



Gurukul Technicals Institute

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FREE EBOOK

ENGLISH, CAREERS AND VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Spoken English for Daily Life

Thirty everyday conversations with useful phrases

INSIDE THIS BOOK

- How to practise speaking
- Greetings and introductions
- At school and college
- Shopping and money
- Getting around
- ...and 6 more chapters, practice questions and a glossary

Beginner

Learners who want to speak English confidently

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Spoken English for Daily Life

Thirty short conversations from daily life, from meeting a new classmate to returning a faulty kettle, each with useful phrases and a tip for Hindi speakers. You will also learn how to practise, how to say tricky sounds clearly, how to fix common Indian English mistakes and how to build a 15-minute daily speaking habit.

WHO IT IS FOR	Learners who want to speak English confidently
LEVEL	Beginner
SUBJECT AREA	English, careers and vocational skills
WHAT IS INSIDE	11 chapters, practice questions with answers, and a glossary

HOW TO USE IT

Read one chapter at a time and try the examples as you go: on a computer, at your workbench or in your notebook. The boxes give tips, safety points and short activities. When you finish, test yourself with the practice questions and check your answers at the end. Words you may not know are explained in the glossary.



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How to practise speaking

Speaking English is a skill, like riding a bicycle or swimming. You cannot learn to swim by reading about water. In the same way, you learn to speak by speaking: out loud, every day, even when you make mistakes.

Many learners know a lot of grammar but still feel nervous when they speak. That is normal, and the fear fades with practice. This book gives you thirty short conversations from daily life and a simple routine to practise them.

Why mistakes are good

A mistake shows you what to practise next. Small children make hundreds of mistakes while learning to talk, and nobody laughs at them. Give yourself the same kindness. Your goal is to be understood, not to be perfect.

REMEMBER

Fluency means speaking smoothly, without long stops. Accuracy means speaking without mistakes. Work on fluency first. Accuracy grows as you keep going.

Five ways to practise

1. **Listen first.** Listen to clear English every day: news readers, educational videos or audiobooks.
2. **Read aloud.** Reading silently trains your eyes; reading aloud trains your mouth and tongue.
3. **Shadow.** Shadowing means repeating what a speaker says just after they say it, like a shadow following you. Copy the speaker's speed and tone.
4. **Record yourself.** Use your phone's voice recorder and listen back. You will hear mistakes you missed while speaking.
5. **Talk to a partner.** Practise with a friend or a family member, taking turns to play each person in a dialogue.

How to use the dialogues

Each dialogue (a short conversation between two people) has three parts: the conversation, a list of useful phrases, and a tip for Hindi speakers. Study each one like this:

1. Read it silently and make sure you understand every word.
2. Read it aloud, playing both people.
3. Say each useful phrase five times.
4. Change the details (names, places, amounts) and say it again.
5. Close the book and try the conversation from memory.

TRY THIS

Choose one dialogue today. Read it aloud three times, then record yourself saying it without looking. Record it again after a month and compare.

Think in English

Many learners first make a sentence in Hindi and then translate it. This is slow, and word-for-word translation often gives wrong English. Start with small things. While making tea, say in your mind: "I'm boiling the water. Now I'm adding the tea leaves." Small steps like this build the habit.

TIP

You do not need a foreign accent. Your accent is the way your speech sounds because of where you grew up, and an Indian accent is perfectly fine. What matters is clear sounds, a steady speed and the right words.

CHAPTER 2

Greetings and introductions

Every conversation starts with a greeting. A good greeting makes people feel comfortable.

Time	Greeting	When to use it
Until about 12 noon	Good morning	Formal and informal

Time	Greeting	When to use it
12 noon to about 5 pm	Good afternoon	Mostly formal
After about 5 pm	Good evening	Formal and informal
Any time	Hello, Hi	"Hi" is informal
Leaving at night	Good night	Only for saying goodbye

REMEMBER

"Good night" is not a greeting. It means goodbye, at night or before sleeping. If you meet someone at 8 pm, say "Good evening".

When someone asks "How are you?", give a short answer and ask back: "I'm fine, thank you. And you?" or "Not bad. How have you been?"

A simple introduction has three parts: your name, where you are from, and what you do. For example: "Hello, I'm Simran Kaur. I'm from Ludhiana, and I'm studying computer applications." To introduce another person, use "This is...": "Papa, this is my friend Kabir."

Dialogue 1: Meeting a new classmate

- **Neha:** Hi! You're new here, aren't you?
- **Arjun:** Yes, today is my first day. I'm Arjun.
- **Neha:** Nice to meet you, Arjun. I'm Neha. Where are you from?
- **Arjun:** I'm from Patna. My family moved to Delhi last month.
- **Neha:** Welcome! If you need any help, just ask me.
- **Arjun:** Thank you, that's very kind of you.

Useful phrases: Nice to meet you. · That's very kind of you.

Hindi-speaker tip: "What is your good name?" is a word-for-word copy of "What is your name?" '8 LGØ –lx LJ U?'. In English, say "What's your name?" or, more politely, "May I know your name?"

Dialogue 2: Meeting a new neighbour

- **Mrs Iyer:** Good evening! I think you've just moved into the flat next door.
- **Rohit:** Good evening. Yes, we moved in on Sunday. I'm Rohit Verma.
- **Mrs Iyer:** I'm Lakshmi Iyer. Welcome to the building.
- **Rohit:** Thank you, Mrs Iyer. This is my mother, and this is my sister, Pooja.

- **Mrs Iyer:** Lovely to meet you all. The milk booth is at the corner, by the way.
- **Rohit:** That's useful to know. Thanks a lot!

Useful phrases: We've just moved in. · That's useful to know.

Hindi-speaker tip: "Mr", "Mrs" and "Ms" go before the surname: "Mrs Iyer" or "Mrs Lakshmi Iyer", never just "Mrs Lakshmi". "Aunt" and "Uncle" are friendly at home, but in an office use "Mr" or "Ms" with the surname, or "sir" and "ma'am".

CHAPTER 3

At school and college

School and college give you a chance to practise English every day.

Dialogue 3: Asking the teacher a question

- **Kavya:** Excuse me, ma'am. May I ask a question about today's lesson?
- **Teacher:** Of course, Kavya. What is it?
- **Kavya:** I didn't understand the difference between speed and velocity.
- **Teacher:** Speed tells you how fast something moves. Velocity tells you how fast and in which direction.
- **Kavya:** Could you give me an example?
- **Teacher:** A car going north at 40 kilometres an hour. Its speed is 40 kilometres an hour. Its velocity is 40 kilometres an hour towards the north.
- **Kavya:** Now I understand. Thank you, ma'am.

Useful phrases: May I ask a question? · Could you give me an example?

Hindi-speaker tip: In India, "I have a doubt" usually means "I have a question". In most other countries, "doubt" means you do not believe something. "I have a question" is clear to everyone.

Dialogue 4: Explaining an absence

- **Sameer:** Good morning, Mr Khan. I'm sorry I missed your classes for the last two days.
- **Mr Khan:** Good morning, Sameer. Is everything all right?
- **Sameer:** I had a high fever, sir. I've brought a note from my parents.

- **Mr Khan:** I hope you're better now. Please copy the notes from a classmate.
- **Sameer:** Yes, sir. Could I submit the assignment on Friday instead of today?
- **Mr Khan:** All right, Friday. But not later than that.

Useful phrases: I'm sorry I missed... · Could I submit it on Friday instead?

Hindi-speaker tip: Use "for" with a length of time and "since" with a starting point: "I was ill for two days", "I have been ill since Monday". Never say "since two days".

Dialogue 5: Borrowing notes

- **Riya:** Hey Manav, could you lend me your chemistry notes? I was absent yesterday.
- **Manav:** Sure. Can you return them by tomorrow? I need them for the test.
- **Riya:** Definitely. I'll take photos of the pages and give them back this evening.
- **Manav:** Great. They're in the blue file.
- **Riya:** Thanks, you're a lifesaver!
- **Manav:** No problem.

Useful phrases: Could you lend me...? · You're a lifesaver (you have helped me a lot).

Hindi-speaker tip: To lend is to give something for a short time. To borrow is to take something for a short time. Say "Could you lend me your notes?" or "Could I borrow your notes?", but never "Can you borrow me your notes?"

Dialogue 6: At the library

- **Librarian:** Good afternoon. How can I help you?
- **Farhan:** Good afternoon. I'd like to return this book, and I'm looking for a book on Python programming.
- **Librarian:** Let me check... Yes, we have two. They're on the third shelf in the computer section.
- **Farhan:** Thank you. How long can I keep a book?
- **Librarian:** Two weeks. You can renew it once if nobody else has asked for it.
- **Farhan:** Great. Thanks for your help.

Useful phrases: I'm looking for... · How long can I keep it?

Hindi-speaker tip: Say "return this book", not "return back this book". "Return" already means "give back", so "back" is extra.

TIP

"Excuse me, sir" or "Excuse me, ma'am" is the polite way to get a teacher's attention. If your class raises hands, raise yours first and wait to be asked.

CHAPTER 4

Shopping and money

Shopping is an easy place to practise, because the conversations are short. Three phrases cover most of it: "Could I have...?", "How much is it?" and "I'll take it."

Dialogue 7: At a grocery shop

- **Shopkeeper:** Yes, madam, what would you like?
- **Anita:** Could I have one kilo of sugar and half a kilo of moong dal, please?
- **Shopkeeper:** Here you are. Anything else?
- **Anita:** A packet of tea, please. How much is that altogether?
- **Shopkeeper:** That's ! 215.
- **Anita:** Can I pay by UPI?
- **Shopkeeper:** Yes, the QR code is right there.

Useful phrases: Anything else? · How much is that altogether?

Hindi-speaker tip: Many Hindi speakers say "one kg sugar". In English, put "of" between an amount and the thing: "a kilo of sugar", "a packet of biscuits", "two litres of milk".

Dialogue 8: Buying a shirt

- **Salesperson:** Hello, can I help you find something?
- **Vikram:** Yes, I'm looking for a light blue formal shirt, size 40.
- **Salesperson:** These are all size 40. Would you like to try one on?
- **Vikram:** Yes, please. (later) It's a little tight. Do you have it in 42?
- **Salesperson:** Yes, here you are.
- **Vikram:** This one fits well. I'll take it.

Useful phrases: Would you like to try it on? · Do you have it in 42?

Hindi-speaker tip: Say "It doesn't fit me" or "It's a little tight", not "It is not fitting to me."

Dialogue 9: Bargaining at a market

- **Meena:** Excuse me, how much are these bangles?
- **Seller:** ! 150 a set, madam.
- **Meena:** They're lovely, but that's a bit expensive. Could you do ! 120?
- **Seller:** Make it ! 130, and I'll give you a small box free.
- **Meena:** All right, it's a deal. Two sets, please.
- **Seller:** That's ! 260.

Useful phrases: That's a bit expensive. · Could you do ! 120? · It's a deal.

Hindi-speaker tip: "How much cost?" is not a full sentence. Say "How much is this?" for one thing and "How much are these?" for more than one, or "How much does it cost?"

Dialogue 10: At a bank

- **Clerk:** Good morning. How may I help you?
- **Pradeep:** Good morning. I'd like to open a savings account.
- **Clerk:** Certainly. Have you brought proof of identity and address?
- **Pradeep:** Yes, I have my Aadhaar card and PAN card with me.
- **Clerk:** Good. Please fill in this form and attach a copy of each, with two photos.
- **Pradeep:** Thank you. Where should I sign?
- **Clerk:** Here, and here at the bottom.

Useful phrases: I'd like to open an account. · Where should I sign?

Hindi-speaker tip: "I'd like..." (short for "I would like") is softer and more polite than "I want...". Use it in banks, offices and restaurants.

SAFETY

Bank staff never need your PIN, your password or an OTP (one-time password, the short code sent to your phone). Never tell these to anyone, even someone who says they are from the bank.

Dialogue 11: At the post office

- **Gaurav:** Good afternoon. I'd like to send this parcel to Bengaluru.

- **Clerk:** Please put it on the scale... 800 grams. Speed Post or ordinary parcel?
- **Gaurav:** Which is faster?
- **Clerk:** Speed Post. The receipt has a tracking number, so you can follow the parcel.
- **Gaurav:** Speed Post, then. How long will it take?
- **Clerk:** Usually a few days.
- **Gaurav:** That's fine. Here you are.

Useful phrases: I'd like to send this parcel to... · How long will it take?

Hindi-speaker tip: "Faster" already means "more fast", so "more faster" is wrong. Say "Which is faster?" and "This one is cheaper."

CHAPTER 5

Getting around

When you travel, you often need help from strangers. Short, polite questions get the quickest help.

Direction words	Meaning
Go straight	Keep walking in the same direction
Take the second left	Turn left at the second road
Opposite	Facing it, on the other side of the road
Next to, beside	Right by its side
At the corner	Where two roads meet

Dialogue 12: Asking for directions

- **Ayesha:** Excuse me, could you tell me how to get to the metro station?
- **Man:** Sure. Go straight down this road and take the second left.
- **Ayesha:** The second left. And then?
- **Man:** Keep walking. The station is opposite a big hospital. You can't miss it.
- **Ayesha:** Is it walking distance?
- **Man:** Yes, about ten minutes on foot.

- **Ayesha:** Thank you so much.

Useful phrases: Could you tell me how to get to...? · Is it walking distance?

Hindi-speaker tip: In Hindi we often call a stranger "bhaiya" or "didi". In English, start with "Excuse me". It is polite and works with everyone.

Dialogue 13: At the railway enquiry counter

- **Suresh:** Excuse me, which platform does the train to Jaipur leave from?
- **Staff:** Platform 5. It's running twenty minutes late today.
- **Suresh:** So what time will it leave?
- **Staff:** At about 6:40.

Useful phrases: Which platform does it leave from? · It's running late.

Hindi-speaker tip: "What is the timing of the train?" is common in India. "What time does the train leave?" or "What time does it arrive?" sounds more natural.

Dialogue 14: Taking an auto-rickshaw

- **Deepak:** Excuse me, will you go to Lajpat Nagar?
- **Driver:** Yes, get in.
- **Deepak:** By the meter, please.
- **Driver:** Okay, by the meter.
- **Deepak:** Please stop here, near the blue gate. How much is it?
- **Driver:** ! 96.
- **Deepak:** Here's ! 100. Keep the change.

Useful phrases: By the meter, please. · Please stop here. · Keep the change.

Hindi-speaker tip: "Kitna loge?" turned word for word into "How much will you take?" sounds rough in English. Ask "How much is it?" or "How much will it be?"

Dialogue 15: On the metro

- **Mrs Das:** Excuse me, does this train go to Rajiv Chowk?
- **Tanvi:** Yes, it does. It's four stops from here.
- **Mrs Das:** Could you tell me when we get there?
- **Tanvi:** Of course. Would you like my seat?
- **Mrs Das:** Oh, that's very kind of you, dear.

Useful phrases: Could you tell me when we get there? · Would you like my seat?

Hindi-speaker tip: A Hindi question keeps the normal word order: "Yeh train Rajiv Chowk jaati hai?" Most English questions need a helping word at the front: "Does this train go to Rajiv Chowk?"

Dialogue 16: Checking in at a hotel

- **Receptionist:** Good evening, and welcome. How may I help you?
- **Mr Joshi:** Good evening. I have a booking in the name of Anil Joshi, for two nights.
- **Receptionist:** Yes, Mr Joshi, I have it here. May I see an identity card, please?
- **Mr Joshi:** Here you are. What time is checkout?
- **Receptionist:** 11 am. Here's your key. Room 304.

Useful phrases: I have a booking in the name of... · What time is checkout?

Hindi-speaker tip: Say "in the name of Anil Joshi" or "in my name", not "on my name".

DID YOU KNOW

In India and Britain, the floor at street level is the "ground floor" and the one above it is the "first floor". In the USA, street level is usually called the first floor.

CHAPTER 6

Health and help

When you are unwell, clear English helps a doctor or chemist help you.

REMEMBER

Useful health words: headache, stomach ache, toothache, sore throat (a painful throat), cough, cold, fever, rash (red spots on the skin) and sprain (a twisted, painful joint).

Dialogue 17: At the doctor

- **Doctor:** Good morning. Please sit down. What seems to be the problem?
- **Harish:** Good morning, doctor. I've had a fever and a sore throat since yesterday.
- **Doctor:** Any cough or headache?

- **Harish:** A slight headache, and my whole body aches.
- **Doctor:** Let me check... Your temperature is 101. It looks like a viral infection. Take this medicine after meals, and drink plenty of water.
- **Harish:** How many times a day should I take it?
- **Doctor:** Twice a day, for three days. Come back if the fever doesn't go down.

Useful phrases: What seems to be the problem? · How many times a day should I take it?

Hindi-speaker tip: In Indian English you often hear "My head is paining." Say "I have a headache", "My stomach hurts" or "My back aches." Also say "I've had a fever since yesterday", not "I am having fever since yesterday."

Dialogue 18: At the chemist

- **Chemist:** Yes, how can I help?
- **Nisha:** I have a prescription from Dr Mehta. Could I have these medicines, please?
- **Chemist:** One minute... I have the syrup, but the tablets are out of stock. I can give you another company's tablets with the same medicine.
- **Nisha:** I'd better check with the doctor first. Can I call her and come back?
- **Chemist:** Of course.
- **Nisha:** Thank you. I'll take the syrup now. How much is it?
- **Chemist:** ! 85.

Useful phrases: It's out of stock. · I'd better check first.

Hindi-speaker tip: In India people say "I'm going to the medical" for the medicine shop. "Medical" is a describing word, so say "the chemist" or "the pharmacy" to be clear everywhere.

SAFETY

Take medicine only as a doctor tells you. Do not change a medicine, or take one a friend suggests, without asking a doctor first. That is why Nisha calls her doctor before buying different tablets.

Dialogue 19: Visiting a friend who is unwell

- **Isha:** Hi Zoya! How are you feeling now?
- **Zoya:** Much better, thanks. The fever's gone, but I'm still a bit weak.

- **Isha:** I've brought you some fruit, and here are this week's notes.
- **Zoya:** That's so sweet of you! Thank you.
- **Isha:** Get some rest, and don't worry about the test. Get well soon!
- **Zoya:** I will. See you on Monday, I hope.

Useful phrases: That's so sweet of you. · Get well soon!

Hindi-speaker tip: "How is your health now?" is understood, but "How are you feeling now?" is warmer and more natural. And say "Get some rest", not "Take rest".

CHAPTER 7

On the phone and at work

Phone calls feel harder than face-to-face talk because you cannot see the other person. Speak a little slower than usual, and repeat important details such as days and times.

Dialogue 20: Taking a message

- **Kunal:** Hello?
- **Caller:** Hello, may I speak to Mr Sharma, please?
- **Kunal:** I'm sorry, he's not at home right now. May I know who's calling?
- **Caller:** This is Ritu from the electricity office.
- **Kunal:** Would you like to leave a message?
- **Caller:** Yes. Please tell him the new meter will be fitted on Thursday morning.
- **Kunal:** Thursday morning. I'll tell him as soon as he's back.

Useful phrases: May I speak to...? · Would you like to leave a message?

Hindi-speaker tip: "Kaun bol raha hai?" turned into "Who is speaking?" can sound sharp. Ask "May I know who's calling?" And to give your own name on the phone, say "This is Ritu" or "Ritu here".

Dialogue 21: Booking an appointment

- **Receptionist:** Good morning, Dr Rao's clinic. How can I help you?
- **Sunita:** Good morning. I'd like to book an appointment with Dr Rao, please.
- **Receptionist:** Is it your first visit?

- **Sunita:** Yes. I have a toothache on the left side.
- **Receptionist:** Can you come tomorrow at 4:30?
- **Sunita:** I'm afraid I'm at work till five. Is six o'clock possible?
- **Receptionist:** Yes, 6 pm is free. May I have your name, please?
- **Sunita:** Sunita Pillai. You can reach me on this number.

Useful phrases: I'd like to book an appointment. · Is six o'clock possible?

Hindi-speaker tip: A plain "No, I can't" can sound blunt in English. Start with "I'm afraid..." to soften it. Here, "I'm afraid" does not mean you are scared; it means "I'm sorry to say".

Dialogue 22: At a job interview

- **Interviewer:** Good morning. Please have a seat.
- **Priya:** Good morning, ma'am. Thank you.
- **Interviewer:** So, tell me about yourself.
- **Priya:** I'm Priya Nair. I've just finished my B.Com in Kochi, and I've done a course in computer accounting. I enjoy working with numbers, and I'm looking for my first job as an accounts assistant.
- **Interviewer:** Why do you want to work with us?
- **Priya:** I'd like to learn and grow with a growing company, and I'm comfortable with spreadsheets, which this job needs.
- **Interviewer:** Thank you, Priya. We'll let you know by Friday.

Useful phrases: Tell me about yourself. · I'm looking for my first job as...

Hindi-speaker tip: Never begin with "Myself Priya." "Myself" cannot start a sentence like that. Say "I'm Priya" or "My name is Priya."

Dialogue 23: Asking a colleague for help

- **Rahul:** Hi Sneha, sorry to disturb you. Have you got a minute?
- **Sneha:** Sure, Rahul. What's up?
- **Rahul:** The printer on our floor isn't working. Do you know who I should tell?
- **Sneha:** Send an email to the IT help desk. They usually fix it the same day.
- **Rahul:** Thanks. Could you show me how to use the printer on the second floor until then?
- **Sneha:** Of course. Come with me.

- **Rahul:** Thanks. I owe you one!

Useful phrases: Have you got a minute? · I owe you one (I will help you back one day).

Hindi-speaker tip: "Please do the needful" is old office English, and it does not say what you want. Say exactly what you need: "Please send me the file by 3 pm."

Dialogue 24: Moving a meeting

- **Anjali:** Hello, Mr Kapoor? This is Anjali from the accounts team.
- **Mr Kapoor:** Hello, Anjali. Yes?
- **Anjali:** It's about tomorrow's meeting at 3 pm. Could we bring it forward to 11 am?
The auditor is coming in the afternoon.
- **Mr Kapoor:** Let me check my calendar... Yes, eleven works for me.
- **Anjali:** Great. I'll send everyone an updated invitation.
- **Mr Kapoor:** Thanks. Please ask them to reply, so we know who's coming.
- **Anjali:** Will do.

Useful phrases: Could we bring it forward to...? · That works for me.

Hindi-speaker tip: "Prepone" is used in India but is not understood in many other countries. Say "bring forward" or "move earlier". In the same way, "Please revert" is clearer as "Please reply" or "Please get back to me".

TRY THIS

Ask a friend to call you and play the caller in Dialogue 20. Write the message down as you listen, then read it back to check every detail.

CHAPTER 8

Food, plans and polite complaints

These six conversations cover eating out, plans and complaining without sounding angry. Notice how often "could", "would" and "please" appear.

Dialogue 25: Ordering at a restaurant

- **Waiter:** Good evening. Are you ready to order?
- **Aman:** Yes. Could we have two masala dosas and one plate of idli, please?

- **Waiter:** Anything to drink?
- **Aman:** Two filter coffees. And could we have some water, please?
- **Waiter:** Sure. Anything else?
- **Aman:** No, that's all for now, thanks.
- **Aman:** (later) Excuse me, could we have the bill, please?

Useful phrases: That's all for now. · Could we have the bill?

Hindi-speaker tip: "Paani laao" sounds normal in Hindi with a friendly tone, but "Bring water" sounds rude in English. Add "Could we have..." and "please".

Dialogue 26: Inviting a friend

- **Kiran:** Hey Divya, are you free on Saturday evening?
- **Divya:** I think so. Why?
- **Kiran:** It's my birthday, and a few friends are coming home for dinner. Would you like to come?
- **Divya:** I'd love to! What time?
- **Kiran:** Around seven. See you then!

Useful phrases: Are you free on...? · I'd love to!

Hindi-speaker tip: To invite someone, say "Would you like to come?" or "Would you like to join us?" A direct translation such as "You also come" sounds like an order in English.

Dialogue 27: Making plans

- **Arjun:** Shall we go to the science exhibition this Sunday?
- **Tara:** Good idea. What time shall we meet?
- **Arjun:** How about 10 am at the bus stop near school?
- **Tara:** Can we make it 10:30? I have a tuition class till ten.
- **Arjun:** Sure, 10:30 it is. Let's ask Rohan too.
- **Tara:** Okay. I'll message him tonight.

Useful phrases: Shall we...? · How about...? · Can we make it 10:30? (can we change the time to 10:30?)

Hindi-speaker tip: Say "this Sunday" or "on Sunday", but not "on this Sunday". The word "this" (and "next" and "last") already does the job of "on".

Dialogue 28: Returning a faulty product

- **Manoj:** Excuse me. I bought this electric kettle here last week, but it's stopped working.
- **Staff:** I'm sorry to hear that. Do you have the bill?
- **Manoj:** Yes, here it is.
- **Staff:** Thank you. It's still under warranty. Would you like a replacement or a refund?
- **Manoj:** A replacement, please.
- **Staff:** Certainly. I'll get you a new one.
- **Manoj:** Thank you for sorting it out so quickly.

Useful phrases: I bought this here last week, but... · Thank you for sorting it out.

Hindi-speaker tip: "This is not working, I want my money back!" sounds angry. Start calmly with the facts, then ask: "Could I get a replacement, please?" Polite and firm works better than loud.

Dialogue 29: Complaining politely to a neighbour

- **Sonal:** Hello, Mr Gill. Sorry to bother you.
- **Mr Gill:** Hello, Sonal. What's the matter?
- **Sonal:** Your car is parked in front of our gate, and my father needs to take the scooter out.
- **Mr Gill:** Oh, I'm so sorry! I didn't realise. I'll move it right away.
- **Sonal:** Thank you so much.
- **Mr Gill:** It won't happen again.

Useful phrases: What's the matter? · I'll move it right away.

Hindi-speaker tip: Begin a complaint with "Sorry to bother you", just as you might begin with "× If 8 ? 2" in Hindi. Going straight to the problem can sound rude.

Dialogue 30: Thanks, sorry and goodbye

- **Varun:** Thank you so much for helping me with my project, Aditi.
- **Aditi:** You're welcome. It was fun!
- **Varun:** And sorry I was late this morning.
- **Aditi:** Don't worry about it.
- **Varun:** I have to go now. See you tomorrow!

- **Aditi:** Bye! Take care.

Useful phrases: Don't worry about it. · Take care.

Hindi-speaker tip: "Mention not" is heard in India, but "You're welcome", "No problem" or "My pleasure" is understood everywhere.

REMEMBER

Polite English uses "could", "would" and "please". "Could you...?" is softer than "Can you...?", and both are far softer than an order like "Give me...".

CHAPTER 9

Pronunciation tips

Pronunciation is the way you say words. You do not need to sound British or American, but you do need to be clear. Here are the sounds that most often trouble Hindi speakers.

V and W

Hindi has one letter, F, whose sound sits between English "v" and "w". English has two separate sounds.

- **V:** Touch your upper front teeth to your lower lip and push air out with your voice on. Your lip should buzz a little.
- **W:** Round your lips as if you are going to say "oo", then open them. Your teeth do not touch your lip.

V word	W word
vest	west
vine	wine
vet	wet
veil	wail
verse	worse

Practise this sentence slowly, then faster: "We visited a village with very wide roads."

TRY THIS

Use a mirror. For "v", you should see your top teeth resting on your lower lip. For "w", you should see round lips and no teeth.

The two TH sounds

English "th" has two sounds, and both are made with the tip of the tongue lightly between the teeth.

- **Without voice:** think, three, thank, bath, month. Blow air gently over the tongue.
- **With voice:** this, that, these, mother, brother. Make the same shape but turn your voice on, so you feel a buzz.

Many Indians say "think" with the Hindi } sound and "this" with ~. This is understood in India, but the tongue position makes you clearer to everyone. Practise: thin and tin, three and tree, they and day.

Silent letters

Some letters are written but not spoken.

Silent letter	Examples
k (before n)	know, knife, knee
w (before r)	write, wrong, wrist
b (after m)	climb, comb, thumb
h	hour, honest, honour
t	listen, castle, whistle
l	walk, talk, half, could
d	Wednesday (say "WENZ-day")
s	island

REMEMBER

"Hour" and "honest" begin with a vowel sound, so we say "an hour" and "an honest man". "House" and "hotel" begin with a spoken "h", so we say "a house".

Words that begin with S

Some speakers add a short "i" before words that begin with "s" plus another consonant, saying "ischool" or "istation". Start with the "s" straight away: school, station, speak, smile.

Word stress

In a longer English word, one part (one syllable) is said louder and longer. This is called stress. Say PHO-to-graph but pho-TOG-ra-phy, ho-TEL, and COM-fort-able (stress at the start, not "com-for-TA-ble"). A dictionary app shows the stress of any new word.

CHAPTER 10

Common Indian English errors

Indian English is a real variety of English, with useful words of its own such as lakh and crore. Some habits, though, are mistakes in any English, or confuse listeners from other countries. Here are the most common.

Avoid	Say instead	Why
Myself Rohan.	I'm Rohan.	"Myself" cannot be the subject.
I am having a cold since Monday.	I've had a cold since Monday.	A state from the past until now takes "have had".
He is knowing the answer.	He knows the answer.	Know, like, want and understand rarely take -ing.
Where you are going?	Where are you going?	Questions put the helping verb first.
I didn't went.	I didn't go.	After "did", use the base verb.
One of my friend	One of my friends	"One of" is followed by a plural.
Discuss about the plan	Discuss the plan	"Discuss" needs no "about".
Explain me	Explain to me	We explain something to someone.
Today morning, yesterday night	This morning, last night	These are fixed phrases.
My cousin brother	My cousin	"Cousin" covers both boys and girls.

Avoid	Say instead	Why
He is out of station.	He is out of town.	"Out of station" is old Indian usage.
The food is too good.	The food is very good.	"Too" means more than you want.
You are coming, isn't it?	You are coming, aren't you?	The tag matches the verb.

DID YOU KNOW

Lakh and crore are Indian English words that everyone in India understands. When you speak to people from other countries, say "one hundred thousand" for a lakh and "ten million" for a crore.

How to fix a habit

Knowing the correct form is easy; using it while you talk fast is harder. Pick one error a week. Write the correct sentence on a card and say it aloud ten times a day. Ask a friend to stop you, kindly, each time you use the old form.

TRY THIS

Read the table aloud, saying only the "Say instead" column. Then cover that column and turn each wrong sentence into a right one from memory.

CHAPTER 11

Your daily 15-minute routine

Fifteen minutes every day is better than two hours once a week, because daily practice keeps words fresh. Choose a fixed time and protect it like a class.

Minutes	What to do
1 to 3	Listen and shadow. Play a short clip of clear English and repeat each sentence after the speaker.
4 to 6	Read aloud. Read one dialogue from this book, playing both people.
7 to 9	Learn phrases. Take three useful phrases and say each one in two sentences of your own.

Minutes	What to do
10 to 12	Talk to yourself. Describe your day, your room or your plans for tomorrow.
13 to 15	Record and check. Record one minute of speech, listen back, and note one thing to fix.

A six-week plan

Study one dialogue a day from Monday to Friday, and you will finish all thirty in six weeks. On Saturday, repeat your favourite with a partner. On Sunday, listen to the week's recordings and notice what has improved.

TIP

Keep a phrase notebook. Write each new phrase with one sentence of your own, such as "Could you lend me your charger? Mine is at home." Read the notebook once a week.

Finding a partner

A partner makes practice more fun and keeps you regular. Agree on simple rules: speak only English for ten minutes, correct each other kindly, and never laugh at a mistake.

REMEMBER

Progress feels slow from day to day, but it is easy to see from month to month. Keep your recordings, and listen to the first one after six weeks.

CHECK YOURSELF

Practice questions

1. You meet your teacher at 7:30 pm. Should you say "Good night" or "Good evening"? Why?
2. Correct this sentence: "What is your good name?"
3. Fill in lend or borrow: "Could I your notes?"
4. Correct this sentence: "I have been ill since two days."

5. Make this request polite: "Give me one kg sugar."
6. What does "I'm afraid" mean in "I'm afraid I'm busy at four"?
7. Correct this sentence: "Myself Priya, from Kochi."
8. What can you say instead of "prepone the meeting"?
9. Correct this sentence: "My stomach is paining."
10. On the phone, which is more polite: "Who is speaking?" or "May I know who's calling?"
11. Correct this sentence: "I want to return back this book."
12. Give two polite ways to invite a friend to join you.
13. How do you make the "v" sound, and how is "w" different?
14. Which letter is silent in each word: knife, write, listen, hour?
15. Why do we say "an hour" but "a house"?
16. Correct this question: "Where you are going?"
17. Correct this sentence: "You are coming, isn't it?"
18. What is shadowing?
19. Correct this sentence: "I have booked a room on my name."
20. List the five parts of the 15-minute daily routine.
21. A shop sold you a phone charger that stopped working after two days. Write two polite sentences to ask for a replacement.
22. What is the difference between fluency and accuracy?

ANSWER KEY

Answers

1. "Good evening". "Good night" is only for saying goodbye at night.
2. "What's your name?" or "May I know your name?"

3. "Could I borrow your notes?" (You take them for a short time.)
4. "I have been ill for two days." Use "for" with a length of time.
5. "Could I have one kilo of sugar, please?"
6. It means "I'm sorry to say". It softens a "no"; it does not mean you are scared.
7. "I'm Priya, from Kochi." or "My name is Priya, and I'm from Kochi."
8. "Bring the meeting forward" or "move the meeting earlier".
9. "I have a stomach ache." or "My stomach hurts."
10. "May I know who's calling?"
11. "I want to return this book." ("Return" already means "give back".)
12. "Would you like to come?" and "Would you like to join us?"
13. For "v", touch your top teeth to your lower lip and use your voice. For "w", round your lips and keep your teeth away from your lip.
14. knife: k; write: w; listen: t; hour: h.
15. "Hour" begins with a vowel sound because the "h" is silent; "house" begins with a spoken "h".
16. "Where are you going?"
17. "You are coming, aren't you?"
18. Repeating what a speaker says just after they say it, copying their speed and tone.
19. "I have booked a room in my name."
20. Listen and shadow; read aloud; learn phrases; talk to yourself; record and check.
21. For example: "I bought this charger here two days ago, but it has stopped working. Could I get a replacement, please?"
22. Fluency is speaking smoothly without long stops; accuracy is speaking without mistakes.

WORD LIST

Glossary

Accent

the way a person's speech sounds because of where they grew up.

Accuracy

speaking or writing without mistakes.

Appointment

a fixed time to meet someone, such as a doctor.

Consonant

a speech sound made by partly blocking the air, such as b, k or s.

Dialogue

a conversation between two or more people.

Fluency

speaking smoothly and easily, without long stops.

Formal

a careful, respectful style used with teachers, officials and strangers.

Informal

a relaxed style used with friends and family.

Out of stock

not available in a shop at the moment.

Phrase

a small group of words used together, such as "Nice to meet you".

Polite request

asking for something kindly, often with "could", "would" and "please".

Prescription

a doctor's written note saying which medicine to take and how.

Pronunciation

the way a word is said.

Question tag

a short question added to the end of a sentence, such as "aren't you?".

Refund

money given back for something you return.

Replacement

a new item given in place of a faulty one.

Shadowing

repeating a speaker's words just after them to copy their speed and tone.

Silent letter

a letter that is written but not spoken, such as the k in "knife".

Stress

saying one part of a word, or one word in a sentence, louder and longer.

Syllable

one beat of a word; "hotel" has two syllables, ho and tel.

Vowel

a speech sound made without blocking the air, such as the sound of a, e, i, o or u.

Warranty

a promise from the seller or maker to repair or replace a faulty product for a set time.



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