

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/podcasts>

British Council Resources

Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills (A1-C1)

<https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills>

Section 4

Questions

Section overview

Asking questions and eliciting responses – arguably the core linguistic skill of all health professionals.

This section covers:

- Statements, their question forms and the use of the 12 main English verb tenses
- Question words
- Subject and object questions using the simple present and past tenses
- Direct and indirect (embedded) questions
- Closed, open and leading questions
- Questions using ‘how’ and ‘what...like’;
- Responses using ‘if anything’ and ‘well’
- Asking about symptoms



Section 4 (i)

Question and verb tenses

Let's start with the construction of statements and the question forms of them using the 12 main verb tenses.

Verb tense	Statement	Question
Present simple	You take your medication.	Do you take your medication?
Present continuous	You are taking your medication.	Are you taking your medication?
Present perfect	You have taken your medication.	Have you taken your medication?
Present perfect continuous	You have been taking your medication.	Have you been taking your medication?
Past simple	You took your medication.	Did you take your medication?
Past continuous	You were taking your medication.	Were you taking your medication?
Past perfect	You had taken your medication.	Had you taken your medication?
Past perfect continuous	You had been taking your medication.	Had you been taking your medication?
Future simple	You will take your medication.	Will you take your medication?
Future continuous	You will be taking your medication.	Will you be taking your medication?
Future perfect	You will have taken your medication.	Will you have taken your medication?
Future perfect continuous	You will have been taking your medication.	Will you have been taking your medication?

For much more about how to form these tenses, how and when they are used, and to compare statement, negative and question forms, go to Section 6.

Here are some of these used in action:

Do you usually **take** any medication for your asthma?

Present simple = in general (do + infinitive)

Are you **having** any difficulties with daily tasks?

Present continuous = currently; at the moment (am / is / are + -ing form)

Have you **tried** paracetamol as an alternative?

Present perfect simple = at any time in the past up till now (have + past participle)

Were you taking any other prescription drugs at the same time?

Past continuous = around a particular time in the past; (was / were + -ing form)

Section 4 (ii)

Question words

Question words indicate the kind of information that is sought in a question.

In English, information questions depend on using specific words — these are what we call WH question words. We have nine WH question words: what, when, where, which, who, why, whom, whose, and how

Some questions are formed with adverbs. These ask for information about time, place, reason, or manner. The four words which function as adverbs are: when, where, why, and how. Adverbs describe a verb or an adjective. Think about this example: where did you read that? In this sentence, where is asking from what source did the information come. Other questions are formed with pronouns. These ask about people or things. The five words that are pronouns are: what, which, who, whom, and whose.

With most questions, you can use the following structure to form them properly. The first structure is for the verb 'to be.' The second structure is for all other verbs.

Questions using 'to be'

Question word + to be + subject + complement (optional)

- Where is your house?
- How is the food?
- Who is that girl?
- When is your birthday?

Questions using other verbs

Question word + auxiliary verb + subject + base verb + complement

- Where do you live?
- How do you like the food?
- Who do you know?
- When do you work?

In many questions with pronouns, the question word functions as a subject. Think of the question 'who sings that song?' The subject is 'who' and 'sing' is the verb. 'That song' is the object. This is important because occasionally, questions that start with a pronoun will not use an auxiliary verb. Look at this example:

- Who sings that song?
(**not** who does sing that song?)
- Whose child made that?
(**not** whose child did make that?)

The WH words explained

Now let's take a look at each of the question words we mentioned before. We will explain the situations in which we use each of them and we will also give some examples of questions and answers we can have when using those question words.

What

We use 'what' to ask specific information about something. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- What is your mother's name?
Her name is Lisa.
- What time is it?
It's half past four.
- What are you doing now?
I'm watching TV.

When

'When' is used to ask questions about time. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- When will Julie arrive at the airport?
She will arrive around 1 p.m.
- When can I pick up from school?
I will be ready at 3 p.m.
- When is his birthday?
His birthday is October 30.

Where

We use 'where' to ask something a place or the position of something. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- Where is my phone?
I think it's on the table.
- Where is Paris?
Paris is located in France.
- Where will you travel to next summer?
I'm thinking about going to the Bahamas.

Which

We will use 'which' whenever we have options to choose from. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- Which pizza did you order: the pepperoni or the margherita? I ordered the pepperoni pizza.
- Which Harry Potter character is your favourite?
Hermione is my favourite!
- Which do you prefer: the red coat or the brown one? I prefer the brown one.

Who

'Who' is used to ask questions about someone who is the subject of a sentence, that is, someone who does an action. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- Who is that guy?
Oh, that's Adam. He's a friend of mine.
- Who are you visiting this weekend?
I'm visiting my grandma.
- Who is your best friend?
My best friend is Laura.

Whom

'Whom' is used to ask questions about someone who is the object of a sentence, that is, someone who receives an action. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- Whom do you believe?
I believe in Tom.
- Whom are you going to invite?
I am going to invite Sam and Michael.
- From whom did you get this information?
I got it from Joanna.

Whose

We use 'whose' to ask questions about something that belongs to someone. Here are a few examples of questions and answers.

- Whose car is this?
I think it is John's car.
- Whose umbrella did you take?
I took my sister's umbrella.
- Whose book is this?
It's Michael's book.

Why

'Why' is used to ask about a reason, an explanation. Here are a few examples of questions and answers. It is common to answer a 'why' question with 'because'.

- Why are you sad?
Because I'm having some problems at home.
Don't worry!
- Why is she traveling alone?
Because her husband is sick.
- Why were you late to the meeting?
Because my alarm didn't go off. I'm sorry.

How

'How' is used to ask about manner, condition, or quality.

How far: ask about distance

- How far is your hometown?
Not very far, it's about 50 km from here.

How long: ask about length (time or space)

- How long have you been dating Taylor?
We have been dating for two months.

How many: ask about the quantity of countable nouns

- How many books do you have?
I guess I have about 100 books.

How much: ask about the quantity of uncountable nouns

- How much coffee did you make?
There's enough for two cups.

How old: ask about age

- How old is your brother?
He is 21 years old.

Subject and object questions

Formation of subject questions in present simple and past simple tenses.

In **subject questions**, where we want to find information about the subject, we do not use the auxiliary verb **do / does / did**.

- Who broke his leg?
John broke his leg.

In **object questions**, where we want to find information about the object, we use the auxiliary verb **do / does / did**.

Study the sentence given below:

John broke his leg.

This sentence has a subject (John), a verb (broke) and an object (leg).

When we make questions to find this information, there are **two** possibilities.

If we want to make a question where the answer is 'leg', the question would be:

What did John break?
John broke his leg.

Now, if we want to make a question where the answer is 'John', the question would be:

Who broke his leg?
John broke his leg.

When we make a question where the answer is the object, we use the auxiliary **do/did**.

In subject questions, the auxiliary **do** is not used.

Subject question

Who likes ice-cream?
Jack likes ice-cream.
(NOT Who does like ice-cream?)

Object question

What does Jack like?
Jack likes ice-cream.
(NOT What Jack likes?)

Using all other tenses, we invert the word order:

'You are feeling unwell' becomes 'Are you feeling unwell?' (Present Continuous)

'He has had an operation' becomes 'Has he had an operation?' (Present Perfect)

Section 4 (iii)

Questions

Direct questions

- Where's the pain?
- When was the last time you had an attack?
- How much time do you spend in front of a screen?
- Why can't you sleep?

Indirect (embedded) questions

(These sound 'softer' or more 'polite' but are grammatically more complex)

- Could you tell me where the pain is?
- Do you know when the last time that you had an attack was?
- Have you any idea how much time you spend in front of a screen? ('do' not needed)
- Would you mind telling me why you can't sleep? (Direct question order is: why can't you sleep?)

Notice how the following question becomes more polite:

- Where is she? (direct)
- Do you know where she is? (indirect / polite)
- You don't happen to know where she is, do you? (very indirect / more polite)

More examples of indirect questions

- Can you tell me if you are on any medication at the moment?
- Would you mind telling me how old you are?
- Tell me how long you have been feeling like this.
- I wondered whether your son could help you with the shopping.
- Can I ask whether you noticed any change when you started the tablets?
- Would you be able to tell me how much you were drinking before the illness?
- May I ask what I should call you?
- Please tell me if you are still feeling dizzy.
- I wonder if you could tell me if you have had symptoms like these before?
- Let me ask you what you have found out about this condition.
- Can I ask if you have any children?
- Can you tell me if you can phone me tomorrow?

It is a good idea to use a few indirect questions at the beginning of a consultation and then switch to direct questions. You can still convey politeness and maintain rapport through your tone of voice or through the use of 'please' or 'may I..?', 'could I..?' – modal verbs that help to 'soften' the questioning.

Test yourself

Practise changing direct questions to indirect questions (answers are at the end)

- A1 Do you need any help? Call me _____
- A2 How much is it going to cost? You don't know _____ do you?
- A3 What does this word mean? Could you tell me _____ ?
- A4 What are you talking about? I don't know _____ .
- A5 Could you lend me some money until I get paid? I was wondering _____ .
- A6 Where's Helen gone? You've no idea _____ have you?
- A7 How long does it take? I'm not really sure _____ .
- A8 How much did it cost? Do you know _____ ?
- A9 Where did she get her coat from? Have you any idea _____ ?
- A10 What do you think? Let me know _____ .
-
- B1 What time is it? Do you know _____ ?
- B2 Will he be back soon? You wouldn't happen to know _____ would you?
- B3 Could I have a word with you? I was wondering _____ .
- B4 What do you mean? I'm not really sure _____ .
- B5 Do you need anything? Let me know _____ .
- B6 Does it hurt? Tell me _____ .
- B7 What time does the bank close? You couldn't tell me _____ could you?
- B8 What are we supposed to be doing? Do you know _____ .
- B9 How long have we been waiting? Have you any idea _____ ?
- B10 How much did she pay for her new hair do? I wonder _____ .

- C1 When will Tony be back? Do you happen to know _____ ?
- C2 Is this the train to Oxford? I don't suppose you know _____ do you?
- C3 Do you need me? Call me _____ .
- C4 Will it take long? Do you know _____ ?
- C5 How much longer will I have to wait? Have you any idea _____ ?
- C6 Can you come to my party? Let me know _____ .
- C7 What does he look like? I've no idea _____ .
- C8 How do you get to the station from here? Could you tell me _____ .
- C9 Would you like to join us for dinner? I was wondering _____ .
- C10 Where did Sam go? You don't happen to know _____ do you?

Complete the following sentences with a tag.

could you?

have you?

would you?

do you?

- D1 You don't know where she got her jacket from _____ .
- D2 You've no idea where Helen is _____ .
- D3 You wouldn't happen to know how much it's going to cost _____ .
- D4 You couldn't tell me when she'll be back _____ .

Answers

- A1 Call me if you need any help.
A2 You don't know how much it is going to cost, do you?
A3 Could you tell me what this word means?
A4 I don't know what you're talking about.
A5 I was wondering if you could lend me some money until I get paid.
A6 You've no idea where Helen's gone, have you?
A7 I'm not really sure how long it takes.
A8 Do you know how much it costs?
A9 Have you any idea where she got her coat from?
A10 Let me know what you think.
- B1 Do you know what time it is/what the time is?
B2 You wouldn't happen to know when he will be back/if he'll be back soon would you?
B3 I was wondering if I could have a word with you.
B4 I'm not really sure what you mean.
B5 Let me know if you need anything/if there's anything you need.
B6 Tell me if it hurts.
B7 You couldn't tell me what time the bank closes, could you?
B8 Do you know what we are supposed to be doing?
B9 Have you any idea how long we have been waiting for?
B10 I wonder how much she paid for her new hair do.
- C1 Do you happen to know when Tony will be back?
C2 I don't suppose you know if this is the train to Oxford/if this is the Oxford train, do you?
C3 Call me if you need me.
C4 Do you know if it will take long?
C5 Have you any idea how much longer I will have to wait?
C6 Let me know if you can come to my party.
C7 I've no idea what he looks like.
C8 Could you tell me how to get to the station from here?
C9 I was wondering if you would like to join us for dinner.
C10 You don't happen to know where Sam went, do you?
- D1 do you?
D2 have you?
D3 would you?
D4 could you?

Section 4 (iv)

Closed, open and leading questions

Closed questions

Closed questions tend to invite very short responses.

However, closed questions can be useful for finding specific information and for bringing a difficult conversation to a close.

Closed questions often lead to a yes or no answer.

Closed questions generally include probing questions. These questions are can mostly answered in a few words. If used too much they can deliver incomplete responses, result in misleading conclusions, or discourage disclosure.

Open questions

Open questions invite more thorough answers, and encourage the patient to divulge information and explain their emotions and behaviour more. Health professionals should try to ask open and closed questions at appropriate moments. Asking questions of the right kind can help to obtain the right information and build a better rapport with the patient.

Open ended questions have been associated with developing trust, being less threatening, allowing a free response. Open ended questions can also be more time consuming, obtain too much information, and may require more effort.

Leading questions and formulating alternative ways of asking.

When conducting a consultation, it is important not to ask leading questions, particularly when you are gathering information from the patient.

A leading question is a question that assumes the answer:

“You didn’t finish the course of antibiotics I prescribed, did you? “

rather than

“Did you finish the course of antibiotics I prescribed?”

The first question assumes that the patient didn’t finish the antibiotics, and leads them to give a specific answer. The second example does not assume to know whether the patient did or didn’t finish the antibiotics and is more likely to get an accurate response.

We can often ask a leading question without being aware of it (particularly if we think we know what the answer will be).

“And you’ve never experienced anything like this before?” (This question assumes that the patient has never experienced anything like this before.)

would be better phrased as:

“Have you ever experienced anything like this before?” (This question does not assume anything of the patient.)

“There’s no history of cancer in your family, is there?”

would be better phrased as:

“Is there any history of cancer in your family?”

“You don’t really think this is related to your back pain, do you?”

would be better phrased as:

“Do you think this is related to your back pain?”

“How much pain are you in?”

would be better phrased as:

“Are you in any pain?”

“How often have you taken recreational drugs?”

would be better phrased as:

“Have you ever taken recreational drugs?”

“When are you planning to have children?”

would be better phrased as:

“Are you planning to try for a baby?”

(if the patient says yes, then it would be appropriate to ask when they are planning to do so)

“How often do you drink alcohol?”

would be better phrased as:

“Do you drink alcohol?”

(if the patient says yes, then it would be appropriate to ask how often they drink)

“And you don’t have asthma or anything?”

would be better phrased as:

“Do you have asthma, or any other conditions?”

“What else are you worried about?”

would be better phrased as:

“Are you worried about anything else?”

“What other health problems do you have?”

would be better phrased as:

“Do you have any other health problems?”

“You aren’t allergic to anything, are you?”

would be better phrased as:

“Are you allergic to anything that you know of?”

or “Have you ever had an allergic reaction to anything?”

Section 4 (v)

Question forms with 'how' and 'what ... like'

Consider these pairs of questions and responses.

- **How's** the situation at home? – It's hard because I'm a working mum. But we're coping OK.
- **How's** your relationship with your husband? – Yeah, it's OK.
- The doctors never asked '**How's** physio going?' or anything.

This can be contrasted with questions about description of things/situations (their characteristics or appearance). In this case, the expected response provides some detail.

- **What's** the pain **like**? – It comes and goes. It's worse when I've been sitting for a long time.
- **What** does the leg look **like**? – It's very swollen and red.
- **What** does the baby's cough sound **like**? – Just like a dog barking. I think he's really sick.

Here are some more examples:

- **How's** the pain? – It's actually not too bad today, almost bearable for once!
- **What's** the pain **like**? – It's sharp and sudden, like being stabbed with a knife.

- **How's** the wound? – Awful.
- **What's** the wound **like**? – It's a fairly deep cut about 10cm long.

- **How** is he these days? – Well, he has his ups and downs but generally he's fine, all things considered.
- **What's** he **like**? – Well, he's a born optimist, always looking on the bright side.

Answering questions using 'if anything'

The phrase "**if anything**" has the meaning: in fact, on the contrary. We can use it to correct an assumption.

- Doctor: Have you lost any weight?
- Patient: No; if anything, I've probably put on a couple of kilos.

- Were you feeling particularly low before the accident?
- No; if anything I was feeling more positive about things.

- Have you been having problems getting to sleep at night?
- No; if anything, I've been falling asleep more easily.

- Will it be difficult for you to exercise when your children are on holiday?
- Well, if anything, it'll be easier – they love going to the swimming pool.

- Have you been drinking any less than usual over the last few weeks?
- Well, if anything, I've been drinking more recently.

- The baby'll start putting on weight as soon as he is born, won't he?
- Well, if anything he'll lose a little bit of weight first.

- Do you think the new medicine might give me more energy, doctor?
- Well, if anything, it might make you feel even more tired in the short term.

- Having such a wide range of drugs available makes it easy to find something that will help.
- Well, if anything, the variety just confuses people in my opinion.

- The plaster cast'll come off in under a month, won't it?
- Well, if anything it'll take more like six weeks.

(Note the use of 'well' at the beginning of these responses; here, it means 'in my opinion' or 'unfortunately')

Asking about symptoms

Pain is one of the commonest symptoms.

For headaches, a doctor would hope to establish most of the features below. Similar questions can be used for other forms of pain.

Feature	Typical question
Main site	Where does it hurt? Show me where it hurts.
Radiation	Does it go anywhere else?
Character	Can you describe the pain?
Precipitating factors	Does anything bring it on?
Time of onset	When does it start?
Time of resolution	When does it stop?
Frequency	How often do you get it?
Aggravating factors	Does anything make it worse? Is there anything else that affects it?
Relieving factors	Does anything make it better?
Associating features	Do you feel anything else wrong when it is there? Have you any other problems related to the pain?
Duration	How long does it last?
Severity	How bad is it?

Description of pain:

Patient's description of pain	Explanation
Aching/an ache	A general pain, often in muscles and joints
Boring	Like a drill
Burning	With heat
Colicky	Pain, often severe, coming and going in waves, usually in abdomen
Crampy/cramp/cramping	An involuntary, spasmodic muscle contraction
Crushing	A feeling of pressure
Dull	A background pain, opposite of sharp
Gnawing	Biting
Gripping	A feeling of tightness
Scalding	Like boiling water
Sharp	Acute
Stabbing	Like a knife

Section 5

Communication skills and barriers

Section overview

- Motivational techniques and skills
- Rapport
- The Consultation – the language of initiation and introduction
- Some key suggested phrases for consultations
- Indirect language and ‘softeners’
- The use of the question tag
- Language for negotiating treatment
- Examining a patient
- Helping patients who are emotionally distressed
- Empathy and the language of validation
- Receipting emotions and turning a receipt
- Top tips for telephone consultations
- Signposting, normalising and other techniques
- 12 communication roadblocks
- Working with children
- Working with elderly patients
- Communication and Alzheimer’s and Dementia
- SBAR in action
- Effective communication



Section 5 (i)

Motivational techniques and skills for physical and mental health

Affirmations

Examples of affirmative statements:

- “You showed a lot of [insert the person’s trait e.g. strength, determination] by doing that.”
- “It’s clear that you’re really trying to change your [insert risky/problem/behaviour].”
- “In spite of what happened last week, you’re coming back today reflects that you’re concerned about changing your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour].”

Rationale: Affirmations are statements made by practitioners in response to what people have said. They are used to recognise people’s strengths, successes, and efforts to change. They help to increase people’s confidence in their ability to change. Avoid statements that sound overly ingratiating or insincere (e.g. “Wow, that’s incredible,” or “That’s great, I knew you could do it!”). Use affirmations like salt, sparingly.

Advice / feedback

Examples of how to provide advice/feedback.

If appropriate, start by asking permission to talk about the person’s behaviour. Be prepared to provide them with relevant informational hand-outs.

“Do you mind if we spend a few minutes talking about...?”

[Followed by]

“What do you know about...?” OR “What do you know about how your [insert a health behaviour] affects your [insert health problem]?”

[Followed by]

“Are you interested in learning more about...?”

“What do you know about the benefits of quitting smoking?”

[Follow-up with asking permission to talk about the person’s concern]

“So you said you are concerned about gaining

weight if you stop smoking; how much do you think the average person gains in the first year after quitting?”

For people who do not want information

“I get the sense that you are not ready to change at this time. We can discuss this at a later time if you change your mind.”

Rationale: People often have either little or incorrect information about their behaviours. Research has shown that telling people what to do does not work well. Most individuals prefer to be given choices in making decisions to change behaviours. By presenting information in a neutral and non-judgmental manner empowers a person to make informed decisions about quitting or changing a risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour.

Tips: When possible, focus on the positives of changing. (e.g. “Within 20 minutes of stopping smoking the body begins a series of changes. Immediately a person’s blood pressure decreases. In 15 years after quitting, the risk of heart disease and death returns to nearly that of those who have never smoked.”)

Provide feedback that allows people to compare their behaviour to national norms (e.g. % of people who have risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour). For example, “Where does your drinking fit in relation to the national norms you see on the feedback page I just gave you?”

Avoid using scare tactics, lectures, or dire warnings as some people might pretend to agree in order to not be further attacked.

Asking permission

Examples of asking permission:

- “Can we talk a bit about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]?”
- “I noticed that you have [insert conditions]? Do you mind if we talk about how different lifestyles affect [insert condition]?” (Diet, exercise, smoking, and alcohol use can be substituted for the word “lifestyles.”)

Rationale: People are more likely to discuss change when respected and asked, than when being told to change.

Normalising

Examples of normalising:

- “A lot of people are concerned about changing their [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour].”
- “Most people report both good and less good things about their [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour].”

Rationale: Normalising is intended to communicate that having difficulties changing is not uncommon for many people.

Open-ended questions

Examples of open-ended questions:

- “What makes you think it might be time for a change?”
- “What brought you here today?”
- “What happens when you [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]?”
- “What was that like for you?”
- “What’s different about (quitting smoking, improving your exercise, diet, etc.) this time?”

Rationale: Open-ended questions allow people to tell their stories and to do most of the talking. They give the practitioner opportunities to respond with reflections or summary statements that express empathy. Too many

back-to-back close-ended questions can feel like an interrogation (e.g., “How often do you overeat?” “How many years have you been smoking?”)

Reflective listening

Examples of reflective listening (generic stems):

- “It sounds like...”
- “It seems as if...”
- “What I hear you saying...”
- “I get the sense that...”
- “I get the sense that this has been difficult...”

Examples of reflective listening (specific reflections):

- “It sounds like you are concerned about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour].”
- “I get the sense that you want to change, and you have concerns about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour or topic].”
- “What I hear you saying is that your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour] is really not much of a problem right now.”
- “What do you think it might take for you to change in the future?”
- “I get the feeling there is a lot of pressure on you to change, and you are not sure you can do it because of difficulties you had when you tried in the past.”

Rationale: Reflective listening allows practitioners to listen carefully and then to paraphrase the person’s comments back (e.g., “It sounds like you are concerned about gaining weight if you quit smoking”).

Goals of reflective listening include: (a) Building empathy, (b) Encouraging people to state their own reasons for change, and (c) Affirming that the practitioner understands what a person is feeling and doing (i.e., “It sounds like you are feeling upset at not meeting your goal.”). If the practitioner’s guess is wrong, the person usually says so (e.g., “No, I do want to quit, but I am concerned about withdrawal and weight gain.”).

Summaries

Examples of summaries

- “It sounds like you are concerned about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour] because it is costing you many negative consequences. Where does that leave you?”
- “On the one hand you feel you need to quit smoking for your health, but on the other hand that will probably mean not associating with your friends anymore. That doesn’t sound like an easy choice.”
- “Over the past three months you have been talking about improving your diet and losing weight. It seems you have started to recognise the less good things about being overweight. And your girlfriend said she is leaving you if you don’t do something about your weight. It’s easy to understand why you are now committed to working on your weight.”

Rationale: Summaries require that practitioners listen very carefully to what a person has said. Summaries are a good way to end a session (i.e., offer a summary of the entire session) as well as to move a talkative person on to the next topic.

Change talk

Questions to elicit change talk:

- “What makes you think you need to change?”
- “What will happen if you don’t change?”
- “What will be different if you (insert desired change: lose weight, improve eating, exercise, take your medications, etc.?)”
- “What would be the good things about changing your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]?”
- “Why do you think others are concerned about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]?”

For people having difficulty changing, focus is on being supportive as the person is struggling to change.

- “How can I help you get past some of the difficulties you are experiencing?”

- “If you were to decide to change, what would you have to do to make that happen?”

For people who have stated little desire for change:

Ask the person to describe a possible extreme consequence if they do or don’t change.

- “What is the BEST thing you could imagine that could result from changing?”
- “If you don’t change, what is the WORST thing that might happen?”
- “If you do change, how would your life be different from what it is today?”

Rationale: Rather than lecturing or telling people the reasons why they should change, the practitioner gets people to state reasons for change that are personally important to them. Several studies show that change talk is associated with positive outcomes.

Pros and cons of change (decisional balancing)

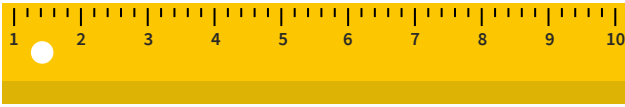
Examples of how to use pros and cons of change:

- “What are some of the good things about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]?” [The person answers]
- “Okay, on the flipside, what are some of the less good things about your [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]?” After the person discusses the good and less good things about their behaviour, the practitioner can use a reflective, summary statement that allows people to talk about their ambivalence about changing.

Rationale: Asking people to evaluate both the good and less good things about their actions helps them understand their ambivalence by seeing that (a) they get some benefits (pros) from their risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour, and (b) that there will be some costs (cons) if they decide not to change their behaviour. Such discussions are intended to help move people further along the readiness to change continuum.

Readiness to change ruler

Examples of how to use a readiness to change ruler:



- Practitioner: “On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all ready to change and 10 is really ready to change where are you right now?”
- Person: “Seven.”
- Practitioner: “And where were you six months ago?”
- Person: “Two.”
- Practitioner: “So it sounds like you went from being not very ready to change your [insert risky/ problem/unhealthy behaviour] to being much more ready to change.”

- “How did you go from a ‘2’ 6 months ago to a ‘7’ now?”
- “How do you feel about moving from a ‘2’ to a ‘7’ over the past 6 months?”
- “What would it take to move a bit higher on the scale?”

People with lower readiness to change (e.g., answers decreased from a ‘5’ in the past to a ‘2’ now)

- “So, it sounds like you went from being ambivalent to changing your [insert risky/ problem/unhealthy behaviour] to no longer thinking you need to change your [insert risky/ problem/unhealthy behaviour].”
- “How did you go from a ‘5’ to a ‘2’?”
- “What one thing do you think would have to happen to get you back to where you were before?”

Rationale: Assessing readiness to change is critical. Readiness is not static; it can change from day to day. People are at different levels of motivation. If practitioners know where a person is on the readiness to change continuum they will be better prepared to work with them. Depending on where the person is on the Readiness to Change Ruler, the conversation may

take different directions. The Ruler can also be used to have people give voice to how their readiness changed, what they need to do to change further, and how they confident they feel about changing right now.

Confidence to change

- Practitioner: “On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is very confident to change how CONFIDENT are you right now that you could make this change?”
- “What would it take to move from a [insert number] to a [higher number]?”
- “What do you think you might do to increase your confidence about changing your [insert risky/ problem/unhealthy behaviour]?”

Rationale: Confidence ratings provide practitioners with information about how people view their ability
Motivational Techniques and Skills

Tip: If a person reports a number of 7 or less, ask them “What will it take to raise your number?”

Supporting confidence to change

Examples of statements supporting self-confidence.

Ask people about changes they made:

- “It seems you’ve been working hard to quit smoking. That is different than before. How have you been able to do that?”
- “So even though you haven’t quit, you have managed to cut down on your smoking. How were you able to do that?” Follow up with a question about how People feel about the changes they made:
- “How do you feel about the changes you made?”
- “How were you able to go from a [# 6 months ago] to a [# now]?”
- [The Person answers]
- “How do you feel about those changes?”

Rationale: Making statements and asking questions about changes encourages people to recognise changes they have made. The objective is to increase their

self-confidence that they can change. If a person's confidence goes from a lower number (past) to a higher number (now), practitioners may follow-up by asking how they were able to do that and how they feel about their change.

For people who are making little progress

Examples of how to use a paradoxical statement:

Practitioner: "You have been trying to change [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour] for two months, but you are still doing [insert risky/problem/unhealthy behaviour]. Maybe now is not the right time to change?"

"It sounds like you have a lot going on, and these priorities are competing with your efforts to change at this time."

For people who decide they do not want to change at this time

The practitioner can discuss with people the reasons why it has been difficult for them to change. Then the practitioner might suggest that person might want to take a short "vacation" from therapy (i.e. a few weeks) and think about whether this is really the best time to commit to changing. The practitioner can tell the person that he/she will call the person in a month to see where they are in terms of readiness to change.

Rationale: Paradoxical statements about change are used to get people to argue for the importance of changing. It is hoped that the person would counter the practitioner statement with an argument that he/she wants to change (e.g. "No, I know I need to change, it's just tough putting it into practice."). Once a person states they do want to change, conversations can identify the reasons why progress has been slow up to now. If the person does not immediately argue for change, the practitioner can ask the person to think about this discussion between now and the next visit. Getting people to think about their behaviour often serves to act as an eye-opener. Reserve these statements for people who may not be aware that they are not making changes within a reasonable period of time. When using this approach, the practitioner must sound genuine and not sarcastic.

Addressing differences between what people say and their behaviour

"On the one hand you're coughing and having trouble breathing, and on the other hand you are saying cigarettes are not causing you any problems. *What do you think is contributing to your breathing difficulties?"

"Help me to understand, on the one hand you say you want to live to see your 12-year old grow up and go to college, and yet you won't take the medication your doctor prescribed for your diabetes.

How will that help you live to see your daughter grow up?"

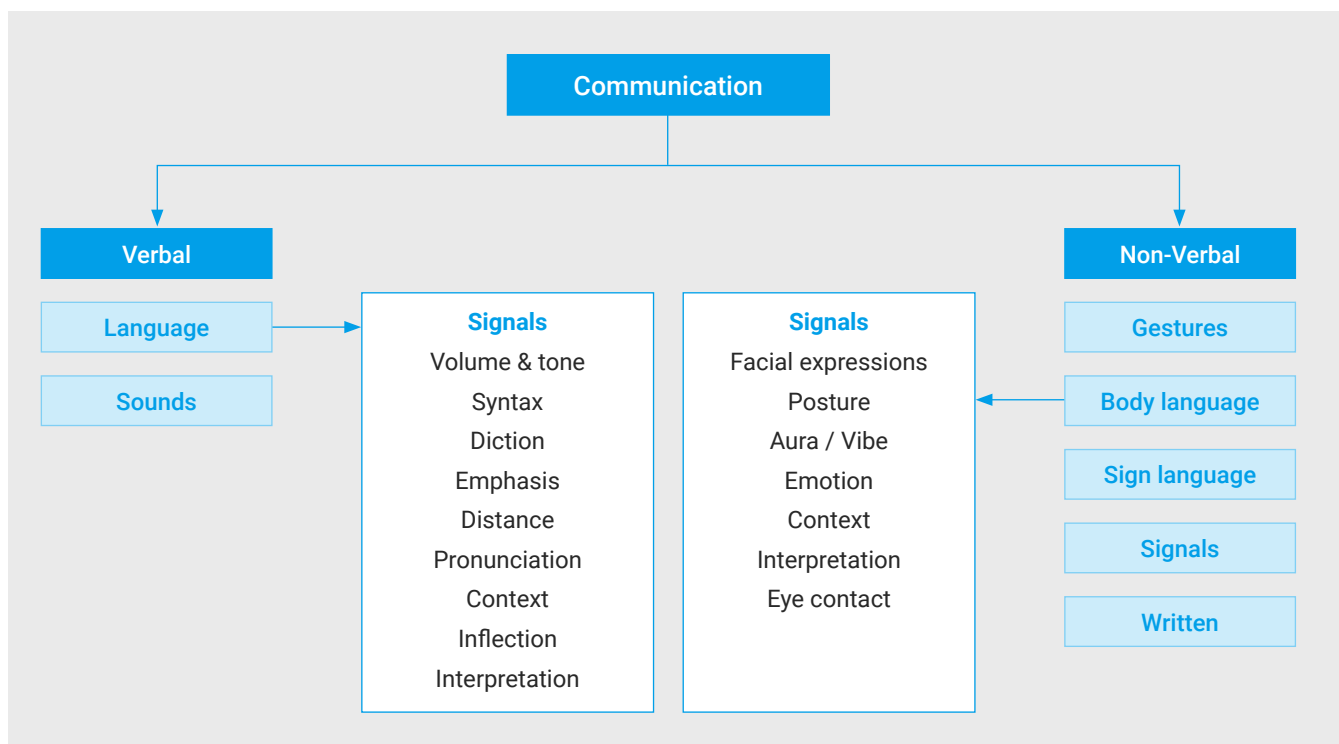
*When using discrepancies try to end the statement on the side of change, as people are more likely to elaborate on the last part of the statement.

Rationale: This approach can be used to provide a curious inquiry without being judgmental or laying blame. This approach allows a practitioner to address discrepancies between what people say and their actual behaviour without evoking defensiveness or resistance. By asking people to make sense of their discrepant information, they must give voice to, recognise, and resolve the discrepancies themselves. This approach evokes less resistance than a practitioner telling people that what they are doing does not make sense or is wrong. In addition, it eliminates the practitioner from sounding judgemental.

Section 5 (ii)

Rapport: what is it?

Research suggests whenever we meet someone for the first time, that judgement about the other person will be formed in only the first few seconds? – about seven seconds. This happens with anyone, even a random person on the street, but is especially important for a doctor to keep in mind. In those first several seconds, we as humans are primed to judge the other person's friendliness, cooperation, and competence. This happens at an entirely subconscious level, and is believed to go back to caveman days, even before speech started, when we had to make snap judgements about the other person very quickly. We can debate whether those first impressions are always right or not, but they do get imprinted in our minds, and we all know from our own experiences that it's very difficult to come back from a bad first impression.



Helpful rapport building behaviours

There are certain behaviours that are particularly helpful in building rapport. These include:

- If you are sitting, then lean towards the person you are talking to, with hands open and arms and legs uncrossed. This is open body language and will help you and the person you are talking to feel more relaxed.
- Look at the other person for approximately 60% of the time. Give plenty of eye-contact but be careful not to make them feel uncomfortable.
- When listening, nod and make encouraging sounds and gestures.
- Smile!
- Use the other person's name early in the conversation. This is not only seen as polite but will also reinforce the name in your mind so you are less likely to forget it!
- To begin with, try to ask the patient open questions (the type of questions that require more than a yes or no answer). These questions are more comfortable to answer, because you are not being put on the spot to give a clear opinion.
- Use feedback to summarise, reflect and clarify back to the other person what you think they have said. This gives opportunity for any misunderstandings to be rectified quickly.
- Talk about things that refer back to what the other person has said. Find links between common experiences.
- Try to show empathy. Demonstrate that you can understand how the other person feels and can see things from their point of view.
- When in agreement with the other person, openly say so and say why.
- Build on the other person's ideas.
- Be non-judgemental towards the other person. Let go of stereotypes and any preconceived ideas you may have about the person.
- If you have to disagree with the other person, give the reason first, then say you disagree.
- Admit when you don't know the answer or have made a mistake. Being honest is always the best tactic, and acknowledging mistakes will help to build trust.
- Be genuine, with visual and verbal behaviours working together to maximize the impact of your communication.
- Offer compliments, avoid criticism and be polite.

Section 5 (iii)

The Consultation – the language of introduction and initiation

Greet the patient and obtain his/her preferred form of address (unless already known)

- Good morning. Come in; take a seat...
- Good afternoon. Mr Jones, isn't it?
- Hello; can I just check – it's Mrs Taylor? We've not met before..
- Mr Overton? Hello. What would you prefer me to call you?
- Hello. Ms Cholmondley ... Am I pronouncing it correctly?

Introduce yourself and clarify your role

- I'm a doctor working with Dr Handley.
- My name is Dr. Pospisil. I'm one of the GPs here.
- I'm Dr Janowicz. Mr colleague asked me to have a chat with you about..
- Dr Santini has referred you to me for further investigations. I'm Dr Chakraborti and I'm...
- Hello; I'm Dr Patel – the locum/associate GP with this practice..
- The following might be helpful:
- I'm Dr (name). You've probably noticed I'm from (nationality).. so I apologise if I have to ask you to repeat anything. And please stop me if there's anything you don't understand.

Explain the purpose and agenda of the interview (if you have requested it)

- I'd like to have a little chat with you about...
- I'd like to spend a few minutes with you to ask some questions, if that's OK?
- I wonder if we can chat for a few minutes about...

Obtain permission for special circumstances (e.g. for another doctor to attend; to take notes)

- If you don't mind, I'd like to take some notes as we talk.
- Do you mind if (our student doctor) is present during our chat?
- If it's all right with you, I'd like to have a listen to your heart.
- Would you like me to invite a chaperone in for this (intimate, sensitive) part of the consultation?

Section 5 (iv)

Some key suggested phrases for consultations

These are a few phrases for different parts of the consultation. It is best if we add our own phrases for each section, noting words and phrases that we think are helpful and with which we feel comfortable. Also, we can delete any phrases that we do not feel are suitable.

Situation	Key phrase
The very beginning	Start with silence (after introduction and welcome) What would you like to talk about today? What else do we need to talk about today?
Active listening Encouraging the patient's contribution	Tell me more... I see...yes... right...mmm... go on... etc If you treat it as a story when did it all start? Could you explain more about it? What do you mean by...?
Responding to cues Acknowledging emotions	You appear to be in a lot of pain ... It sounds like a difficult situation. That must be really hard for you. Is it something that you want to discuss with me? You seem very ... upset/frustrated/angry/annoyed/ambivalent/negative/elated. You mentioned about
Establishing patient ideas	What thoughts have you had about what might be causing your symptoms? I just wonder whether you had any ideas yourself what it might be? Have you had any ideas what it is? What do you think is happening? Some people with X are concerned it might be a tumour ... (pause expectantly) Some patients have theories about what might be going on, have you thought ... I hope it's not...? What have you been telling yourself about all this? What's your brain been telling you?
Establishing patient concerns	What were you worried it might be? Is there something at the back of your mind that you are thinking about? Have you looked it up on the web? What did you Google? What is it that particularly concerns you about X? What is the worst thing you think it might be?
Establishing expectations and the patient's agenda	What were you thinking we could do about it today? Is there something in particular that you were hoping we might do for it today? What thoughts have you had about what we might do about it today? What else have you thought about? What did we do last time?
Exploring patient's health understanding/knowledge	You mentioned lumbago? What do you mean by that? You mentioned that you thought you might be depressed. What do you understand by depression? What do you know about X? Please put me right if I am wrong but I get the impression that...
Obtaining social and psychological information to enable the doctor to put the complaints in context (holistic approach)	How is this affecting your job or life? How has it made you feel? Is it having an impact on what you are doing? How is it affecting you as a ... (builder)? What have you been unable to do due to your symptoms? How has this problem restricted what you can do? Help me to understand ...
Touch and go empathy	You have an awful lot to cope with. I think most people would feel the same way. You've clearly been through a lot. I appreciate it's been a difficult time for you. It sounds a very difficult situation.

Situation	Key phrase
Information gathering	I need to ask you a few more questions if that's okay ... Would you mind if I ask you a few more questions to clarify things? Can I ask few more specific questions? If I could ask some questions to get a grip on how this is affecting you. How do you feel about the future, with things looking so gloomy do you ever consider ...? (Start with open questions, move to closed questions, avoid leading questions)
Signpost that you want to move into management planning	Can we ... have a chat about what can be done to make things better? It is okay ... if we move onto the options available to us to make things better? Shall we ... explore some of the ways we can approach this?
The doctor's explanation incorporates some or all of the patient's health beliefs	I think you're right; the most likely diagnosis is X. You mentioned that you thought you had Y. I think that's unlikely because of Z and it's more likely that you have X. We usually find that people with your symptoms have X rather than Y which you suggested earlier. There are number of possibilities ...
Involving patients in management options	What thoughts have you had about how we could treat/investigate your problem? There are a few things we can try ... There are couple of ways to approach this and they are A and B. What would you prefer? The options are a, b, c. What do you think is the best thing for you? The advantages and disadvantages of each option as I see it are ... Which option would you prefer to follow? I agree, I think that seems very reasonable. My main concern with that option is ... and I wonder if we would be better to do ... What ideas have you had about things you might be able to do to help with the situation? Have you already thought of some ideas that may help? I could give you a leaflet... or a prescription... perhaps I could see you in a week Perhaps in a week or two you could come back and see me?
The doctor takes steps to enhance concordance, by exploring and responding to the patient's understanding of the diagnosis and treatment.	We've discussed a lot of issues. So that I'm sure I've made myself clear perhaps you could tell me what you understand by how we going to treat things. We've covered a lot of ground... just so I know that I've explained things adequately to you, could you tell me what you have understood and what we'll do now? When you get home and your partner asks about treatment, what are you going to tell them? Ok, so what's our plan? Just to make sure that we both have understood things could you recap what we have discussed today? There are a number of possible diagnoses and I just want to check that you've understood what they might be.
Ending when not all items on the list have been covered	We've run out of time today. Can we meet again soon to discuss the other items?
Ending with positive statement	We'll see you in a couple of weeks if things aren't settling, but hopefully things will settle of their own accord.

Explanations – some examples of useful phrases

Situation	Key Phrase
Eczema	It's an inflammation of the skin which sometimes flares up. Moisturising cream is the most important, but when it is bad like this, a steroid cream is helpful, just for a week or so.
Chronic conditions eg eczema, asthma, oa	The underlying problem remains, but there is a lot we can do to ease the symptoms.
Viral self limiting diseases	As you know, viruses go away on their own. There are several things you can do to help feel better while it is going away... Treatment is mainly to help the symptoms, but the virus will go away on its own. This often/ usually gets better in a week or two.
Treatment options	There are a few thing that often help ... Painkillers, lozenges ... There are various things that can help, for example, a cream, tablets. What would you prefer?
Reinforcing patient good treatment already	You are doing the right thing by using moisturising cream, and I think you should continue with that. But just now it may be helpful to add a steroid cream for a short time. Lozenges are the best thing for this type of sore throat, carry on using them. Also, you may find hot drinks helpful.
No Cure, Terminal Illness	I don't think this will get better, but there is a lot we can do to keep you as comfortable as possible.
Keep explanations short, rather than the whole page from a medical book	Fungal infections are caused by a yeast which under certain conditions sometimes flares up. Yeasts are ... blah blah...
Avoid medical jargon	On examination there is nothing serious. I do not find any worrying signs. Having listening to your story and examined you, I am pleased to say I do not find any signs of X but I think it is Y.
Explaining Genetic Problems	<p>Variation or variant, rather than mutation or mutant</p> <p>Changed or altered, rather than defective or damaged</p> <p>Condition, rather than disease</p> <p>Person with a condition, rather than carrier or sufferer</p> <p>Chance or likelihood, rather than risk</p>

Section 5 (v)

Indirect language used in instructions and the softener 'just'

Using indirect language for instructions

Indirect language is used to soften the instruction so that it comes across more like a request and less like a command. As a result, it is considered polite. Patients may be feeling anxious, frightened or agitated. Use of more direct language would further aggravate their feelings.

Language for polite instructions:

- Can/Could you + infinitive of verb ... e.g. Could you lift up your arm?
- Would you mind + verb + ing?... e.g. Would you mind lifting up your arm?
- If you can/could + infinitive of verb ... e.g. If you could lift up your arm.
- I want/I'd like you to + infinitive of verb ... I'd like you to lift up your arm

More examples:

- If you could stand up for me, please.
- You can put your foot down now.
- I'd like you to lift your leg as high as you can.
- (Please,) If you could take off your shoes and tights.
- Would you mind just lifting your skirt over your knee.
- I want you to tell me if it starts to feel uncomfortable.
- Would you mind rolling over onto your stomach for me?

The use of the word 'just'

'Just' softens the instruction and, as a result, renders it more polite. It can also be used to reassure the patient or diminish the seriousness of the situation.

- I'd just like you to lift your left leg.
- Just relax your leg.
- I'm just going to feel your shoulder for any fractures.
- It just looks like a minor fracture at this stage.
- Just one more examination left.

Just in case

Just in case means 'in the event that something may (not) happen' and is used to reassure the patient that the doctor is looking at every possible potential cause, even though the chance of there being a serious problem is slight

Section 5 (vi)

The use of the question tag

'It's nice weather, isn't it?'

How many chance encounters with strangers contain this statement? But look at the end of the sentence... 'isn't it?' This question tag is there for a reason. It encourages the listener to respond. A relationship, however brief, is formed. British speakers use the question tag many times a day. It cements relationships, maintains rapport and adds a degree of informality to any conversation.

- Oh dear; that's a nasty cough, isn't it?
- That was a big bump, wasn't it?
- It's a bit hard to breathe, isn't it?
- Your skin looks rather red, doesn't it?

We can add question tags like *isn't it?*, *can you?* or *didn't they?* to a statement to make it into a question. Question tags are more common in speaking than writing.

We often use question tags when we expect the listener to agree with our statement. In this case, when the statement is positive, we use a negative question tag.

- She's a doctor, isn't she?
- Yesterday was so much fun, wasn't it?

If the statement is negative, we use a positive question tag.

- He isn't here, is he?
- The trains are never on time, are they?
- Nobody has called for me, have they?

If we are sure or almost sure that the listener will confirm that our statement is correct, we say the question tag with a falling intonation. If we are a bit less sure, we say the question tag with a rising intonation.

Formation

If there is an auxiliary verb in the statement, we use it to form the question tag.

- I don't need to finish this today, do I?
- James is working on that, isn't he?
- Your parents have retired, haven't they?
- The phone didn't ring, did it?
- It was raining that day, wasn't it?
- Your mum hadn't met him before, had she?

Sometimes there is no auxiliary verb already in the statement. For example, when:

a) the verb in the statement is present simple or past simple and is positive. Here we use *don't*, *doesn't* or *didn't*:

- Jenni eats cheese, doesn't she?
- I said that already, didn't I?

b) the verb in the statement is to be in the present simple or past simple. In this case we use *to be* to make the question tag:

- The bus stop's over there, isn't it?
- None of those customers were happy, were they?

c) the verb in the statement is a modal verb. Here we use the modal verb to make the question tag:

- They could hear me, couldn't they?
- You won't tell anyone, will you?

If the main verb or auxiliary verb in the statement is *am*, the positive question tag is *am I?* but the negative question tag is usually *aren't I?*:

- I'm never on time, am I?
- I'm going to get an email with the details, aren't I?

That was an interesting section of the Healthy English website, wasn't it?

Section 5 (vii)

Language for negotiating treatment

The following expressions are useful when negotiating treatment with the patient:

Proposing

- How about ... + verb + ing? e.g. How about trying this?
- What if ... ? ... + subject + verb (base infinitive) e.g. What if we try this?
- Instead of + verb + ing, you could ... e.g. Instead of doing that, you could do this.
- Why don't you ... ? + verb (base infinitive) e.g. Why don't you try this?

Inviting suggestions from patient

- What do you think you'll be able to do?
- What do you think is an achievable/realistic target?
- What is your preferred course of action?
- What treatment do you think would suit you best?

Checking if proposal is acceptable

- Do you think that is manageable?
- How do you feel about that?
- Do you think you can manage that?
- Does that sound achievable?
- Is that OK?

Section 5 (viii)

Examining a patient

Introduce yourself

Good morning, I'm _____

Brief the patient on what he/she should expect

- Do you know what we are going to do?
- What we're going to do today is...
- I'm going to examine your ... so I can find out what's causing this ...
- What we do is ...
- What happens is that ...
- I'll ask you to ...
- Are you ready?
- OK?

Show sensitivity to the patient's needs and respond to discomfort, reassuring if appropriate.

- You might feel a little bit of discomfort.
- This might hurt a little but I'll be quick.
- Tell me if it hurts.
- Let me know if it's sore.
- It will be over very quickly.
- It won't take long.
- You're doing very well.

Talk the patient through the procedure.

- I'm just going to...
- First I'll...
- Then I'll ...
- Now I'm going to ...
- Now I'm going to ...
- You'll feel ...
- When it's over, I'll ...
- That's it. All over.

Share your findings with the patient.

- Well, I'm fairly certain you've got a...
- One possibility is it could be what we call ...
- I haven't found anything to suggest any problems.

Instruct the patient in a clear but polite manner

Initially, use polite forms:

- Could you bend forward as far as you can?
- If you could cross your arms in front of your chest.
- What I'd like to do is examine you standing up.

After that, direct instructions can be used:

- Stand with your feet together.
- Lie perfectly still.

To soften an instruction

- Can you just turn to the side again?
- Could you just lie on the couch?

Here are some verbs commonly used in instructions:

- Bend down/over
- Breathe in/out
- Close your eyes
- Curl up
- Do this
- Follow my fingertip with your eyes
- Keep your knee straight
- Let your wrist go floppy
- Lie on your side/back; on the bed/couch
- Lie down
- Look straight ahead
- Look at something
- Open your mouth
- Point to the finger that moves
- Pull as hard as you can
- Push as hard as you can
- Put your head down
- Put out/stick out your tongue
- Raise your leg
- Relax
- Roll on to your back/front
- Roll over
- Roll up your sleeve

- Show me what movements you can manage
- Sit
- Sit up
- Sit down
- Slide your hand down your side
- Slip off your coat
- Stand straight
- Stand up
- Take off your top things
- Tell me if it hurts
- Tilt your head back
- Touch your shoulder with your chin
- Turn your head to the left
- Turn on your side

Section 5 (ix)

Helping patients who are emotionally distressed: BATHE

Enabling patients to find their own ways forward

BATHE

This is an acronym that helps move consultations forward constructively when patients are emotionally distressed.

As clinicians we always attempt to offer our own solutions to patients (trying to make things better), although in some situations they may not be feasible or achievable (rather than facing up to the fact we may be therapeutically impotent). Using the BATHE tool helps you enable patients to find their own ways forward instead, or at least support them during a time of distress. The model includes

- **B**ackground
- **A**ffect
- **T**roubling
- **H**andling
- **E**mpathy

Background

- What's going on in your life right now? (Open question)
- What was happening (e.g.) two weeks ago? (Open question)
- When did the problem start? (Closed question)

Affect

- How is this affecting you? (Open Question)
- How do you feel about that? (Open question)

Trouble

- What is troubling you most? (Open question)

Handling

- How are you handling this? How are you dealing with this? (Open question)

Empathy

- I can understand that this must be difficult for you.

This BATHE model supports the patient's own coping strategies and encourages development of coping skills and responsibility for their own behaviours, feelings and actions.

The BATHE model

Background

“What is going on in your life right now?”

This helps you to understand the patient’s situation. The qualifying phrase ‘right now’ helps the patient focus on the ‘here and now’ rather than launching into the epic saga dating from 1970.

Affect

“How is this affecting you?” or “How do you feel about that?”

This moves the patient forward from a description of events, conversations, works etc. It acts as a punctuation mark in their thoughts, so that they can tell you more easily what is specifically causing them problems, difficulties or distressing feelings. As with any consultation, you cannot assume or correctly guess what it is that the patient is feeling – you have to ask the question.

Trouble

“What is troubling you most?”

This is the focusing tool which will help the patient to tell you what it is that is really getting on top of them. The key word is ‘most’ and the patient response to the question can lead you to the central problem

Handling

“How are you handling this?”

This question has two effects. First it moves the problem forward again from defining it clearly into talking about actions. It has an implicit meaning (a presupposition) that the patient IS handling it. In other words, it shifts the responsibility for the problem back to the patient. This is useful for both apparently helpless patients and also for well meaning, but over helpful, clinicians.

Empathy

“I can understand this must be difficult for you”

This empathic remark helps balance the practical nature of the other parts of the model. Equally, it expresses caring and concern without implying that the clinician can make it better or has a solution, or that the patient should hand over responsibility for the problem to the clinician.

Summary

Although the model sounds simplistic, it actively discourages the patient from developing dependency on the doctor (bad for both the patient and the clinician) and instead helps the patient to explore realistic coping strategies. It is a model that works with, and supports, the patient’s own coping strategies and encourages further development of coping skills and responsibility for their own behaviours, feelings and actions.

Section 5 (x)

Empathy statements and validating patients

Verbal cues

Picking up and checking out verbal cues

- ‘You said you felt miserable, could you tell me more about how, you’ve been feeling?’
- ‘You said that you were worried that the pain might be something serious; what ideas did you have yourself about what it might be?’
- ‘You mentioned that your mother had rheumatoid arthritis; did you think that’s what might be happening to you?’

Repetition of verbal cues

- ‘angry ...?’
- ‘upset ...?’
- ‘something could be done ...?’

Non-verbal cues

Picking up and reflecting non-verbal cues

- ‘I sense that you’re very tense; would it help to talk about it?’
- ‘You sound sad when you talk about John.’
- ‘I sense that you’re not quite happy with the explanations you’ve been given in the past. Is that right?’
- ‘Am I right in thinking you’re quite upset about your daughter’s illness?’

Asking specifically about the patient’s illness perspective:

Different phrasing is required to ask questions about patients’ ideas, concerns or expectations.

Ideas (belief)

- ‘Tell me about what you think is causing it.’
- ‘What do you think might be happening?’
- ‘Have you any ideas about it yourself?’
- ‘Do you have any clues; any theories?’
- ‘You’ve obviously given this some thought, it would help me to know what you were thinking it might be.’

Concerns

- ‘What are you concerned that it might be?’
- ‘Is there anything particular or specific that you were concerned about?’
- ‘What was the worst thing you were thinking it might be?’
- ‘In your darkest moments ...’

Expectations

- ‘What were you hoping we might be able to do for this?’
- ‘What do you think might be the best plan of action?’
- ‘How might I best help you with this?’
- ‘You’ve obviously given this some thought, what were you thinking would be the best way of tackling this?’

Asking about patient feelings

- ‘How did that leave you feeling?’
- ‘Can you remember a time when you felt like that?’

What actually happened?’

- ‘Could you bear to tell me just how you have been feeling?’

How to end the discussion of feelings and not sink into a downward spiral with the patient

- Thank you for telling me how you have been feeling. It helps me to understand the situation much better.
- Do you think you’ve told me enough about how you are feeling to help me understand things?
- I think I understand now a little of what you have been feeling. Let’s look at the practical things that we can do together to help.

Empathy statements

The aim of empathy : Communicating your understanding back to the patient so that they know you appreciate and are sensitive to their difficulty.

Both non-verbal and verbal skills can help us here.

Empathic non-verbal communication can say more than a thousand words. Facial expression, proximity, touch, tone of voice or use of silence in response to a patient’s expression of feelings can clearly signal to the patient that you are sensitive to their predicament.

Empathic statements are supportive comments that specifically link the ‘I’ of the doctor and the ‘you’ of the patient. They both name and appreciate the patient’s affect or predicament. So if you’re in pain and I feel your pain ...If you’re being anxious, I pick up your anxiety. If you’re sad and I pick up your sadness.”

Examples

- ‘I can see that your husband’s memory loss has been very difficult for you to cope with.’
- ‘I can appreciate how difficult it is for you to talk about this.’
- ‘I can sense how angry you have been feeling about your illness.’
- ‘I can see that you have been very upset by all of this.’
- ‘I can understand that it must be frightening for you to know the pain might keep coming back.’

Depending on the situation, these are also very useful:

- It sounds like you did everything you could.
- I can see how difficult this has been.
- The whole thing sounds so discouraging.
- I can totally see why you would be upset.
- You’re holding up very well considering how much stress you’re under.
- If that happened to me, I would be upset, too.
- What a time you’ve had.
- I understand.
- It’s totally natural that you would feel this way.
- I understand how hard this is for you.
- What you’re saying makes so much sense to me.
- That must have hurt your feelings.
- I would have a hard time with that too.
- That sounds like a difficult situation.
- You must have felt so...
- I can see how hard you tried here.
- I’m sorry this is so discouraging right now.
- It sounds like you were doing the best you could, even though it was difficult.
- It’s perfectly normal to feel frustrated in a situation like this.
- I know you feel like giving up right now, and I’m glad you aren’t.
- It has to be difficult to deal with this.
- I understand how frustrating it must be to wait this long.
- I’m so glad you contacted me about that; it’s important that we get it seen to.
- I know you’ve spent a lot of time on this already.
- I know you have a lot of choices, so I want to make sure we meet your needs. Can you tell me more?
- So, what I hear you saying is...
- It makes total sense you would need some help with this.
- I can hear your concern in your voice.
- You must feel like no one even listened to your idea.
- I know it isn’t easy to deal with stuff like this, but you are handling it so well.
- It’s been a difficult couple of weeks, hasn’t it?

Section 5 (xi)

Receipting emotions and turning a receipt

Receipting emotions

These are two-part steering remarks (an observation, followed by a question)

- That's a nice shirt. Where did you get it?
- I haven't seen you for ages. How are you?

Jamie, I told you it's supper time. Wash your hands and come to the table.

In the surgery...

- It's nice to meet you. How can I help?
- You mentioned you felt a bit unwell last week. What did you put it down to?
- So, the pain came without any warning. Can you tell me what happened next?
- It doesn't sound like anything serious. But can I ask, have you brought up any blood?

Receipting emotions and feelings often has the effect of taking the consultation to a deeper level, where highly significant factors in the patient's story emerge and can be safely discussed:

- That must have worried you
- I get the feeling you're quite angry
- I think you're probably quite sad
- I wonder whether you perhaps blame yourself
- That sounds really frustrating
- So, the future looks pretty bleak
- I've known people in a similar situation who feel like that.

Turning a receipt

When you give someone a receipt, they briefly pause in mid-narrative and wait for a moment to see if you are going to take over. If you don't, they will carry on. But if you want to take over, the receipt gives you the opportunity to do so.

Essentially, turning a receipt consists of saying "Thank you for this; now we'll do that".

There are three stages in successfully turning a receipt. The first is for you to have a clear idea in your mind as to what needs to happen next in the consultation. Then you need to give an effective receipt – an appreciative acknowledgement of something important the patient has told you. Finally, you have to follow the receipt by saying something to the patient that makes it clear what you want to do or talk about next (the 'turn').

Intention: To obtain more details of the patient's symptoms

Receipt: Thank you. That's very interesting.

Turn: Please tell me some more about the symptoms you've been getting.

Intention: To encourage a patient who is reluctant to talk

Receipt: I can see that this is a bit difficult for you to talk about

Turn:but the more you can tell me, the easier it will be for me to understand what's worrying you

Intention: To transition to the Doctor's part

Receipt: You've given me a lot of helpful information...

Turn: ...and now I've got some questions I'd like to ask you.

Intention: You want to examine the patient

Receipt: I think I've got a clear picture of what's been happening.

Turn: So now I'd like to examine you please.

Intention: To transition to the shared part

Receipt: Now I've examined you, I think I know what the problem is.

Turn: Let's talk about where we go from here.

Intention: To suggest your management plan to the patient (shared part)

Receipt: I know there's a lot about this on the Internet..

Turn: But first, may I tell you what I'm thinking?

Intention: To deal with your own uncertainty

Receipt: I want to be sure you have the best advice...

Turn: So I'd like to get a second opinion from...

In each of these examples, the receipt acts as a cushion to prevent the doctor's suggestion appearing too abrupt, but the intention is clear nonetheless.

More examples:*Intention: Dealing with a patient who expects you to ask all the questions*

Receipt: We haven't met before...

Turn: ...but I'd like to begin by asking you to tell me as much as you can about why you've come, in your own words.

Intention: To get a patient who rambles to come to the point

Receipt: There's obviously been a lot happening...

Turn: ...but perhaps we could focus now on what you think is most important.

Intention: Dealing with a patient who tells you the same thing over and over

Receipt: I really do understand what you've told me so far...

Turn: ... but I'm keen to know what happened next.

Intention: To elicit a patient's idea (1)

Receipt: This is something you've not had before.

Turn: I wonder what you thought might have caused it.

Intention: To elicit the patient's ideas (2)

Receipt: You mentioned you Googled your condition.

Turn: What did you find out?

Intention: To find out the patient's concerns (1)

Receipt: You sound quite worried about this.

Turn: Was there anything in particular you were afraid it could be?

Intention: To find out the patient's concerns (2)

Receipt: This has obviously come as a bit of a shock.

Turn: How do you think it's going to affect you?

Intention: To discover the patient's expectations (1)

Receipt: There are various ways I could help.

Turn: Did you have any thoughts yourself about what would be best?

Intention: To discover the patient's expectations (2)

Receipt: I know you're not a great one for taking medication

Turn: What other kinds of treatment have you heard about?

Intention: To see whether the patient has any hidden agenda (1)

Receipt: Sometimes when people start telling me about a relatively minor problem..

Turn:it can be because they actually have something more serious that's worrying them

Intention: To see whether the patient has any hidden agenda (2)

Receipt: You've told me about your acne...

Turn: ...but I got the feeling there might be something else on your mind you'd like to discuss

Intention: To prioritise the items on a patient's list

Receipt: You mentioned there are several things you wanted to talk about today.

Turn: Shall we start with whatever is worrying you the most?

Section 5 (xii)

Top tips for the telephone consultation

Making the call

Much of what you'll find below you'll already know from your training and experience in face-to-face consultation. It's just that to begin with, when using the telephone, it's important to make a little bit more conscious effort to ensure that the patient knows that you are fully engaged with them. Similarly, you need to listen very closely when they speak to pick up information that is diagnostically useful as you don't have access to non-verbal signs and cues.

There are 6 fundamentals of expert telephone consultation. Practice these precepts and you will flying in no time.

Be prepared – double check the information about the call the receptionist has gathered and check against the patient's record before making the call. The chances are you'll have a very good idea about what needs to happen next even before you have spoken to the patient.

Take your time. Just as with a face-to-face consultation, take your time. If you are rushed, or even (as you may think) simply briskly professional in your tone of voice and pace of speech, you are likely to unsettle the patient and unconsciously they will feel the need to hurry as well. This can easily lead to an unsatisfactory consultation and almost inevitably, more unnecessary work down the line. You have more time than you think!

Give the patient time to talk – let them know you're here to listen and give them up to two minutes without interruption to tell you their story. When the patient is speaking, make use of 'uh-huh', 'right', 'go on', 'I see', 'mm-hm' – all those ways of showing that you are still there, listening and being attentive.

Be clear, calm, friendly, interested and empathetic throughout the call. Don't be flat, mechanistic and formal, try to modulate your tone of voice. They need to know you are on their side and your voice is the only tool you have to demonstrate your interest and your empathy.

Always be checking you have understood what they have said to you, and what you have said them has been understood.

Good record-keeping. As with any face-to-face consultation, it's essential that you accurately record the conversation, its outcomes and agreed further actions, if any. Contemporaneous notes are hugely important in successful – and safe – telephone triage and consultation.

Safety-netting

Ensuring safety will of course be your prime consideration. As has been said, if you are in any doubt at all, or if they report standard clinical red flag symptoms, bring your patient in for a face-to-face consultation – don't waste time on the phone. Employ the same protocols that you currently do to identify patients who need immediate attention, but beyond those who need to be seen that day, you'll still want to ensure that if a patient's symptoms don't improve or worsen, you will want to be told as soon as possible.

So, it is vital to always prepare a safety net and give the caller permission to ring back if things get significantly worse, e.g. "please do feel free to call if he gets worse". Also, give concrete examples of worrying signs and symptoms. Explain what to do if your plan is not working, including when and how to seek help.

Give clear, specific, follow up instructions e.g. "If the pain/temperature has not settled in an hour please call back" If necessary, re-check patient understanding and acceptance of your plan. Remember that a face-to-face appointment with you doesn't have to be the next step. You can ask them to come and see the nurse if you think that is appropriate, or ask them to come in and have some tests done if that is likely to be needed, or perhaps visit their pharmacist.

Just as a clear management plan is essential for those looking after patients, it is vital for patient confidence that they share an understanding of the plan. The aggressive and usually anxious patient can make life a misery if badly handled. Even these calls can lead to a rewarding consultation if appropriately completed. A confident assertive clinician delivering good advice makes everyone feel better! With clear understanding of the patient's agenda and assertive triage, comes less stress, fewer complaints and a more pleasant working environment for everyone. Ending the call well is so

important to successful telephone consultation – not only for that particular instance, but for building confidence in the long term, so please don't leave the call if you feel the patient is still unhappy!

A safety net that works for the caller/patient will often depend on you having clearly identified the "caller's agenda". Sometimes the caller/patient's ideas, concerns and feelings – beyond the reporting of symptoms – are really clear, but at other times you will have to ask, e.g. "Tell me, have you any worries about what might be going to happen" or "have you had any bad experiences with these sort of symptoms before?" Then, the fear of the throat closing up, the ear drum perforating or meningitis developing will be out in the open. This is particularly important where you are dealing with parents of sick children.

Finally, in completing the safety net, remember you may need one too! If possible, allow some time for reflection and if not entirely happy with any element of the triage, never be afraid to phone the patient again.

Telephone consultation and vulnerable patients

Frail and elderly people

Consultation over the phone can be tricky as they may want a visit or to come and see you for reasons other than clinical. So, it's really vital with this group that you get the message across that you are not saying NO to a face-to-face consultation, just establishing the best course of action. Of course, if the usual red flags are there, or if they are very distressed, or simply unable to have a productive conversation because of poor hearing/language ability, it's best to bring them in or arrange a home visit straight away, and not waste time on the phone. But where you can have a conversation, try to proceed as you would for any patient. However, before you call, make sure you are fully aware of what their current care package is, if they have one, and if you know they have recently been in hospital, check up on the discharge notes. It may well be that there will be several healthcare professionals involved in this person's care – e.g. district nurse, social services as well as you and the local hospital, and a face to face consultation with you is not necessarily the best response in any event. Taking time to gather all the salient information and arranging for a visit by another healthcare professional, and/or a modification of the care package might be a far better option. This can be a time-consuming call, but in the short to medium term, well worth the effort.

Children

Naturally, this will involve concerned or anxious parents, a small number whom may be angry or exasperated at the call back system, if it's their first experience. So again, it's really vital that you get the message across straight away, that you are not saying NO to a face-to-face consultation, just establishing the best course of action. Of course, if the standard clinical red flags are there, or if you have any uncertainty, it's best to bring them in or arrange a home visit straight away, and not waste time on the phone.

But children can fall ill and recover very quickly, and most parents will know that, so the chances are, if the red flags aren't there, then the problem will resolve itself within a day or two. In this case, most parents will be happy with advice and reassurance coupled with a clear safety-netting plan (see above).

Make sure you get information about what the child is doing at the moment of the consultation – if the child is, for example, running around, they are probably OK. If the child is old enough, ask to speak to them – they might give better information than the parent, or you can assess useful information directly such as breathlessness, and the strength of their voice.

If you're not bringing them in it's important to express confidence in your diagnosis and your suggested course of action. You also need to make it clear that you are very happy for them to call back if the situation is not improving within a given timeframe. Make sure that they are happy also with the plan – ask them directly how they feel about it. Whilst you are not restricting access, it's important not to reinforce coming-in-too-soon behaviour.

Patients with mental health issues

Clearly if this is a new presentation, you need to be sure they are safe and not likely to harm themselves or others, so if you have any concerns at all, bring them in. If the patient has a history, then make sure you have read the notes and proceed as you would with any other patient, if that is possible. If they are too upset, or again if you have any concerns about self-harm or harm to others, bring them in.

Angry patients

Stay calm, speak in a low tone and slowly. Reassure them – they probably will have a face-to-face appointment, but it's hard to diagnose with a lot of anger present – make sure they understand you are NOT saying NO.

Using 'I' Statements allows a person to 'own' their thoughts feelings and opinions rather than using 'you' Statements, which may implicitly blame the other person. These also disclose your feelings in a professional manner and help to create empathy:

- "I understand that you are angry"
- "I am sorry that..." Can be an expression of sympathy only and does not have to imply that anything was your fault
- "I am concerned that"

At the end of the call, make sure that repeat back what they want and explicitly agree to the course of action.

Information gathering – useful questions and approaches

What if a patient is not really being very clear about what their concern is? If you find you need to gather more detailed and specific information, DO USE the five 'W's:

- What** is the problem?
- Where** does the problem occur?
- When** did the problem start?
- What** makes the problem better or worse?
- When** does the problem happen/is most troubling?

DO NOT ask lengthy complex questions – keep it simple.

DO NOT do ask quick-fire multiple choice questions – "Have you tried x, y, z....?)"

DO NOT use medical/NHS jargon

In general always try to use OPEN rather than closed questions.

Using "I" phrases to build rapport and confidence

"I" Phrases can make repeated or sensitive questions or statements less threatening. They also involve the patient in the process of diagnosis, which is a great builder of rapport and confidence. Examples include:

- "I am wondering..."
- "I get the feeling that..."
- "I have a sense of..."

After a discussion led by these questions and their responses, you should find it a lot easier to get the patient to feel that they have proper ownership of the care plan – that it's not something simply imposed upon them.

The patient isn't listening!

All consultations are a form of negotiation. Sometimes this might break down because the patient is angry, anxious or has unreasonable expectations. Most likely they will cease to listen at this point; how do you tackle the situation?

Do not be deterred by or respond to anything which is off the point you are trying to make. Just keep saying in a calm, low and repetitive voice what you want to say until the other person hears what you are saying. Talking through the action plan.

Always share your thinking with the caller, i.e. "this sounds highly likely to be a nasty virus" or "if it was something that I need to see immediately, such and such would be happening". When giving advice, as with asking questions, be assertive but not aggressive. E.g.: "It would be good to give paracetamol on a four hourly basis because..."

Always check that there is agreement and understanding of what you propose. This is important. It might also be necessary to emphasise your confidence in your own advice e.g. "yes, I'm sure this is medically sensible and safe, could we try it for a while". "Are you happy with that?" etc.

Being able to help is wonderful but it is important to stress, where necessary, what you are unable to do so that the caller does not have unrealistic expectations. e.g. "I cannot do/arrange X but I am happy to listen and see if there is anything I can offer..."

Section 5 (xiii)

Signposting

Signposting is a useful way for a doctor to give structure to a consultation. For example: “We’ll talk about options later on. Would you tell me a bit more about your back pain?” This indicates to the patient that the doctor has heard the request, but allows the topic to be shifted to get the information currently needed. Signposting helps the patient understand the direction the consultation is going in, and why, and allows doctors to share their thoughts and needs with the patient.

Signposting can be used at different stages of the consultation.

To transition from the introduction to the information-gathering stage:

OK, can you tell me how it started?

To outline the sequence of the consultation:

First, we’ll talk about your pain, then I will examine you, and then we can talk about ways to treat the problem.

To transition from one topic to another:

Now that we’ve identified the problem, we can discuss treatment options.

To explain a certain line of questioning:

Because this condition can be hereditary, I’d like to find out about your family history.

To ask permission:

Is it OK if I ask you some questions about your lifestyle?

To warn about sensitive questioning:

I need to ask you some personal questions if that’s all right.

To begin the closure of the consultation:

I think I have everything I need ...

A simple phrase which can work to break up a long list of questions or a long explanation is simply to say:

“OK, so ...”

Instructions: Create a range of sentences using phrases from all three columns.
Practise saying all the different combinations.

Let me	ask you about	a few issues
Can I	start with	your general health
I need to	discuss	your lifestyle
I’d like to	go back to	your family history
I’m going to	move on to	some other possibilities
Is it OK if I	look at	your test results
I want to	consider	your symptoms
What I’d like to do is	find out about	some options for treatment
May I	summarise	your present condition

Use signposting to move from one section of the consultation to the next so that:

- the patient understands where the interview is going and why
- you can share your thoughts and needs with the patient
- you can obtain the patient's permission (e.g. to ask about sensitive topics)
- the consultation is structured overtly for you both

More signposting

Using signposting in a medical interview allows the doctor to explain the direction they want to take the consultation in, and what they hope to achieve. This reduces patient uncertainty, allowing them to concentrate and contribute more effectively. It is particularly useful to use signposting when moving between the different sections of the consultation.

Instructions: Look at this sequence of a doctor's questions and statements from a consultation (the patient's responses have been removed). Where does the topic change? What signposting phrases could you add these points?

- How can I help you today?
- When did it start?
- Have you ever had it before?
- Where do you work?
- How old are you?
- How are things at home?
- Are you in a relationship?
- Are you sexually active?
- Do you smoke?
- Do you drink?
- Do you take any recreational drugs?
- Are you on any medication?
- Do you have any allergies?
- Does anyone in your family have any serious illnesses?
- How is this affecting your life?
- Do you have any other concerns?
- Please get undressed behind that curtain.
- We'll run some tests.
- Goodbye.

There are many different possible answers here. The signposting examples listed below are one possible answer. The topic changes are italicised and the signposting phrases are in bold.

- How can I help you today?
- When did it start?
- Have you ever had it before?
- **I'd like to start by just asking some general questions.**
- *Where do you work?*
- *How old are you?*
- **I have to ask some personal questions now if that's ok.**
- *How are things at home?*
- Are you in a relationship?
- Are you sexually active?
- **Do you mind if I ask some questions about your lifestyle?**
- *Do you smoke?*
- Do you drink?
- Do you take any recreational drugs?
- **OK, thanks for that, so**
- *Are you on any medication?*
- Do you have any allergies?
- **Because some conditions can be hereditary, I'd like to find out about your family history.**
- *Does anyone in your family have any serious illnesses?*
- **To give me a better understanding about your situation, can you tell me**
- *How is this affecting your life?*
- *Do you have any other concerns?*
- **If that's all you wanted to see me about, I'd like to do a physical examination now.**
- *Please get undressed behind that curtain.*
- **I'd like to find out some more about your condition, so**
- *We'll run some tests.*
- **I think that's all we need to talk about today. Thanks for coming in, and we'll be in touch.**

Section 5 (xiv)

Normalising, paraphrasing, prioritising and offering options

Normalising – ‘Third-personing’

People may sometimes have difficulty in volunteering some information about their problem, particularly if they are anxious or embarrassed about it. One way of reassuring a patient is to use statements that ‘normalise’ their problem, that they are not the only person to have the experience. This can be done by making a general, or normalising, statement about the issue to take the focus off the patient momentarily. Beginning statements with phrases like many people feel ..., some people tell me ..., often this is about ..., sometimes I have been told that ... can provide a starting point to encourage the patient to talk honestly about a difficult topic.

Acknowledge or normalise patient’s feelings to reassure them. (This builds trust, openness and self-respect.)

Examples:

- Frequently, teens are worried about parents finding out about their use of birth control.
- It can be difficult for some people to talk about using a condom with their sexual partner.
- I have heard a lot of women say that.
- That’s a pretty common reaction.
- I felt that way too.

This technique allows the patient to respond to the statement and talk about their feelings if they choose. It allows the patient to correct assumptions.

Paraphrasing

People often use vague or tentative language when they speak, using word choices that may not accurately reflect what they mean. Depending on the context, there could be several reasons for this. It might mean that they are unsure of what they want to say, and are having trouble expressing themselves; or it might mean that they are uncomfortable with the topic.

An effective way to make sure you understand what the patient wishes to say, and to ensure that you don’t miss important information, is to paraphrase what the patient

has said. To paraphrase is to use different words to express the same idea or meaning. This will enable you to better identify the patient’s meaning rather than just focusing on the words they use.

The goal is to promote personal exploration, clarify the content or cognitive component of a patient’s message and communicate that the patient’s unique perspective has been heard and understood. To paraphrase properly, the practitioner must communicate back to the patient (in his/her own words) the essence of what has been said. It is often helpful to include a few key words, which a patient has used, but avoid “parroting” or repeating the exact response, which can be irritating and disrupt communication.

Shortens and clarifies the essence of what the patient has just said (content) and feeds back in practitioner’s own words.

Patient: I spent a long time trying to sort out the information package the nurse gave me on hormones.

Practitioner accurately feeds back the patient’s content:

So, you found it difficult to understand the material.

Reflection of feelings. People are usually reluctant to disclose personal feelings until trust has been established. Practitioners should avoid eliciting in-depth reflection of feeling early in the relationship, as the patient is likely to be resistant or frightened by the experience. It is wise to use brief reflections, at an interchangeable level, (reflect back feelings at the level of awareness and intensity communicated by the patient without taking away from the meaning of the message). Such reflection communicates that the practitioner understands the feelings being experienced by the patient and often serves to free-up the patient for further problem solving.

Identifies what the patient is feeling now and feeds back in practitioner’s own words

Patient: I’ve looked at the material but I seem to go back and forth and still don’t know what to do.

Practitioner accurately feeds back the patient’s current feelings: So, you’re unsure about which option is best for you.

Summarising the patient's key comments can be used effectively mid-way through an interaction and in the final stage of the interview. The practitioner notes the patient's verbal behaviour over a period of time and communicates his/her understanding of key concepts back to the patient. Effective summarising, by tying together critical elements of the situation, assists people to gain a broader perspective of the situation rather than becoming bogged down in detail.

Condenses several key comments made by the patient over time during the interview (content and/or feelings) and feeds back in practitioner's own words

Practitioner focuses on patients's key content and/or feelings: So, you've read the information, you've discussed the issue with your partner but you're having difficulty making a decision because you're worried about the risks.

Perception checks are used to verify with the patient that the practitioner is interpreting the patient's message clearly. Perception checks are often used following a paraphrase or a summary.

Checks to ensure that what is said or heard is accurate; may be used after a paraphrase, reflection or summary

Patient: It's difficult to decide. My symptoms are really not that bad. I don't know.

Practitioner validates accuracy of understanding with patient: You're saying that you're not ready to make a decision at this time. Is that correct?

Prioritising

This skill allows the patient to define his or her own priorities and needs. By using it, you can help a patient figure out his or her priorities.

- You're dealing with many different issues. What concerns you most?
- Which side effects would cause you the most discomfort?

People sometimes hesitate to ask these types of questions, as they might not fall within our agenda. This technique shows respect for the patient's needs and allows him or her to control the session's direction.

Offering options

When a patient is struggling with a decision, a health professional can offer a "buffet of options," allowing the patient to choose which options might work for him or her. This approach helps to give the client a selection of choices without using the information to influence the patient's choice.

Examples:

- Some people decide not to have sex at all.
- Other people find ways to be sexual without having intercourse.
- Others use a latex condom with each and every act of intercourse.

When patients do not choose from the options, the "If...then..." approach could be used. For example, say to the patient, "If you want to avoid getting an STD, you'll want to consider one of these options."

This technique is a powerful reminder of where the responsibility for behaviour change lies.

Section 5 (xv)

Twelve communication roadblocks (what NOT do do)

Implicit (and sometimes quite explicit) in these 12 categories of listener responses is the desire or intent to change rather than accept the speaker. The Roadblocks communicate a desire for (and often pressure for) the person asking for help to think, feel, or behave differently. These 12 types of responses, then, act as vehicles for communicating unacceptance. And we know that a climate of unacceptance is very non-conducive to personal growth, development, and psychological health.

Why? It seems that people don't problem-solve very effectively when they fear arbitrary power to make them change, or when they feel threatened, judged, put down, or analysed so they will change. Such a climate produces defensiveness and resistance to change; it also inhibits self-expression and self-exploration – both necessary for solving one's problems.

Listening performs another very important function in helping people solve their problems – it helps keep the responsibility for problem-solving with the member (who, of course, is the one who “owns the problem”). The 12 Roadblocks, on the other hand, in varying degrees, tend to grab that responsibility away from the owner of the problem and deposit it in the hands of the leader.

1. Ordering, Directing, Commanding

- You must do this.
- You cannot do this.
- I expect you to do this.
- Stop it.
- Go and apologise to her.

2. Warning, Admonishing, Threatening

- You had better do this, or else . . .
- If you don't do this, then . . .
- You better not try that.
- I warn you, if you do that . . .

3. Moralising, Preaching, Imploring

- You should do this.
- You ought to try it.
- It is your responsibility to do this.
- It is your duty to do this.
- I wish you would do this.
- I urge you to do this.

4. Advising, Giving Suggestions or Solutions

- What I think you should do is . . .
- Let me suggest . . .
- It would be best for you if . . .
- Why not take a different approach?
- The best solution is . . .

5. Persuading with Logic, Lecturing, Arguing

- Do you realise that . . .
- The facts are in favour of . . .
- Let me give you the facts.
- Here is the right way.
- Experience tells us that . . .

6. Judging, Criticising, Disagreeing, Blaming

- You are acting foolishly.
- You are not thinking straight.
- You are out of line.
- You didn't do it right.
- You are wrong.
- That is a stupid thing to say.

7. Praising, Agreeing, Evaluating Positively, 'Buttering Up'

- You usually have very good judgment.
- You are an intelligent person.
- You have so much potential.
- You've made quite a bit of progress.
- You have always made it in the past.

8. Name-calling, Ridiculing, Shaming

- You are a sloppy worker.
- You are a fuzzy thinker.
- You're talking like an engineer.
- You really made a mistake there!

9. Interpreting, Analysing, Diagnosing

- You're saying this because you're angry.
- You are jealous.
- What you really need is ...
- You have problems with authority.
- You want to look good.
- You are being a bit paranoid.

10. Reassuring, Sympathising, Consoling, Supporting

- You'll feel different tomorrow.
- Things will get better.
- It is always darkest before the dawn.
- Behind every cloud there's a silver lining.
- Don't worry so much about it.
- It's not that bad.

11. Probing, Questioning, Interrogating

- Why did you do that?
- How long have you felt this way?
- What have you done to try to solve it?
- Have you consulted with anyone?
- When did you become aware of this feeling?
- Who has influenced you?

12. Distracting, Diverting, Kidding

- Think about the positive side.
- Try not to think about it until you're rested.
- Let's have lunch and forget about it.
- That reminds me of the time when ...
- You think you've got problems!

Section 5 (xvi)

Working with children

Communicating with young children

Say hello to the child and call him/her by name

Hello Sally. Hello Mrs Brown. My name is Dr Chatterjee.

Smile at the child (and the parent).

Be at the same level as the child (interviews proceed better if the child's eye level is at or even above the doctor's).

"Just let me raise your chair up so you can see me."

(Again, the word just is used to give reassurance)

"I'm just going to clear some space for Teddy to sit".

"If I could just get you to sit here next to me. That's great. Are you comfortable?"

Compliment the child e.g. admire something that they are wearing or praise something they are doing (e.g. a drawing)

"That's a great shirt/drawing Ben."

That's a + adjective + noun / They're + adjective + noun (plural)

- That's a cool toy
- They're cool trainers
- That's a lovely/pretty dress
- That's a lovely smile
- That's a cute bunny rabbit/teddy bear

Use a gentle tone of voice and develop rapport

Are you feeling sad?

I can understand why you're feeling sad.

(Question tags are very useful; they encourage the listener to agree)

- Oh dear; that's a nasty cough, isn't it?
- That was a big bump, wasn't it?
- It's a bit hard to breathe, isn't it?
- Your skin looks rather red, doesn't it?

Giving instructions

- What I need to do is have a look at your chest.
- OK, Tom, I need to look at your chest; can I get Mummy/Daddy to take off your top for a few moments?
- OK, now I need you to take a big breath in for me and hold it.
- I need you to open your mouth a bit more so I can see better.
- This can also be formulated as a question: Can you open your mouth a bit more so I can see better?
- I need you to open your eyes so I can see what's causing your headaches.
- Can you open your eyes so I can see what's causing your headaches?
- Does the light hurt your eyes?
- I need you to lie as still as possible when I am looking at your tummy.
- Can you lie as still as possible when I am looking at your tummy?
- Does your tummy/stomach hurt?
- I just need you to stand on the weighing machine, please.
- Will you let me look in your ears?

Showing empathy

- That must have hurt, Sam. (The word must shows empathy; subject + must + present perfect)
- That must be sore.) Subject + must + infinitive + adjective)
- That must have been disappointing for you.
- You must be/feel very tired.
- You must be in a lot of pain.
- That must be difficult for you.

Reassuring the child

- Don't look so sad. We are going to make you better very soon.
- Don't be scared. I promise this won't hurt.
- It will be very quick. You'll hardly feel a thing.
- Don't worry. It's not your fault.
- I'm sure you didn't mean to do it.

Checklist for the doctor

- Ask child's permission to be examined.
- Ask the parent to remove any of the child's clothing.
- Tell the child he/she can get dressed again shortly.
- Explain procedure (Prepare the child for a strange noise or smell, a painful procedure, or change from a familiar routine).
- Demonstrate procedure on a toy (Toys help to establish rapport with children. They can also be used to explain procedures).
- Check child understands what is happening.
- Give clear, simple instructions.
- Praise child for cooperation.
- Tell child to put clothing back on as soon as examination has finished.

Section 5 (xvii)

Working with elderly patients

Tips for improving communication with older patients

Before you read on, remind yourself what was written in Section 12: Top Tips for the Telephone Conversation

Good communication is an important part of the healing process. Effective doctor-patient communication has research-proven benefits: patients are more likely to adhere to treatment and have better outcomes, and they express greater satisfaction with their treatment.

Use proper form of address

Establish respect right away by using formal language. “Use Mr., Mrs., Ms., and so on. Or, you might ask your patient about preferred forms of address as well as how she or he would like to address you. Avoid using familiar terms which tend to sound patronising.

If the older patient is accompanied by a relative or friend, avoid the “does he take sugar?” approach. Do not refer to the patient using the third person – “he” or “she” – unless it is very clear that the patient finds communication very difficult (dementia, severe hearing loss, etc), in which case, the companion can act as an intermediary.

Make older patients comfortable

Ask staff to make sure patients have a comfortable seat in the waiting room and help with filling out forms if necessary. Be aware that older patients may need to be escorted to and from exam rooms, offices, toilets, and the waiting area. Staff should check on them often if they have a long wait in the examination room.

Take a few moments to establish rapport

Introduce yourself clearly and do not speak too quickly. Show from the start that you accept the patient and want to hear his or her concerns. If you are in a hospital setting, remember to explain your role or refresh the patient’s memory of it.

In the examination room, greet the patient(s) and apologise for any delays. With new patients, try a few comments to promote rapport: “Are you from this area?” or “Do you have family nearby?” With returning patients,

friendly questions about their families or activities can relieve stress.

Try not to rush

Older people may have trouble following rapid-fire questioning or torrents of information. By speaking more slowly, you will give them time to process what is being asked or said. If you tend to speak quickly, especially if your accent is different from what your patients are used to hearing, try to slow down. This gives them time to take in and better understand what you are saying.

Avoid hurrying older patients. Time spent discussing concerns will allow you to gather important information and may lead to improved cooperation and treatment adherence.

Feeling rushed leads people to believe they are not being heard or understood. Be aware of the patient’s own tendency to minimise complaints or to worry that he or she is taking too much of your time.

If time is an issue, you might suggest that your patients prepare a list of their health concerns in advance of their appointments. That way they are prepared and you have a sense of everything they’d like to cover during your time together.

Avoid interrupting

One study found that doctors, on average, interrupt patients within the first 18 seconds of the initial interview. Once interrupted, a patient is less likely to reveal all of his or her concerns. This means finding out what you need to know may require another visit or some follow-up phone calls.

Use active listening skills

Face the patient, maintain eye contact, and when he or she is talking, use frequent, brief responses, such as “okay,” “I see,” and “uh-huh.” Active listening keeps the discussion focused and lets patients know you understand their concerns.

Demonstrate empathy

Watch for opportunities to respond to patients' emotions, using phrases such as "That sounds difficult," or "I'm sorry you're facing this problem; I think we can work on it together." It also has rewards in terms of patient satisfaction, understanding, and adherence to treatment.

Avoid medical jargon

Try not to assume that patients know medical terminology or a lot about their disease. Introduce necessary information by first asking patients what they know about their condition and building on that. Although some terms seem commonplace—MRIs, CT scans, stress tests, and so on—some older patients may be unfamiliar with what each test really is. Check often to be sure that your patient understands what you are saying. You might ask the patient to repeat back the diagnosis or care plan in his or her own words—this can help with recall, as well. You may want to spell or write down diagnoses or important terms to remember.

"Tell me more about how you spend your days."

Although she complains of loneliness and long days in front of the television, Mrs. Lomas refuses to participate in activities at the community senior centre. "I don't want to hang around old people who have nothing better to do than compare health problems," she tells her doctor. "Why not give it a try?" her doctor asks. "You might find members who share many of your same interests, including your love of gardening." Six months later, when she sees the doctor again, Mrs. Lomas thanks her. She has joined the garden club and reports that the members all have green thumbs and are lively conversationalists. Better still, Mrs. Lomas's depressive symptoms seem improved.

Be careful about language

Some words may have different meanings to older patients than to you or your peers. Words may also have different connotations based on cultural or ethnic background. For example, the word "dementia" may connote insanity, and the word "cancer" may be considered a death sentence. Although you cannot anticipate every generational and cultural/ethnic difference in language use, being aware of the possibility may help you to communicate more clearly.

Use simple, common language, and ask if clarification is needed. Offer to repeat or reword the information: "I know this is complex. I'll do my best to explain, but let me know if you have any questions or just want me to go over it again."

Low literacy, eyesight or inability to read also may be a problem. Reading materials written at an easy reading level can help.

Write down take-away points

It can often be difficult for patients to remember everything discussed during an appointment about their condition and care. Older adults can especially benefit from having written notes to refer back to that summarise major points from the visit. Try to make these notes simple and clear, avoiding ambiguous and complicated language. For example, you might write, "Drink at least one glass of water every two hours" instead of "Increase fluids."

Ensure an understanding of the health information

Conclude the visit by making sure the patient understands:

- What the main health issue is
- What he or she needs to do
- Why it is important to act

One way to do this is the "teach-back method"—ask patients to say what they understand from the visit. Also, ask about any potential issues that might keep the patient from carrying out the treatment plan.

Compensating for hearing deficits

Age-related hearing loss is common. About one quarter of people between the ages of 65 and 75, and half of those over the age of 75 have disabling hearing loss. Here are a few tips to make it easier to communicate with a person who has lost some hearing:

Make sure your patient can hear you. Ask if the patient has a working hearing aid. Look at the auditory canal for the presence of excess earwax.

Talk slowly and clearly in a normal tone. Shouting or speaking in a raised voice actually distorts language sounds and can give the impression of anger.

Avoid using a high-pitched voice; it is hard to hear.

Face the person directly, at eye level, so that he or she can lip-read or pick up visual clues.

Keep your hands away from your face while talking, as this can hinder lip-reading ability.

Be aware that background noises, such as whirring computers and office equipment, can mask what is being said.

If your patient has difficulty with letters and numbers, give a context for them. For instance, say, “‘m’ as in Mary,” “‘two’ as in twins,” or “‘b’ as in boy.” Say each number separately (for example, “five, six” instead of “fifty-six”). Be especially careful with letters that sound alike (for example, m and n, and b, c, d, e, t, and v).

Keep a notepad handy so you can write what you are saying. Write out diagnoses and other important terms.

Tell your patient when you are changing the subject. Give clues, such as pausing briefly, speaking a bit more loudly, gesturing toward what will be discussed, gently touching the patient, or asking a question.

Compensating for visual deficits

Visual disorders become more common as people age. Here are some things you can do to help manage the difficulties caused by visual deficits:

Make sure there is adequate lighting, including sufficient light on your face. Try to minimise glare.

Check that your patient has brought and is wearing glasses, if needed.

Make sure that handwritten instructions are clear.

If your patient has trouble reading, consider alternatives such as recording instructions, providing large pictures or diagrams, or using aids such as specially configured pillboxes.

When using printed materials, make sure the type is large enough and the typeface is easy to read.

Recepting Emotions

Recepting emotions and feelings often has the effect of taking the consultation to a deeper level, where highly significant factors in the patient’s story emerge and can be safely discussed:

- That must have worried you
- I get the feeling you’re quite angry
- I think you’re probably quite sad
- I wonder whether you perhaps blame yourself
- That sounds really frustrating
- So, the future looks pretty bleak for you?

Section 5 (xviii)

Communication and Alzheimer's and Dementia

Communication in the early stage

In the early stage of Alzheimer's disease, sometimes referred to as mild Alzheimer's in a medical context, an individual is still able to participate in meaningful conversation and engage in social activities.

However, he or she may repeat stories, feel overwhelmed by excessive stimulation or have difficulty finding the right word.

Tips for successful communication:

- Don't make assumptions about a person's ability to communicate because of an Alzheimer's diagnosis. The disease affects each person differently.
- Don't exclude the person with the disease from conversations.
- Speak directly to the person rather than to his or her caregiver or companion.
- Take time to listen to the person express his or her thoughts, feelings and needs.
- Give the person time to respond. Don't interrupt unless help is requested.
- Ask what the person is still comfortable doing and what he or she may need help with.
- Discuss which method of communication is most comfortable. This could include face-to-face conversation, email or phone calls.
- It's OK to laugh. Sometimes humour lightens the mood and makes communication easier.
- Don't pull away; your honesty, friendship and support are important to the person.

Communication in the middle stage

The middle stage of Alzheimer's, sometimes referred to as moderate Alzheimer's, is typically the longest and can last for many years. As the disease progresses, the person will have greater difficulty communicating and will require more direct care.

Tips for successful communication:

- Engage the person in one-on-one conversation in a quiet space that has minimal distractions.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Maintain eye contact. It shows you care about what he or she is saying.
- Give the person plenty of time to respond so he or she can think about what to say.
- Be patient and offer reassurance. It may encourage the person to explain his or her thoughts.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Ask yes or no questions. For example, "Would you like some coffee?" rather than "What would you like to drink?"
- Avoid criticising or correcting. Instead, listen and try to find the meaning in what the person says. Repeat what was said to clarify.
- Avoid arguing. If the person says something you don't agree with, let it be.
- Offer clear, step-by-step instructions for tasks. Lengthy requests may be overwhelming.
- Give visual cues. Demonstrate a task to encourage participation.
- Written notes can be helpful when spoken words seem confusing.

Communication in the late stage

The late stage of Alzheimer's disease, sometimes referred to as severe Alzheimer's, may last from several weeks to several years. As the disease advances, the person with Alzheimer's may rely on non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions or vocal sounds. Around-the-clock care is usually required in this stage.

Tips for successful communication:

- Approach the person from the front and identify yourself.
- Encourage non-verbal communication. If you don't understand what the person is trying to say, ask him or her to point or gesture.
- Use touch, sights, sounds, smells and tastes as a form of communication with the person.
- Consider the feelings behind words or sounds. Sometimes the emotions being expressed are more important than what's being said.
- Treat the person with dignity and respect. Avoid talking down to the person or as if he or she isn't there.
- It's OK if you don't know what to say; your presence and friendship are most important.

Section 5 (xix)

SBAR communication tool



Online library of Quality,
Service Improvement
and Redesign tools

**SBAR communication
tool** – situation, background,
assessment, recommendation

NHS England and NHS Improvement



SBAR communication tool – situation, background, assessment, recommendation

What is it?

SBAR is an easy to use, structured form of communication that enables information to be transferred accurately between individuals. SBAR was originally developed by the United States military for communication on nuclear submarines, but has been successfully used in many different healthcare settings, particularly relating to improving patient safety.

SBAR consists of standardised prompt questions in four sections to ensure that staff are sharing concise and focused information. It allows staff to communicate assertively and effectively, reducing the need for repetition and the likelihood for errors. As the structure is shared, it also helps staff anticipate the information needed by colleagues and encourages assessment skills. Using SBAR prompts staff to formulate information with the right level of detail.

When to use it

Communication can be defined as *‘a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange information but also create and share meaning’*.

SBAR helps to provide a structure for an interaction that helps both the giver of the information and the receiver of it. It helps the giver by ensuring they have formulated their thinking before trying to communicate it to someone else. The receiver knows what to expect and it helps to ensure the giver of information is not interrupted by the receiver with questions that will be answered later on in the conversation.

SBAR can be used in any setting but can be particularly effective in reducing the barrier to effective communication across different disciplines and between different levels of staff. When staff use the tool in a clinical setting, they make a recommendation that ensures the reason for the communication is clear. This is particularly important in situations where staff may be uncomfortable about making a recommendation, eg those who are inexperienced or who need to communicate with someone who is more senior than them.

The use of SBAR provides clarity to communication and prevents the unreliable process of ‘hinting and hoping’ that the other person understands.

Figure 1: SBAR communication tool

S	Situation: I am (name), (X) nurse on ward (X) I am calling about (patient X) I am calling because I am concerned that... (e.g. BP is low/high, pulse is XX, temperature is XX, Early Warning Score is XX)
B	Background: Patient (X) was admitted on (XX date) with... (e.g. MI/chest infection) They have had (X operation/procedure/investigation) Patient (X)'s condition has changed in the last (XX mins) Their last set of obs were (XX) Patient (X)'s normal condition is... (e.g. alert/drowsy/confused, pain free)
A	Assessment: I think the problem is (XXX) And I have... (e.g. given O ₂ /analgesia, stopped the infusion) OR I am not sure what the problem is but patient (X) is deteriorating OR I don't know what's wrong but I am really worried
R	Recommendation: I need you to... Come to see the patient in the next (XX mins) AND Is there anything I need to do in the mean time? (e.g. stop the fluid/repeat the obs)
Ask receiver to repeat key information to ensure understanding	
The SBAR tool originated from the US Navy and was adapted for use in healthcare by Dr M Leonard and colleagues from Kaiser Permanente, Colorado, USA	

How to use it

S – situation

- Identify yourself the site/unit you are calling from.
- Identify the patient by name and the reason for your communication.
- Describe your concern.

The following example shows how to explain the specific situation about which you are calling, including the patient's name, consultant, patient location, code status, and vital signs.

'This is Jenny, a registered nurse on Nightingale Ward. The reason I'm calling is because Mrs Taylor in room 225 has become suddenly short of breath, her oxygen saturation has dropped to 88% on room air, her respiration rate is 24 per minute, her heart rate is 110 and her blood pressure is 85/50.

We have placed her on six litres of oxygen and her saturation is 93%, her work of breathing is increased, she is anxious, her breath sounds are clear throughout and her respiratory rate remains greater than 20.'

B – background

- Give the patient's reason for admission
- Explain significant medical history
- Inform the receiver of the information of the patient's background: admitting diagnosis, date of admission, prior procedures, current medications, allergies, pertinent laboratory results and other relevant diagnostic results. For this part in the process you need to have collected information from the patient's chart and notes.

For example:

'Mrs. Smith is a 69 year old woman who was admitted 10 days ago following a car accident with a T 5 burst fracture and a T 6 ASIA B SCI. She had T 3-T 7 instrumentation and fusion nine days ago. Her only complication was a right haemothorax for which a chest drain was put in place. The drain was removed five days ago and her chest x-ray has shown significant improvement. She has been mobilising with physio and has been progressing well. Her haemoglobin is 100 gm/L but otherwise her blood work is within normal limits. She has been on Enoxaparin for DVT prophylaxis and Oxycodone for pain management.'

A – assessment

- Vital signs.
- Contraction pattern.
- Clinical impressions, concerns.

You need to think critically when informing the receiver of your assessment of the situation. This means you have considered what might be the underlying reason for your patient's condition. Not only have you reviewed your findings from your assessment but you have also consolidated these with other objective indicators, such as laboratory results.

If you do not have an assessment, you may say:

'I think she may have had a pulmonary embolus.'

'I'm not sure what the problem is, but I am worried.'

R – recommendation

Finally, what is your recommendation? That is, what would you like to happen by the end of the conversation. Any advice that is given on the phone needs to be repeated back to ensure accuracy.

- Explain what you need – be specific about request and time frame.
- Make suggestions.
- Clarify expectations.

For example:

'Would you like me get a stat CXR and ABGs? Start an IV?'

'Should I begin organising a spiral CT?'

'When are you going to be able to get here?'

Although SBAR is a simple and effective tool, incorporating it can take considerable effort and require significant training. It can be very difficult to change the way people communicate, particularly with more senior staff.

SBAR can be used anywhere, including:

- inpatient or outpatient
- urgent or non urgent communications
- conversations between clinicians, either in person or over the phone - particularly useful in nurse to doctor communications and also helpful in doctor to doctor communication
- conversations with peers – change of shift report
- communication between different disciplines, eg care home to emergency department
- escalating a concern
- when patients move between NHS services or from social care to NHS services, eg care homes and into/out of hospital.

TIPS

Less experienced clinical staff can sometimes be anxious about making recommendations. When this is the case, offer extra support, encouragement and training. A good place to start is by trying the tool with supportive colleagues and to do role play to try it out.

Hospitals using SBAR have found that notepads or paper with the tool printed on them, pocket cards and stickers on telephones are useful aides in the early stages of using the tool within an organisation.

Examples

1. The multi-disciplinary team meeting is an example of the process in action. Many clinicians are present and most are in a position to help formulate the most appropriate management for the patient.

The doctor directly responsible presents the current situation and the relevant background. The assessment will include a discussion with other clinicians to clarify the clinical findings and a joint review of the results of all relevant investigations. Recommendations will be agreed by all present. These will be documented in the patient's notes.

2. Another example where this tool would add clarity and contribute to better care is the emergency call to a sleeping senior colleague for advice about patient management.

When woken in the night, it can take some time to absorb the necessary facts and respond. This is greatly aided by a clear presentation of the situation, the background, the assessment and the recommended treatment or action.

In the surgical situation it is possible – and even quite likely – that the senior colleague is needed to help with the assessment and/or to carry out the recommended surgery. The request for direct help should be made clear as part of the recommendation so that there is no misunderstanding.

3. When working within the care home environment, it was discovered that communication between the care home and the emergency department was poor. Both sides would blame the other for not providing information that was required. Emergency department staff would often report that *'the care home had sent someone with the patient who knew nothing about them'*. The care home would report that once one of their residents went into the hospital, it was like a 'black hole' with it being impossible to get information about what was going on.

Following implementation of SBAR communication, both sides reported that there were significant improvements in both the communication and the quality of the overall relationship.

What next?

Once you have started using SBAR as a communication tool, you need to monitor the progress – how well it is being used and whether communication is improved. If it is proving successful, the next step is to embed the tool into people's everyday habits, so that it becomes 'the way things are done around here'.

Ideas for helping the more widespread use of SBAR include:

- using prompts and visual cues – eg stickers on the telephone, letter templates and patient notes
- ensuring people feel it's alright to prompt each other using your agreed framework. For example, 'Can I make sure I understand you? What is your recommendation here?'
- make time for team discussion, reflection and refinement of the tool
- disseminate your good practice to other teams by modelling the communication behaviour you are aiming for.



Section 6

English verb tenses

Section overview

Some trainees will not use the correct tense of the verb. If you think that this is a problem and creating confusion in the patient, or is potentially jeopardising patient safety or compliance, this must be pointed out and corrected. It will probably be one of the 12 tenses listed below. The trainee can then be advised to go to the relevant section of the detailed explanations to study and to practise.

Additionally, checking techniques can be used to aid clarification: 'When you say that you have been taking your medication, did you take it every day as prescribed and are you still taking it?'



Section 6 (i)

A summary of tenses

Getting the verb tense right is extremely important. Failure to do so may result in misunderstanding or receiving an incorrect answer to a question.

It is always important to double check the answer. ‘So, you took the tablets every day as I prescribed and you have finished the course of antibiotics?’ (...as a follow up to question 5 below).

Below are 12 questions.

a. You want to know if the medication you have prescribed is being taken regularly by the patient. Which question do you ask?

(Answer at the bottom of the page)

b. And, a patient who is supposed to take medication twice a day, forgot to do so several days in a row and told you today that he felt unwell last weekend. Which question do you ask?

(Answer at the bottom of the page)

1. Do you take your medication?
2. Are you taking your medication?
3. Have you taken your medication?
4. Have you been taking your medication?
5. Did you take your medication?
6. Were you taking your medication?
7. Had you taken your medication?
8. Had you been taking your medication?
9. Will you take your medication?
10. Will you be taking your medication?
11. Will you have taken your medication?
12. Will you have been taking your medication?

Answers

- a. Have you been taking your medication?
- b. Had you been taking your medication?

Summary of English Verb Tenses

There are 12 main tenses in English

- Simple present: She writes every day.
- Present continuous: She is writing right now.
- Present perfect: She has written Chapter 1.
- Present perfect continuous: She has been writing for 2 hours.
- Simple past: She wrote last night.
- Past continuous: She was writing when he called.
- Past perfect: She had written Chapter 3 before she started Chapter 4.
- Past perfect continuous: She had been writing for two hours before her friends arrived.
- Simple future: She will write tomorrow.
- Future continuous: She will be writing when you arrive.
- Future perfect: She will have written Chapter 4 before she writes Chapter 5.
- Future perfect continuous: She will have been writing for two hours by the time her friends come over.

And there are four main Conditionals:

Zero conditional (general truths/general habits).

Example: If I have time, I write every day.

First conditional (possible or likely things in the future).

Example: If I have time, I will write every day.

Second conditional (impossible things in the present/unlikely in the future).

Example: If I had time, I would write every day.

Third conditional (things that did not happen in the past and their imaginary results)

Example: If I had had time, I would have written every day.

There are Modal Verbs too. This is how they are used:

- You may take your medication.
(permission/possibility)
- You can take your medication.
(ability/permission/request in questions)
- You might take your medication.
(possibility)
- You should take your medication.
(advice; uncertain prediction)
- You have to take your medication.
(obligation/forced circumstances)
- You must take your medication.
(obligation/firm necessity)

Section 6 (ii)

Six common verb tense mistakes

Verbs are tricky. When learning a new language, verbs and their conjugations are arguably the hardest part to master. It's common for people to accidentally choose an incorrect verb form. Overcoming verb tense errors isn't merely an issue of mastering the ins and outs of a language. Such mistakes can easily lead to miscommunication. With that in mind, explore six common verb mistakes and how to avoid them.

1. Using Inconsistent Verb Forms

One of the best ways to confuse your readers or listeners is with inconsistent verb forms. This verb tense error involves using a verb tense that is not correct within the sentence or larger context in which it is used.

- **Inconsistent verb usage** – We were on the way to school. Suddenly, the sky turns dark. (“Were” is past tense and “turns” is present tense, so the verb tense is inconsistent.)
- **Consistent verb usage** – We were on the way to school. Suddenly, the sky turned dark. (Both “were” and “turned” are past tense forms, so the verb tense is consistent.)

It's important to avoid switching back and forth between tenses.

2. Confusing the Present Tense Forms

The present tense has some intimidating labels that represent different forms of present tense verbs. There are four different present tense verb forms. They are very similar but are not interchangeable. Here's how to use each present tense form, along with sample sentences featuring a form of the verb “to work” that illustrate correct usage.

Present tense verb form	When to use	Sample sentence
present simple	current or habitual actions	My friend works there
present perfect	connects the past to the present	My friend has worked there
present continuous	discussing something that is in progress right now	My friend is working there
present perfect continuous	an ongoing action that has not been completed	My friend has been working there

In the world of verb conjugation, the words ‘continuous’ and ‘progressive’ are used interchangeably. Present continuous tense means the same thing as present progressive tense.

So, what's the difference between, “My friend works there” and “My friend is working there”? The difference is slight.

“My friend works there” tells us that it is a habitual action. The friend is not just there for a few days as a temporary worker; she is an employee. Beyond that, it is a statement of fact.

“My friend is working there” refers to an action taking place right now. It's continuous, or ongoing, at this very moment. It can also suggest that the situation is temporary.

3. Confusing the past tense forms

Just like present tense verbs have multiple forms, so do past tense verbs. Mixing them up is a common error. It sounds pretty heavy. In truth, it's not too difficult. They're phrases people use day in and day out, without even thinking about verb conjugation. The table below explains when to use each form along with a sample sentence featuring the verb "to walk."

Past tense verb form	When to use	Sample sentence
past simple	action completed in the past	I walked the dog
past perfect	action that was done at some point in the past	I had walked the dog
past continuous	action that was in progress in the past but is now over	I was walking the dog
past perfect continuous	previously ongoing action that ceased without being complete	I had been walking the dog

If you mention something that happened in the past and then want to reference something that happened even earlier than that, be sure to use the past perfect tense.

4. Switching in and out of present and past tense

Sometimes, people write the same way they speak. In everyday speech, it's easy to slip up and use the wrong tense. The chances are that the person with whom you are speaking will figure out what you mean. But, when you are writing, it is important to avoid the mistake of switching between the present and past tenses.

- *Switching tenses* – "Tom! Get down here right now!" granddad yelled. Grandad was a fierce drill sergeant and is always nagging me about punctuality.
- *Consistent tense* – "Tom! Get down here right now!" granddad yelled. Granddad had been a fierce drill sergeant and had always nagged me about punctuality.

5. Misusing the past continuous tense

Think back to the past continuous tense. That's the tense that indicates something happened in the past, on a continuous basis. The past continuous tense is something along the lines of, "I was walking the dog." The past perfect continuous tense is would be "I had been walking the dog."

The trouble with the past continuous tense is, if it wasn't an ongoing affair in the past, all those helping verbs and -ing words are only going to make your prose appear cumbersome.

- **simple past tense** – He fixed the alarm system before she walked into the kitchen.
- **past continuous tense** – He was fixing the alarm system before she walked into the kitchen.
- **past perfect continuous tense** – He had been fixing the alarm system before she walked into the kitchen.

With the examples above, none are wrong as written. Choosing the correct option is just a matter of whether or not you want to signify a continuous event. So, had this man finished fixing the alarm system before she walked into the kitchen? Or was he continuously fixing the alarm system? Or, when he saw her, did he stop and do something else? Choose the option that correctly conveys what you mean

6. Altering the future tense forms

Of course, English is a language of exceptions. So far, these verb tense error examples have made it clear that you should generally remain in the tense that you start with. However, the future tense likes to play by a different set of rules.

- **incorrect usage** – I will hire you full-time when your degree will be complete. ❌
- **correct usage** – I will hire you full-time when your degree is complete. ✅

From the standpoint of uniformity, you might think this is the proper construct. "Will hire" is in the future tense, so shouldn't the subordinate clause also be in the future tense? Not in this case. When the verb in the main clause is in the future tense, the verb in the subordinate clause should actually shift to the present tense.

Section 6 (iii)

The present simple

The present simple is a verb tense which is used to show repetition, habit or generalisation. Less commonly, the simple present can be used to talk about scheduled actions in the near future and, in some cases, actions happening now.

The present simple is just the base form of the verb. Questions are made with *do* and negative forms are made with *do not*.

Statement: You speak English.

Question: Do you speak English?

Negative: You do not speak English.

In the third person singular, *-s* or *-es* is added. Questions are made with *does* and negative forms are made with *does not*.

Statement: He speaks English.

Question: Does he speak English?

Negative: He does not speak English.

Simple present – uses

Use 1: Repeated actions

Use the simple present to express the idea that an action is repeated or usual. The action can be a habit, a hobby, a daily event, a scheduled event or something that often happens. It can also be something a person often forgets or usually does not do.

Examples:

- I play tennis.
- She does not play tennis.
- Does he play tennis?
- The train leaves every morning at 8 AM.
- The train does not leave at 9 AM.
- When does the train usually leave?
- She always forgets her purse.
- He never forgets his wallet.
- Every twelve months, the Earth circles the Sun.

- Does the Sun circle the Earth?

Use 2: Facts or generalisations

The simple present can also indicate the speaker believes that a fact was true before, is true now, and will be true in the future. It is not important if the speaker is correct about the fact. It is also used to make generalisations about people or things.

Examples:

- Cats like milk.
- Birds do not like milk.
- Do pigs like milk?
- California is in America.
- California is not in the United Kingdom.
- Windows are made of glass.
- Windows are not made of wood.
- New York is a small city. It is not important that this fact is untrue.

Use 3: Scheduled events in the near future

Speakers occasionally use simple present to talk about scheduled events in the near future. This is most commonly done when talking about public transportation, but it can be used with other scheduled events as well.

Examples:

- The train leaves tonight at 6 PM.
- The bus does not arrive at 11 AM, it arrives at 11 PM.
- When do we board the plane?
- The party starts at 8 o'clock.
- When does class begin tomorrow?

Use 4: Now (*non-continuous verbs*)

Speakers sometimes use the simple present to express the idea that an action is happening or is not happening now. This can only be done with non-continuous verbs and certain mixed verbs.

Examples:

- I am here now.
- She is not here now.
- He needs help right now.
- He does not need help now.
- He has his passport in his hand.
- Do you have your passport with you?

Simple present: Tips

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You only speak English.
- Do you only speak English?

Active/passive

Examples:

- Once a week, Tom cleans the car. (Active)
- Once a week, the car is cleaned by Tom. (Passive)

Section 6 (iv)

The present continuous

The present continuous is a verb tense which is used to show that an ongoing action is happening now, either at the moment of speech or now in a larger sense. The present continuous can also be used to show that an action is going to take place in the near future.

Present Continuous Forms

The present continuous is formed using am/is/are + present participle. Questions are indicated by inverting the subject and am/is/are. Negatives are made with not.

Statement: You are watching TV.

Question: Are you watching TV?

Negative: You are not watching TV.

Present Continuous Uses

Use 1: Now

Use the present continuous with normal verbs to express the idea that something is happening now, at this very moment. It can also be used to show that something is not happening now.

Examples:

- You are learning English now.
- You are not swimming now.
- Are you sleeping?
- I am sitting.
- I am not standing.
- Is he sitting or standing?
- They are reading their books.
- They are not watching television.
- What are you doing?
- Why aren't you doing your homework?

Use 2: Longer actions in progress now

In English, "now" can mean: this second, today, this month, this year, this century, and so on. Sometimes, we use the present continuous to say that we are in the process of doing a longer action which is in progress; however, we might not be doing it at this exact second.

Examples:

(All of these sentences can be said while eating dinner in a restaurant.)

- I am studying to become a doctor.
- I am not studying to become a dentist.
- I am reading the book Tom Sawyer.
- I am not reading any books right now.
- Are you working on any special projects at work?
- Aren't you teaching at the university now?

Use 3: Near future

Sometimes, speakers use the present continuous to indicate that something will or will not happen in the near future.

Examples:

- I am meeting some friends after work.
- I am not going to the party tonight.
- Is he visiting his parents next weekend?
- Isn't he coming with us tonight?

Use 4: Repetition and irritation with “always”

The present continuous with words such as “always” or “constantly” expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happens. Notice that the meaning is like simple present, but with negative emotion.

Remember to put the words “always” or “constantly” between “be” and “verb+ing.”

Examples:

- She is always coming to class late.
- He is constantly talking. I wish he would shut up.
- I don't like them because they are always complaining.

Present continuous: Tips

REMEMBER – Non-continuous verbs / mixed verbs

It is important to remember that non-continuous verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for mixed verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using present continuous with these verbs, you must use simple present.

Examples:

- She is loving this chocolate ice cream. ❌
- She loves this chocolate ice cream. ✅

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You are still watching TV.
- Are you still watching TV?

Active/passive

Examples:

- Right now, Tom is writing the letter. (Active)
- Right now, the letter is being written by Tom. (Passive)

Section 6 (v)

The present perfect

The present perfect is a verb tense which is used to show that an action has taken place once or many times before now. The present perfect is most frequently used to talk about experiences or changes that have taken place, but there are other less common uses as well.

Present perfect forms

The present perfect is formed using has/have + past participle. Questions are indicated by inverting the subject and has/have. Negatives are made with not.

Statement: You have seen that film many times.

Question: Have you seen that film many times?

Negative: You have not seen that film many times.

Present Perfect Uses

Use 1: Unspecified time before now

We use the present perfect to say that an action happened at an unspecified time before now. The exact time is not important. You CANNOT use the present perfect with specific time expressions such as: yesterday, one year ago, last week, when I was a child, when I lived in Japan, at that moment, that day, one day, etc. We CAN use the present perfect with unspecific expressions such as: ever, never, once, many times, several times, before, so far, already, yet, etc.

Examples:

- I have seen that movie twenty times.
- I think I have met him once before.
- There have been many earthquakes in California.
- People have travelled to the Moon.
- People have not travelled to Mars.
- Have you read the book yet?
- Nobody has ever climbed that mountain.
- Has there ever been a war in the United States?
Yes, there has been a war in the United States.

How do you actually use the present perfect?

The concept of “unspecified time” can be very confusing to English learners. It is best to associate present perfect with the following topics:

Topic 1: Experience

You can use the present perfect to describe your experience. It is like saying, “I have the experience of...” You can also use this tense to say that you have never had a certain experience. The present perfect is NOT used to describe a specific event.

Examples:

- I have been to France.

This sentence means that you have had the experience of being in France. Maybe you have been there once, or several times.

- I have been to France three times.

You can add the number of times at the end of the sentence.

- I have never been to France.

This sentence means that you have not had the experience of going to France.

- I think I have seen that movie before.
- He has never travelled by train.
- Joan has studied two foreign languages.
- Have you ever met him?
No, I have not met him.

Topic 2: Change over time

We often use the present perfect to talk about change that has happened over a period of time.

Examples:

- You have grown since the last time I saw you.
- The government has become more interested in arts education.
- Japanese has become one of the most popular courses at the university since the Asian studies course was established.
- My English has really improved since I moved to Britain.

Topic 3: Accomplishments

We often use the present perfect to list the accomplishments of individuals and humanity. You cannot mention a specific time.

Examples:

- Man has walked on the Moon.
- Our son has learned how to read.
- Doctors have cured many deadly diseases.
- Scientists have split the atom.

Topic 4: An uncompleted action you are expecting

We often use the present perfect to say that an action which we expected has not happened. Using the present perfect suggests that we are still waiting for the action to happen.

Examples:

- James has not finished his homework yet.
- Susan hasn't mastered Japanese, but she can communicate.
- Bill has still not arrived.
- The rain hasn't stopped.

Topic 5: Multiple actions at different times

We also use the present perfect to talk about several different actions which have occurred in the past at different times. Present perfect suggests the process is not complete and more actions are possible.

Examples:

- The army has attacked that city five times.
- I have had four examinations and five tests so far this semester.
- We have had many major problems while working on this project.
- She has talked to several specialists about her problem, but nobody knows why she is sick.

Time expressions with present perfect

When we use the present perfect it means that something has happened at some point in our lives before now. Remember, the exact time the action happened is not important.

Sometimes, we want to limit the time we are looking in for an experience. We can do this with expressions such as: in the last week, in the last year, this week, this month, so far, up to now, etc.

Examples:

- Have you been to Mexico in the last year?
- I have seen that film six times in the last month.
- They have had three tests in the last week.
- She graduated from university less than three years ago. She has worked for three different companies so far.
- My car has broken down three times this week.

Notice: “Last year” and “in the last year” are very different in meaning. “Last year” means the year before now, and it is considered a specific time which requires simple past. “In the last year” means from 365 days ago until now. It is not considered a specific time, so it requires present perfect.

Examples:

- I went to Mexico last year.
- I went to Mexico in the calendar year before this one.
- I have been to Mexico in the last year.
- I have been to Mexico at least once at some point between 365 days ago and now.

Use 2: Duration from the past until now (non-continuous verbs)

With non-continuous verbs and non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, we use the present perfect to show that something started in the past and has continued up until now. “For five minutes,” “for two weeks,” and “since Tuesday” are all durations which can be used with the present perfect.

Examples:

- I have had a cold for two weeks.
- She has been in England for six months.
- Mary has loved chocolate since she was a little girl.

Although the above use of present perfect is normally limited to non-continuous verbs and non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, the words “live,” “work,” “teach,” and “study” are sometimes used in this way even though they are NOT non-continuous verbs.

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You have only seen that film one time.
- Have you only seen that film one time?

Active/passive

Examples:

- Many tourists have visited that castle. (Active)
- That castle has been visited by many tourists. (Passive)

Section 6 (vi)

The present perfect continuous

The present perfect continuous (also called present perfect progressive) is a verb tense which is used to show that an action started in the past and has continued up to the present moment. The present perfect continuous usually emphasises duration, or the amount of time that an action has been taking place.

Present perfect continuous forms

The present perfect continuous is formed using *has/have + been + present participle*. Questions are indicated by inverting the subject and *has/have*. Negatives are made with *not*.

Statement: You have been waiting here for two hours.

Question: Have you been waiting here for two hours?

Negative: You have not been waiting here for two hours.

Present perfect continuous uses

Use 1: Duration from the past until now

We use the present perfect continuous to show that something started in the past and has continued up until now. “For five minutes,” “for two weeks,” and “since Tuesday” are all durations which can be used with the present perfect continuous.

Examples:

- They have been talking for the last hour.
- She has been working at that company for three years.
- What have you been doing for the last 30 minutes?
- James has been teaching at the university since June.
- We have been waiting here for over two hours!
- Why has Nancy not been taking her medicine for the last three days?

Use 2: Recently, lately

You can also use the present perfect continuous WITHOUT a duration such as “for two weeks.” Without the duration, the tense has a more general meaning of “lately.” We often use the words “lately” or “recently” to emphasise this meaning.

Examples:

- Recently, I have been feeling really tired.
- She has been watching too much television lately.
- Have you been exercising lately?
- Mary has been feeling a little depressed.
- Lisa has not been practicing her English.
- What have you been doing?

Important: Remember that the present perfect continuous has the meaning of “lately” or “recently.” If you use the present perfect continuous in a question such as “Have you been feeling alright?”, it can suggest that the person looks sick or unhealthy. A question such as “Have you been smoking?” can suggest that you smell the smoke on the person. Using this tense in a question suggests you can see, smell, hear or feel the results of the action. It is possible to insult someone by using this tense incorrectly.

Remember: Non-continuous verbs/mixed verbs

It is important to remember that non-continuous verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for mixed verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using present perfect continuous with these verbs, you must use present perfect.

Examples:

- Sam has been having his car for two years. ✗
- Sam has had his car for two years. ✓

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You have only been waiting here for one hour.
- Have you only been waiting here for one hour?

Active/passive

Examples:

- Recently, John has been doing the work. (Active)
- Recently, the work has been being done by John.
(Passive)

Note: Present perfect continuous is less commonly used in its passive form.

Section 6 (vii)

The past simple

The past simple (also called simple past, past indefinite or preterite) is a verb tense which is used to show that a completed action took place at a specific time in the past. The simple past is also frequently used to talk about past habits and generalizations. Read on for detailed descriptions, examples, and simple past exercises.

Simple past forms

The simple past is formed using the verb + ed. In addition, there are many verbs with irregular past forms. Questions are made with did and negative forms are made with did not.

Statement: You called Debbie.

Question: Did you call Debbie?

Negative: You did not call Debbie.

Simple past uses

Use 1: Completed action in the past

Use the simple past to express the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Sometimes, the speaker may not actually mention the specific time, but they do have one specific time in mind.

Examples:

- I saw a film yesterday.
- I didn't see a play yesterday.
- Last year, I travelled to Japan.
- Last year, I didn't travel to Korea.
- Did you have dinner last night?
- She washed her car.
- He didn't wash his car.

Use 2: A Series of completed actions

We use the simple past to list a series of completed actions in the past. These actions happen 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on.

Examples:

- I finished work, walked to the beach, and found a nice place to swim.
- He arrived from the airport at 8:00, checked into the hotel at 9:00, and met the others at 10:00.
- Did you add flour, pour in the milk, and then add the eggs?

Use 3: Duration in the past

The simple past can be used with a duration which starts and stops in the past. A duration is a longer action often indicated by expressions such as: for two years, for five minutes, all day, all year, etc.

Examples:

- I lived in Brazil for two years.
- Shauna studied Japanese for five years.
- They sat at the beach all day.
- They did not stay at the party the entire time.
- We talked on the phone for thirty minutes.
- A: How long did you wait for them?
- B: We waited for one hour.

Use 4: Habits in the past

The simple past can also be used to describe a habit which stopped in the past. It can have the same meaning as “used to.” To make it clear that we are talking about a habit, we often add expressions such as: always, often, usually, never, when I was a child, when I was younger, etc.

Examples:

- I studied French when I was a child.
- He played the violin.
- He didn't play the piano.
- Did you play a musical instrument when you were a kid?
- She worked at the cinema after school.
- They never went to school; they always skipped class.

Use 5: Past facts or generalisations

The simple past can also be used to describe past facts or generalisations which are no longer true. As in USE 4 above, this use of the simple past is quite similar to the expression “used to.”

Examples:

- She was shy as a child, but now she is very outgoing.
- He didn't like tomatoes before.
- Did you live in Texas when you were a kid?
- People paid much more to make cell phone calls in the past.

Simple past tips

Important – When-clauses happen first

Clauses are groups of words which have meaning but are often not complete sentences. Some clauses begin with the word “when” such as “when I dropped my pen...” or “when class began...” These clauses are called when-clauses, and they are very important. The examples below contain when-clauses.

Examples:

- When I paid her one pound, she answered my question.
- She answered my question when I paid her one pound.

When-clauses are important because they always happen first when both clauses are in the simple past. Both of the examples above mean the same thing: first, I paid her one pound, and then, she answered my question. It is not important whether “when I paid her one pound” is at the beginning of the sentence or at the end of the sentence. However, the example below has a different meaning. First, she answered my question, and then, I paid her one pound.

Example:

- I paid her one pound when she answered my question.

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You just called Debbie.
- Did you just call Debbie?

Active/passive

Examples:

- Tom repaired the car. (Active)
- The car was repaired by Tom. (Passive)

Section 6 (viii)

The past continuous

The past continuous (also called past progressive) is a verb tense which is used to show that an ongoing past action was happening at a specific moment of interruption, or that two ongoing actions were happening at the same time. Read on for detailed descriptions, examples, and past continuous exercises.

Past continuous forms

The past continuous is formed using *was/were + present participle*. Questions are indicated by inverting the subject and *was/were*. Negatives are made with *not*.

Statement: You were studying when she called.

Question: Were you studying when she called?

Negative: You were not studying when she called.

Past continuous uses

Use 1 Interrupted action in the past

Use the past continuous to indicate that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the simple past. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

Examples:

- I was watching TV when she called.
- When the phone rang, she was writing a letter.
- While we were having the picnic, it started to rain.
- What were you doing when the earthquake started?
- I was listening to my iPod, so I didn't hear the fire alarm.
- You were not listening to me when I told you to turn the oven off.
- While John was sleeping last night, someone stole his car.
- Sam was waiting for us when we got off the plane.
- While I was writing the email, the computer suddenly went off.
- What were you doing when you broke your leg? I was snowboarding.

Use 2: Specific time as an interruption

In USE 1, described above, the past continuous is interrupted by a shorter action in the simple past. However, you can also use a specific time as an interruption.

Examples:

- Last night at 6 PM, I was eating dinner.
- At midnight, we were still driving through the desert.
- Yesterday at this time, I was sitting at my desk at work.

Important In the simple past, a specific time is used to show when an action began or finished. In the past continuous, a specific time only interrupts the action.

Examples:

- Last night at 6 PM, I ate dinner.
- I started eating at 6 PM.
- Last night at 6 PM, I was eating dinner.
- I started earlier; and at 6 PM, I was in the process of eating dinner.

Use 3: Parallel actions

When you use the past continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions were happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

Examples:

- I was studying while he was making dinner.
- While Ellen was reading, Tim was watching TV.
- Were you listening while he was talking?
- I wasn't paying attention while I was writing the letter, so I made several mistakes.
- What were you doing while you were waiting?
- Tom wasn't working, and I wasn't working either.
- They were eating dinner, discussing their plans, and having a good time.

Use 4: Atmosphere

In English, we often use a series of parallel actions to describe the atmosphere at a particular time in the past.

Example:

When I walked into the office, several people were busily typing, some were talking on the phones, the boss was yelling directions, and customers were waiting to be helped. One customer was yelling at a secretary and waving his hands. Others were complaining to each other about the bad service.

Use 5: Repetition and irritation with “always”

The past continuous with words such as “always” or “constantly” expresses the idea that something irritating or shocking often happened in the past. The concept is very similar to the expression used to but with negative emotion. Remember to put the words “always” or “constantly” between “be” and “verb+ing.”

Examples:

- She was always coming to class late.
- He was constantly talking. He annoyed everyone.
- I didn't like them because they were always complaining.

Past continuous tips

While vs. when

Clauses are groups of words which have meaning, but are often not complete sentences. Some clauses begin with the word “when” such as “when she called” or “when it bit me.” Other clauses begin with “while” such as “while she was sleeping” and “while he was surfing.” When you talk about things in the past, “when” is most often followed by the verb tense simple past, whereas “while” is usually followed by past continuous. “While” expresses the idea of “during that time.” Study the examples below. They have similar meanings, but they emphasize different parts of the sentence.

Examples:

- I was studying when she called.
- While I was studying, she called.

Remember: Non-continuous verbs / mixed verbs

It is important to remember that Non-continuous verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for mixed verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using past continuous with these verbs, you must use simple past.

Examples:

- Jane was being at my house when you arrived. ❌
- Jane was at my house when you arrived. ✔️

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You were just studying when she called.
- Were you just studying when she called?

Active/passive

Examples:

- The salesman was helping the customer when the thief came into the store. (Active)
- The customer was being helped by the salesman when the thief came into the store. (Passive)

Section 6 (ix)

The past perfect

Form: [had + past participle]

Examples:

- You had studied English before you moved to England.
- Had you studied English before you moved to England?
- You had not studied English before you moved to England.

Complete list of past perfect forms

Use 1: Completed action before something in the past

The past perfect expresses the idea that something occurred before another action in the past. It can also show that something happened before a specific time in the past.

Examples:

- I had never seen such a beautiful beach before I went to Kauai.
- I did not have any money because I had lost my wallet.
- Tony knew Istanbul so well because he had visited the city several times.
- Had Susan ever studied Thai before she moved to Thailand?
- She only understood the movie because she had read the book.
- Kristine had never been to an opera before last night.
- We were not able to get a hotel room because we had not booked in advance.
- Had you ever visited the U.S. before your trip in 2006? Yes, I had been to the U.S. once before.

Use 2: Duration before something in the past (non-continuous verbs)

With non-continuous verbs and some non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, we use the past perfect to show that something started in the past and continued up until another action in the past.

Examples:

- We had had that car for ten years before it broke down.
- By the time Alex finished his studies, he had been in London for over eight years.
- They felt bad about selling the house because they had owned it for more than forty years.

Although the above use of past perfect is normally limited to non-continuous verbs and non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, the words “live,” “work,” “teach,” and “study” are sometimes used in this way even though they are NOT non-continuous verbs.

Important: Specific times with the past perfect

Unlike with the present perfect, it is possible to use specific time words or phrases with the past perfect. Although this is possible, it is usually not necessary.

Example:

- She had visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.

Moreover, if the past perfect action did occur at a specific time, the simple past can be used instead of the past perfect when “before” or “after” is used in the sentence. The words “before” and “after” actually tell you what happens first, so the past perfect is optional. For this reason, both sentences below are correct.

Examples:

- She had visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.
- She visited her Japanese relatives once in 1993 before she moved in with them in 1996.

However, if the past perfect is not referring to an action at a specific time, the past perfect is not optional. Compare the examples below. Here past perfect is referring to a lack of experience rather than an action at a specific time. For this reason, simple past cannot be used.

Examples:

- She never saw a bear before she moved to Alaska. ❌
- She had never seen a bear before she moved to Alaska. ✅

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You had previously studied English before you moved to New York.
- Had you previously studied English before you moved to New York?

Active/passive

Examples:

- George had repaired many cars before he received his mechanic's license. (Active)
- Many cars had been repaired by George before he received his mechanic's license. (Passive)

Section 6 (x)

The past perfect continuous

Form: [had been + present participle]

Examples:

- You had been waiting there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.
- Had you been waiting there for more than two hours when she finally arrived?
- You had not been waiting there for more than two hours when she finally arrived.

Complete list of past perfect continuous forms

Use 1: Duration before something in the past

We use the past perfect continuous to show that something started in the past and continued up until another time in the past. “For five minutes” and “for two weeks” are both durations which can be used with the past perfect continuous. Notice that this is related to the present perfect continuous; however, the duration does not continue until now, it stops before something else in the past.

Examples:

- They had been talking for over an hour before Tony arrived.
- She had been working at that company for three years when it went out of business.
- How long had you been waiting to get on the bus?
- Mike wanted to sit down because he had been standing all day at work.
- James had been teaching at the university for more than a year before he left for Asia.
- – How long had you been studying Turkish before you moved to Ankara?
– I had not been studying Turkish very long.

Use 2: Cause of something in the past

Using the past perfect continuous before another action in the past is a good way to show cause and effect.

Examples:

- Jason was tired because he had been jogging.
- Sam gained weight because he had been overeating.
- Betty failed the final test because she had not been attending class.

Past continuous vs. past perfect continuous

If you do not include a duration such as “for five minutes,” “for two weeks” or “since Friday,” many English speakers choose to use the past continuous rather than the past perfect continuous. Be careful because this can change the meaning of the sentence. Past continuous emphasises interrupted actions, whereas past perfect continuous emphasises a duration of time before something in the past. Study the examples below to understand the difference.

Examples:

- He was tired because he was exercising so hard.
This sentence emphasises that he was tired because he was exercising at that exact moment.
- He was tired because he had been exercising so hard.
This sentence emphasises that he was tired because he had been exercising over a period of time. It is possible that he was still exercising at that moment OR that he had just finished.

Remember: Non-continuous verbs / mixed verbs

It is important to remember that Non-continuous verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for mixed verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using past perfect continuous with these verbs, you must use past perfect.

Examples:

- The motorcycle had been belonging to George for years before Tina bought it. ❌
- The motorcycle had belonged to George for years before Tina bought it. ✅

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You had only been waiting there for a few minutes when she arrived.
- Had you only been waiting there for a few minutes when she arrived?

Active/passive

Examples:

- Chef Jones had been preparing the restaurant's fantastic dinners for two years before he moved to Paris. (Active)
- The restaurant's fantastic dinners had been being prepared by Chef Jones for two years before he moved to Paris. (Passive)

Note: Passive forms of the past perfect continuous are not common.

Section 6 (xi)

The future simple

The future simple has two different forms in English: “will” and “be going to.” Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two very different meanings. These different meanings might seem too abstract at first, but with time and practice, the differences will become clear. Both “will” and “be going to” refer to a specific time in the future.

Form: (will): [will + VERB]

Examples:

- You will help him later.
- Will you help him later?
- You will not help him later.

Form: (Be going to): [am/is/are + going to + VERB]

Examples:

- You are going to meet Jane tonight.
- Are you going to meet Jane tonight?
- You are not going to meet Jane tonight.

Future simple uses

Use 1: “Will” to express a voluntary action

“Will” often suggests that a speaker will do something voluntarily. A voluntary action is one the speaker offers to do for someone else. Often, we use “will” to respond to someone else’s complaint or request for help. We also use “will” when we request that someone help us or volunteer to do something for us. Similarly, we use “will not” or “won’t” when we refuse to voluntarily do something.

Examples:

- I will send you the information when I get it.
- I will translate the email, so Mr. Smith can read it.
- Will you help me move this heavy table?
- Will you make dinner?
- I will not do your homework for you.

- I won’t do all the housework myself!
- – I’m really hungry.
– I’ll make some sandwiches.
- – I’m so tired. I’m about to fall asleep.
– I’ll get you some coffee.
- – The phone is ringing.
– I’ll get it.

Use 2: “Will” to express a promise

“Will” is usually used in promises.

Examples:

- I will call you when I arrive.
- If I am elected President of the United States, I will make sure everyone has access to inexpensive health insurance.
- I promise I will not tell him about the surprise party.
- Don’t worry, I’ll be careful.
- I won’t tell anyone your secret.

Use 3: “Be going to” to express a plan

“Be going to” expresses that something is a plan. It expresses the idea that a person intends to do something in the future. It does not matter whether the plan is realistic or not.

Examples:

- He is going to spend his holiday in Scotland.
- She is not going to spend her vacation in Cornwall.
- When are we going to meet each other tonight?
We are going to meet at 6 PM.
- I’m going to be an actor when I grow up.
- Sally is going to begin medical school next year.
- They are going to drive all the way to Alaska.
- Who are you going to invite to the party?
- Who is going to make John’s birthday cake?
Sue is going to make John’s birthday cake.

Use 4: "Will" or "be going to" to express a prediction

Both "will" and "be going to" can express the idea of a general prediction about the future. Predictions are guesses about what might happen in the future. In "prediction" sentences, the subject usually has little control over the future and therefore USES 1-3 do not apply. In the following examples, there is no difference in meaning.

Examples:

- The year 2222 will be a very interesting year.
- The year 2222 is going to be a very interesting year.

- John Smith will be the next Vice Chancellor.
- John Smith is going to be the next Vice Chancellor.

- The movie "Zenith" will win several Academy Awards.
- The movie "Zenith" is going to win several Academy Awards.

Important. In the simple future, it is not always clear which USE the speaker has in mind. Often, there is more than one way to interpret a sentence's meaning.

No future in time clauses

Like all future forms, the simple future cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of simple future, simple present is used.

Examples:

- When you will arrive tonight, we will go out for dinner. (X)
- When you arrive tonight, we will go out for dinner. (✓)

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You will never help him.
- Will you ever help him?

- You are never going to meet Jane.
- Are you ever going to meet Jane?

Active/passive

Examples:

- John will finish the work by 5:00 PM. Active
- The work will be finished by 5:00 PM. Passive

- Sally is going to make a beautiful dinner tonight. (Active)
- A beautiful dinner is going to be made by Sally tonight. (Passive)

Section 6 (xii)

The future continuous

The Future continuous has two different forms: “will be doing” and “be going to be doing.” Unlike simple future forms, future continuous forms are usually interchangeable.

Form: future continuous with “Will”:
[will be + present participle]

Examples:

- You will be waiting for her when her plane arrives tonight.
- Will you be waiting for her when her plane arrives tonight?
- You will not be waiting for her when her plane arrives tonight.

Form: Future Continuous with “Be Going To”:
[am/is/are + going to be + present participle]

Examples:

- You are going to be waiting for her when her plane arrives tonight.
- Are you going to be waiting for her when her plane arrives tonight?
- You are not going to be waiting for her when her plane arrives tonight.

Remember: It is possible to use either “will” or “be going to” to create the future continuous with little difference in meaning.

Future continuous uses

Use 1: Interrupted action in the future

Use the future continuous to indicate that a longer action in the future will be interrupted by a shorter action in the future. Remember this can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time.

Examples:

- I will be watching TV when she arrives tonight.
- I will be waiting for you when your bus arrives.
- I am going to be staying at the Madison Hotel, if anything happens and you need to contact me.
- He will be studying at the library tonight, so he will not see Jennifer when she arrives.

Notice in the examples above the final clauses are in present simple rather than future simple. This is because the interruptions are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in time clauses.

Use 2: Specific time as an interruption in the future

In USE 1, described above, the future continuous is interrupted by a short action in the future. In addition to using short actions as interruptions, you can also use a specific time as an interruption.

Examples:

- Tonight at 6 PM, I am going to be eating dinner.
- I will be in the process of eating dinner.
- At midnight tonight, we will still be driving through the desert.
- We will be in the process of driving through the desert.

Remember: In the simple future, a specific time is used to show the time an action will begin or end. In the future continuous, a specific time interrupts the action.

Examples:

- Tonight at 6 PM, I am going to eat dinner.
- I am going to start eating at 6 PM.
- Tonight at 6 PM, I am going to be eating dinner.
- I am going to start earlier and I will be in the process of eating dinner at 6 PM.

Use 3: Parallel actions in the Future

When you use the future continuous with two actions in the same sentence, it expresses the idea that both actions will be happening at the same time. The actions are parallel.

Examples:

- I am going to be studying and he is going to be making dinner.
- Tonight, they will be eating dinner, discussing their plans, and having a good time.
- While Ellen is reading, Tim will be watching television.

Notice “is reading” because of the time clause containing “while” (see explanation below).

Use 4: Atmosphere in the future

In English, we often use a series of Parallel Actions to describe atmosphere at a specific point in the future.

Example:

When I arrive at the party, everybody is going to be celebrating. Some will be dancing. Others are going to be talking. A few people will be eating pizza, and several people are going to be drinking beer. They always do the same thing.

Remember: No future in time clauses

Like all future tenses, the future continuous cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of future continuous, present continuous is used.

Examples:

- While I am going to be finishing my homework, she is going to make dinner. ❌
- While I am finishing my homework, she is going to make dinner. ✅

And remember: Non-continuous verbs / mixed verbs

It is important to remember that non-continuous verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for mixed verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using future continuous with these verbs, you must use simple future.

Examples:

- Jane will be being at my house when you arrive.
Not Correct
- Jane will be at my house when you arrive. ✅

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You will still be waiting for her when her plane arrives.
- Will you still be waiting for her when her plane arrives?

- You are still going to be waiting for her when her plane arrives.
- Are you still going to be waiting for her when her plane arrives?

Active/passive

Examples:

- At 8:00 PM tonight, John will be washing the dishes. (Active)
- At 8:00 PM tonight, the dishes will be being washed by John. (Passive)

- At 8:00 PM tonight, John is going to be washing the dishes. (Active)
- At 8:00 PM tonight, the dishes are going to be being washed by John. (Passive)

Note: Passive forms of the future continuous are not common.

Section 6 (xiii)

The future perfect

The future perfect has two different forms: “will have done” and “be going to have done.” Unlike simple future forms, future perfect forms are usually interchangeable.

Form: Future Perfect with “Will”:
[will have + past participle]

Examples:

- You will have perfected your English by the time you come back from the U.S.
- Will you have perfected your English by the time you come back from the U.S.?
- You will not have perfected your English by the time you come back from the U.K.

Form: Future Perfect with “Be Going To”
[am/is/are + going to have + past participle]

Examples:

- You are going to have perfected your English by the time you come back from the U.K..
- Are you going to have perfected your English by the time you come back from the U.K.?
- You are not going to have perfected your English by the time you come back from the U.K..

Note: It is possible to use either “will” or “be going to” to create the future perfect with little or no difference in meaning.

Future perfect – uses

Use 1: Completed action before something in the future

The future perfect expresses the idea that something will occur before another action in the future. It can also show that something will happen before a specific time in the future.

Examples:

- By next November, I will have received my promotion.
- By the time he gets home, she is going to have cleaned the entire house.
- I am not going to have finished this test by 3 o'clock.
- Will she have learned enough Chinese to communicate before she moves to Beijing?
- Sam is probably going to have completed the proposal by the time he leaves this afternoon.
- By the time I finish this course, I will have taken ten tests.
- How many countries are you going to have visited by the time you turn 50?

Notice in the examples above that the reference points (marked in *italics*) are in simple present rather than simple future. This is because the interruptions are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in time clauses.

Use 2: Duration before something in the future (non-continuous verbs)

With non-continuous verbs and some non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, we use the future perfect to show that something will continue up until another action in the future.

Examples:

- I will have been in London for six months by the time I leave.
- By Monday, Susan is going to have had my book for a week.

Although the above use of future perfect is normally limited to non-continuous verbs and non-continuous uses of mixed verbs, the words “live,” “work,” “teach,” and “study” are sometimes used in this way even though they are NOT non-continuous verbs.

Remember: No future in time clauses

Like all future forms, the future perfect cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of future perfect, present perfect is used.

Examples:

- I am going to see a movie when I will have finished my homework. ❌
- I am going to see a movie when I have finished my homework. ✅

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You will only have learned a few words.
 - Will you only have learned a few words?
-
- You are only going to have learned a few words.
 - Are you only going to have learned a few words?

Active/passive

Examples:

- They will have completed the project before the deadline. (Active)
 - The project will have been completed before the deadline. (Passive)
-
- They are going to have completed the project before the deadline. (Active)
 - The project is going to have been completed before the deadline. (Passive)

Section 6 (xiv)

The future perfect continuous

The future perfect continuous has two different forms: “will have been doing” and “be going to have been doing.” Unlike simple future forms, future perfect continuous forms are usually interchangeable.

Form: Future Perfect Continuous with “Will”
[will have been + present participle]

Examples:

- You will have been waiting for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives.
- Will you have been waiting for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives?
- You will not have been waiting for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives.

Form: Future Perfect Continuous with “Be Going To”
[am/is/are + going to have been + present participle]

Examples:

- You are going to have been waiting for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives.
- Are you going to have been waiting for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives?
- You are not going to have been waiting for more than two hours when her plane finally arrives.

Note: It is possible to use either “will” or “be going to” to create the future perfect continuous with little or no difference in meaning.

Future perfect continuous – uses

Use 1: Duration before something in the future

We use the future perfect continuous to show that something will continue up until a particular event or time in the future. “For five minutes,” “for two weeks,” and “since Friday” are all durations which can be used with the future perfect continuous. Notice that this is related to the present perfect continuous and the past perfect continuous; however, with future perfect continuous, the duration stops at or before a reference point in the future.

Examples:

- They will have been talking for over an hour by the time Thomas arrives.
- She is going to have been working at that company for three years when it finally closes.
- James will have been teaching at the university for more than a year by the time he leaves for Asia.
- How long will you have been studying when you graduate?
- We are going to have been driving for over three days straight when we get to Anchorage.
- When you finish your English course, will you have been living in New Zealand for over a year?
No, I will not have been living here that long.

Notice in the examples above that the reference points (marked in *italics*) are in simple present rather than simple future. This is because these future events are in time clauses, and you cannot use future tenses in timeclauses.

Use 2: Cause of something in the future

Using the future perfect continuous before another action in the future is a good way to show cause and effect.

Examples:

- Jason will be tired when he gets home because he will have been jogging for over an hour.
- Claudia's English will be perfect when she returns to Germany because she is going to have been studying English in the United States for over two years.

Future continuous vs. Future perfect continuous

If you do not include a duration such as “for five minutes,” “for two weeks” or “since Friday,” many English speakers choose to use the future continuous rather than the future perfect continuous. Be careful because this can change the meaning of the sentence. Future continuous emphasizes interrupted actions, whereas future perfect continuous emphasizes a duration of time before something in the future. Study the examples below to understand the difference.

Examples:

- He will be tired because he will be exercising so hard.
- This sentence emphasizes that he will be tired because he will be exercising at that exact moment in the future.
- He will be tired because he will have been exercising so hard.

This sentence emphasises that he will be tired because he will have been exercising for a period of time. It is possible that he will still be exercising at that moment OR that he will just have finished.

Remember: No future in time clauses

Like all future forms, the future perfect continuous cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of future perfect continuous, present perfect continuous is used.

Examples:

- You won't get a promotion until you will have been working here as long as Tim. ❌
- You won't get a promotion until you have been working here as long as Tim. ✅

And remember: Non-continuous verbs / mixed verbs

It is important to remember that non-continuous verbs cannot be used in any continuous tenses. Also, certain non-continuous meanings for mixed verbs cannot be used in continuous tenses. Instead of using Future perfect continuous with these verbs, you must use future perfect.

Examples:

- Ned will have been having his driver's license for over two years. ❌
- Ned will have had his driver's license for over two years. ✅

Adverb placement

The examples below show the placement for grammar adverbs such as: always, only, never, ever, still, just, etc.

Examples:

- You will only have been waiting for a few minutes when her plane arrives.
- Will you only have been waiting for a few minutes when her plane arrives?
- You are only going to have been waiting for a few minutes when her plane arrives.
- Are you only going to have been waiting for a few minutes when her plane arrives?

Active/passive

Examples:

- The famous artist will have been painting the mural for over six months by the time it is finished. (Active)
- The mural will have been being painted by the famous artist for over six months by the time it is finished. (Passive)

- The famous artist is going to have been painting the mural for over six months by the time it is finished. (Active)
- The mural is going to have been being painted by the famous artist for over six months by the time it is finished. (Passive)

Note: Passive forms of the future perfect continuous are not common.

Section 6 (xv)

Future in the past

Like future simple, future in the past has two different forms in English: would and was going to. Although the two forms can sometimes be used interchangeably, they often express two different meanings.

Form: Would

[would + VERB]

Examples:

- I knew you would help him.
- I knew you would not help him.

Form: Was/Were Going To

[was/were + going to + VERB]

Examples:

- I knew you were going to go to the party.
- I knew you were not going to go to the party.

Future in the past – uses

Use 1: Future in past

Future in the past is used to express the idea that in the past you thought something would happen in the future. It does not matter if you are correct or not. Future in the past follows the same basic rules as the simple future. “Would” is used to volunteer or promise, and “was going to” is used to plan. Moreover, both forms can be used to make predictions about the future.

Examples:

- I told you he was going to come to the party. (plan)
- I knew Julie would make dinner. (voluntary action)
- Jane said Sam was going to bring his sister with him, but he came alone. (plan)

- I had a feeling that the vacation was going to be a disaster. (prediction)
- He promised he would send a postcard from Egypt. (promise)

Remember: No future in time clauses

Like all future forms, future in the past cannot be used in clauses beginning with time expressions such as: when, while, before, after, by the time, as soon as, if, unless, etc. Instead of using future in the past, you must use simple past.

Examples:

- I already told Mark that when he would arrive, we would go out for dinner. ❌
- I already told Mark that when he arrived, we would go out for dinner. ✅

Active/passive

Examples:

- I knew John would finish the work by 5:00 PM. (Active)
- I knew the work would be finished by 5:00 PM. **Passive**

- I thought Sally was going to make a beautiful dinner. (Active)
- I thought a beautiful dinner was going to be made by Sally. (Passive)

Section 6 (xvi)

Used to

Form: [used to + VERB]

Example:

- I used to go to the beach every day.

It is better not to use *used to* in questions or negative forms; however, this is sometimes done in informal spoken English. It is better to ask questions and create negative sentences using simple past.

Used to – uses

Use 1: Habit in the past

Used to expresses the idea that something was an old habit that stopped in the past. It indicates that something was often repeated in the past, but it is not usually done now.

Examples:

- Jerry used to study English.
- Sam and Mary used to go to Mexico in the summer.
- I used to start work at 9 o'clock.
- Christine used to eat meat, but now she is a vegetarian.

Use 2: Past facts and generalisations

Used to can also be used to talk about past facts or generalisations which are no longer true.

Examples:

- I used to live in Paris.
- Sarah used to be fat, but now she is thin.
- George used to be the best student in class, but now Lena is the best.
- Oranges used to cost very little in Florida, but now they are quite expensive.

Used to vs. Simple past

Both simple past and *used to* can be used to describe past habits, past facts and past generalisations; however, *used to* is preferred when emphasising these forms of past repetition in positive sentences. On the other hand, when asking questions or making negative sentences, simple past is preferred.

Examples:

- You used to play the piano.
- Did you play the piano when you were young?
- You did not play the piano when you were young.

Active/passive

Examples:

- Jerry used to pay the bills. (Active)
- The bills used to be paid by Jerry. (Passive)

Section 6 (xvii)

Would always

Form: [would always + VERB]

Examples:

- You would always take your surfboard with you when you went to the beach.
- Would you always take your surfboard with you when you went to the beach?
- You would not always take your surfboard with you when you went to the beach.

Would always – uses

Use 1: Habit in the past

Like used to and simple past, would always expresses the idea that something was an old habit which stopped in the past. It says that an action was often repeated in the past, but it is not usually done now. Unlike used to and simple past, would always suggests that someone willingly acted that way and sometimes expresses annoyance or amusement at the habit. It also often suggests the habit was extreme. To express the opposite idea, we can say would never to indicate that someone never did something in the past, but now they do.

Examples:

- She would always send me strange birthday gifts.
- Sam and Mary would always choose the most exotic vacation destinations.
- Sally would not always arrive early to class. She came late once or twice.
- Ned would always show up at our house without calling first.
- Mindy would not always walk to school. Sometimes, she took the bus.
- Christine would always come late to the meetings.
- Jeff would never pay for drinks when we went out together with our friends.
- Refusing to do something or normally not doing something is also a form of habit.

Remember: would always is different

Would always is not exactly the same as used to or the simple past. Would always cannot be used to talk about past facts or generalisations. It can only be used for repeated actions.

Examples:

- Sarah was shy, but now she is very outgoing. ✓
- Sarah used to be shy, but now she is very outgoing. ✓
- Sarah would always be shy, but now she is very outgoing. ✗

Forms related to would always

In addition to would always, English speakers often use would constantly, would often, would forever or simply would. Although the last form would is correct, it is not suggested because it can easily be confused with other verb forms such as the conditional or future in the past. Similarly, speakers can use would rarely, would occasionally and would seldom to express the idea that an action was not often repeated.

Examples:

- Joe would come to the parties every weekend.
- Joe would constantly bring his girlfriend to the parties.
- Joe would often bring his best friend to the parties.
- Joe would occasionally bring his older brother to the parties.
- Joe would seldom bring his sister to the parties.
- Joe would never bring his younger brother to the parties.

Active/passive

Examples:

- My mother would always make the pies. (Active)
- The pies would always be made by my mother. (Passive)

Section 6 (xviii)

Verb tenses – Test 1

Test yourself

Complete the gaps with the correct tense of the verbs supplied:

1. You look really great! (you, work) _____ out at the fitness centre recently?
2. What (you, do) _____ when the accident occurred? I (try) _____ to change a light bulb that had burnt out.
3. I (have) _____ the same car for more than ten years. I'm thinking about buying a new one.
4. If it (rain) _____ this weekend, we (go) _____ to the cinema in Manchester.
5. What do you call people who work in libraries? They (call) _____ librarians.
6. I came to England six months ago. I started my economics course three months ago. When I return to Australia, I (study) _____ for nine months and I (be) _____ in England for exactly one year.
7. Sam (arrive) _____ in Macclesfield a week ago.
8. Samantha (live) _____ in Berlin for more than two years. In fact, she (live) _____ there when the Berlin wall came down.
9. If Vera (keep) _____ drinking, she (lose, eventually) _____ her job.
10. The Maya established a very advanced civilization in the jungles of the Yucatan; however, their culture (disappear, virtually) _____ by the time Europeans first (arrive) _____ in the New World.
11. Shhhhh! Be quiet! John (sleep) _____.
12. It (rain) _____ all week. I hope it stops by Saturday because I want to go to the beach.
13. Listen Donna, I don't care if you (miss) _____ the bus this morning. You (be) _____ late to work too many times. You are fired!
14. I am sick of rain and bad weather! Hopefully, when we (wake) _____ up tomorrow morning, the sun (shine) _____.
15. I have not travelled much yet; however, I (visit) _____ the Grand Canyon and San Francisco by the time I leave the United States.

16. I (see) _____ many pictures of the pyramids before I went to Egypt. Pictures of the monuments are very misleading. The pyramids are actually quite small.
17. In the last hundred years, travelling (become) _____ much easier and very comfortable.
In the 19th century, it (take) _____ two or three months to cross North America by covered wagon.
The trip (be) _____ very rough and often dangerous. Things (change) _____ a great deal in the last hundred and fifty years. Now you can fly from New York to Los Angeles in a matter of hours.
18. Joseph's English (improve, really) _____, isn't it? He (watch) _____ British television programmes and (study) _____ his grammar every day since he first arrived in Macclesfield. Soon he will be totally fluent.
19. When I (arrive) _____ home last night, I discovered that Jane (prepare) _____ a beautiful candlelit dinner.
20. If you (need) _____ to contact me sometime next week, I (stay) _____ with my friends in Liverpool.

Answers

- You look really great! **Have you been working out** at the fitness centre recently?
- What **were you doing** when the accident occurred? I **was trying** to change a light bulb that had burnt out.
- I **have had** the same car for more than ten years. I'm thinking about buying a new one.
- If it **rains** this weekend, we **will go** to the cinema in Manchester.
- What do you call people who work in libraries? They **are called** librarians.
- I came to England six months ago. I started my economics course three months ago. When I return to Australia, I **will have been studying** for nine months and I **will have been** in England for exactly one year.
- Sam **arrived** in Macclesfield a week ago.
- Samantha **has been living** in Berlin for more than two years. In fact, she **was living** there when the Berlin wall came down.
- If Vera **keeps** drinking, she **will eventually lose** her job.
- The Maya established a very advanced civilization in the jungles of the Yucatan; however, their culture **had virtually disappeared** by the time Europeans first **arrived** in the New World.
- Shhhhh! Be quiet! John **is sleeping**.
- It **has been raining** all week. I hope it stops by Saturday because I want to go to the beach.
- Listen Donna, I don't care if you **missed** the bus this morning. You **have been** late to work too many times. You are fired!
- I am sick of rain and bad weather! Hopefully, when we **wake** up tomorrow morning, the sun **will be shining**.
- I have not travelled much yet; however, I **will have visited** the Grand Canyon and San Francisco by the time I leave the United States.
- I **had seen** many pictures of the pyramids before I went to Egypt. Pictures of the monuments are very misleading. The pyramids are actually quite small.
- In the last hundred years, travelling **has become** much easier and very comfortable.
In the 19th century, it **took** two or three months to cross North America by covered wagon. The trip **was** very rough and often dangerous.
Things **have changed** a great deal in the last hundred and fifty years. Now you can fly from New York to Los Angeles in a matter of hours.
- Joseph's English **is really improving**, isn't it? He **has been watching** British television programmes and **has been studying** his grammar every day since he first arrived in Macclesfield. Soon he will be totally fluent.
- When I **arrived** home last night, I discovered that Jane **had prepared** a beautiful candlelit dinner.
- If you **need** to contact me sometime next week, I **will be staying** with my friends in Liverpool.

Section 6 (xix)

Verb tenses – Test 2

Test yourself

1. When Carol (call) _____ last night, I (watch) _____ my favourite show on television.
2. I (work) _____ for this company for more than thirty years, and I intend to stay here until I retire!
3. Sharon (love) _____ to travel. She (go) _____ abroad almost every summer. Next year, she plans to go to Peru.
4. Thomas is an author. He (write) _____ mystery novels and travel memoirs. He (write) _____ since he was twenty-eight. Altogether, he (write) _____ seven novels, three collections of short stories and a book of poetry.
5. We were late because we had some car problems. By the time we (get) _____ to the train station, Susan (wait) _____ for us for more than two hours.
6. Sam (try) _____ to change a light bulb when he (slip) _____ and (fall) _____.
7. Everyday I (wake) _____ up at 6 o'clock, (eat) _____ breakfast at 7 o'clock and (leave) _____ for work at 8 o'clock. However, this morning I (get) _____ up at 6:30, (skip) _____ breakfast and (leave) _____ for work late because I (forget) _____ to set my alarm.
8. Right now, Jim (read) _____ the newspaper and Kathy (make) dinner. Last night at this time, they (do) _____ the same thing. She (cook) _____ and he (read) _____ the newspaper. Tomorrow at this time, they (do, also) _____ the same thing. She (prepare) _____ dinner and he (read) _____. They are very predictable people!
9. By this time next summer, you (complete) _____ your studies and (find) _____ a job. I, on the other hand, (accomplish, not) _____ anything. I (study, still) _____ and you (work) _____ in some new high paying job.
10. The students (be, usually) _____ taught by Mrs. Smith. However, this week they (be, teach) _____ by Mr. Brown.
11. Jane talks on the phone. Bob has been talking on the phone for an hour. Mary is talking on the phone.
Who is not necessarily on the phone now?
12. I'm going to make dinner for Frank. I'm making dinner for Judy. I'll make dinner for Mary. I make dinner for Ted. I will be making dinner for Tony. *Who are you offering to make dinner for?*
13. Jane left when Tim arrived. Bob left when Tim had arrived. When Tim arrived, Mary was leaving. John had left when Tim arrived. After Tim arrived, Frank left. *Who did not run into Tim?*
14. Jane is talking in class. Bob always talks in class. Mary is always talking in class. *Whose action bothers you?*
15. Jane never left Manchester. Bob has never left Manchester. *Who is still alive?*

Answers

1. When Carol **called** last night, I **was watching** my favourite show on television.
2. I **have been working** for this company for more than thirty years, and I intend to stay here until I retire!
3. Sharon **loves to** travel. She **goes** abroad almost every summer. Next year, she plans to go to Peru.
4. Thomas is an author. He **writes** mystery novels and travel memoirs. He **has been writing** since he was twenty-eight. Altogether, he **has written** seven novels, three collections of short stories and a book of poetry.
5. We were late because we had some car problems. By the time we **got** to the train station, Susan **had been waiting** for us for more than two hours.
6. Sam **was trying** to change a light bulb when he **slipped** and **fell**.
7. Every day I **wake** up at 6 o'clock, **eat** breakfast at 7 o'clock and **leave** for work at 8 o'clock. However, this morning I **got** up at 6:30, **skipped** breakfast and **left** for work late because I **forgot** to set my alarm.
8. Right now, Jim **is reading** the newspaper and Kathy **is making** dinner. Last night at this time, they **were doing** the same thing. She **was cooking** and he **was reading** the newspaper. Tomorrow at this time, they **will also be doing** the same thing. She **will be preparing** dinner and he **will be reading**. They are very predictable people!
9. By this time next summer, you **will have completed** your studies and **will have found** a job. I, on the other hand, **will not have accomplished** anything. I **will still be studying** and you **will be working** in some new high-paying job.
10. The students **are usually** taught by Mrs. Smith. However, this week they **are being taught** by Mr. Brown.
11. Jane talks on the phone.
12. I'll make dinner for Mary.
13. John had left when Tim arrived.
14. Mary is always talking in class.
15. Bob has never left Manchester.

Section 7

Pronunciation

Section overview

- Accent
- British English Phonemes – the sounds of British English
- English as a Lingua Franca
- Linking words
- Speaking clearly and slowing down
- Word formation and word stress
- Different forms of word and syllable stress
- Sentence stress



Section 7 (i)

Accent

An accent is a way of pronouncing a language. It is therefore impossible to speak without an accent.

Some people may think they do not have an accent. Or you may think that there are other people who do not have an accent. Everyone has an accent. The term 'accentless' is sometimes used (by non-linguists) about people who speak one of the high prestige 'reference' accents (such as 'Standard English' or, less commonly, 'RP' – Received Pronunciation), which are associated with people from a fairly wide region and with people of high social class. But these are also accents.

Your accent results from how, where, and when you learned the language you are speaking and it gives impressions about you to other people. People do not have a single fixed accent which is determined by their experiences. We can control the way we speak, and do, both consciously and unconsciously. Most people vary their accent depending on who they are speaking with. We change our accents, often without noticing, as we have new life experiences.

How accurate people are in knowing about you from your accent depends not only on the features of your accent, but also on who the listener is, and what they know about the other people who speak with a similar accent to you.

Your accent might be one that is associated with people from a particular place (for example, with being from New York, London, or Delhi). Some people might just hear you as simply being from the US, England, or India. Your accent might give the impression that you spoke some other language before the one you are speaking at the moment (you might speak French with an English accent, or English with a Korean accent). It's impossible to speak without conveying some information through your accent.

All languages are spoken with several different accents. There is nothing unusual about English. And not everyone who comes from the same place speaks the same: in any place there is a variety of accents.

Language changes over time. We get new words, there are grammatical changes, and accents change over time. If you listen to recordings made by people from your own language community 100 years ago, you will hear for yourself that even over that time accents have changed.

Why are the accents from a particular place like they are?

Separate development accounts for some accent variation. But sometimes we need to talk about the first generation of speakers of a particular language brought up in a new place. The first children to grow up in a new place are very important. The children who grow up together are a 'peer group'. They want to speak the same as each other to express their group identity. The accent they develop as they go through their childhood will become the basis for the accents of the new place. So where does their accent come from?

The first generation of children will draw on the accents of the adults around them, and will create something new. If people move to a new place in groups (as English speakers did to America, Australia and New Zealand) that group usually brings several different accents with it. The children will draw on the mixture of accents they hear and create their own accent out of what they hear. The modern accents of Australia are more similar to London accents of English than to any other accent from England – this is probably because the founder generation (in the eighteenth century) had a large component drawn from the poor of London, who were transported to Australia as convicts. The accents of New Zealand are similar to Australian accents because a large proportion of the early English-speaking settlers of New Zealand came from Australia.

The mix found in the speech of the settlers of a new place establishes the kind of accent that their children will develop. But the first generation born in the new place will not keep the diversity of their parents' generation – they will speak with similar accents to the others of their age group. And if the population grows slowly enough, the children will be able to absorb subsequent children into their group, so that even quite large migrations of other groups (such as Irish people into Australia) will not make much difference to the accent of the new place. Most parents know this. If someone from New York (US) marries someone from Glasgow (Scotland, UK), and these two parents raise a child in Leeds (England, UK), that child will not speak like either of the parents, but will speak like the children he is at school with.

To understand what happened in the past we need strong evidence from both language and history. We need to know about the places that migrants came from, and something about the kinds of accents they are likely to have had.

Can I change my accent?

Yes. Accents are not fixed. Our accents change over time as our needs change and as our sense of who we are changes and develops. Usually this happens naturally, and often unconsciously. Accents can be expected to change until we are in our early twenties. This is usually the time we come to some sort of decision about who we are. But even after that, if you want (and need) to change your accent, you can.

To change your accent you have to want to. Really want to, deep down. This usually happens without much effort because you move to a new place, mix with different people, or develop new aspirations.

If a change hasn't happened naturally but **you want to change your accent, you should ask yourself why. It could be because your accent is so strong that it makes it hard for other people to understand you.** If that is the case, you need to work on the individual sounds of the language you wish to use. This means practising the phonemes (there are 44 of them in British English, for example), and working on how sounds are linked together and stressed within words and sentences.

What is it about the messages you give to people that you don't like? Are you finding it difficult to be a member of a group you want to join because you don't speak in the way the group expects? Do you need to change your badge of identity?

Sometimes it is other people's prejudice that you are responding to. Do you want to accept other people's prejudice? Someone might change the pronunciation of words like *book*, *look* because of pressure. Instead of pronouncing "look" the same as *Luke* (/lu:k/), it might be changed to the vowel of 'put' to be more like other people. But it is sad to succumb to pressure like this — it is no different from dark skinned people using skin whitening creams to look like pale skinned people, or East Asian people having their eyelids operated on to get European looking eyes.

Anyway, if you do decide you have good reasons for changing your accent, and you want to put in some effort these are some things to do:

- Identify the accent you want to speak.
- Expose yourself to the accent you want as much as possible.
- Try to get some friends who speak with the accent you want.
- Try to make sure you are not mixing with people who will criticise you for changing your accent.

Here is one method. If you do this, it is best to choose recordings of someone of your own gender.

- Get a recording of someone who speaks English with the accent that you would like to have, at least twenty minutes long.
- Listen to the recording all the way through once or twice, just to become familiar with its content. Don't write it down or try to memorise it.
- Listen to a brief sequence – just a sentence or two. Rewind the tape to the beginning of that sentence.
- Say the sentence aloud – with the recording. Don't repeat it afterwards as is done in traditional foreign language courses – speak with the speaker. Don't worry about making mistakes; just do your best to speak simultaneously with the speaker.
- Rewind to the beginning of the sentence and do this again, several times. (Ten times is not too many.)
- Move to the next sentence and do the same thing.
- Continue until you've worked your way through the whole recording speaking with your chosen model speaker.

The amount of time it takes for this to yield good results varies from one individual to another, depending on many factors. When you become so familiar with the recording that you know it by heart or you're so bored with it that you can't stand it, choose a different one that uses the same accent and repeat the process. Be careful not to work with any one recording so long that you start sounding as if you were trying to do an impersonation of the speaker.

Examples of the different accents and dialects in the UK

Accents in Britain:

<https://accentbiasbritain.org/accents-in-britain/>

British Library Resources:

<https://www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects>

The North-South divide:

<https://www.bl.uk/british-accent-and-dialects/articles/regional-voices-the-north-south-divide>

Section 7 (ii)

British English Phonemes

British English is made up of 44 sounds (phonemes). If we can learn how to pronounce the different sounds, we can improve our speaking skills and understand native speakers better.

Phonemic chart

VOWELS	monophthongs				diphthongs			voiced unvoiced
	i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ		
	sheep	ship	good	shoot	here	wait		
	e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ	əʊ	
	bed	teacher	bird	door	tourist	boy	show	
	æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ	
	cat	up	far	on	hair	my	cow	
CONSONANTS	p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g
	pea	boat	tea	dog	cheese	June	car	go
	f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
	fly	video	think	this	see	zoo	shall	television
	m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j
	man	now	sing	hat	love	red	wet	yes

Vowel Monophthongs Phonemes

- i: sheep - eagle - field
- ɪ ship - busy - started
- ʊ good - put - should
- u: moon - grew - through
- e bed - dead - said
- ə about - police - the
- ɜ: bird - hurt - work
- ɔ: door - walk - saw
- æ apple - cat - mad
- ʌ up - money - cut
- ɑ: car - bath - safari
- ɒ not - what - because

Vowel Diphthongs Phonemes

- ɪə ear - here - career
- eɪ train - say - plane
- ʊə your - sure - tourist
- ɔɪ boy - point - oil
- əʊ coat - low - note
- eə hair - careful - there
- aɪ by - high - fine
- aʊ now - our - house



Click here to listen to a recording of these Vowel Diphthongs Phonemes.



Click here to listen to a recording of these Vowel Monophthongs Phonemes.

Consonants Phonemes

Unvoiced

p	pen - hopping - jump
t	table - little - what
tʃ	chips - itch - picture
k	key - car - luck
f	fire - laugh - phone
θ	thick - healthy - teeth
s	see - city - notice
ʃ	shop - nation - special
h	house - hungry - who

Voiced

b	ball - hobby - herb
d	dog - added - played
dʒ	jam - danger - fudge
g	green - hug - league
v	video - move - of
ð	mother - this - with
z	zebra - cosy - has
ʒ	television - visual - leisure
m	man - tummy - lamb
n	no - funny - knife
ŋ	sing - uncle - angry
j	yes - onion - view
l	light - smelly - feel
r	right - berry - wrong
w	win - where - one

The North Wind and the Sun by Aesop

The fable is made famous by its use in phonetic descriptions of languages as an illustration of spoken language. In the Handbook of the International Phonetic Association and the Journal of the International Phonetic Association, a translation of the fable into each language described is transcribed into the International Phonetic Alphabet. It is recommended by the IPA for the purpose of eliciting all phonemic contrasts that occur in English when conducting tests by foreign users or of regional usage.

The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger, when a traveller came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who first succeeded in making the traveller take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other. Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveller fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave up the attempt. Then the Sun shone out warmly, and immediately the traveller took off his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two.

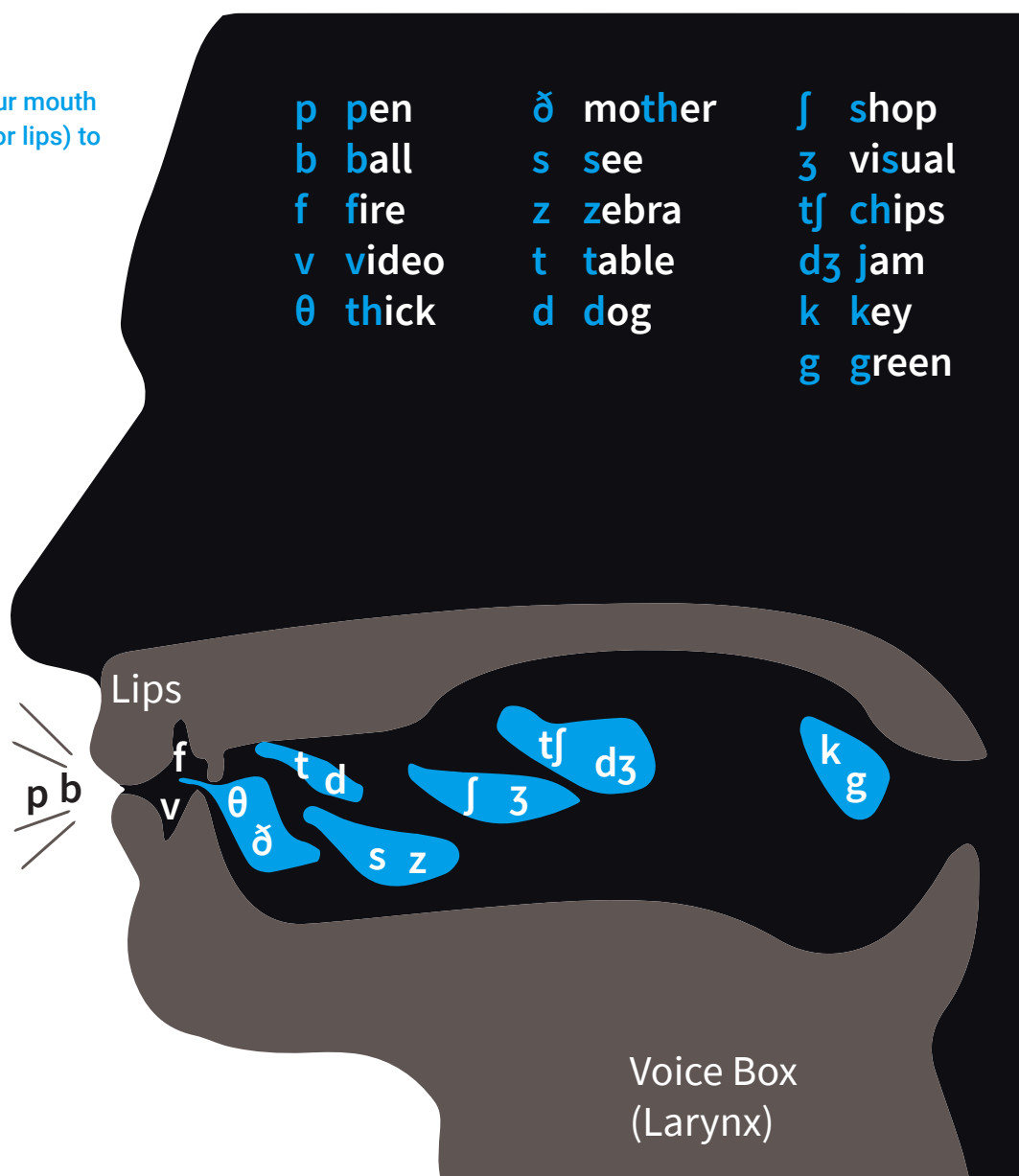


Click here to listen to a recording of this fable in Standard, Southern British English.



Click here to listen to a recording of these Consonants Phonemes.

Where you close your mouth
(with tongue, teeth or lips) to
make the sound.



Link to the BBC website: Tim's Pronunciation

Workshop (episodes 46 - 75)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/pronunciation>

and scroll down for the individual recordings about each
of the 44 phonemes of English (videos 1 – 45)

Section 7 (iii)

English as a Lingua Franca and the “Lingua Franca Core”

The concept of ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) is simple: many learners of English today do not need to use English with people whose first language (L1) is English. They are more likely to use English in situations where nobody shares an L1 (e.g. a native speaker of French, a native speaker of Japanese and a native speaker of Arabic might use English to communicate with each other).

Barbara Seidlhofer, a linguist at the University of Vienna who has studied and written extensively on this use of English, explains ELF as follows:

“any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option.”

In 2000, a linguist called Jennifer Jenkins wrote a book about this way of using English, including research on what aspects of pronunciation appear important to produce and understand accurately if a learner’s goal is NOT to sound precisely like a native speaker, but to communicate intelligibly with other non-native as well as native speakers.

One result of this research was the ‘Lingua Franca Core’ (the ‘LFC’). This is a list of pronunciation features which appear to be crucial to produce accurately in order for ELF communication to be intelligible. (There’s much more to it than this, of course).

Outside the ‘core’ are all other features of pronunciation that might occur in different varieties of English; but these are probably not necessary for learners to be able to produce if their goal is mainly NOT to communicate with (or sound like) a native speaker.

By teaching features outside the ‘core’ receptively, rather than productively, learners can still understand other accents of English and maintain something of their L1 accent, which many learners may wish to do, given that accent is an important part of personal identity.

Here’s the LFC in summary:

Consonant sounds

All English consonant sounds are necessary EXCEPT /θ/ (thin) and /ð/ (there) (for which most substitutions are possible, such as /f/ and /v/, but probably not /ʃ/, (she) /dʒ/ (jab) or /z/ (zebra)).

‘Dark /l/’ (pool) (also written as [ɫ]) is not necessary. Speakers can substitute ‘clear /l/’ (leaf) (possibly preceded by a schwa (ago) (if the /l/ is syllabic, like at the end of ‘bottle’). Substituting /ʊ/ (put) for /l/ at the ends of words might also be acceptable, but more research is needed to confirm this.

/r/ should be pronounced as in Standard English pronunciation. It should not be pronounced at the ends of words, as in American English, but will not affect understanding if it is.

/t/ needs to be carefully pronounced between vowels (e.g. ‘Italy’) and in clusters in the middle of words (e.g. ‘winter’). It should not be ‘flapped’ (as in General American pronunciation, ‘Italy’ might sound like ‘Idaly’ or ‘latter’ might sound like ‘ladder’); and it should not be replaced with a glottal stop (like in Cockney ‘better’).

The consonants /p/, /t/ and /k/ must be aspirated when occurring in initial position in a stressed syllable (e.g. the first /p/ in ‘paper’).

Consonant clusters

Clusters of consonants at the beginning of words must not be simplified (e.g. learners mustn’t drop the /r/ at the start of ‘product’).

Clusters of consonants in the middle or at the end of words are a bit more complicated. They can be simplified if it makes articulation easier, but only according to rules of elision (i.e. dropping sounds) that also apply to native English varieties (especially in clusters containing /t/ and /d/, like ‘postman’).

If learners have trouble producing consonant clusters, it’s usually OK to insert a very short schwa (ago) vowel between consonants, providing they don’t then stress this syllable (e.g. ‘product’ could be pronounced more like [pəˈrɒdʌkətə] by Japanese speakers without damaging intelligibility).

Similarly, learners can add a short schwa at the end of a word ending with a consonant, provided this does not create another word which it might be confused with (e.g. 'hard' sounding like 'harder').

Vowels

Length contrasts must be preserved, e.g. 'pill' versus 'peel. However, the actual quality of vowels is less important, providing it's consistent (e.g. don't keep switching between different pronunciations of the vowel in 'hat' so sometimes it sounds like Received Pronunciation [hæt] and sometimes it sounds like New Zealand [het]).

The length of diphthongs must be preserved but, again, the actual quality of the vowels is less important, providing it's consistent.

When a vowel occurs before an unvoiced consonant, it should sound slightly shorter than when it occurs before a voiced consonant. For example, the vowel in 'right' is slightly shorter than the vowel in 'ride', and the vowel in 'kit' is slightly shorter than the vowel in 'kid'.

The /ɜ:/ vowel, as in 'girl' or 'first', must be pronounced accurately.

Word groups and nuclear stress

The stream of speech should be divided into meaningful tone units (also known as 'tone groups', 'word groups' or 'thought groups').

Nuclear stress (i.e. which word is stressed within a 'tone group') must be placed appropriately, especially for contrast/emphasis. This means the difference in meaning should be clear between, for example, 'Let's meet NEXT Saturday' and 'Let's meet next SATURDAY'.

Section 7 (iv)

Linking words together

Fluent speakers of English don't pronounce each word separately in a phrase; instead, they link their words together. Linking is a way of connecting the pronunciation of two words so that they flow together smoothly. There are different ways that this happens in English:

Consonant to vowel linking

This occurs when the final consonant of a word links to the beginning of a following word that begins with a vowel:

- an operation: 'anoperation'
- spinal injury: 'spinalinjury'

Vowel to vowel linking

When a word ends in a vowel and the next word starts with another vowel, a consonant sound (usually /w/, /y/ or /r/) is inserted to make the transition:

- two hours: two(w)hours
- we all: we(y)all
- yeah I: yeah(r)I

Sounds disappearing

When the sounds 't' or 'd' occur between two consonant sounds, they will often disappear completely from the pronunciation

- just wondering: juswondering
- appointment: appoinment
- hands and feet: hansanfeet

Sounds lengthening

When the last consonant of one word is the same as the first of the following word, instead of separating the two sounds, the consonant can be lengthened

- hip pain: hippain
- I've taken Nurofen: I've takennurofen

Test: Choose the correct answer for each of the following questions

(it may help you to say the options aloud).

1. Which phrase doesn't contain linking?

- a. That's enough
- b. Quite intensive
- c. An ulcer
- d. Aston University

2. Which phrase contains linking?

- a. X-ray beam
- b. Why worry?
- c. An hour
- d. My gynaecologist

3. Which sound links the words "two eggs"?

- a. (w)
- b. (y)
- c. (r)
- d. (o)

4. Which sound links the words "the edge"?

- a. (w)
- b. (y)
- c. (r)
- d. (e)

5. Which sound can be deleted in the phrase "next week"?

- a. (w)
- b. (t)
- c. (r)
- d. (e)

6. Which sound can be deleted in the phrase "behind the screen"?

- a. (n)
- b. (d)
- c. (th)
- d. (t)

7. Which phrase doesn't contain lengthening?

- a. Enough food
- b. Abnormal liver
- c. Blood donor
- d. Eleventh hour

8. Which phrase contains lengthening?

- a. Long gap
- b. Both times
- c. Stomach cancer
- d. Chronic knee pain

Answers:

- 1. d
- 2. c
- 3. a
- 4. b
- 5. b
- 6. b
- 7. d
- 8. c

Section 7 (v)

Speaking clearly and slowing down

There are several things we can do to be more clearly understood. People were asked what speakers can do to help improve communication. Here are some of their responses.

Speaker 1: It helps me when speakers talk more slowly.

Speaker 2: Slow down. I understand more if they slow down their speaking speed.

But be careful when you're slowing down that you don't also talk down to them, making them feel inferior or embarrassed. There's a difference between slowing your speech and talking down. Just speak a little more slowly.

Speaker 1: It's helpful when you use clear speech.

Speaker 2: It helps if you use clear intonation.

You can enunciate more clearly. It's important to understand that speech is a steady stream of connected sounds. We tend to think in individual words. And we certainly read and write in individual words. But when we're speaking, all of our sounds are really connected into a steady stream. This is easier to notice in a language you're less familiar with. This can even happen when you are familiar with the language.

Speaker 1: Sometimes they use really short words, which confuses me.

Speaker 3: It's helpful when you use full words instead of short words.

To help you to be understood better by non-native speakers, use fewer reductions. Now, we naturally use these in our speech to save time and to maintain the rhythm and the cadence of English. But these can be hard for non-native speakers to hear. There are several different examples of reductions that we naturally use in our speech. One is trimming sounds. An obvious example of this is in contractions where we'd say "he's" instead of "he is" or "can't" instead of "cannot" or "shouldn't've" instead of "should not have". And these are even visually noted with an apostrophe to show that something has been dropped from this word.

There are other patterns where we also drop sounds and it's not noted by any marking or apostrophe. For example, the phrase "act nicely" tends to drop that T sound. And we would pronounce it more like "acnicely" at normal speed. Or, in the word "friendly", we tend to drop that D sound and pronounce it more like "frienly" when we're speaking at a normal speed.

A common thing we do is to drop H sounds in some words. A sentence such as "she gave him her pen", sounds more like "she gave 'im 'er pen." This helps us maintain the rhythm. But we're losing some of the sounds that are really present in the words.

We also drop entire syllables. In a word like family, we tend to really make that two syllables – "fam-ly." The same thing with "corporate". We make that two syllables – "cor-prate."

We also blend sounds together. If we take the phrase "did you", in normal speech we would tend to say, "didja." And we're actually introducing a totally new sound, "ja", that isn't present in the word "did" or in the word "you." But as we combine those sounds together, they blend, and our tongue and mouth muscles are preparing for the next sound so that this extra sound is produced in the phrase. This happens with a lot of phrases like "aren't ya" or "where'd ya" instead of "aren't you" or "where did you".

Additionally, we shorten verbs in general, saying "wanna" to instead of "want to", "gonna" instead of "going to", or "hafta" instead of "have to." Now, any one of these isn't that problematic. But in regular speech, we tend to build a lot of these into our sentences. And over time, this can cause problems for listeners to understand us.

Summary

- **Slow down;** separate the words more; use clear intonation and enunciation. (But remember to avoid “talking down” to people; just slow down and speak a little more clearly).
- **Use fewer reductions;** do not say “should’ve”, say “should have”; don’t say “couldn’t’ve”, say “could not have”.
- **Be careful not to drop sounds and syllables;** don’t say “she gave ‘im ‘er pen”, say “she gave him her pen”; “act nicely/ ac-nicely”
- **Be aware of what often happens when we blend words;** Did you give the patient his medication? (new sound is “Di – jou”)

Section 7 (vi)

Word formation and word stress

A fast way to expand your vocabulary is to make sure you know the different forms of the words you learn. Note how the stressed syllable often changes. Here, the verbs have been changed into nouns:

Verb	Stress	Noun	Stress
<u>a</u> nalyse	1	a <u>n</u> alysis	2
<u>c</u> arry	1	<u>c</u> arrier	1
<u>c</u> ure	1	<u>c</u> ure	1
de <u>g</u> enerate	2	degenera <u>t</u> ion	4
<u>d</u> iagnose	1	diagno <u>s</u> is	3
exa <u>m</u> ine	2	examina <u>t</u> ion	4
inf <u>e</u> ct	2	infec <u>t</u> ion	2
ob <u>s</u> truct	2	obstruc <u>t</u> ion	2
o <u>p</u> erate	1	opera <u>t</u> ion	3
<u>p</u> aralyse	1	para <u>l</u> ysis	2
pres <u>c</u> ribe	2	prescrip <u>t</u> ion	2
re <u>c</u> over	2	reco <u>v</u> ery	2
ref <u>e</u> r	2	referr <u>a</u> l	2
re <u>p</u> lace	2	replac <u>e</u> ment	2
<u>s</u> uffer	1	<u>s</u> uffering	1



Click here to listen to recording ONE to check your pronunciation

Word Stress – Three syllables

One of the keys to English pronunciation is stress – emphasis. There are three possible patterns for three syllable words:

A:	X - -	hos-pi-tal
B:	- X -	pre-scrip-tion
C:	- - X	rec-om-mend

Read these five conversations. Find all the three-syllable words and classify them by their pronunciation. There are 27 in total.

The answers are on the following page.

Dialogue 1

- When was she admitted to hospital?
- At about four o'clock.
- Has there been any improvement?
- No, her condition is stable. We're waiting to see how things develop.

Dialogue 2

- What do you recommend?
- Well, first of all, cut down on fatty foods.
- And what else?
- Take regular exercise, don't smoke and keep alcohol down to a minimum.

Dialogue 3

- What's the problem?
- I went to give him his injection and I saw that he'd started to haemorrhage.
- We'll have to operate. Make sure all the equipment is prepared.
- I'll go down to the theatre and check.

Dialogue 4

- So, is it serious?
- Don't worry. It's probably just an allergic reaction.
- Are you just saying that to reassure me?
- You're fine. Look, I'm going to give you a prescription for some painkillers.

Dialogue 5

- Have you got the test results yet?
- Well, they're still incomplete, but it's clear that they're positive.
- Any idea when infection took place?
- I'd say five or six weeks ago, but that's just an opinion. Do you want to see her medical history?

Word Stress – Three syllables (Dialogues) Answers

Group A

hospital
regular
exercise
alcohol
minimum
haemorrhage
operate
theatre
serious
painkillers
positive
medical
history

Group B

admitted
improvement
condition
develop
injection
equipment
allergic
reaction
prescription
infection
opinion

Group C

recommend
reassure
incomplete



Click here to listen to recording
TWO to check your pronunciation

In the sentences below, the verbs have been changed to nouns. Note the stressed and the unstressed syllables.

1. I diagnosed that the patient had a heart condition.
My diagnosis was that the patient had a heart condition.
2. I examined the patient fully.
I made a full examination.
3. I prescribed a course of antibiotics.
I wrote a prescription.
4. He suffered very little.
He experienced very little suffering.
5. We operated immediately.
The operation was immediate.
6. This disease cannot be cured.
There is no cure for this disease.
7. He has recovered fully.
He has made a full recovery.
8. The lab analysed the blood sample.
The lab made an analysis of the blood sample.
9. We found that the tissue was infected.
We found an infection of the tissue.
10. Ten per cent of the population are thought to carry the bacteria.
Ten per cent of the population are thought to be carriers.
11. We replaced the patient's hip.
The patient was given a hip replacement.
12. His condition has degenerated.
There has been a degeneration.
13. The patient was referred to a specialist.
The patient was given a referral.
14. His arm was paralysed after the stroke.
He suffered paralysis of the arm.
15. The artery was obstructed by a blood clot.
The blood clot was forming an obstruction.



Click here to listen to recording
THREE to check your pronunciation

The words above the following sentences are all **nouns**. What are the **adjective** forms? Complete the sentences using the correct adjective forms. Answers are below.

defect

The surgeons operated to repair the patient's _____ heart valve.

deficiency

His diet is calcium- _____ .

dependence

She is physically _____ on amphetamines.

excess

The doctor noted an _____ amount of bile in the patient's blood.

hypoglycaemia

A _____ attack can be prevented by eating glucose or a lump of sugar when feeling faint.

inactivity

They have periods when they are completely _____ .

pain

His foot is so _____ that he can hardly walk.

spine

I suffered _____ injuries in the crash.

stiffness

She complained of _____ joints.

immunity

The vaccine should make you _____ to tuberculosis.

Answers

The surgeons operated to repair the patient's **defective** heart valve.

His diet is calcium-**deficient**.

She is physically **dependent** on amphetamines.

The doctor noted an **excessive** amount of bile in the patient's blood.

A **hypoglycaemic** attack can be prevented by eating glucose or a lump of sugar when feeling faint.

They have periods when they are completely **inactive**.

His foot is so **painful** that he can hardly walk.

I suffered **spinal** injuries in the crash.

She complained of **stiff** joints.

The vaccine should make you **immune** to tuberculosis.



Click here to listen to recording
FOUR to check your pronunciation

Word Stress – Four syllables

One of the keys to English pronunciation is stress – emphasis. There are three normal patterns for four-syllable words:

A:	X---	vac -ci-na-ted
B:	-X--	pneu- mo -ni-a
C:	--X-	in-flu- en -za

Read the 20 sentences below aloud. Decide which syllable is stressed in the words highlighted in bold.

Answers are below.

1. She appeared to be improving, but a **complication** set in and she died a few hours later.
2. Bell's Palsy causes facial **paralysis**.
3. Come right now. It's an **emergency**.
4. The patient was having difficulties breathing so we put him on a **respirator**.
5. She had an **operation** to replace the cornea.
6. He was given a general **anaesthetic** before the surgeons began work.
7. As a precaution against AIDS we use **disposable** needles.
8. He can't take aspirin: he has an **intolerance** to it.
9. Rub your hands together to get the **circulation** going.
10. He couldn't **coordinate** the movements of his arms and legs.
11. An **experiment** was organised to test the drug on a small group of people.
12. Tests confirmed the **malignancy** of the growth.
13. This is the allergen which was **responsible** for the patient's reaction.
14. **Analysis** showed that the food contained bacteria.
15. The surgeons are trying to find a **compatible** donor.
16. A diet high in **saturated** fats increases the risk of heart disease.
17. The surgeon **demonstrated** to the students how to make the incision.
18. As many as 60 - 70% of diarrhoeal deaths are caused by **dehydration**.
19. Autistic children do not **communicate** with anyone.
20. **Penicillin** is a common antibiotic produced from a fungus.

Word Stress – Four syllables Answers

	Group A X---	Group B -X--	Group C --X-
anaesthetic			✓
analysis		✓	
circulation			✓
communicate		✓	
compatible		✓	
complication			✓
coordinate		✓	
dehydration			✓
demonstrated	✓		
disposable		✓	
emergency		✓	
experiment		✓	
intolerance		✓	
malignancy		✓	
operation			✓
paralysis		✓	
penicillin			✓
respirator	✓		
responsible		✓	
saturated	✓		

Here are the words from the exercise above:

anaesthetic analysis circulation communicate
compatible complication coordinate dehydration
demonstrated disposable emergency experiment
intolerance malignancy operation paralysis
penicillin respirator responsible saturated



Now say these sentences again and check your pronunciation by listening to recording FIVE.

1. She appeared to be improving, but a complication set in and she died a few hours later.
2. Bell's Palsy causes facial paralysis.
3. Come right now. It's an emergency.
4. The patient was having difficulties breathing so we put him on a respirator.
5. She had an operation to replace the cornea.
6. He was given a general anaesthetic before the surgeons began work.
7. As a precaution against AIDS we use disposable needles.
8. He can't take aspirin: he has an intolerance to it.
9. Rub your hands together to get the circulation going.
10. He couldn't coordinate the movements of his arms and legs.
11. An experiment was organised to test the drug on a small group of people.
12. Tests confirmed the malignancy of the growth.
13. This is the allergen which was responsible for the patient's reaction.
14. Analysis showed that the food contained bacteria.
15. The surgeons are trying to find a compatible donor.
16. A diet high in saturated fats increases the risk of heart disease.
17. The surgeon demonstrated to the students how to make the incision.
18. As many as 60 – 70% of diarrhoeal deaths are caused by dehydration.
19. Autistic children do not communicate with anyone.
20. Penicillin is a common antibiotic produced from a fungus.

Section 7 (vii)

Different forms of word or syllable stress



Click here to listen to the recording which accompanies this section to practise the different forms of stress.

Use these various types of stress to help improve your pronunciation.

Improving sentence intonation is one of the key elements in English pronunciation. The four basic types of word stress that lead to proper intonation in English are:

- Tonic stress
- Emphatic stress
- Contrastive stress
- New information stress

Tonic stress

Tonic stress refers to the syllable in a word which receives the most stress in an intonation unit. An intonation unit has one tonic stress. (Remember that a sentence can have more than one intonation unit, and therefore have more than one tonic stress).

- He's **wait**ing
- He's **wait**ing / for his **friend**
- He's **wait**ing / for his **friend** / at the **sta**tion.

Generally, the final tonic stress in a sentence receives the most stress. In the above example, 'station' receives the strongest stress.

Emphatic stress

If you decide to emphasise something, you can change the stress from the principal noun to another content word such as an adjective (big, difficult, etc.), intensifier (very, extremely, etc.) This emphasis calls attention to the extraordinary nature of what you want to emphasize.

For example:

- That was a difficult **test**.
– Standard statement
- That was a **difficult** test.
– Emphasises how difficult the test was

There are some adverbs and modifiers which tend to be used to emphasize in sentences that receive emphatic stress:

extremely – terribly – completely – utterly – especially

- It was an **extremely difficult** operation

Contrastive stress

Contrastive stress is used to point out the difference between one object and another. Contrastive stress tends to be used with determiners such as 'this, that, these and those'.

- I think I prefer **this** colour.
- Do you want **these** or **those** curtains?

Contrastive stress is also used to bring out a given word in a sentence which will also slightly change the meaning.

- **He** came to the party yesterday.
(It was he, not someone else.)
- He **walked** to the party yesterday.
(He walked rather than drove.)
- He came to the **party** yesterday.
(It was a party not a meeting or something else.)
- He came to the party **yesterday**. (It was yesterday, not two weeks ago or some other time.)

The simple sentence below can have many levels of meaning based on the word you stress according to the contrastive choices. The stressed words are written in bold.

1. **I** don't think he should get the job.

Meaning: Somebody else thinks he should get the job.

2. I **don't** think he should get the job.

Meaning: It's not true that I think he should get the job.

3. I don't **think** he should get the job.

Meaning: That's not really what I mean. Or I'm not sure he'll get the job.

4. I don't think **he** should get the job.

Meaning: Somebody else should get the job.

5. I don't think he **should** get the job.

Meaning: In my opinion it is wrong that he is going to get the job.

6. I don't think he should **get** the job.

Meaning: He should have to earn that job.

7. I don't think he should get **the** job.

Meaning: He should get another job.

8. I don't think he should get the **job**.

Meaning: Maybe he should get something else instead.

As we see in the example, the meaning changes when we shift the stress in the phrase according to our contrastive choices.

New information stress

When asked a question, the requested information is naturally stressed more strongly.

For example:

- Where are you from?
– I come from **Seattle**, in the USA.
- What do you want to do?
– I want to go **bowling**.
- When does class begin?
– The class begins at **nine o'clock**.

Depression monologue

Listen to the audio file in the 'Depression Recording' and mark on the transcript below where the speaker pauses. Use / to indicate a pause (punctuation has been removed from the text).



[Click here to listen to the Depression Recording audio file.](#)

people often use the term depressed when they're talking about being sad or down about something that's happened or a situation in life but depression is actually a medical condition which affects 1 in 5 people at some stage in their lives it usually involves persistent sadness negativity and difficulty coping over a period of time and it's not something you can just 'get over' but it does respond well to treatment depressive illness is similar to cancer in many ways it can affect anyone regardless of age sex intelligence or social status in severe cases the condition is life threatening early intensive and occasionally prolonged treatment gives the best chance of totally eradicating the illness and reducing the risk of relapse a combination of your own efforts and appropriate medication produces much better results than either approach on its own

Here is the transcript with punctuation:

People often use the term 'depressed' when they're talking about being sad or down about something that's happened, or a situation in life; but depression is actually a medical condition which affects 1 in 5 people at some stage in their lives.

It usually involves persistent sadness, negativity and difficulty coping over a period of time, and it's not something you can just 'get over'; but it does respond well to treatment.

Depressive illness is similar to cancer in many ways. It can affect anyone regardless of age, sex, intelligence or social status. In severe cases, the condition is life-threatening.

Early intensive and, occasionally, prolonged treatment gives the best chance of totally eradicating the illness and reducing the risk of relapse. A combination of your own efforts and appropriate medication produces much better results than either approach on its own.



[Click here to listen to the Depression Recording once again.](#)

Section 7 (viii)

Sentence stress

Why does it matter where we put stresses in a sentence?

The singer Plácido Domingo needs no subtitles when interviewed on the BBC, despite his Spanish vowels and ‘strong eSpanish accent’. It’s because his sentence stresses are perfect.

But even advanced English language learners still often speak with equal stress on each word: ‘I will meet you downstairs.’ or ‘You must telephone me’. This confuses English listeners and can also sound a bit rude.

Sentence stress is common sense

Even when you talk to yourself, you stress the words that matter.

And, if asked in class, students know at once which words are important in that context, because it’s common sense. All you have to do is to stress them.

Practice is the key to learning sentence stress

All students are able to stress perfectly, whatever their mother tongue. Ask a Japanese person if he comes from India and he’ll certainly stress ‘Japan’ clearly.

An inappropriate stress confuses an English ear. Would we ever catch the right train if the station master announced the train times with random stress, e.g. ‘The next TRAIN at PLATFORM two WILL arrive at a QUARTER past ten.’?

The key words are NEXT, TWO, ARRIVE and TEN

So: ‘The next train at platform two will arrive at a quarter past ten.’

Why are sentence stresses harder to hear in English?

You can certainly hear sentence stress in spoken Germanic and Latin languages, but their unstressed a, o and u stay unchanged and are therefore easier to hear. English often reduces its unstressed a, o, u to the neutral /ə/ sound (as heard in, for example, ‘future, method, pursue, ago, forget etc.’), which means the meaning of the sentence depends very much on the stressed words.

Obviously, our stresses have to be in place for us to compress the unstressed words. And if we don’t compress unstressed structure words, we sound like robots and the precise meaning gets blurred, while we also sound too insistent.

In the instruction ‘You must knock on the door.’, would you prefer to hear a quick ‘You m-s...’ or a clear ‘You must... knock on the door.’? (Native speakers would use “you m-s knock on the door”. But foreign learners think it careless to say ‘It’s ...’, ‘I’ve...’, so they opt for ‘It is...’, ‘I have...’ to be polite. But this sounds too precise in normal English conversation. The former prime minister, Mrs Thatcher, tended to spell out each word, thereby sounding like a bossy school teacher in parliament!

Compressing words

English specialises in compressing unstressed auxiliary verbs. ‘I would never have caught it.’ becomes ‘I’d never’ve caught it.’ Even unstressed ‘going to’ is often pronounced ‘gonna’ today, yet once it was not allowed on the BBC. Now, it is now often heard on the BBC, even in serious programmes, if not on the news itself perhaps. Listen out for it during weather forecasts.

Sentence stress is a far easier guide to speaking. What’s more, all English dialects use it.

The sooner you get into the habit of stressing the relevant words, the sooner you’ll be able to communicate with English speakers – which is, presumably, your ultimate wish.

Grammar and vocabulary learning won’t be delayed by reminders of which words to stress. They’ll thrive in each other’s company.

Section 8

Support for speakers of specific languages

Section overview

The pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, word order and much more of one language will differ, sometimes radically, from those of another.

Consequently, it is possible to list the typical mistakes and difficulties that many speakers will exhibit when using English. Often, these do not get in the way of understanding (though they do not inspire confidence in others when writing).

As well as highlighting weaknesses (and strengths) of the English use of their trainees, trainers can encourage them to research the obstacles to using English caused by the interference of their mother tongue.

The seven examples offer different approaches to this, and can be used as a starting point for speakers of languages not listed.



Section 8 (i)

Avoiding common mistakes that Spanish speakers make when using English

From overusing infinitives to confusing prepositions like “of” and “on”, there are typical mistakes Spanish speakers tend to make when using English. This article has some pointers for avoiding them.

We are going to summarise the main barriers that a Spanish learner of English may encounter when trying to communicate accurately with native speakers of the language. Such obstacles may affect both written and oral language, different parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives and so on), syntactic structures in general, and finally, the main stumbling block that prevents accurate, effective communication: English pronunciation.

Contents

1. Verbs and nouns
2. Adjectives
3. Prepositions
4. English pronunciation
5. Negation
6. A common phrase
7. Common false friends
8. English to Spanish False Friends – a longer list
9. False Friends Test Yourself – and answers
10. Directly translated phrases
11. Word order
12. Articles
13. More prepositions
14. Verb choice
15. Verb tense
16. Noun choice
17. Plural nouns
18. More adjectives
19. Correct the Spanglish mistakes – and answers

1. Verbs and nouns

A very common source of mistakes is that many Spanish speakers use “can” and “must” as if they were equivalents of the Spanish verbs “poder” and “deber”, thus producing sentences such as * “I can to speak Catalan” or * “We must to study every day”. This infinitive is also observed in other structures such as * “You should not to smoke so much”.

Of course, there are errors which affect far more basic grammar, the most salient of them being to forget the mark of the third person singular verbs in the present simple tense: “-S”. The reason for this is that verbs in Spanish change all their endings, for all persons in all tenses. When ESL students learn that there is no such complication in English, they just forget to add the only ending which happens to be compulsory.

Subject-verb agreement also affects words such as “everybody”, “anybody”, “somebody”, “everyone”, “everything” and so on. The assumption made by some students is that “everybody” means “todos”, so they use a plural verb with such words, as in * “Everybody like his music”. Conversely, “people” when it is a plural noun, is the equivalent of “la gente”, a singular noun in Spanish. As a consequence, we will hear sentences like * “People complains about low salaries”.

Finally, if your mother tongue is Spanish, you will find it difficult to give a subject to every verb!

Every verb in English requires a subject (unless you are using the imperative form: e.g Stand up!)

2. Adjectives

There are two grammar rules that students must learn in order to increase intelligibility:

1. Adjectives never have a different plural form.

Adjectives precede nouns. Here are two typical mistakes:

- Ibiza's beautiful beaches are incredible.
→ Ibiza's beautiful beaches are incredible.
- My mother was a teacher very good.
→ My mother was a very good teacher.

It is also difficult for some students to tell the difference between -ED (passive meaning) and -ING (active meaning) adjectives. Here are two examples:

- I am tiring after Physical Education class.
→ I am tired after Physical Education class.
- The film was so bored! → The film was so boring!

3. Prepositions

Further common mistakes in English arise from the fact that equivalent verbs do not always take the equivalent preposition after them, if they take any preposition at all. Thus, many Spanish speakers will say * "Listen me!" or * "I like listening music" because they are mentally making the Spanish to English translation of "¡Escúchame!" or "Me gusta oír música".

Other examples are:

- "consist in" (instead of "of")
- "depend of" (instead of "on")
- "marry with someone" (instead of just "marry someone", without a preposition)
- "She said me..." (instead of "She said to me...")

4. English pronunciation

Another source of common mistakes in English is, undoubtedly, pronunciation.

The fact that the spelling of a Spanish word exactly reflects its pronunciation – while that is by no means the case in English – does not help matters. This problem is complicated by the fact that most teaching–learning systems tend to present the written form of a word before the oral form. In some cases, the oral form is not presented at all. As a consequence, we may hear "main" pronounced "mine", or "boat", "heard" and "juice" pronounced * [boat], * [heard] and * [juis].

Furthermore, English has twelve vowels – vowel phonemes – plus eight diphthongs. Many learners, even those who have some notion of the International Phonetic Alphabet, produce the very same vowel for "ship" and "sheep"; or for "cat", "cut" and "cart". Many forget that "word", "work", "world" or "worse" have the same vowel as "girl", and pronounce a clear Spanish [o] for the abovementioned words.

The weak vowel, or schwa, transcribed as /ə/ and which is omnipresent in so many unstressed syllables in English, is simply absent in Spanish pronunciation. Many Spanish speaking ESL learners will assume (unless otherwise told) that all written syllables are to be pronounced. The consequence is that they will say * [komforteibol] and * [bejeteibols] to pronounce "comfortable" and "vegetables".

As for consonants, we must take into account that there are no Spanish words beginning with "S + consonant". So, it is not uncommon to hear things such as * "I am a estudent from eSpain". Some ESL learners will make things worse by saying * "I am an estudent..."

The right sound that corresponds to the English letter "H" ("her", "house") is often mispronounced as a rough sound which is the common realization of that letter in some Spanish speaking areas, and is the normal Spanish pronunciation of "G" and "J" in the following groups:

ja	ge / je	gi / ji	jo	ju
----	---------	---------	----	----

On the other hand, the English letters "G" and "J" are often realized as a "Y". For instance, it is not uncommon to hear * "yam" instead of "jam", or * "yeneral" instead of "general". This is due to the fact that the correct English sound simply does not exist in the Spanish pronunciation system.

To conclude, students have to make a great effort in order to acquire a number of consonant sounds which just do not appear in Spanish words (the circled phonemes below).

Both “B” and “V” are pronounced [b] in Spanish.

The consonant in “the” is very frequently pronounced [d].

The consonant in “she” does not exist in mainstream Spanish.

Voiced /z/ is often realized as voiceless [s], especially when the student is reading it.

VOWELS	iː READ	I SIT	ʊ BOOK	uː TOO	ɪə HERE	eɪ DAY		
	e MEN	ə AMERICA	ɜː WORD	ɔː SORT	ʊə TOUR	ɔɪ BOY	əʊ GO	
	æ CAT	ʌ BUT	ɑː PART	ɒ NOT	eə WEAR	aɪ MY	aʊ HOW	
CONSONANTS	p PIG	b BED	t TIME	d DO	tʃ CHURCH	dʒ JUDGE	k KILO	g GO
	f FIVE	v VERY	θ THINK	ð THE	s SIX	z ZOO	ʃ SHORT	ʒ CASUAL
	m MILK	n NO	ŋ SING	h HELLO	l LIVE	r READ	w WINDOW	j YES

5. Negation

There are two aspects of negative sentences and verbs which are difficult to grasp by Spanish speaking ESL students: (1) there are no negative auxiliaries in Spanish, and (2) double negative structures are not only standard, but compulsory in Spanish. It is normal that in early stages of English learning, when students tend to translate everything they say from Spanish to English, they make mistakes when they try to utter a negative sentence.

For example, we may hear something like * “I not know the answer” / * “I know not the answer”, or even * “I no know the answer” instead of “I don’t know the answer” (“No sé la respuesta”).

On the other hand, the “logical”, so to speak, way to translate the following sentences from Spanish to English would be as follows:

- No he visto a nadie. → I have not seen nobody.
- No trabaja nunca. → She does not work never. / She not works never.

Other structures

This is a difficult mistake to get rid of: “Llevo tres años viviendo en Barcelona” → * “I live in Barcelona since three years” instead of “I have been living in Barcelona for three years”. We will often hear this kind of sentence and, to make things worse, “since” will be pronounced * [sains]. In general, there is much confusion involving the “ago”, “for” and “since”.

On the other hand, and on a more basic level, it takes some time for learners to realise that they cannot make a literal English to Spanish translation in these basic contexts:

- Tengo doce años. → I have twelve years. / I have twelve years old.
- ¿Tienes hambre? → Do you have hungry?
- Tengo sed. → I have thirsty.
- Trabajo de enfermero. → I work as nurse. / I work of nurse.

6. A common phrase

An extremely frequent mistake of Spanish English learners has to do with the verb “to agree”. It is, like most problems we have seen above, acquired in the early stages of the learning process and it is very difficult to uproot later on. The verb “to agree” in Spanish is “estar de acuerdo” (“estar” is the equivalent of “to be”). So, it is extremely frequent, as we have said, to hear and read * “I am agree with you”, * “I am not agree with you”, * “We are not agree”, and so on.

7. Common false friends

There is a huge list of false friends for the Spanish speaking ESL student to learn. Here are some common ones. A much bigger list is below.

Spanish word	English translation	English word	Spanish translation
Actual	current, present-day	Actual	real, efectivo
Americano	person from North, Central or South America	American	estadounidense
Asistir	to attend, be present at OR to assist	Assist	ayudar
Carpeta	folder	Carpet	alfombra
Casualidad	coincidence, chance	Casualty	víctima
Constipado	a cold	Constipated	estreñido
Dormitorio	bedroom	Dormitory	residencia universitaria
Embarazada	pregnant	Embarrassed	avergonzado
Éxito	success, hit	Exit	salida
Fábrica	factory	Fabric	tela
Introducir	insert	Introduce (someone)	presentar
Largo	long	Large	grande
Librería	bookshop	Library	biblioteca
Molestar	bother	Molest	abusar (sexualmente)
Realizar	to come true	Realize	darse cuenta
Suceso	event	Success	éxito

8. English to Spanish false friends

Actual ≠ actual**Actually ≠ actualmente**

- I used to live in New York, but I actually live in Colorado.
- I used to live in New York, but I currently live in Colorado.
- I used to work for the government, but my actual job is in the private sector.
- I used to work for the government, but my current job is in the private sector.

Actual means *real* or **verdadero** in Spanish

Actually means **de hecho**

To assist ≠ asistir

- I always assist my classes.
- I always attend my classes.

Assist means **ayudar**

To attend ≠ atender

- She attended many customers today.
- She assisted/took care of/helped many customers today.

Attend means **asistir**

Bland ≠ blando

- Cesium is the blandest metal in the world.
- Cesium is the softest metal in the world.

Bland means **insípido, soso** or **poco estimulante** in Spanish

Blando is usually translated as **soft** or **smooth**, depending on the context

career ≠ carrera

- What was his career in college?
- What was his major in college?

Career does mean *carrera* if we are talking about *una trayectoria profesional* or *una profesión*. However, to talk about someone's specialisation in college, we use

the word **major**

Carpet ≠ carpeta

- Kevin saved the document in a carpet on his desktop.
- Kevin saved the document in a folder on his desktop.

Carpet means **alfombra**

College ≠ colegio

- They really liked 9th grade, but they didn't like the rest of their college experience.
- They really liked 9th grade, but they didn't like the rest of their high school experience.

College means **universidad**

Claim ≠ clamar

- They claimed about the bad service at the restaurant.
- They complained about the bad service at the restaurant.

Claim means **asegurar**

Compromise ≠ compromiso

- Having children is a big compromise.
- Having children a big commitment.

Compromise means **un mutuo acuerdo en que los dos lados hacen concesiones** (it can also be used as a verb)

Deception ≠ decepción

- They were expecting to have a great time on vacation, but it was a big deception.
- were expecting to have a great time on vacation, but it was a big disappointment.

Deception means **engaño**

Demand ≠ demandar

- Did you hear about the woman who found a mouse in her soup and demanded the restaurant? She won \$200,000!
- Did you hear about the woman who found a mouse in her soup and sued the restaurant? She won \$200,000!

Demand means **exigir**

Explode ≠ explotar

- They exploded the workers and didn't pay them for the hours they worked.
- They exploited the workers and didn't pay them for the hours they worked.

Explode is translated as **explotar** if we are talking about an explosion. However, if you want to say **sacar provecho** or **abusar de alguien**, the word in English is **exploit**

Fabric ≠ fabrica

- His first job was working in a chemical fabric.
- His first job was working in a chemical factory.

Fabric means **tela** or **tejido**

Familiar ≠ familiar

- Is it a familiar movie? I want to know if I can bring my kids.
- Is it a family movie? I want to know if I can bring my kids.

Familiar can sometimes be translated as **familiar** if we are talking about something **conocido**. However, we do not use **familiar** to talk about things related to a family.

Globe ≠ globo

- We bought globes for the party and filled them with helium.
- We bought balloons for the party and filled them with helium.

Globe means **globo terráqueo**

Grass ≠ grasa

- You shouldn't eat fast food because it has a lot of grass.
- You shouldn't eat fast food because it has a lot of fat.

Grass means **zacate**

Idiom ≠ idioma

- Everyone says that Mandarin is a really difficult idiom.
- Everyone says that Mandarin is a really difficult language.

Idiom means **modismo** or **refrán**

Inhabitable ≠ inhabitable

- This house is dirty and there is no electricity. It's totally inhabitable.
- This house is dirty and there is no electricity. It's totally uninhabitable.

*These words are complete opposites in English and Spanish. In English **inhabitable** means **habitable** in Spanish. To talk about **un lugar inhabitable**, we say **an uninhabitable place***

Introduce ≠ introducir

- She introduced the dirty dishes in the dishwasher.
- She put the dirty dishes in the dishwasher.

Introduce means **presentar**

Lecture ≠ lectura

- Our teacher assigned the lecture on page 37. We have to read it and answer the questions.
- Our teacher assigned the reading on page 37. We have to read it and answer the questions.

Lecture means **lección** or **sermón**

library ≠ librería

- I need to go to the library to buy my textbooks for this semester.
- need to go to the bookstore to buy my textbooks for this semester.

Library means **biblioteca**

Molest ≠ molestar

- Loud noise molests me when I'm trying to study.
- Loud noise bothers me when I'm trying to study.

Molest means **abusar sexualmente**

Parent ≠ pariente

- Many of my parents were at my cousin's birthday party.
- Many of my relatives were at my cousin's birthday party.

Parent means **padre (mamá o papá)**

Plant ≠ planta

- Do you want to take the elevator or the stairs?
We're going to the fourth plant.
- Do you want to take the elevator or the stairs?
We're going to the fourth floor.

Plant cannot be used to talk about *un piso de un edificio*. We use **plant** to talk about flowers, trees, grass, etc.

Professor ≠ profesor

- My third grade professor, Ms. Osborne, was excellent.
- My third grade teacher, Ms. Osborne, was excellent.

Professor is only for a teacher at university level.

Realise ≠ realizar

- They are going to realise the movie next year.
- They are going to make the movie next year.

Realizar can be translated many different ways.

Realizar to mean *ejecutar* can be translated by "make" or "carry out."

Realise means **darse cuenta**

Recipient ≠ recipiente

Do you have a recipient to put this leftover food in?
Do you have a container to put this leftover food in?

Recipient means **receptor** or **destinatario**

Record ≠ recordar

- I can't record much of what happened to me when I was a young child.
- I can't remember much of what happened to me when I was a young child.

Record (as a verb) means **grabar**

Remove ≠ remover

- Can you get her a spoon so she can remove her coffee?
- Can you get her a spoon so she can stir her coffee?

Remove means **sacar** or **quitar**

Resume ≠ resumir

- Could we resume what we've agreed on so far today?
- Could we summarise what we've agreed on so far today?

Resume means **continuar**, **seguir** or **reanudar**

Retire ≠ retirar

- If you see the waiter, ask him to retire these plates.
- If you see the waiter, ask him to take away these plates.

Retire is usually only used to mean **to stop working (jubilarse)**.

Sane ≠ sano

- We try to eat sane foods that are not processed.
- We try to eat healthy foods that are not processed.

Sane means **cuerto** or **sensato**

Scientific ≠ científico

- Albert Einstein was a great scientific.
- Albert Einstein was a great scientist.

Scientific is an adjective in English. For example, **un descubrimiento científico** is 'a scientific discovery' in English. The person is a 'scientist'.

Sensible ≠ sensible

- Her eyes are very sensible to the light.
- Her eyes are very sensitive to the light.

Sensible means *sensato*

Support ≠ suportar

- My girlfriend and I broke up because she couldn't support a long-distance relationship.
- My girlfriend and I broke up because she couldn't tolerate/stand/put up with a long-distance relationship.

Support can mean *apoyar, respaldar, or mantener*

Sympathetic ≠ sympathetic

- Everyone likes being around her. She's so sympathetic.
- Everyone likes being around her. She's so nice/kind/friendly.

Sympathetic means *compasivo or empático*

Últimamente ≠ ultimamente

- Jacky has been going to the gym ultimately.
- Jacky has been going to the gym recently.

Ultimately can mean *basicamente, finalmente, or por ultimo*

9. Test: To practise, try this Spanish to English false friends activity

The answers are at the end of the activity

1. I'm so glad I changed jobs. My actual job is so much better than my previous one.
2. I really need to organize my desktop. I'm going to create a carpet and put all of these Excel documents in it.
3. Rob asked a police to give him directions.
4. Kids these days are really poorly educated. They don't have any manners and don't respect adults.
5. The song sounds really good, but the letters are really vulgar and don't make much sense.
6. I don't know why you get so offended by his jokes. You're so sensible.
7. How many idioms do you speak?
8. She has to redact a three-page essay about Napoleon Bonaparte.
9. Karen has a good relation with her supervisor.
10. Look at this prescription. I can't read my doctor's letter at all.
11. My doctor told me I need to eat more protein and carbohydrates, and less grass.
12. Some of the students claimed to the principal because they didn't like their teacher.
13. My mother tries not to buy things from companies that explode their employees.
14. She was really sick, so she didn't assist the conference.
15. The nurse introduced the needle into the patient's arm.
16. I like working at Walmart, but attending customers can be really difficult.
17. Please don't say vulgar things. This is a familiar restaurant and there are a lot of kids here.
18. In general, college was fun for Mary Beth, but 9th grade was a little difficult.
19. Do you need a spoon so you can remove your coffee?
20. Miguel was scared of getting married because he knew it was such a big compromise.
21. It's a beautiful apartment on the 4th plant with a view of Central Park.
22. I used to work in a fabric manufacturing cars, but then it closed.
23. I never listen to his histories because they are always boring.
24. All of these flies are molesting me.
25. When doctors make mistakes, sometimes people demand them for a lot of money.
26. The lecture in the entrance exam to get into college was really challenging. There were so many difficult words and really long sentences.

27. We had a reunion at work today, but a lot of people missed it.
28. I don't really want to read the whole article. Can you resume what it was about so I have a general idea?
29. The climate is absolutely beautiful today.
30. He doesn't want the car anymore, so he is going to sell it to one of his parents — either his cousin or his uncle.
31. That store has a great politic for returns. I returned some shirts and they gave me my money back without asking any questions.
32. In college, I started out studying Economics, but I didn't like my career, so I changed it to engineering.
33. What a nice guy. He's so much fun to be around, and very sympathetic.
34. Melanie has been going to the gym a lot ultimately.
35. They are trying to realize some changes so that the company can be more competitive.
36. Mike says that he could never be an actor because he would be scared to look out and see everyone in the public.
37. Many scientifics are looking for cures to terrible diseases.
38. My memory is terrible. I can't even record what I had for breakfast this morning.
39. Sarah and James told us that the service was horrible at that store. They kept looking for a store associate, but there was no one there to attend them.
40. Oops. I think I cooked this pasta for too long. The texture is horrible. It's very bland.
41. It's not a great library. Most of the books are really expensive.
42. When people get older, sane eating and regular exercise becomes even more important.
43. We got Jamie a big helium globe that says "Happy Birthday."
44. I can't believe he said something that offensive on television. He's going to have to retire the statement and tell everyone that he didn't mean it.
45. My kindergarten professor taught me how to count to 10 in Spanish.
46. I was so excited to see the movie, but it was horrible. It was such a deception.
47. I can't believe he lives in that old, disgusting place. It's completely inhabitable.
48. Do you know if this recipient is okay to put gasoline in?
49. If John comes to work late one more time, he is going to be fired. Management doesn't support people arriving late all the time.

Answers

1. I'm so glad I changed jobs. My current job is so much better than my previous one.
2. I really need to organize my desktop. I'm going to create a folder and put all of these Excel documents in it.
3. Rob asked a police officer to give him directions.
4. Kids these days are really disrespectful/rude/impolite. They don't have any manners and don't respect adults.
5. The song sounds really good, but the lyrics are really vulgar and don't make much sense.
6. I don't know why you get so offended by his jokes. You're so sensitive.
7. How many languages do you speak?
8. She has to write a three-page essay about Napoleon Bonaparte.
9. Karen has a good relationship with her supervisor.
10. Look at this prescription. I can't read my doctor's handwriting at all.
11. My doctor told me I need to eat more protein and carbohydrates, and less fat.
12. Some of the students complained to the principal because they didn't like their teacher.
13. My mother tries not to buy things from companies that exploit their employees.
14. She was really sick, so she didn't attend the conference.
15. The nurse put the needle into the patient's arm.
16. I like working at Walmart, but taking care of/helping/dealing with customers can be really difficult.
17. Please don't say vulgar things. This is a family restaurant and there are a lot of kids here.
18. In general, high school was fun for Mary Beth, but 9th grade was a little difficult.
19. Do you need a spoon so you can stir your coffee?
20. Miguel was scared of getting married because he knew it was such a big commitment.
21. It's a beautiful apartment on the 4th floor with a view of Central Park.
22. I used to work in a factory manufacturing cars, but then it closed.
23. I never listen to his stories because they are always boring.
24. All of these flies are bothering/annoying me.
25. When doctors make mistakes, sometimes people sue them for a lot of money.
26. The reading in the entrance exam to get into college was really challenging. There were so many difficult words and really long sentences.
27. We had a meeting at work today, but a lot of people missed it.
28. I don't really want to read the whole article. Can you summarise what it was about so I have a general idea?
29. The weather is absolutely beautiful today.
30. He doesn't want the car anymore, so he is going to sell it to one of his relatives/family members — either his cousin or his uncle.
31. That store has a great policy for returns. I returned some shirts and they gave me my money back without asking any questions.
32. In college, I started out studying Economics, but I didn't like my major, so I changed it to engineering.
33. What a nice guy. He's so much fun to be around, and very friendly/nice.
34. Melanie has been going to the gym a lot lately/recently.
35. They are trying to make some changes so that the company can be more competitive.
36. Mike says that he could never be an actor because he would be scared to look out and see everyone in the audience.
37. Many scientists are looking for cures to terrible diseases.
38. My memory is terrible. I can't even remember what I had for breakfast this morning.
39. Sarah and James told us that the service was horrible at that store. They kept looking for a store associate, but there was no one there to help/assist them.
40. Oops. I think I cooked this pasta for too long. The texture is horrible. It's very soft.
41. It's not a great bookstore. Most of the books are really expensive.
42. When people get older, healthy eating and regular exercise becomes even more important.
43. We got Jamie a big helium balloon that says "Happy Birthday."
44. I can't believe he said something that offensive on television. He's going to have to take back/retract the statement and tell everyone that he didn't mean it.
45. My kindergarten teacher taught me how to count to 10 in Spanish.
46. I was so excited to see the movie, but it was horrible. It was such a disappointment.
47. I can't believe he lives in that old, disgusting place. It's completely uninhabitable.
48. Do you know if this container is okay to put gasoline in?
49. If John comes to work late one more time, he is going to be fired. Management doesn't tolerate/put up with people arriving late all the time.

10. Directly Translated Phrases

We say 'at work', not 'in the job':

- I sometimes use Facebook when I'm in the job. ❌
- I sometimes use Facebook when I'm at work. ✅

We say 'I'm not sure about...', or 'I have a question about...', not 'I have a doubt':

- I have a doubt about the homework. ❌
- I have a question about the homework. ✅

Saying 'I have a doubt' isn't necessarily incorrect, but it sounds unnatural. It's better to say 'I'm not sure about...', or 'I have a question about...' instead.

We say 'I think...', not 'for me...' when giving personal opinions:

- For me, the idea is okay. ❌
- I think the idea is okay. ✅

It's not necessarily wrong to say 'for me...' before giving opinions, but we don't use 'for me...' nearly as often as Spanish speakers use 'Para mi...' when giving opinions.

We say 'I think so', not 'I think yes':

- Is John the guy in the blue shirt? I think yes. ❌
- Is John the guy in the blue shirt? I think so. ✅

For the negative, we say 'I don't think so', not 'I think no':

- Are you going to go out with us tonight?
I think no. ❌
- Are you going to go out with us tonight?
I don't think so. ✅

- They asked me to work overtime today,
but I said that no. ❌
- They asked me to work overtime today,
but I said no. ✅

- I asked for a raise and they told me that yes. ❌
- I asked for a raise and they told me yes. ✅

We say 'how long...?', not 'for how much time...?' to ask a question about a duration of time:

- For how much time have you lived in San Jose? ❌
- How long have you lived in San Jose? ✅

We say 'know how (+ infinitive verb)', not 'know (+ infinitive verb)' to talk about things someone can and can't do:

- I know to swim. ❌
- I know how to swim. ✅

- Does your child know to read yet? ❌
- Does your child know how to read yet? ✅

We say 'I have no idea', not 'I don't have an idea' to communicate 'no tengo idea':

- What should we have for lunch?
I don't have an idea. ❌
- What should we have for lunch? I have no idea. ✅

When we introduce people, we say 'this is...' or 'these are...', not 'he is...', 'they are...', etc:

- Hey, Mike. Let me introduce you to everyone. She is my sister, Alison, and they are my parents. ❌
- Hey, Mike. Let me introduce you to everyone. This is my sister, Alison, and these are my parents. ✅

If we are talking about people in the distance, we say 'that' or 'those'. 'Those are my parents over there', for example.

We say 'leave me alone', not 'leave me in peace':

- Leave me in peace. I don't want to talk right now. ❌
- Leave me alone. I don't want to talk right now. ✅

We say 'now is the time', not 'now is when':

- I'm not sure if now is when to change jobs. ❌
- I'm not sure if now is the time to change jobs. ✅

We say 'no wonder', not 'with reason' to communicate '*con razón*':

- With reason you got a bad grade on the test.
You didn't study at all. ❌
- No wonder you got a bad grade on the test.
You didn't study at all. ✅

We say 'from now on', not 'since now' to communicate '*desde ahora en adelante*':

- Since now he is going to be more careful. ❌
- From now on, he is going to be more careful. ✅

We say 'from (point in time) to (a point in time)', not 'since (a point in time) to (a point in time)':

- I work since 8 AM to 6 PM. ❌
- I work from 8 AM to 6 PM. ✅

We say 'less and less' and 'more and more', not 'each time less' or 'each time more':

- I am each time less interested in watching this TV show. ❌
- I am less and less interested in watching this TV show. ✅

- This TV show is getting each time more interesting. ❌
- This TV show is getting more and more interesting. ✅

If the adjective is one syllable (good, bad, big) or a two-syllable adjective ending in 'y' (funny, busy) we would say 'bigger and bigger', 'better and better', 'worse and worse', 'funnier and funnier', etc.

We say 'it's the way she is', not 'it's her way of being':

- She works really hard and has trouble relaxing.
It's her way of being. ❌
- She works really hard and has trouble relaxing.
It's the way she is. ✅

We say 'get a new job/car', etc. 'not change my job/car':

- He said he was learning English so he could change his job. ❌
- He said he was learning English so he could get a new job. ✅

- We're saving money so we can change our car. ❌
- We're saving money so we can buy a new car. ✅

We say 'out of work', not 'without job':

- Edgar was without job, so he was preparing his resume and looking for job opportunities. ❌
- Edgar was out of work, so he was preparing his resume and looking for job opportunities. ✅

We say 'the (adjective) thing/part', not 'the (adjective)' to communicate things like '*lo bueno*', '*lo malo*', '*lo importante*', etc:

- The good about my new job is that I have a flexible schedule. ❌
- The good thing/part about my new job is that I have flexible schedule. ✅

- The difficult about being a parent is making time for yourself. ❌
- The difficult thing/part about being a parent is making time for yourself. ✅

We say 'there are five of us', not 'we are five', etc:

- We are five in my English class. ❌
- There are five of us in my English class. ✅

Similar examples:

- We can't beat your team. We are only three and you are five. ❌
- We can't beat your team. There are only three of us and five of you. ✅

- How many are you? ❌
- How many of you are there? ✅

We say 'who are you rooting for?', or 'who do you want to win?', not 'who are you going with?' when we ask someone which team he or she wants to win a game:

- Who are you going with, Real Madrid or Barcelona? ❌
- Who are you rooting for, Real Madrid or Barcelona? ✅
- Who do you want to win, Real Madrid or Barcelona? ✅

11. Word order

We don't normally start a sentence with 'probably'. We normally use 'probably' before the main verb or after the verb 'to be':

- Probably, we have a test this week. ❌
- We probably have a test this week. ✔️

- Probably, they are twins. ❌
- They are probably twins. ✔️
- They're probably twins. ✔️

We don't use 'always' to start a sentence. We use 'always' before the main verb or after the verb 'to be':

- Always, he goes to the beach. ❌
- He always goes to the beach. ✔️

- Always, they're late for class. ❌
- They are always late for class. ✔️
- They're always late for class. ✔️

We don't normally place an adverb between the verb and its object:

- I study normally English at the weekend. ❌
- I normally study English at the weekend. ✔️

- Kate goes usually to work at 7:30 AM. ❌
- Kate usually goes to work at 7:30 AM. ✔️

We place the adverbs 'a lot' and 'very much' after the object of a sentence.

- They like a lot pizza. ❌
- They like pizza a lot. ✔️

- She loves very much her cats. ❌
- She loves her cats very much. ✔️

We usually put frequency statements ('once a week', 'three times a year', 'once in awhile', etc.) at the end of the sentence.

- I drink every morning a strong cup of coffee. ❌
- I drink a strong cup of coffee every morning. ✔️

- You should go twice a year to the dentist. ❌
- You should go to the dentist twice a year. ✔️

We say 'like (something) more', not 'like more (something)'.

- Gary likes more baseball than soccer. ❌
- Gary likes baseball more than soccer. ✔️

We say 'number + more + noun', not 'number + noun + more':

- We only have three days more of class. ❌
- We only have three more days of class. ✔️

- Jack has worked here for two years more than anyone else. ❌
- Jack has worked here for two more years than anyone else. ✔️

12. Articles

We don't use the article 'the' when we are talking about a non-specific group. If we are talking about a specific group, we use 'the':

- In general, I like the dogs. ❌
- In general, I like dogs. ✅ (*non-specific*)

- Dogs outside my house were barking last night and I couldn't sleep. ❌
- The dogs outside my house were barking last night and I couldn't sleep. ✅ (*specific group*)

We don't use the article 'the' before sports if we are speaking about the sport in general:

- I love the baseball. ❌
- I love baseball. ✅

- What is your favourite sport? Mine is the soccer. ❌
- What is your favourite sport? Mine is soccer. ✅

It is possible (but not common) to use 'the' before sports if we are talking about something very specific. "The baseball they play in the Dominican Republic is a little different from what I'm used to", for example.

We don't use the article 'the' before academic subjects if we are speaking about the subject in general:

- I love the science, but I hate the history. ❌
- I love science, but I hate history. ✅

It is possible to use 'the' before an academic subject if we are talking about something specific. For example, "I'm reading about the history of the Incan civilization".

We don't use the article 'the' before expressions like 'last week', 'last January', 'next week', 'next Thursday', etc:

- I won't be here the next weekend. ❌
- The last January it snowed a lot in the United States. ❌
- Last January it snowed a lot in the United States. ✅

If we are talking about where someone is going, we use 'the' before some places, but not others:

- go to the park
- go to the gym
- go to the pool
- go to the mall
- go to the supermarket
- go to the beach
- go to the bank
- go to the post office
- go to work
- go to school
- go to class
- go to court
- go to church

- I don't feel well. I don't know if I'll go to the work tomorrow. ❌
- I don't feel well. I don't know if I'll go to work tomorrow. ✅

- They went to the school yesterday even though it was snowing. ❌
- They went to school yesterday even though it was snowing. ✅

Note that if we are talking about a specific school, class, court, or church, we might use 'the'. For example, "I have history on Friday mornings, but I've only been to the class once".

We use 'the' before certain countries:

- the United States
- the United Kingdom
- the Czech Republic
- the Dominican Republic
- the Netherlands
- the Philippines
- the Bahamas
- the Maldives
- the United Arab Emirates

General rules for when we use 'the' for a country:

- If the country or area is a collection of islands (the Maldives, the Canary Islands).
- If we are using the complete name of the country with the word 'of'. The People's Republic of China, for example.

We use possessives (my, your, his, her, their, our, Mike's, Kate's, etc.), not 'the' for body parts:

- Open the mouth. ✗
- Open your mouth. ✓

- John broke the arm. ✗
- John broke his arm. ✓

We don't use the article 'the' before percentages if we are talking about an exact number:

- Almost the 60% of Americans disagree with the president's decision. ✗
- Almost 60% of Americans disagree with the president's decision. ✓

If we do not say the exact number, we use 'the'. "The percentage of people who don't have a car is increasing", for example.

We don't use the article 'the' before 'double', 'triple', 'quadruple', etc:

- I can't sell you my car for that price. Someone already offered me the double that price. ✗
- I can't sell you my car for that price. Someone already offered me double that price. ✓

We don't use the article 'the' before 'both':

- I like the both options. ✗
- I like both options. ✓

We don't use the article 'the' before numbered items in a list or series:

- Did you do the maths homework?
I had trouble with the number 11. ✗
- Did you do the maths homework?
I had trouble with number 11. ✓

- I was surprised by the number five on *People Magazine's* list of the sexiest people alive. ✗
- I was surprised by number five on *People Magazine's* list of the sexiest people alive. ✓

We don't use the article 'the' before 'heaven' or 'hell':

- She told me to go to the hell. ✗
- She told me to go to hell. ✓

- Did you read the book about the kid who almost died and had a vision of the heaven? ✗
- Did you read the book about the kid who almost died and had a vision of heaven? ✓

We use the article 'the' before abbreviations of organisations in which each letter is said separately ('the FBI', 'the FDA', etc.). If we pronounce the organisation as a word instead of saying each letter, we don't use the article 'the' (NASA, FEMA, PETA, etc.):

- The NASA is doing some impressive things with nanotechnology. ❌
- NASA is doing some impressive things with nanotechnology. ✔️

- Many people are members of the PETA, which is an animal rights group. ❌
- Many people are members of PETA, which is an animal rights group. ✔️

- FBI is a powerful organisation. ❌
- The FBI is a powerful organisation. ✔️

We need to use an article before professions (if it's singular):

- I am chef. ❌
- I am a chef. ✔️

- Jan is architect. ❌
- Jan is an architect. ✔️

We say 'when someone was a child', not 'when someone was child':

- I had blond hair when I was child. ❌
- I had blond hair when I was a child. ✔️

- When she was child, she was very quiet. ❌
- When she was a child, she was very quiet. ✔️

In general, when we talk about meals we don't use the article 'a' or 'an'. However, if we include an adjective, then we use the article 'a' or 'an':

- Did you eat a breakfast this morning? ❌
- Did you eat breakfast this morning? ✔️

- I finish work at five o'clock, and then I'm going to go home and eat a lunch. ❌
- I finish work at five o'clock, and then I'm going to go home and eat lunch. ✔️

- I had big breakfast this morning. ❌
- I had a big breakfast this morning. ✔️

- We've been eating a lot of junk food lately, so let's eat light dinner. ❌
- We've been eating a lot of junk food lately, so let's eat a light dinner. ✔️

13. More prepositions

We say 'depends on', not 'depends of':

- I don't know what I'm going to do tomorrow. It depends of the weather. (✗)
- I don't know what I'm going to do tomorrow. It depends on the weather. (✓)

We say 'think about/of', not 'think in':

- I'm thinking in my future and deciding what I want to do. (✗)
- I'm thinking about my future and deciding what I want to do. (✓)

If we are imagining or envisioning something, we use 'think of' or 'think about'. If we are considering something, we use 'think about'.

We say 'married to', not 'married with':

- He is married with a woman from Argentina. (✗)
- He is married to a woman from Argentina. (✓)

With the verb 'to marry' we don't use a preposition:

- I married to my wife when I was 20 years old. (✗)
- I married my wife when I was 20 years old. (✓)

We say 'worry about', not 'worry for':

- Her mother worries for her a lot. (✗)
- Her mother worries about her a lot. (✓)

We say 'dream about', not 'dream with':

- What does it mean if you dream with flying? (✗)
- What does it mean if you dream about flying? (✓)

We say 'similar to', not 'similar than':

- John is very similar than his older brother. (✗)
- John is very similar to his older brother. (✓)

[MISSING TEXT?]

- The hotel I'm staying at is near to the airport. (✗)
- The hotel I'm staying at is near the airport. (✓)
- The hotel I'm staying at is close to the airport. (✓)

When we are talking about the creator of something we say 'written by', 'painted by', 'directed by', 'created by', etc. not 'written for', 'painted for', etc:

- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was written for Gabriel Garcia Marquez. (✗)
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. (✓)

- *Clockwork Orange* was directed for Stanley Kubrick. (✗)
- *Clockwork Orange* was directed by Stanley Kubrick. (✓)

- *Starry Night* was painted for Vincent Van Gogh. (✗)
- *Starry Night* was painted by Vincent Van Gogh. (✓)

We say 'related to', not 'related with':

- This is a problem related with drug abuse. (✗)
- This is a problem related to drug abuse. (✓)

We say 'arrive in/at a place', not 'arrive to a place':

- I arrived to work at 9 AM. (✗)
- I arrived at work at 9 AM. (✓)

We use 'arrive in' when we are talking about large places such as cities and states (London, the UK, New Jersey, etc.). We use 'arrive at' when we are talking about specific locations (the bank, the store, work, etc.).

We say 'go home', not 'go to home':

- Instead of going to home right after work, let's go get something to eat. ❌
- Instead of going home right after work, let's go get something to eat. ✅

We say 'listen to + something/someone'. Omitting the preposition 'to' is incorrect:

- She wants to know what kind of music you are listening. ❌
- She wants to know what kind of music you are listening to. ✅

- Can I borrow your notes? I wasn't listening the teacher during class. ❌
- Can I borrow your notes? I wasn't listening to the teacher during class. ✅

We say 'good/bad at something', not 'good/bad in something':

- He's good in basketball but bad in baseball. ❌
- He's good at basketball but bad at baseball. ✅

If we use the comparative and superlative forms of good and bad, the same rule applies:

- He's good in basketball, but he's better in football. ❌
- He's good at basketball, but he's better at football. ✅

- No, I don't want to go golfing. I'm the absolute worst in golf. ❌
- No, I don't want to go golfing. I'm the absolute worst at golf. ✅

We say 'opposite of', not 'opposite to':

- 'Light' is the opposite to 'dark'. ❌
- 'Light' is the opposite of 'dark'. ✅

We say 'talking on the phone', not 'talking by phone':

- Please be quiet. I'm talking by phone. ❌
- Please be quiet. I'm talking on the phone. ✅

We say 'attend an event', not 'attend to an event' to communicate 'asistir a un evento':

- I have attended to every single class this year. ❌
- I have attended every single class this year. ✅

With many verbs (answer, ask, call, choose, tell, visit), we don't place 'to' between the verb and the object:

- I couldn't answer to the teacher. ❌
- I couldn't answer the teacher. ✅

- The reporter asked to him a question. ❌
- The reporter asked him a question. ✅

- Salespeople always call to the house during dinner. ❌
- Salespeople always call the house during dinner. ✅

- I hope they choose to me for the job opening. ❌
- I hope they choose me for the job opening. ✅

- I told to John the story about what happened last weekend. ❌
- I told John the story about what happened last weekend. ✅

There are other examples, but the verbs above tend to cause problems for Spanish speakers.

We say 'been to', not 'been in' for cities, states, and other places:

- I've never been in New Jersey. ❌
- I've never been to New Jersey. ✅

- Before that, she had never been in Europe. ❌
- Before that, she had never been to Europe. ✅

- Have you guys been in that new Italian restaurant? ❌
- Have you guys been to that new Italian restaurant? ✅

We say 'smile at someone', not 'smile to someone':

- A cute guy smiled to me on the bus. ❌
- A cute guy smiled at me on the bus. ✅

We say 'despite + noun/gerund', not 'despite of + noun/gerund':

- Despite of being tired, he came to class. ❌
- Despite being tired, he came to class. ✅

We say 'on the bus/train/plane', not 'in the bus/plane/train':

- Sometimes I read when I'm in the bus. ❌
- Sometimes I read when I'm on the bus. ✅

- Let's get in the plane. ❌
- Let's get on the plane. ✅

We use 'on' with types of public transport and 'in' with cars, vans, trucks, etc.

We say 'waiting for someone/something', not 'waiting someone/something':

- We are waiting John to get here. ❌
- We are waiting for John to get here. ✅

We normally say 'trust someone', not 'trust in someone':

- I trust in my employees to do a good job when I'm not in the office. ❌
- I trust my employees to do a good job when I'm not in the office. ✅

We say 'according to someone', not 'according someone':

- According many experts, the economy is going to improve. ❌
- According to many experts, the economy is going to improve. ✅

If we are talking about completing paperwork (forms, government documents, etc.) we say 'fill out', not 'fill':

- I filled the immigration form when I was on the plane. ❌
- I filled out the immigration form when I was on the plane. ✅

We say 'put music on' or 'put on music', not 'put music' to communicate 'poner música':

- Let's put music. It's too quiet. ❌
- Let's put on some music. It's too quiet. ✅
- Let's put some music on. It's too quiet. ✅

We say contact someone, not contact with someone.

- I'm going to contact with her when I find out more information. ❌
- I'm going to contact her when I find out more information. ✅

We say 'pay for something', not 'pay something' to talk about purchasing something tangible.

- They paid the book and then left the store. ❌
- They paid for the book and then left the store. ✅

When talking about something intangible (bills, taxes, rent, etc.) we don't use 'for':

- Everyone has to pay for their taxes by the end of the financial year. ❌
- Everyone has to pay their taxes by the end of the financial year. ✅

We say 'the same as', not 'the same than' or 'the same to':

- He's the same than his father. They both like the same things and have similar personalities. ❌
- He's the same as his father. They both like the same things and have similar personalities. ✅

We say 'because of', not 'for' to emphasise the cause or reason of something:

- I can't go running right now for my knee injury. ❌
- I can't go running right now because of my knee injury. ✅

- Getting to work can be difficult for the traffic. ❌
- Getting to work can be difficult because of the traffic. ✅

We say 'insist that', not 'insist in that':

- She insisted in that we stay for dinner. ❌
- She insisted that we stay for dinner. ✅

We say 'in the world', not 'of the world' to communicate 'del mundo':

- He is one of the best soccer players of the world. ❌
- He is one of the best soccer players in the world. ✅

14. Verb choice

We use the verb 'to be' for the age of someone, not 'to have':

- She has 25 years. ❌
- She is 25 years old. ✔️
- She's twenty-five. ✔️

Many expressions with 'tener' in Spanish take the verb 'to be' in English:

- Tener hambre = to be hungry
- Tener miedo = to be scared/afraid
- Tener sed = to be thirsty
- Tener sueño = to be tired
- Tener vergüenza = to be ashamed/embarrassed
- Tener frío = to be cold
- Tener prisa = to be in a hurry
- Tener razón = to be right
- Tener la culpa = to be guilty
- Tener celos = to be jealous

We say 'make money' or 'earn money', not 'gain money':

- I hope to get a new job soon so I can gain more money. ❌
- I hope to get a new job soon so I can make/earn more money. ✔️

'Win money' would also be incorrect. We use 'win money' to talk about prizes or gambling winnings.

We say 'make mistakes', not 'have errors' or 'have mistakes':

- My English is okay, but I have a lot of errors. ❌
- My English is okay, but I have a lot of mistakes. ❌
- My English is okay, but I make a lot of mistakes. ✔️

We say 'have a party', not 'make a party' or 'do a party':

- Do you think we should make a party this weekend? ❌
- Do you think we should do a party this weekend? ❌
- Do you think we should have a party this weekend? ✔️

We say 'play a sport', not 'practice a sport' if it is for fun or recreation:

- I like to practice soccer with my friends after work. ❌
- I like to play soccer with my friends after work. ✔️

We say 'spend time', not 'share time' to communicate 'compartir tiempo':

- At the weekend, she usually shares time with her husband. ❌
- At the weekend, she usually spends time with her husband. ✔️

We normally say 'go to a place', not 'visit a place'. We typically use 'visit' for people:

- I might visit the beach this weekend. ❌
- I might go to the beach this weekend. ✔️

We say 'take pills', not 'drink pills'. We only use 'drink' for liquids:

- I always drink a pill if I have a headache. ❌
- I always take a pill if I have a headache. ✔️

We say 'wear', not 'use' to talk about clothes, jewelry, makeup, or anything else that goes on someone's body:

- John is the one using the red shirt.
Tom is the one using glasses. ❌
- John is the one wearing the red shirt.
Tom is the one wearing glasses. ✔️

We say 'come in', not 'pass' when we tell someone to enter a room:

- He knocked on the door, and I told him to pass. ❌
- He knocked on the door, and I told him to come in. ✔️

We say 'pay attention', not 'put attention':

- I don't remember what they said. I wasn't putting attention. ❌
- I don't remember what they said. I wasn't paying attention. ✔️

We say 'to take care of' or 'to look after', not 'to care' to communicate '*cuidar a alguien*':

- Jessica cares her little brother when her mom is at work. ❌
- Jessica takes care of her little brother when her mum is at work. ✔️
- Jessica looks after her little brother when her mum is at work. ✔️

We say 'support', not 'maintain' to communicate '*mantener a alguien*':

- It's really difficult to maintain three kids. ❌
- It's really difficult to support three kids. ✔️

We say 'tell the truth', not 'say the truth':

- They were such honest kids.
They always said the truth. ❌
- They were such honest kids.
They always told the truth. ✔️

We say 'to go for the first time', not 'to meet' or 'to know' to communicate '*conocer un lugar*'. We only use 'meet' for people:

- I met New York in 2009. ❌
- I went to New York for the first time in 2009. ✔️

We say 'see', 'visit', 'experience', etc. for places, not 'know':

- Let's leave the hotel so we can know the city. ❌
- Let's leave the hotel so we can see/experience/check out the city. ✔️

We say 'pay', not 'cancel' to talk about making a payment:

- Can you go up to the counter and cancel? ❌
- Can you go up to the counter and pay? ✔️

We say 'lead', not 'conduct' to communicate '*enseñar el camino*' or '*conducir a un lugar*':

- They conducted the horses to the stable. ❌
- They led the horses to the stable. ✔️
(*'lead' becomes 'led' in the past*)

We say 'waste time', not 'lose time' to communicate '*perder el tiempo*':

- Sara loses a lot of time watching TV. ❌
- Sara wastes a lot of time watching TV. ✔️

We say 'brush (someone's) teeth', not 'wash (someone's) teeth':

- I'm going to wash my teeth and go to bed. ❌
- I'm going to brush my teeth and go to bed. ✔️

We say 'keep a secret', not 'save a secret' or 'guard a secret':

- You can tell me what's bothering you.
I can save a secret. ❌
- You can tell me what's bothering you.
I can guard a secret. ❌
- You can tell me what's bothering you.
I can keep a secret. ✔️

We use the verb ‘turn out’, not ‘result’ to communicate ‘*resultar que*’:

- It results that we are both from the same town. ❌
- It turns out that we are both from the same town. ✔️

We say ‘to sunbathe’ or ‘to get a tan’, not ‘to take sun’:

- I’m going to take sun today. ❌
- I’m going to sunbathe today. ✔️
- I’m going to get a tan today. ✔️

We almost always say ‘hire’, not ‘contract’ to communicate ‘*contratar a alguien*’:

- Things have been going really well. Management is thinking about contracting more people. ❌
- Things have been going really well. Management is thinking about hiring more people. ✔️

We say ‘take place’, not ‘have place’ to talk about where events happen in a movie, book, play, etc:

- The novel has place in Brooklyn in the 1920s. ❌
- The novel takes place in Brooklyn in the 1920s. ✔️

Animals ‘lay’ eggs. They do not ‘put’ eggs:

- Our chicken still hasn’t put any eggs this week. ❌
- Our chicken still hasn’t laid any eggs this week. ✔️
(‘lay’ is ‘laid’ in the past)

We say ‘make (someone/something) disappear’, not ‘disappear (someone/something)’:

- Joseph Stalin disappeared many people when he was the leader of the Soviet Union. ❌
- Joseph Stalin made many people disappear when he was the leader of the Soviet Union. ✔️

15. Verb tense

We use the present continuous, not the simple present to talk about things happening 'en el momento':

- Right now, I cook dinner. ❌
- Right now, I'm cooking dinner. ✅

We don't use the structure 'maybe + going to + verb'. We use 'maybe + subject + will' or 'might' instead:

- Maybe we are going to the beach this weekend. ❌
- Maybe we'll go to the beach this weekend. ✅
(the speaker is thinking about it now)
- We might go to the beach this weekend. ✅
(the speaker is communicating a future possibility)

We use one of the present perfect tenses, not the simple present to talk about actions that started in the past and continue in the present:

- He has three years at this company. ❌
- He has worked here for three years. ✅
- He has been working here for three years. ✅

- How long do they have being married? ❌
- How long have they been married? ✅

We use 'will', not 'going to' when we make a decision about the future at the same time we are speaking:

- Your car broke down? No problem, I'm going to pick you up at your house. ❌
- Your car broke down? No problem, I'll pick you up at your house. ✅

- Would you like a copy of this presentation? Okay, my secretary is going to send it to you. ❌
- Would you like a copy of this presentation? Okay, my secretary will send it to you. ✅

In Spanish, some verbs are followed by 'que' and then the second verb in the subjunctive:

- Quiero que tenga...
- Quisiera que me regale...
- Espero que tenga...
- Le pedi que llegaran...

In English, these verbs ('want', 'would like', 'expect', 'ask', and 'tell') are followed by the object and the second verb in the infinitive:

- I want that you call me later. ❌
- I want you to call me later. ✅

- I would like that you help me with something. ❌
- I would like you to help me with something. ✅

- They always expected that we were on time. ❌
- They always expected us to be on time. ✅

- He asked that I got here at 8 a.m. ❌
- He asked me to get here at 8 a.m. ✅

- He told that I got here at 8 a.m. ❌
- He told me to get here at 8 a.m. ✅

When we put two verbs together, some verbs are followed by the infinitive and some verbs are followed by the gerund. A common mistake is to always combine two verbs by putting the second verb in the infinitive:

- I avoid to go to the mall on weekends. ❌
- I avoid going to the mall on weekends. ✅

- She enjoys to run. ❌
- She enjoys running. ✅

Verbs followed by the gerund include avoid, consider, deny, enjoy, finish, keep, miss, recommend, suggest, and understand.

16. Noun choice

We have the words *main* and *principal* in English. With many nouns, *main* is a better choice and *principal* can sound awkward:

- The principal problem is a lack of data. ❌
- The main problem is a lack of data. ✅

We usually say *flood*, not *inundation*:

- After the storm, there was an inundation in the valley. ❌
- After the storm, there was a flood in the valley. ✅

We say *car park*, not *parking* to talk about a specially designed area in which to park cars:

- The parking was full, so we parked on the street. ❌
- The car park was full, so we parked on the street. ✅

We say *permit*, not *permission* to talk about an official document that gives us permission to do something:

- We had to show the government officials our permission. ❌
- We had to show the government officials our permit. ✅

Only married people have a *mother-in-law*, *father-in-law*, etc:

- Paul likes his girlfriend a lot, but he doesn't like his mother-in-law. ❌
- Paul likes his girlfriend a lot, but he doesn't like his girlfriend's mother. ✅

We say *coworkers*, not *partners* to talk about the people we work with.

We say *classmates*, not *partners* to talk about the people we go to school with:

- It's hard to get work done because my partners talk too much. ❌
- It's hard to get work done because my coworkers talk too much. ✅

- Brandon's high school partners always made fun of him. ❌
- Brandon's high school classmates always made fun of him. ✅

Most Spanish words ending in “ion” have an equivalent in English. However, some do not.

- Actualización is update, not actualization
- Calificación can be grade, mark, score, or rating, not calification
- Explicación is explanation, not explication
- Grabación is recording, not grabation
- Decepción is disappointment, not deception ('Deception' = engaño, see section on false friends)
- Filmación is filming or shooting, not filmation
- Habitación is room or bedroom, not habitation
- Presión is pressure, not pression
- Recopilación can be collection, set, summary, review, or compilation, not recopilation
- Ubicación is location, not ubication

17. Plural nouns

‘Homeworks’ is not a word. ‘Homework’ is an uncountable noun:

- Kate couldn’t come to the party because she had many homeworks to do. (✗)
- Kate couldn’t come to the party because she had a lot of homework to do. (or too much homework to do). (✓)

‘Furnitures’ is not a word. ‘Furniture’ is an uncountable noun:

- We just bought a house and we have to buy new furnitures. (✗)
- We just bought a house and we have to buy new furniture. (✓)

‘Advices’ is not the plural of ‘advice’. ‘Advice’ is an uncountable noun:

- My father always gave me very good advices. (✗)
- My father always gave me very good advice. (✓)

‘Popcorns’ is not a word. ‘Popcorn’ is an uncountable noun:

- Let’s make some popcorns and watch a movie. (✗)
- Let’s make some popcorn and watch a movie. (✓)

‘Evidences’ is not the plural of ‘evidence’. ‘Evidence’ is an uncountable noun:

- There were many evidences against the defendant. He was convicted of the crime. (✗)
- There was a lot of evidence against the defendant. He was convicted of the crime. (✓)

‘Proofs’ is not the plural of ‘proof’. Unless we’re speaking about mathematical proofs, ‘proof’ is an uncountable noun:

- He had to provide proofs of his legal status in the country. (✗)
- He had to provide proof of his legal status in the country. (✓)

‘Jewellery’ is normally an uncountable noun:

- Her husband has given her many jewelleries over the years. (✗)
- Her husband has given her a lot of jewellery over the years. (✓)

We say ‘election’, not ‘elections’ to talk about one event:

- The next presidential elections will be in 2018. (✗)
- The next presidential election will be in 2018. (✓)

We say ‘elections’ to talk about multiple events.

We say ‘go on vacation’ or ‘take a vacation’, not ‘go on vacations’ or ‘take vacations’:

- I’m going to take vacations next May. (✗)
- I’m going to take a vacation next May. (✓)

- Stewart is on vacations.
He’ll be back on Monday. (✗)

- Stewart is on vacation.
He’ll be back on Monday. (✓)

We say ‘vacations’ to talk about multiple trips on multiple occasions.

‘News’ is always plural (except to communicate ‘nuevo’):

- Have you heard the new about Stacy? (✗)
- Have you heard the news about Stacy? (✓)

‘Scissors’ is always plural:

- Pass me the scissor, please. ✗
- Pass me the scissors, please. ✓

‘Pyjamas’ is always plural:

- My son opened his Christmas presents without changing out of his pyjama. ✗
- My son opened his Christmas presents without changing out of his pyjamas. ✓

To talk about multiple people in a family, we add an ‘s’ to the last name:

- The Thompson live next to us. ✗
- The Thompsons live next to us. ✓

- She likes to watch the Simpson. ✗
- She likes to watch the Simpsons. ✓

Words like ‘candy’, ‘chocolate’, and ‘beer’ are both countable and uncountable nouns. We use the singular form to talk about something abstract and the plural form to talk about a specific number:

- He eats too many candies. ✗
- He eats too much candy. ✓

- They ate 12 chocolate. ✗
- They ate 12 chocolates. ✓

- He’s probably going to get up late tomorrow. He drank a lot of beers last night. ✗
- He’s probably going to get up late tomorrow. He drank a lot of beer last night. ✓

- He drank six beer last night. ✗
- He drank six beers last night. ✓

18. More adjectives

'Fun' and 'funny' are two different adjectives with different meanings.

'Fun' = something enjoyable ('divertido').

'Funny' = something that causes laughter ('chistoso'):

- Playing video games is funny. ✗
- Playing video games is fun. ✓

- My friend Frank always makes me laugh with his fun stories. ✗
- My friend Frank always makes me laugh with his funny stories. ✓

The comparative of 'fun' is 'more fun', not 'funner':

- I think going dancing is funner than staying home. ✗
- I think going dancing is more fun than staying at home. ✓

We only use 'ugly' to describe the physical appearance of something:

- You were ugly with me yesterday. ✗
- You were mean to me yesterday. ✓

- I had a very ugly day. ✗
- I had a very bad day. ✓

We normally use 'humble' to talk about people, not things:

- He has a lot of money, but his house is very humble. ✗
- He has a lot of money, but his house isn't very big. ✓
- He has a lot of money, but his house is very modest. ✓

We say that people are 'close', not 'united' to communicate '*son muy unidos*':

- Kate and her father are very united. She calls him every day. ✗
- Kate and her father are very close. She calls him every day. ✓

19. Test: Correct the 'Spanglish' mistakes

Answers are at the end.

1. I don't know how much money my coworkers win.
2. Stacy and Carl have three years together.
3. United States is a big country with about four hundred million residents.
4. Jane filled the form and gave it to the government official.
5. Last night, I dreamt with being an astronaut and going to Mars.
6. We were so excited when we met Times Square.
7. I have six years knowing him.
8. Maintaining a family can be very difficult, especially if only one of the parents works.
9. I try not to lose too much time on Facebook.
10. I don't use a watch because I don't like the way it feels on my wrist.
11. Each time he goes to the movies he gets a large popcorn.
12. I don't know if I can go with you on Sunday. It depends of the time.
13. Always, I drink coffee in the morning.
14. Students can fail the course if they do not attend to class regularly.
15. Right now I'm busy, but I help you as soon as I'm done.
16. Chris was driving drunk, and he crashed with a parked car.
17. All of the members of their family are similar than each other.
18. Some people buy expensive things despite of not having much money.
19. I have to wake up early because I don't live near to the office.
20. Because of his disease, he has to drink pills every day.
21. She cares her four children while her husband is at work.
22. Mozart had four years when he started composing music.
23. I have a doubt about what I should do in this situation.
24. I'm going to call to my friend and ask to him what he is doing right now. (two mistakes)
25. I knew divorce was common, but I didn't know that the 40% of marriages end in divorce.
26. When I was a kid I liked more Christmas than Thanksgiving.
27. Do you think that he's the right person for the job? I think yes.
28. We couldn't finish watching the movie because we had too much fear.
29. The magician disappeared the rabbit.
30. He seemed really happy after the job interview and confident that they would contract him.
31. I practise basketball with my friends on Sunday mornings.
32. Could you pass me my purse so I can go to the counter and cancel?

33. I have a headache. Oh, I'm going to get you an Aspirin, then.
34. According Karen, she's never had a drop of alcohol in her entire life.
35. Worrying for money is very common.
36. I liked Hamlet, but I don't like most plays written for William Shakespeare.
37. I've never been in London, but I would really like to go.
38. The novel has place in Brooklyn in the 1910's.
39. Maybe they're going to Russia to visit his family at the end of the year.
40. Put your wallet away. I invite you.
41. Kim wants to change her car.
42. The restaurant is open since 11 a.m. to midnight.
43. I don't know if I believe you because you have a reputation for not saying the truth.
44. Put the music and let's dance.
45. She didn't answer right away because she wanted to think in it.
46. For me the idea is okay.
47. There was a fly in my soup, so they didn't make us pay our meal.
48. Many writers have written about what the heaven might be like.
49. I'm going to contact with Kevin later today.
50. They're a lot of fun to be around because they're in a good mood always.
51. Who is Tom going with in the game tonight between the Yankees and Red Sox?
52. Karla insisted in that she pay for lunch.
53. I think that the kangaroos are the best animal in the world.
54. Mike usually goes to the church on Sunday.
55. The lecture was boring and it was obvious that no one was putting attention.
56. The hotel manager told me to follow her and conducted me to my room.
57. Meg wants to make a party to celebrate Colin's retirement.
58. Our math homework was really difficult and I couldn't figure out the number six.
59. I'm hungry. I'm going to cook a dinner.
60. When Kate was child, she used to suck her thumb.
61. Working in sales can be difficult because it's hard to share a lot of time with your family.
62. I visited Walmart on the way home from work.
63. I'm really good at saving secrets, so my friends tell me a lot of things.
64. Mum, I'd like to present you to my new friend, Sara.
65. They're looking for someone who knows to use Microsoft Excel.
66. I'm going to start my diet the next week.

67. When Kate knocked on the door, John told her to pass.
68. She can't go to the movies with us because she studies right now.
69. We weren't sure what to do because the both options sounded good.
70. Listen your mother and do what she tells you to do.
71. Assembling furniture is something that I've never been good in.
72. The cost of living is getting each time more expensive.
73. I wish everyone would leave me in peace.
74. We are eight in my family, so I'm used to sharing things and living with other people.
75. With reason he was selected for the position – his father-in-law is the CEO.
76. He's engineer, so he must be good at math.
77. When I found out that we had the same last name, I wondered if I was related with him.
78. Shirley arrived in the bank at nine o'clock in the morning.
79. The good about being bilingual is having more job opportunities.
80. I'm going to try to be more healthy. Since now, I'm going to stop smoking and start exercising.
81. They have a really good marriage and they know that they can trust in each other.
82. Hi, Mike. Welcome to the party. They are my friends, Mike and Sally.
83. Washing your teeth after every meal helps prevent cavities.
84. When I'm in the job, I try to focus on my work and not get distracted.
85. The police knocked the neighbours' doors to find out if they knew anything about the crime.
86. After watching the movie, David and Susan decided to go to home and get some sleep.
87. What they showed us was the exact opposite to what we were expecting.
88. Many people would prefer to do business in person and not talk for the phone.
89. Can you believe that there are only six days more until Christmas?
90. Some people think that you shouldn't marry with someone until you have lived with that person.
91. My son broke one of our dishes, but he didn't do it to purpose so we weren't mad at him.
92. Your purse is the same to mine.
93. My job is stressful for the long hours.
94. The psychology has always fascinated me, which is why I took a psychology course in college.
95. When they were kids, they used to watch the baseball on TV almost every day.
96. I don't have an idea who she is.
97. I go once in awhile to the movies.
98. We can't leave yet because we are still waiting John and Mike to get here.
99. I thought he was being serious until he smiled to me and laughed.
100. The students asked for more time to do their essay, but the teacher told them that no.

Answers

1. I don't know how much money my coworkers make.
2. Stacy and Carl have been together for three years.
3. The United States is a big country with about four hundred million residents.
4. Jane filled out the form (or filled the form out) and gave it to the government official.
5. Last night, I dreamt about being an astronaut and going to Mars.
6. We were so excited when we went to Times Square for the first time.
7. I have known him for six years.
8. Supporting a family can be very difficult, especially if only one of the parents works.
9. I try not to waste too much time on Facebook.
10. I don't wear a watch because I don't like the way it feels on my wrist.
11. Every time he goes to the movies he gets a large popcorn.
12. I don't know if I can go with you on Sunday. It depends on the time.
13. I always drink coffee in the morning.
14. Students can fail the course if they do not attend class regularly.
15. Right now I'm busy, but I'll help you (or I can help you) as soon as I'm done.
16. Chris was driving drunk, and he crashed into a parked car.
17. All of the members of their family are similar to each other.
18. Some people buy expensive things despite of not having much money (or, even though/although they don't have much money).
19. I have to wake up early because I don't live near to (or close to) the office.
20. Because of his disease, he has to take pills every day.
21. She takes care of/looks after her four children while her husband is at work.
22. Mozart was four years old (or was four) when he started composing music.
23. I'm not sure what I should do in this situation.
24. I'm going to call my friend and ask him what he is doing right now. (two mistakes)
25. I knew divorce was common, but I didn't know that 40% of marriages end in divorce.
26. When I was a kid I liked Christmas more than Thanksgiving.
27. Do you think that he's the right person for the job? I think he is.
28. We couldn't finish watching the movie because we were too scared.
29. The magician made the rabbit disappear.
30. He seemed really happy after the job interview and confident that they would hire him.
31. I play basketball with my friends on Sunday mornings.
32. Could you pass me my purse so I can go to the counter and pay?
33. I have a headache. Oh, I'll get you an Aspirin, then.
34. According to Karen, she's never had a drop of alcohol in her entire life.
35. Worrying about money is very common.
36. I liked Hamlet, but I don't like most plays written by William Shakespeare.
37. I've never been to London, but I would really like to go.
38. The novel takes place in Brooklyn in the 1910s.
39. They might go to Russia to visit his family at the end of the year.
40. Put your wallet away. I'm buying/I got it/It's on me.
41. Kim wants to get a new car.
42. The restaurant is open from 11 a.m. to midnight.
43. I don't know if I believe you because you have a reputation for not telling the truth.
44. Put the music on (or Put on the music) and let's dance.
45. She didn't answer right away because she wanted to think about it.
46. I think the idea is okay.
47. There was a fly in my soup, so they didn't make us pay for our meal.
48. Many writers have written about what heaven might be like.
49. I'm going to contact Kevin later today.
50. They're a lot of fun to be around because they're always in a good mood.
51. Who is Tom rooting for (or Who does Tim want to win) in the game tonight between the Yankees and Red Sox?
52. Karla insisted (that) she pay for lunch. ("that" is optional in this sentence)
53. I think (that) kangaroos are the best animals in the world. ("that" is optional in this sentence)
54. Mike usually goes to church on Sunday.
55. The lecture was boring and it was obvious that no one was paying attention.
56. The hotel manager told me to follow her and led me to my room.
57. Meg wants to make have/throw a party to celebrate Colin's retirement.
58. Our maths homework was really difficult and I couldn't figure out number six.
59. I'm hungry. I'm going to cook dinner.
60. When Kate was a child, she used to suck her thumb.
61. Working in sales can be difficult because it's hard to spend a lot of time with your family.
62. I went to/stopped at Walmart on the way home from work.
63. I'm really good at keeping secrets, so my friends tell me a lot of things.
64. Mum, I'd like to present introduce you to my new friend, Sara.
65. They're looking for someone who knows how to use Microsoft Excel.
66. I'm going to start my diet next week.
67. When Kate knocked on the door, John told her to come in,
68. She can't go to the movies with us because she is studying right now.
69. We weren't sure what to do because both options sounded good.
70. Listen to your mother and do what she tells you to do.
71. Assembling furniture is something that I've never been good at.
72. The cost of living is getting more and more expensive.
73. I wish everyone would leave me alone.
74. There are eight of us in my family, so I'm used to sharing things and living with other people.

75. No wonder he was selected for the position – his father-in-law is the CEO.
76. He's an engineer, so he must be good at maths.
77. When I found out that we had the same last name, I wondered if I was related to him.
78. Shirley arrived at (or got to) the bank at nine o'clock in the morning.
79. The good thing/part about being bilingual is having more job opportunities.
80. I'm going to try to be more healthy. From now on/Starting now, I'm going to stop smoking and start exercising.
81. They have a really good marriage and they know that they can trust each other.
82. Hi, Mike. Welcome to the party. These are my friends, Mike and Sally.
83. Brushing your teeth after every meal helps prevent cavities.
84. When I'm at work, I try to focus on my work and not get distracted.
85. The police knocked on the neighbours' doors to find out if they knew anything about the crime.
86. After watching the movie, David and Susan decided to go to home and get some sleep.
87. What they showed us was the exact opposite of what we were expecting.
88. Many people would prefer to do business in person and not talk on the phone.
89. Can you believe that there are only six more days until Christmas?
90. Some people think that you shouldn't marry someone until you have lived with that person.
91. My son broke one of our dishes, but he didn't do it on purpose so we weren't mad at him.
92. Your purse is the same as mine.
93. My job is stressful because of/due to the long hours.
94. Psychology has always fascinated me, which is why I took a psychology course in college.
95. When they were kids, they used to watch baseball on TV almost every day.
96. I have no idea who she is.
97. I go to the movies once in a while.
98. We can't leave yet because we are still waiting for John and Mike to get here.
99. I thought he was being serious until he smiled at me and laughed.
100. The students asked for more time to do their essay, but the teacher told them no (refused/refused their request).

Section 8 (ii)

Avoiding common mistakes that Arabic speakers make when using English

What are some of the most common errors made by Arabic speaking learners of English? Well, as English teachers, we get to teach lots of different nationalities, and each one has unique strengths and weaknesses. For example, the Spanish struggle with pronunciation but can't stop talking, the Koreans are great at grammar but shy as mice when speaking up in class, the Brazilians have no problems speaking but have trouble constructing sentences on paper. So what about Arabic speakers? We have compiled a list of the most common errors, which Arabic speakers see as a challenge. Can you guess what some of them are?

Let's take a look!

1. Confusing 'p' with 'b', and 't' with 'd'

I often get asked by students, 'Teacher, do you have any beds?' Beds?! Of course I have a bed, I would answer. Why wouldn't I have a bed? How would I sleep otherwise? My student would then say, 'You need a bed to sleep at night?' and this confusing conversation would go on for a few minutes before everything became clear. 'Bed' meant 'pet'! No wonder it seemed strange that I needed my 'pet' beside me in order to sleep at night!

Speakers of Arabic often pronounce letters in a stronger way than in English – and as you can see, this leads to a LOT of misunderstandings! So, how can you solve this problem? Try this.

Put your lips together as if you are about to say the word 'bed' and as you open them, blow out just a little air. Just a little! Remember, you're not blowing up a balloon, you're just letting out the tiniest bit of air. Do not press down on your lips. This should make a 'p' sound instead of a 'b' sound. Try saying the word 'please' now. If it comes out sounding like a 'b', then you haven't blown out any air, and you've pressed down too hard on your lips. Got it? Keep repeating.

Now, once you've become good at this, follow the same rule with your tongue. When putting your tongue up to the back of your top, front teeth to say the word 'dog' – let a little air out and drop your tongue to let out the air. Don't press on your tongue. Try it! Do you hear any difference? It should sound like a 't' now, not a 'd'. Try saying the word 'table'.

Again, if it sounds like 'dable', then you're not blowing out enough air and you're pressing down too hard. Now, let's have that 'pet' conversation one more time...)

2. Over-pronouncing

Arabic speakers are used to pronouncing every single sound in a word, and often in a strong, clear manner. It's different with English. We don't always pronounce every letter, and sometimes what we're saying sounds very different from what is written on paper. To make matters even more complicated, we have something called a 'schwa'. What's a 'schwa'? I hear you ask. Well, are you ready for this? It's the unstressed vowel that is usually somewhere in the middle of a word. Don't worry, we've put together some examples for you. 'London' is not pronounced exactly as it is written. The second vowel, 'o', which is near the end of the word, is dropped, almost like we don't need it there. When native speakers say 'London', it actually sounds like 'Lundn'. The first vowel sounds more like a 'u' than an 'o' and the second vowel is a 'schwa' – an unstressed vowel.

Let's try another one: 'Freedom' – we actually drop the 'o' and it sounds like 'freedm'. Try saying it like that. I bet you sound more natural now. Okay, let's try one more: 'pleasant'. We don't say 'pleasANT'. No, we say 'pleasnt'. Try it! Why don't we just spell it this way to make life much easier? Well, that's just how it is unfortunately. Try to learn about the schwa and imitate native speakers. A good way to start is by listening to native speakers carefully and then repeating, watching YouTube videos, or simply listening to the radio. Relax your voice when speaking in English, try not to over-pronounce as you would do in Arabic, and repeat the words over and over until you get it right. Before you know it, your friends will think you just got back from studying in the US or UK!

3. Reading

When Arabic speakers read English, it's much more difficult than, for example, Spanish, Italian or French speakers. Arabic is from a different language family entirely, so Arab speakers need more time to process the words correctly. When you are reading, try to slow down. Sound out each letter and use an online dictionary sound button to check the pronunciation, or ask your teacher if you have one. When you read aloud, make sure that your tone of voice goes down before each full stop, to tell your listeners that a sentence has ended. This helps break up the reading into small parts so that you can understand it better. It can be difficult for listeners to follow your reading if you don't change the tone of your voice, and your classmates, and your teacher, might be left confused. Don't ignore question marks or commas either – raise your tone of voice before a question mark and pause slightly at each comma. Doing this will also help you to process what is on the paper. Most importantly, take your time and read voraciously! What does 'voraciously' mean? Well, start by going to Google and instead of using the dictionary or Google Translate (not recommended!), type 'reading voraciously for English learners' into the search engine. Find an article. Try to read it, or at least try to read part of it. See if you can guess the meaning of the word from the sentences around it, in other words, the 'context'. Are you correct? Now you can check the dictionary. By following this kind of system, you not only improve your vocabulary and spelling, but also your reading skills. Remember, low tone at full stops, pause at commas, high tone at question marks, and sloooooooooooooow down.

4. Writing

The most common errors in writing are run-on sentences, wrong tenses and spelling. What does all of that mean? Well, run-on sentences means that the writer has not used a full stop when he/she should have. Maybe a comma was used instead and this is a mistake. Take the following example: 'The dog ate the food, it was delicious.' Right? Wrong! 'It' (the dog) is a new subject here. Of course, we are still talking about the dog but we are making a new statement about the dog. Every sentence in English follows a 'subject + verb' pattern, or a 'subject + verb + object' pattern in most cases. Whenever you have a new subject, you need a full stop and a new sentence (with a capital letter). Now, you can use linking words such as 'and' or 'but', but if you don't want to use a linking word – you need that full stop. Can a comma be used instead of a full stop? The answer is

no. A comma is a pause, not the end of the story. When we speak, we often pause for a second and breathe in before continuing our sentence, just for a split second – that's a comma. For example, 'I went to the shops, and I bought a dress.' When you say this aloud, do you notice where you naturally make a tiny pause? It's right before 'and', which is where our comma should go. If you are to say 'I went to the shops. I bought a dress' out loud, then the pause is slightly longer isn't it? That's a full stop. 'I' is a new subject. Let's go back to the example of the dog and the food. The correct sentence would be: 'The dog ate the food. It was delicious.' or 'The dog ate the food and it was delicious.' Remember – commas and full stops are not the same thing!

Another problem in writing is using wrong tenses. If you're writing about something that happened last week, use one of the past tenses (simple or continuous, depending on the story) and keep using a past tense until the time of your story changes. After each sentence, go back and read it. Do the tenses match the time of your event? Ask yourself if the event has finished, or is repeated often, or is continuing now. Sometimes you're going to have to use a verb in the infinitive, that is 'to ask' for example, even in the past. That's a special case though. 'I wanted to ask her to come to the party.' It's in the past, but two verbs are sitting together and they cannot both be in the past tense. This is an exception. Make sure that your main verb 'wanted' is in the past though. To get examples, try reading some stories set in the past, present and future and pay attention to how the verbs are used. Some might seem like they are in the wrong tense – but is it part of the exception? Try it. Reading is key!

And finally, the dreaded spelling! So many people have problems with spelling, so you're not alone. When you learn a new word, break that word down into what we call 'CVC' which is, 'consonant-vowel-consonant'. For example, 'sister' would be 'sis/ter' s = consonant, i = vowel, s = consonant. Say it aloud. 'sis'. This is going to help you remember later that it's an 'i' and not a 'e' for example. You might need to brush up on your vowel sounds too. I know, I know – you did this in beginner English, or when you were at elementary school, but that was a long time ago now. It is a great idea to go back and practise the vowel sounds again. Arabic speakers have problems with the vowel sounds. Another example is 'reception' which would be 're/cep/tion'. Read each part aloud. Your brain will visualise the spelling, making it easier for you to remember later. Try it, and see how it works for you.

5. Using the verb 'to be'

The final entry in our list of common errors is the famous verb 'to be' or the 'is/are/am' verb. Arabic does not have this verb in the present tense, so it's particularly difficult for Arabic speakers to remember to use it. Of course you need to know and understand the grammar rules behind using the verb 'to be', but that doesn't seem to make it any easier to remember to use it in speaking, does it? The key to solving this problem is not by getting stuck into your grammar books once again, it's by practising your speaking as much as possible in a relaxed setting. Ask the native speaker to correct you when you forget to use 'is, am, are'. We also have the word 'do' which isn't used in Arabic, and it means that Arabic speakers often make mistakes forming questions. Ask your teacher, friend, or language partner to check your use of 'do' as well, and practise by asking lots and lots of 'Do you...' questions. Are you describing something? Then you'll have to use the verb 'to be'. Are you stating a fact? Again, you will need to use the verb 'to be'. Asking a question that includes a verb? Here comes 'do' again. Get yourself a language partner and start practising!

So, that concludes our list of the most common errors among Arabic speakers. Try applying some of these tips – and you will improve very quickly.

Section 8 (iii)

Common difficulties with English pronunciation for speakers of Chinese languages.

Background

The sound system of English is very different from the sound systems of the various Chinese languages, so Chinese learners of English may have particular difficulties with pronunciation.

There is no single 'Chinese' language, as people from China and the Chinese diaspora may speak a variety of different first languages. While Mandarin (Putonghua) is promoted as the national language in China and most Chinese people learn this variety, their own first language or dialect may be quite distinct.

Many of the issues that cause problems for Chinese learners of English are common to speakers of any of the Chinese languages, so this resource will generally refer to Chinese languages rather than identify specific languages or dialects (e.g., Cantonese, Hokkien, etc.).

While the large number of Chinese learners of English in Australia means that many Australians are familiar with the pronunciation of these speakers, there are particular aspects of pronunciation that can affect the success of communication with Australian English speakers.

This section identifies some of the common difficulties for Chinese speakers in the pronunciation of English; however, it is not a comprehensive guide.

Common difficulties – sounds

Vowels

English has more vowel sounds than Chinese languages and, although some of the Chinese vowels may be similar to English ones, they are not identical. Also, pronunciation rules in Chinese mean that the same vowel might sound different in different words.

Chinese speakers sometimes find it difficult to pronounce English vowels consistently, especially since the spelling system of English is not regular, so the same letter(s) may correspond to more than one sound, depending on which word it appears in.

Common difficulties for Chinese speakers with English vowels include:

Speakers inserting an extra vowel between consonants or after a final consonant, e.g. 'post' may sound like 'poster'; 'worked' may sound like 'work it'.

Speakers omitting a reduced vowel. Unstressed syllables in English words often have a 'reduced' vowel, known as 'schwa' (written as [ə] in the International Phonetic Alphabet). Since this is far less frequent in Chinese than in English, speakers often use a 'full' vowel, which doesn't sound natural in English.

'arrive', 'consider', 'sister'

The sounds here are the same, even though they are spelt with different letters.

Learners also tend to stress too many English syllables, giving the weak syllables a full rather than reduced pronunciation, e.g:

- 'fish **and** chips'
- '**The** capital **of** England **is** London.'

Diphthongs – moving from one vowel to another within the same syllable

While Chinese languages do have diphthongs, they are usually pronounced with quicker and smaller tongue and lip movements than their English counterparts, so sound too short with insufficient distinction between two component vowels, e.g.

- ‘face’ and ‘price’

Speakers make no distinctions between certain vowel sounds

English distinguishes the following vowel sounds, which may be hard to distinguish for Chinese speakers, e.g.

- ‘fleece’ – ‘kit’
- ‘goose’ – ‘foot’
- ‘trap’ – ‘dress’
- ‘strut’ – ‘palm’

Common difficulties – consonants

The sounds represented by the letter combination ‘th’ are difficult for speakers of many languages, particularly since there are two different sounds that correspond to this spelling:

- ‘thigh’, ‘bath’, ‘teeth’, ‘thought’, ‘thyroid’ [voiceless]
- ‘thy’, ‘bathe’, ‘although’, ‘gather’ [voiced]

These sounds should be produced with vibration between the tip of the tongue and the back of the teeth, as distinct from [d] or [t] in English. Chinese speakers commonly replace these sounds with [t, d; s, z, or f].

The English sound [v] is not common in Chinese languages, so speakers often replace it with [w] or [f], e.g:

- ‘vine’, as distinct from ‘wine’ or ‘fine’

Some Chinese language speakers find [l] and [r] difficult to distinguish

- ‘liver’ – ‘river’; ‘light’ – ‘right’
- ‘light’ – ‘night’
- ‘hospital’, ‘humour’, ‘human’, ‘hot’
- ‘like’ or ‘light’ à ‘lie’

Difficulties with [l] and [n], which in some languages (e.g. Cantonese) don’t change the meaning of a word, but do in English, so learners have trouble distinguishing.

For example, [h] tends to be pronounced more ‘heavily’ in Chinese languages, with friction in the back of the mouth rather than a soft sound in the throat, e.g.

Chinese speakers often omit consonant sounds at the end of English words, which can make the meanings hard to interpret, e.g.

- ‘card’ and ‘car’

Since English grammar is sometimes indicated by the end of the word (e.g. plural ‘-s’, past tense ‘-ed’), it is important to pronounce word endings clearly.

Common difficulties – sound combinations

Consonant clusters (two consonant sounds together without a vowel in between) are not common in Chinese, so speakers often either:

Insert a slight vowel, e.g:

- ‘spoon’ à ‘sipoon’

leave out particular sounds, e.g:

- ‘**think**’, ‘**thing**’ or ‘thin’

Beyond sounds

1. Word stress

In Chinese languages most words are made up of two syllables distinguished by tone (a change in pitch) rather than stress as they would be in English. Chinese speakers might, therefore, have difficulty hearing or making a distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables.

Use the word stress activities to practise this with medical words.

2. Sentence stress

English speakers use sentence stress to highlight important words in a sentence. Chinese speakers sometimes try to pronounce each and every word fully and correctly, which makes speech that is difficult for the listener to decode, i.e., to work out the speaker's intended meaning.

Use the contrastive stress and more contrastive stress activities to practise sentence stress.

3. Intonation

Changes in pitch (tones) are used in Chinese languages to distinguish words whose pronunciation is otherwise the same; intonation is used less across a whole sentence than it is in English. This can make it difficult for Chinese speakers to learn both to understand and to use intonation patterns effectively in English.

Use the intonation and question intonation activities to practise English intonation patterns.

4. Linking

Because the structure of Chinese words is very different to English, Chinese learners of English tend to separate English words in a sentence rather than joining them smoothly into a 'stream of speech', which produces a 'staccato' or 'choppy' sound.

Use the linking activity to practise linking.

Section 8 (iv)

Common difficulties with English pronunciation for speakers of Filipino

Filipino speakers have what they often refer to as a “Filipino Accent,” which can often be very difficult for native English speakers to understand. The reason behind this confusion is that people from the Philippines mix up several consonants and vowels in English words when they speak, making it difficult for native listeners to understand.

People from the Philippines often substitute the /p/ in a word for an /f/ (saying pine instead of fine). This becomes especially tricky when those sounds occur close together. For example:

- perform
- helpful
- cup
- perfect

Filipino speakers also commonly make the mistake of mixing up the /v/ and the /b/ sounds (saying berry instead of very, or the words November and very big).

Many a Filipino person often goes to the, “moo bees,” on a Friday night instead of the movies.

Another sound that Tagalog speakers struggle with is the /th which they substitute with /t/ or a /d/ sound (saying sin or tin instead of thin – unvoiced TH – , or saying day or zay instead of they – voiced TH). So, don’t “tank” your “mudder”. Instead, “Thank your mother”.

Many people confuse the /s/ sound with the /z/ sound, meaning that they often say an /s/ sound where there is commonly a /z/ sound in English (saying sue instead of zoo).

Do not trill the R sound; say run instead of rrrrun.

Do not add a sound before “s” blends; say school instead of eschool.

Remember to use voicing at the ends of words when needed; don’t say cap; instead, say cab)

Do not leave off the ending sound of words, especially the /t and d/ sounds (say note instead of no)

Here is a list of commonly mispronounced words:

These words have an /s/ sound:

- piece
- face
- bus
- price

These words have a /z/ sound:

- peas
- phase
- buzz
- prize

There are also several vowel sounds that people struggle with. The short and long sounds in words such as:

- sit and seat
- live and leave
- fill and feel

Also:

- shot and shut
- lock and luck
- cop and cup

Section 8 (v)

Pronunciation for speakers of languages of the Indian sub-continent

Background

Indian English is a recognised variety of English spoken by many in the Indian subcontinent as well as in the Indian diaspora around the world.

This variety has its own distinct pronunciation, vocabulary and grammatical features. However, speakers of other varieties of English may experience some difficulties in interaction with speakers of Indian English.

Indian English itself comprises a number of sub-varieties, influenced by the first language or languages spoken in different regions. The large number of indigenous languages spoken across the subcontinent leads to a high degree of variation in the use of English.

In this resource, the term Indian English will be used to describe features common to the speech of people with different first languages from the subcontinent, but not every example will relate to all speakers.

This section identifies some of the common difficulties for Indian speakers in the pronunciation of English; however, it is not a comprehensive guide.

Common difficulties

Speed

One of the key issues making Indian English difficult for British English listeners to understand is speed. Listeners commonly feel that Indian speakers talk 'too quickly' and that if their speech were slower, it would be easier to understand.

Speaking more slowly gives the listener more time to process speech, and become familiar with some of the differences between the speaker's Indian English and their own variety.

In a medical interview, the patient is likely to be more focused on WHAT the doctor says than HOW he or she says it; if the doctor slows his or her rate of speech, this can help patients understand clearly and not be confused by differences in speech.

Vowels

Indian languages tend to have fewer vowel sounds than English. Therefore, it is important for speakers of Indian languages communicating in English to be aware of the differences between certain vowel sounds, which may affect the meaning of English words.

These are some common vowel pairs that may cause problems for Indian English speakers:

- trap – dress; dead – dad; bed – bad; head – had
- cloth and thought
- cot – caught
- food and good; loose and look; goose and foot

When a language doesn't have a certain sound but something quite similar, the natural pattern for the learner is to replace the new sound with the one they are more familiar with. However, if both sounds exist in the new language, there can be confusion as to which sound or word is actually intended. For example:

The vowel sound in words like 'goat' in British English (and other varieties) is a diphthong (moving from one vowel to another within the same syllable), rather than a monophthong (single sound) as it is in many Indian languages. Compare these words:

loan – lawn – long

Similarly, the vowel sound in words like 'face' contain a diphthong in British English:

- late – let
- pain – pen

The vowel sound in words like ‘**nurse**’ may be difficult, as it doesn’t exist in many Indian languages:

world – **word** – **hurt** – **heard** – **worse**

Unstressed syllables in English words often have a ‘reduced’ vowel, known as ‘schwa’ (written as [ə] in the International Phonetic Alphabet): e.g. ‘**comma**’. It is not usually pronounced the way it is spelt.

arrive – **consider** – **sister**

The sounds here are the same, even though they are spelt with different letters.

Consonants

Some consonant sounds are pronounced differently in English from Indian languages and this can be confusing for listeners. For example:

To produce the sound [v] the top teeth should actually touch the bottom lip – if they don’t, it sounds like [w]:

- **vet** – **wet**; **vile** – **while**
- **behave** – **alive** – **survive**

Some Indian English speakers (incorrectly) replace the sound [f] as in ‘**fit**’ with the sound [p] as in ‘**pit**’:

fool – **pool**

And others replace the same sound [f] with [v]:

fast – **vast**

Some speakers replace the consonant [z] as in ‘**zoo**’ with the sound <j> as in ‘**judge**’:

measles

Some speakers confuse the sounds in ‘**she**’ and ‘**see**’

shoe – **sue**

The sounds represented by the letter combination ‘th’ are difficult for speakers of many languages, particularly since there are two different sounds that correspond to this spelling:

- **thigh** – **bath** – **teeth** – **thought** – **thyroid** [voiceless]
- **thy** – **bathe** – **although** – **gather** [voiced]

These sounds should be produced with vibration between the tip of the tongue and underneath the upper teeth, as distinct from [d] and [t] in English.

Some speakers leave out the sound <h> at the beginning of a word, e.g:

hospital – **humour** – **human** – **hot**

Beyond sounds

Other areas which differ between Indian English and British English are word stress, sentence stress, phrasing and intonation. Go to the relevant pages to find out more.

1. Word stress

Indian English speakers tend to stress the first syllable in a word, where British English speakers stress different syllables, depending on the word.

It is helpful to listen to native speakers of other varieties of English and notice where they put the stress in certain words. Also a dictionary should indicate which syllable is stressed, often with the mark ‘ before the stressed syllable.

- ho‘tel – de‘tain – pla‘cebo – antibi‘otic
- John is one of my ‘colleagues. – He’s very co‘llegial.
- I don’t have any ‘record of your appointment. – The doctor re‘corded the symptoms.
- The patient has de‘veloped severe symptoms. – Miss Smith’s develop‘mental history is quite complex.

2. Sentence stress

In some Indian languages, stress is associated with a low pitch, whereas in most English dialects, stressed syllables are generally pronounced with a higher pitch. Thus, when some Indian speakers talk, they appear to be putting the stress on the wrong syllables, or accentuating all the syllables of a long English word.

Use the contrastive stress and more contrastive stress activities to practise sentence stress.

3. Intonation

Falling intonation plays an important function in English and is used to indicate finality. For speakers of Indian English, it is common to use level intonation pattern at the end of statements instead of a distinct fall. This feature may interfere with smooth turn-taking. The listener may think that there is more to come and that the speaker is about to continue.

Speakers of British English tend to use more variety in their intonation patterns than speakers of Indian English, which can sound 'flat' in comparison. Intonation is important and plays a part in establishing rapport, expressing empathy as well as achieving success in doctor-patient interaction overall. Speech lacking sentence stress in combination with monotonous, so-called 'flat' pitch gives the impression that the doctor is bored or not interested in a patient's story.

4. Phrasing and pausing

Some speakers of Indian English apply their first language patterns and therefore tend to break a sentence into much smaller phrases, inserting extra pauses in places native English speakers wouldn't expect. This makes the sentence more difficult to follow.

In addition, how speakers of Indian English group words together and divide up information can seem quite unusual to native speakers of English, not corresponding to the thought groups in a sentence. As a result, the message can be misunderstood or misinterpreted by a listener.

Use the phrasing and more phrasing activities to practise phrasing.

There is a wide variety of resources available to help speakers of Indian English develop their pronunciation, including the references below. Focused practice, ideally with feedback from a teacher or trained native speaker of British English, will help address some of these issues for speakers of Indian languages and improve their pronunciation of English.

Section 8 (vi)

Common errors made by Polish speakers when using English

Polish speakers can make mistakes when it comes to constructing **conditional sentences**, as a result of direct translation from Polish. For example:

- If I will see him, I'll tell him

versus

- If I see him, I'll tell him

Polish speakers might not **invert the word order in questions**. For example:

- How long you are staying in Poland?

instead of

- How long are you staying in Poland?

This brings us to our next problem. There are no **perfect tenses** in Polish, so Polish speakers will use the past simple or present simple instead of using the present perfect.

Polish does not have any **articles**, which means Polish speakers will often leave them out when speaking English.

Polish also does not have a contrast between **countable and uncountable nouns**. Consequently, Polish speakers may speak about advices, informations or furnitures.

Surprisingly, there are quite a few words in Polish which are similar to English, but there are also quite a few which look and sound similar but which have different meanings. These are known as false friends. **Common false friends** which cause confusion are:

- 'Ewentualnie' means 'possibly', not 'eventually'
- 'Aktualny' means 'current' not 'actually'
- 'Fabryka' means 'factory', not 'fabric'
- 'Sympatyczny' means 'friendly', not 'sympathetic'

Much/many

- 'Ile masz czasu?' vs 'Ile razy to zrobisz?'

How much time do you have vs how many times did you do it.

In Polish, questions about an amount, frequency or volume usually start with 'ile'. In English though, we have to use 'how much' or 'how many', depending on what we're talking about.

If the noun is singular, we use 'much':

- 'How much money do you have?'

If the noun is plural (more than one), we use 'many':

- How many friends do you have?

We also use 'much' and 'many' when we use countable or uncountable nouns.

Countable nouns have a singular and a plural form. In the plural, they can be used with a number:

- 15 cats – many cats.

Uncountable nouns can only be used in the singular – so we use 'much' (or sometimes 'a lot') Hence the name uncountable.

- money – much money
- time – a lot of/much time

'TH' sound

The Polish language has some wonderful sounds:

W Szczepieszynie chrząszcz brzmi w trzcinie, i
Szczepieszyn z tego słynie

which, for all of us who don't speak Polish means:

In Szczepieszyn the beetle sounds in the reed, and
Szczepieszyn is famous for it.

But one sound that does not exist in your beautiful language is the TH sound. The sound that comes in this, that, these, those, three, think.

99% of Poles turn this sound into a D, TR or F sound:

- dis (this)
- dat (that)
- dese (these)
- dose (those)
- tree (three)
- fink (think).

A Pole that can pronounce the TH sound without thinking is a Pole that has good control of the English language. Little things like this are what separates an English speaker from someone that uses English.

The sound is made by gently touching the tip of your tongue against the back of your front teeth and pushing air over and around the sides of your tongue.

All you English speakers are doing the same thing now, aren't you!

Practice makes perfect. You'll look and feel like a fool the first few times you do it, but the more you do it, the better you'll get.

It's a very important part of using English that needs to be mastered. Not an English mistake as such, but something that can easily be fixed!

Other sounds that don't exist in Polish include:

- /θ/ as in Thursday
- /ŋ/ as in sing
- /r/ as in rubbish
- /ɜ:/ as in girl

Past tenses

Our next common English mistake is about the past tense.

- I swim
- I fight
- I teach
- I ride

But yesterday, what did you do? Did you swimmied, foughted, teached and rided? No.

The past tense form of some verbs can be really tricky to remember.

- Yesterday I swam
- Yesterday I fought
- Yesterday I taught
- Yesterday I rode

Just like phrasal verbs, there are very few rules when it comes to creating the past tense form of a lot of verbs. It's just a matter of learning them and committing to memory.

Teach vs Learn vs Study.

uczyć vs uczyć się (teach versus learn):

- I am the English teacher, so I teach. I am teaching.
- You are the student, so you learn, You are learning.

Polish speakers often confuse these two words.

The third word that's often appropriate but frequently overlooked is the word 'study':

- 'I was learning last night until midnight'.

Technically, that's correct but the better word to use is study or studying:

- 'I was studying last night until midnight'.

Phrasal verbs

o boże (Oh my god!)

This is not an easy thing to teach, let alone learn!

Phrasal verbs are magical little words that go together and mean something different.

'To put out' for example, doesn't just mean 'to put something outside'. It also means 'to extinguish'.

'We put out the fire before it spread'. But the sentence 'I put out the rubbish this morning' means that I put the rubbish outside.

As mentioned earlier, phrasal verbs are really hard to teach and even harder to learn, because there are no rules.

Honestly, take nearly any three letter-word and put it next to another, and it's probably a phrasal verb. The best way to learn them is repetition, over and over, and grind them into your memory.

Here are some advanced phrasal verbs that you may not have known existed:

- to drop in
- to put off
- to turn down
- to check in on
- to pay off
- to muster up
- to weed out
- to rat on

Good luck!

Pronunciation

There are a lot of fancy words in the English language that can be hard to pronounce. I mean look at either.

Do you say EEE-ther or EYE-ther? Put an 'N' at the start. KNEE-ther or NYE-ther?

But on a smaller scale, the ability to pronounce small little nuances (the little things) correctly, shows that you have a great understanding and control of the English language.

A good way to test yourself is using minimal pairs. Minimal pairs are two words that differ in one phonological element sound really similar but mean two different things, for example:

- Bag and back

One extra letter, but two completely different sounds.

'Bag' has a much longer 'a' sound, while 'back' has a very short and snappy 'ack' sound.

Want some more minimal pairs to test your pronunciation?:

- girls & curls
- bean & bin
- hat & had
- very & berry
- strips & stripes
- jeep & cheap

From, to, for, until & since.

These are called 'prepositions of time'.

John works from 9am. He works to 5pm. He works for 8 hours a day and has worked here for 3 years. But since last week until the end of the month, he is on holiday.

We use 'from', 'to' and 'until' to define the beginning and end of a period of time (9am, 5pm & the end of the month).

'For' is used to specify an overall amount of time (3 years) and 'since' is used to specify a specific point in time (last week).

These ones are tricky – unfortunately, there's no real way to make these fun, but they're super essential to get right!

Pronunciation

There are a few sounds which cause difficulties for Polish speakers in English. This is because these sounds don't exist in Polish. These include:

- /θ/ as in Thursday
- /ŋ/ as in sing
- /r/ as in rubbish
- /ɜ:/ as in girl

Remember: practice makes perfect.

Good luck!

Section 8 (vii)

Mistakes Romanians commonly make in English – by an English teacher working in Romania

Here are some errors that Romanians frequently make in English. This guide is intended to enable Romanians to become aware of these mistakes and to avoid these slip-ups. This is a guide to British English in particular.

Pronouns

- ‘It’s my sister’

A sister must be referred to as ‘she’. It is very impolite to call a person ‘it’. The word ‘it’ is an impersonal pronoun. ‘It’ is for a common noun or abstract noun.

‘She’ is the feminine personal pronoun when used as the subject of the sentence. For example:

- ‘She is my sister’ *or*
- ‘She went to Canada’

The passive personal pronoun is ‘her’. When the female person is the object of the sentence, one uses ‘her’. For example:

- ‘Do you know her?’ *or*
- ‘I met her in Canada’

Likewise ‘he’ is the male personal pronoun when used as the subject of the sentence. For instance

- ‘He is a nice guy’ *or*
- ‘He is from New Zealand’

‘Him’ is the male personal pronoun when used as the object of the sentence. For example:

- ‘I like talking to him’ *or*
- ‘Give this bag to him please’

‘It’ can be used for animals. However, if you know the sex of the animal it is acceptable to use she or he.

The ‘th’ sound.

This sound is made by putting one’s tongue just in front of one’s teeth. Think of a snake sticking its tongue out and making that hissing noise. The noise is not ‘ssssss’ it is ‘thththth’.

Many native speakers of English do not make the ‘th’ sound. In Southern Ireland and southern England many people do not make this sound. Instead of ‘thanks’ they say ‘fanks.’ Instead of ‘brother’ they may say ‘brudder’ in Ireland or ‘bruvver’ in England.

A Romanian student of mine found the ‘th’ sound very difficult. I would coach him extensively on the ‘th’ sound. At the end of the session he would say ‘Sank you – sank you very much.’

Telling the time

- Five and a half o'clock ❌
- Half past five ✔️
- Five thirty ✔️

Never say 'three and a half' or 'eleven and a half' for the time. This makes others think of fractions such as $3\frac{1}{2}$ or $11\frac{1}{2}$.

Here are ways to say the time:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1.05 | Five past one. Five minutes past one. |
| 1.10 | Ten past one. Ten minutes past one. |
| 1.15 | One fifteen. A quarter past one. |
| 1.20 | Twenty past one. Twenty minutes past one. One twenty. |
| 1.25 | Twenty-five past one. Twenty-five minutes past one. One Twenty-five. |
| 1.30 | One thirty. Half past one. |
| 1.35 | One thirty-five. Thirty five minutes past one. Twenty five to two. |
| 1.40 | One forty. Twenty to two. Forty minutes past one. |
| 1.45 | A quarter to two. One forty-five. Forty-five minutes past one. |
| 1.50 | Ten to two. One fifty. Fifty minutes past one. |
| 1.55 | One fifty-five. Five to one. Five minutes to one. |

More common mistakes

- Do not dot a capital 'I'.

Only a small 'i' has a dot above it.

- For 'dots' or 'spots' do not say 'points'.

This is a close mental translation from 'puncte' in Romanian

- Pronounce 'metres' as 'MEE ters' not 'MAY-ters'.

- The professors at my high school. ❌

In English a professor refers only to someone who teaches at a university and has been awarded the title 'professor.' In order to be a professor one has to teach at a university for many years. The word 'professor' is a very high honour in the United Kingdom. People who teach at a secondary school or primary school never get the title professor.

- Did she do faculty? ❌
- Did she go to university? ✔️

This question was asked to me by my colleague. He was an English teacher asking about my girlfriend. 'Faculty' in English refers to a department in a university where one subject or several related subjects are taught. For example 'the Law Faculty' or 'the Sciences Faculty'. It is acceptable to put the nouns either way around either 'the Faculty of Humanities' or the Humanities Faculty.'

- This weekend I am going to the mountainside. ❌
- I am going to the mountains. ✔️

The mountainside means literally that – the side of a mountain. It is not like countryside. Countryside can be translated 'peisaj' – it means the rural areas, the opposite of the city. It can refer to the landscape or perhaps a small village as in 'She grew up in the countryside.'

'Countryside' and country can be interchangeable. One may wish to use 'country' to mean a rural area. For instance, 'my grandfather did not grow up in a city, he grew up in the country.'

Country is ambiguous because it can mean 'nation' or 'state'. For instance, 'Romania is a country and China is another country.'

- I want to buy a cigar.

This is what my friend Alin said. A cigar is a long, fat, brown tobacco object often produced in Cuba and favoured by the Argentine terrorist Che Guevara.

I found out, as I suspected, that Alin wanted a packet of cigarettes.

- I got good notes at school. ❌
- I got good grades at school. ✅

A note in English can mean a musical note – as in the sound one has to make. It can mean a piece of writing, normally very brief to remind oneself of something.

- I do not have the person's contacts. ❌
- I do not have the person's contact details. ✅

- Did I participate to the hour? ❌
- Did I participate in the lesson? ✅

An hour is strictly that – a unit of time of 60 minutes. An hour is not a lesson or vague unit of time.

- Carmen is the Director of the school. ❌
- Carmen is the Headteacher of the school. ✅

In the UK the person who is the teacher in charge of the school is entitled the Headmistress in the case of a woman and the Headmaster in the case of a man. One can use a gender neutral term – Headteacher. In the United States this person is the Principal.

There may be a Director of Studies at a school but this person is below the Headteacher.

In other contexts the word 'director' is fine. For example – company director, theatre director, film director or director of football.

- I like to play basket and volley ❌
- I like to play basketball and volleyball ✅

Basket is the physical object – cos. The sport is called basketball.

Volley means throwing or kicking a ball or even many people firing guns at the same time. The sport is called volleyball.

- How you say fular? ❌
- How do you say fular? ✅

It is a scarf. English does not distinguish between fular and esarfa.

- Concediu maternitate = Maternity leave

- How is it called? ❌
- What is it called? ✅

Or, you can ask, 'how do you say...?'

- In football he scored an autogol. ❌
- He scored an own goal. ✅

- He is so bad to me. He behaves ugly. It is not correct. ❌
- He is so bad to me. He behaves badly. It is not fair. ✅

In English 'correct' is strictly about factual accuracy. 'Ugly' is about the physical appearance of a person, animal, place or building.

- I am going in America. ❌
- I am going to America. ✅

- I am going to make a course to improve my English. ❌
- I am going to do a course to improve my English. ✅

'Make' is normally about creating something, constructing it. 'To do' is more like an activity.

- My dad works in publicitate. ❌
- My dad works in advertising. ✅

- I am going to England with a car. ❌
- I am going to England by car. ✅

For transport 'by' always works – by plane, by boat, by bicycle, by train, by horse and even by foot. There are other prepositions that sometimes work for transport such as on a boat, on a bicycle, on a horse, in a car or on foot. However if in doubt use 'by' because works for all of them.

- I am doing planifications. ❌
- I am making plans. ✅

The word 'planifications' does not exist in English.

- 'Give me the pi' = a (ball-point) pen

- This man had a barba. ❌
- This man had a beard. ✅

- I am going in French and Bulgary. ❌
- I am going to France and Bulgaria. ✅

Going to places is always 'to' – remember that – to go to!:

- I am going to the hospital.
- I am going to my sister's house.
- I am going to the cinema.

One of the few cases when one does not use a preposition is 'I am going home'. It is wrong to say 'I am going to home.'

- I have been to Netherlands, Ukraine and Czech Republic. ❌
- I have been to the Netherlands, the Ukraine and the Czech Republic. ✅

Some countries take 'the'. These are ones that are plurals or are known by their constitutional title. The Ukraine and the Lebanon are exceptions as they are not plurals.

- He is from Arabia. He is Arabic. ❌
- He is from an Arab country. ✅

We talk about a country called Saudi Arabia but we do not refer to the Middle East in general as Arabia any more. The Arabian Peninsula for use means Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and Yemen.

In this case one should say 'he is from an Arab country.' We refer to the Arab World for all Arabic speaking countries.

Arabic refers only to the language. The people are Arabs and the adjective is Arab.

- Raise up your hand. ❌
- Raise your hand. ✅

There is no need to say 'up' in this case. Just say 'raise your hand'.

- Right before Easter is Big Friday – it is the day of Jesus' death. ❌
- Right before Easter is Good Friday – it is the day of Jesus' death. ✅

In English 'Big Friday' is called 'Good Friday'.

- Look at that animal – it is a pork. ❌
- Look at that animal – it is a pig. ✅

The animal is a pig. Its meat is called pork.

- What is your motive for coming to the doctor? ❌
- What is your reason for coming to the doctor? ✅

'Motive' means one's reason for choosing to do something such as to commit a crime. Business people are motivated by the profit motive.

- The school tax is 1,000 Euros a month. ❌
- The school fees are 1,000 Euros a month. ✅

One normally refers to 'fees' in the plural. 'Tax' is what is paid to the government.

- There are many fishes in my fridge. ❌
- There are a lot of fish in my fridge. ✅

'Fish' is an invariable plural. When it is plural it still behaves like a singular. 'One fish', 'two fish', etc.

One only says 'fishes' when distinguishing between different species of fish. Many native speakers get this wrong.

Other animal invariable plurals:

- Sheep
- Deer
- Reindeer

Other invariable plurals:

- I have many luggages. (✗)
- I have many pieces of luggage. (✓)
- Pieces/items of information.
- Pieces of baggage. It is simpler to say 'bags'.

- Physic development. (✗)
- Physical development. (✓)

'Physical' is the adjective. 'Physic' no longer exists in English. There is 'physique' which means the body. 'Physics' is the scientific subject.

For age, one must use 'to be':

- I have 17 years old. (✗)
- I am 17 years old. (✓)

- When you mention something that was tell by someone else. (✗)
- When you mention something that was said by someone else. (✓)

- Responsabil (✗)
- In English this is spelt*
- Responsible (✓)

- 'Exploatare' in English is 'to exploit'.

- 'Negligenta' is 'negligence'.

- She's a Sudan. (✗)
 - She's Sudanese. (✓)
- 'Sudanese' is the adjective. It can also be the demonym as in 'she is a Sudanese'.

- I do not want to learn him. (✗)
 - I do not want to teach him. (✓)
- A teacher 'teaches' and a student 'learns'.

- She appreciate.
- She appreciates.

The second person singular in the present simple always ends in an 's'. For example:

- He/she/it is.
- He/she/it has.
- He/she/it writes.

- This weekend I was in mountain. (✗)
- This weekend I was in the mountains. (✓)

'The mountains' means the mountains in general. If one wishes to say that one was on one particular mountain, one would say 'This weekend I was on a mountain'.

- Have you saw? (✗)
- Did you see? (✓)

- Sooner laster. (✗)
- Sooner or later. (✓)

- I have paid this price since four years. (✗)
- I have paid this price for the last four years. (✓)

- The children need to make a pause. (✗)
- The children need to have a break. (✓)
- The children need to take a break. (✓)

- I have fear by water. (✗)
- I am afraid of water. (✓)

- This is a great realisation. (✗)
- This is a great achievement. (✓)

- Usually I am park with them. (✗)
- Usually I am in the park with them. (✓)

- I prefer not to be agglomerate with much children. ✗
- I prefer not to be crowded by too many children. ✓

- In seventh of August. ✗
- On the seventh of August. ✓

When we write '7th August' we always say out loud 'the seventh of August'.

- I never was there. ✗
- I was never there. ✓

- It has 1,000 year old the church. ✗
- The church is 1,000 years old. ✓

- She sacrifice a lot. ✗
- She sacrificed a lot. ✓

- Here you can arrive only by train. ✗
- You can only get here by train. ✓

- The channel between the Danube and the Black Sea.
 - The canal between the Danube and the Black Sea.
- Certain small seas are called channels such as the English Channel.

- The intellectual peoples. ✗
- The intellectuals. ✓

- Three childs. ✗
- Three children. ✓

- Our house is a bit crowdly at the moment. ✗
- Our house is a bit crowded at the moment. ✓

- We make our brandy from pears.

The man pronounced this 'PEE – arz'. It should be pronounced 'pairs'. 'Pair' and 'pear' are pronounced exactly the same.

- I like UK people. ✗
- I like British people. ✓

- He is from Czech. ✗
- He is from the Czech Republic. ✓

For us Czech is the name of the language or it is a noun. 'She is a Czech' or 'he is a Czech'.

- The student has had a lot of evolution in the subject. ✗

In English 'evolution' is the process of natural selection as described by Charles Darwin. We seldom use it in any other context. In an educational context one should say:

- The student has made a lot of progress in the subject. ✓

- My dad's job is he talk on the radio. ✗
- My dad's job is he is a radio broadcaster. ✓

- In Turkey I spoke to the Turkeys. ✗
- In Turkey I spoke to the Turks. ✓

The people of Turkey are called 'Turks'. Their language is called Turkish. The adjective relating to Turkey is Turkish.

Turkeys are birds.

- Paul spooked very highly of you. ✗
- Paul spoke highly of you. ✓

- You will see how deep is my level of English. ✗
- You will see how low my level of English is. ✓

- My dad he Chisinau. My mum she Tiraspol. ❌
- My dad is from Chisinau. My mum is from Tiraspol. ✅

Incidentally 'mom' is the American spelling and 'mum' is the British spelling. The same pattern applies to the more childlike version of this word 'mommy' and 'mummy'.

- My son cannot take critics from his teachers. ❌
- My son cannot take criticism from his teachers. ✅

A critic is a person and criticism is the action that is performed by a critic.

- I have to say you... ❌
- I have to tell you... ✅

- I was never good in tenses. ❌
- I was never good at tenses. ✅

One always says it like this no matter what the subject or activity one is talking about. He is good at basketball, she is good at Spanish and we are good at ice skating.

- 'Plague' is not pronounced 'plaag' to rhyme with 'Prague'. ❌
- Plague is pronounced 'plaig' to rhyme with 'vague' or 'Haig'. ✅

- Children whom parents are teachers are not always smart. ❌
- Children whose parents are teachers are not always smart. ✅

- 'Whom' is the object form of 'who'.
- 'Whose' is the possessive form of 'who'.

'Whose', which indicates belonging, is not to be confused with 'who's' despite them being pronounced exactly the same. 'Who's' is a widely accepted contraction of 'who is'.

Here is an example: 'Who's that guy?'
This is precisely the same as 'who is that guy?'

- 'Branches' is not pronounced 'BRAIN-chéz.'
It sounds like 'BRAAN chz.'

- 'Hidden' is not pronounced 'HIDE'n'.
- It is pronounced 'HID'n'. The letter 'i' does not say its name in this word. The confusing thing is in the present tense the 'i' does pronounce its name. 'Hide' rhymes with 'tide' or 'side'.

- 'Recipe' must not be pronounced 'ress IPE' to rhyme with 'pipe' or 'skype'.
- 'Recipe' is pronounced 'RESS – i – pee'.

- 'We have a new man who is the cooker in the kitchen.' ❌

Catalina made this mistake and she is an English teacher! I can see her logic but I am afraid this word breaks the pattern.

Take an activity such as football – someone who does that activity is a footballer. Someone who paints is a painter. Someone who takes photos is a photographer. However, this does not apply to cooking. Someone who cooks is a cook.

A 'cooker' is the oven, the machine that cooks.

Catalina should have said:

- 'We have a new man who is a cook.' ✅

A chef is a very highly qualified cook. Someone who cooks for a living is a cook and someone who cooks at home is a cook. Only certain excellent professional cooks are called a chef.

[author info]



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