

Not just what you say, but the way that you say it

Jonathan Marks



# Why do people talk?

To exercise their tongues?

To practise their grammar?

To demonstrate their knowledge of vocabulary?



No - they talk to *get things done* ...

to establish and maintain relationships

to exchange information

to tell stories

to agree and disagree

to make suggestions

to apologize

to make excuses

to give instructions

to give explanations

... and so on



There's a \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_.



There's a new Italian restaurant in the High Street.



A: I'm taking my parents out for a meal next week, 'cos it's my dad's birthday, but I don't know where we can go.

B: There's a new Italian restaurant in the High Street.



A: There was this bloke next to me on the bus, talking on his mobile, and he finished his conversation with "OK, then, I'll see you in Verona in about half an hour." Verona's in Italy, isn't it?

B: There's a new Italian restaurant in the High Street.



A: What's it like round here nowadays? Still as run-down as ever? Still all those boarded-up shops?

B: There's a new Italian restaurant in the High Street.





A: It's ridiculous how many restaurants there are in this town - I don't know how they can all survive.

B: There's a new Italian restaurant in the High Street.



A: The trouble with this town is there's nowhere to eat out if you don't like Indian food.

B: There's a new Italian restaurant in the High Street.



# Making suggestions

I'm taking my parents out for a meal next week, 'cos it's my dad's birthday, but I don't know where we can go.

how      why      what      about      I  
if      go      went      going      don't      you  
try      not      could      always      suggest      to  
that new Italian restaurant



Go to that new Italian restaurant.

Why not go to that new Italian restaurant?

How about going to that new Italian restaurant?

What about going to that new Italian restaurant?

Why don't you go to that new Italian restaurant?

Why don't you try going to that new Italian restaurant?

You could always go to that new Italian restaurant.

You could always try going to that new Italian restaurant.

I suggest you try going to that new Italian restaurant.

I suggest you go to that new Italian restaurant.

What if you went to that new Italian restaurant?



I suggest to go to that new Italian restaurant.

I suggest you to go to that new Italian restaurant.

Can I suggest you go to that new Italian restaurant?

May I suggest you go to that new Italian restaurant?



# Agreeing and disagreeing

1. Which of these ways of agreeing is least appropriate here?

The traffic in town's worse than ever today.

a You're telling me. It took me ages to get home from work.

b You can say that again. It took me ages to get home from work.

c I agree entirely. It took me ages to get home from work.

d It certainly is. It took me ages to get home from work.



2. Which of these responses expresses tentative agreement?

I think it'd be better to postpone the meeting till next week.

a Exactly. Too many people are away this week.

b I'm inclined to agree. Too many people are away this week.

c I couldn't agree more. Too many people are away this week.

d It would. Too many people are away this week.



3. Which of these responses express reluctant agreement?

It's getting late. I think we'd better go home, without calling round to see your parents.

a I suppose so. Let's just phone them instead, shall we?

b You're right. Let's just phone them instead, shall we?

c I know. Let's just phone them instead, shall we?

d I guess so. Let's just phone them instead, shall we?





4. Which of these responses express partial agreement?

Listening to English is really impossible.

a Absolutely, but speaking it's even worse!

b I agree up to a point, but it gets easier with practice.

c I wouldn't go as far as to say that. It's difficult, but it's really just a matter of getting used to it.

d That's right – so many of the words are unclear.



5. Which of these responses gives an impression of politeness?

The 1960s were the best decade for music.

a Rubbish! Have you listened to any music since then?

b I'm sorry, but have you listened to any music since then?

c How can you say that? Have you listened to any music since then?

d Are you kidding? Have you listened to any music since then?



6. Which of these responses expresses disagreement most strongly?

What use is history? Do you remember our history lessons at school? Most of what they taught us was completely useless, wasn't it?

a I don't know. I don't think it's fair to say that, actually.

b I take your point, but that was probably because of the way it was taught.

c You've got a point there, but the problem was that the teachers didn't really show how it was relevant to us.

d That's true, but I think it's taught a bit differently nowadays.



7. Which of these responses is the most polite?

I think we all agree that the writing was the hardest part of the test.

a Speak for yourself.

b Excuse me, but I'm not sure whether everyone thought so.

c We all agree? You must be joking!

d Nonsense! The listening was far worse.



8. Which of these responses is the most polite?

All public transport in cities should be free.

a Don't make me laugh. How on earth would it be financed?

b Nothing of the kind! How on earth would it be financed?

c I'm afraid I can't agree with you. How on earth would it be financed?

d Of course not. How on earth would it be financed?



# Where are the main stresses?

- 1 You can say that again.
- 2 You're telling me.
- 3 I couldn't agree more.
- 4 I'm inclined to agree.
- 5 I agree up to a point, but ...
- 6 I wouldn't go as far as to say that.
- 7 Speak for yourself.
- 8 Are you kidding?
- 9 You must be joking.
- 10 Nothing of the kind!
- 11 How can you say that?



1 You can say that again.

2 You're telling me.

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4 I'm inclined to agree.

5 I agree up to a point, but ...

6 I wouldn't go as far as to say that.

7 Speak for yourself.

8 Are you kidding?

9 You must be joking. / You must be joking. / You must be joking.

10 Nothing of the kind!

11 How can you say that?



## Agreeing by negating the opposite

A: This is the most expensive hotel I've ever stayed in.

B: It isn't exactly cheap.

It isn't exactly cheap, is it?

✓ \





1 The portions in this restaurant are tiny.        *generous*

2 I can't follow these instructions.        *straightforward*

3 This guide was published in 1987.        *up-to-date*

4 There's hardly anyone here.        *crowded*

5 I wonder when these sandwiches were made.        *fresh*



Well ...

A: How was your holiday?

B: Well, the weather was good.

∨

Well, the kids had a good time.

∨



A: How was the film?

B: Well, ...

A: Are you coming to the party?

B: Well, ...

A: Do you get on well with your neighbours?

B: Well, ...



I bet ...

A: I had a great time at the party last night.

B: I bet you did!

∧



A: I'm looking forward to getting back home.

B: I bet ...

A: They were surprised to see me when I walked in.

B: I bet ...

A: It was pretty hard work to get everything ready in time.

B: I bet ...



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Pragmatics lesson plans on:

<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/learn/pragmatics2014.html>

Marks J. & Bowen T. *The Book of Pronunciation*  
Delta Publishing 2012



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