

BEGINNER'S

ENGLISH

CONVERSATION & GRAMMAR

FRANCES MCGONIGLE

FREE E-BOOK

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make the most of your life!

BEGINNER'S ENGLISH
Conversation & Grammar

Frances McGonigle, 01/09/22

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Hello!

Learning a language is fun and rewarding, with many benefits to your wellbeing also. For instance, it can improve your confidence and self-esteem, especially as you interact with people, make friends and explore the country.

Language skills can also be shared in great conversations! It just takes practice, as you build on your grammar knowledge and vocabulary more and more. Each day that you're immersed in the culture and language, you will learn something new. There may be challenges and setbacks, but, inevitably, you will keep moving forward, depending on how much time you dedicate to developing your skills.

The conversations and grammar in this short book have been written for beginners of English who have some knowledge already, particularly learners who have come to the UK to live and need basic conversational skills to get by.

Best of luck on your journey of learning, and in all that you do in your life!

Frances

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1. Everyday Life

Whether having short, friendly conversations with strangers you meet, or having longer conversations with friends, work colleagues, etc., your confidence, vocabulary and accuracy will increase the more you practise your English.

Sometimes you'll find it difficult to form the right words, or to understand what is being said. So, start with easy phrases and questions and build up from there!

Greetings

Hello!

Hello, my name is Adrian.

Hey!

Hey, Adrian. I didn't know you were working today.

Hey! Yes, I'm doing overtime for a few days.

Hiya!

Hiya! How's it going?

Hiya! Not bad, thanks.

Alright?

Alright?

Yea, good, cheers.

How are you?

How are you?

Good, thanks. No, actually, it could be better!

Politeness

Please

Please can you tell me the time?

Can you say that again, please?

Thank you

Thanks for the delicious meal.

You're welcome. Thank you for coming.

Hope

I hope you have a wonderful holiday.

Thanks! I hope you can get away soon.

Excuse me / Sorry

Excuse me [or 'sorry'], please can I get past?

Sure. I'm sorry I was in the way.

Could / Would

Could you say that again?

Of course. Would you like me to speak more slowly?

Do you mind if...

Do you mind if I go home early today?

No problem, but do you mind coming in a bit earlier tomorrow?

Shopping

Receipt

That's £6.50. Would you like a receipt?

No, that's okay, thanks.

Online

Did you buy that online?

Yes, online, because you can't buy that round here.

Therapy

I love shopping, it's great therapy!

Oh, I don't! I find it boring.

Shopping list

Did you make a shopping list?

Yes, because otherwise I will buy too much.

Opening times

What time do you close?

We're only open until 4pm today.

Browsing / How much?

Hi, can I help you with anything?

It's okay, thanks, I'm just browsing. Oh, actually, how much is this?

Travelling

Where is...?

Can you tell me where the nearest bank is?

Sure. It's in the High Street next to the supermarket.

Tickets

One adult to Edinburgh, please.

Is that a single or return?

Timetable

Hi, do you have a timetable of buses to Dumfries?

Yes, on the stand over there.

Departure / arrival time

Excuse me, what time is the train leaving?

You just missed it, but the next train is arriving in five minutes.

Hotel / Bed & Breakfast

Is there a decent hotel or a bed & breakfast near here?

There's a good hotel in the next street, but it's expensive.

Business or pleasure?

Are you travelling for work or pleasure?

Pleasure. I'm visiting all of the castles in Scotland!

Working

Interview

*I have an interview for a new job on Friday.
Good luck! I hope you get it.*

How long

*How long have you been working here?
About twenty years. I'm retiring soon.*

Hours

*Are you working part-time or full-time hours?
I'm full-time and do about 40 hours a week.*

Pay day

*What day is pay day this month?
We're paid on the last day of every month.*

Profession

*What is it you do?
I'm a chef. I specialise in traditional Cantonese food.*

Tasks

*I know you're working on that (task) already, but
can you do this as well?
Of course. I'm really good at multi-tasking!*

2. Social Life & Leisure

If you want to make the most of your free time and enjoy a work-life balance, being able to hold a conversation about social and leisure activities is important. It might come up at work what you did at the weekend, or you might want to make arrangements with your friends. Either way, knowing the correct grammar and a few simple phrases will help you start a conversation and be understood.

Reading

Books

What book are you reading?

It's a fictional account of life in Ancient Egypt.

Magazines

What kind of magazines do you like?

I'm really into magazines about cars.

Online News

Do you watch the News online?

No, I don't watch the News, it's too negative.

Research

I've been researching about dolphins online for work.

That's really interesting. I just surf the Net for fun.

Signs

There's a 'one-way' sign.

Then let's go this way, there's a sign for the city centre.

Library

You can find books and videos in the library.

Is it free to join? There's one near me.

Watching Films

Cinema

*We couldn't go to the cinema during lockdown.
I know, I streamed online instead.*

Genre

*What genre [or 'type'] of films do you like?
I prefer comedies, but watch a lot of action movies.*

Favourite

*Do you have a favourite film / actor?
Not really, but Mel Gibson was good in 'Braveheart'.*

Scenes

*Some scenes in the film were a bit shocking.
Really? It had good reviews.*

Music

*The soundtrack to that film is absolutely great!
I love film music, it really builds the action.*

Lines

*The best line in the film is when he says, "Are
you talking to me?"
Yea, that was a good one! Great script. I loved
all of the dialogue in Lawrence of Arabia, too.*

Playing Games

Board games

*If the TV is broken, we can play board games instead.
Great! We normally only play those at Christmas.*

Card games

*Do you want to play cards for pennies?
Okay, I'll shuffle, then it's your turn.*

Kids' games

*When you were a kid, did you play chase?
Of course! We played chase, hopscotch, rounders...*

Quizzes

*There's a pub quiz on tonight.
I'm useless at quizzes, but let's go anyway!*

Party games

*It was a good party, with lots of games.
Did you win any prizes?*

Points

*The person with the most points wins.
But, if it's a draw, then everyone wins!*

Exercising

Working out

It was a tough workout. I'm exhausted.

Yea, that cardio workout is a killer.

Warming up

Brief stretches are a good way to warm up.

I'm not very flexible, but they're quite easy.

Gear

Workout gear from popular brands can be really expensive.

Yea, but you don't need expensive kit to get started.

Sport

What's your favourite sport?

I watch a bit of tennis, but don't play sport.

Fitness

Are you exercising to lose weight or get fit?

Only for fitness. It helps keep you young.

Gym

The classes and equipment at my gym are great.

I might join. Do they have a pool?

Going Out

Coffee shop

Shall we meet in town for a coffee later?

Sorry, I can't. I have an English lesson.

Restaurant

There's a new restaurant opening in town.

Really? What kind of restaurant?

Clubs

My social club has bingo on a Thursday.

That's not my thing, but I might come along for a drink.

Walking

I go for a walk in the park most lunchtimes.

Nice. Spending time in nature is calming.

Go and see...

We could go and see a film on Saturday night. Are you free?

I'm not sure, yet. Let's play it by ear.

Ideas

Any idea what we could do today?

How about a picnic, a bike ride, or bowling?

3. Grammar

Points

Knowing how a sentence is put together will help you speak and write more accurately in English.

There are many rules about how to form a sentence, including around word order, agreement and punctuation. This chapter will give you some examples of the different forms you should use. There are always exceptions to rules, but in time and with experience, these can also be learnt.

Conjunctions

Words that connect parts of speech:

and, or, because, for, however, but, if, so, meanwhile, although...

*I'm a chef **and** a racing car driver.*

*Do you want tea **or** coffee?*

*We need rain, **because** water is essential to life.*

*Let's go **for** a walk after dinner.*

*Painting is fun. **However**, drawing will always be my first love.*

*They were angry, **but** they soon calmed down.*

*We can go to the beach **if** Adrian can drive.*

*Smoking is unhealthy, **so** giving up is a great idea.*

*I was asleep in the garden, **meanwhile** the house was on fire!*

*I thought he was wrong, **although** I didn't say anything at the time.*

Prepositions

Words expressing relationships between parts of clauses:

Prepositions of place: *at, in, on, behind, between, for, to, off*

Prepositions of time: *in, on, at, about*

*She was **at** the park when it began to rain.*

*I live **in** a Scottish town.*

*He was **on** the train when Adrian called.*

*You can park the car **behind** the flats.*

*I saw a fox **between** the trees.*

*You can see **for** miles.*

*Have you been **to** work today?*

*Get **off** the bus at the next stop.*

*Dinner will be ready **in** 5 minutes.*

*She was always **on** time.*

*They are due to arrive **at** 6 O'clock.*

*I spoke to the builder **about** the hole in my roof.*

Articles

Words that come before nouns to show if they are general or specific:

Indefinite articles: *a, an*

Definite articles: *the*

Note: there are some exceptions!

*Having **a** dog, **the** main thing I've learnt is patience.*

Having dogs, you need patience.

*Don't be **a** fool.*

Don't be foolish.

***The** weather was lovely.*

It was lovely weather.

*She needed **a** number of stitches in her leg.*

She needed twenty stitches in her leg.

*I'll get **the** shopping, if you clean **the** house.*

Shopping is boring. Houses are dirty.

*That's **a** really good example.*

Good examples, everyone!

***The** football is mine.*

I don't like football.

***The** bread they were selling. **The** water in the sea.*

I ate bread and water.

New Words & Phrases

Expand your vocabulary:

Learn a few new words and phrases every week and practise using them in conversations. This will help with your spoken English, as well as with your understanding of written English, online and in print.

Mantlepiece

Footstool

Hob

Rug

Specifically

Generally

Crisis

Prompted

Shine

Boom

Scale

Time flies.

It's raining cats and dogs.

Actions speak louder than words.

A stitch in time saves nine.

It cost an arm and a leg.

You're barking up the wrong tree.

Back to the drawing board.

You've bitten off more than you can chew.

This was just to help you get started.
Now, add lots of words of your own!

Useful Links

Online resources:

There are numerous online platforms offering English tuition. But, you may also find it useful to listen to some of the thousands of talks and documentaries on YouTube, or to podcasts on a subject you find interesting. Reading diverse material in print or online is also very helpful in building your knowledge of English. Below, are some suggestions where you can find free material to read or listen to online.

<https://www.channel5.com/>

<https://www.itv.com/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue>

[Young Scotcast](#)

I will find more!

Author

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She also tutors English, and enjoys craft, photography and adventures with her dog, Solo, in the beautiful countryside of South West Scotland.

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Express yourself with
confidence in a language
you love, make friends and
engage with the culture...

...starting now!