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**ПРАКТИЧЕСКАЯ  
ГРАММАТИКА РАЗГОВОРНОГО  
АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

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**ESSENTIALS  
OF CONVERSATIONAL  
ENGLISH GRAMMAR**

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Учебное пособие содержит подробное описание грамматических особенностей английской разговорной (диалогической) речи. В нем уделяется значительное внимание различным структурно-коммуникативным типам предложений и отдельным частям речи, реально функционирующим в сфере повседневного бытового общения. Дается также описание экспрессивных средств английской разговорной речи; проводится дифференциация в области грамматики между британским и американским вариантами английского языка. Каждое языковое явление сопровождается серией упражнений, построенных исключительно на образцах диалогической речи, представленной в современной художественной литературе, а также в радиопередачах Англии и США. Во 2-е издание были внесены изменения и дополнения.

Для студентов учреждений высшего профессионального образования.

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*Светлой памяти моего Учителя,  
доктора филологических наук,  
профессора И.Е. Аничкова  
посвящается*

## PREFACE

The aim of this book is to concentrate on informal conversational English by providing the student with structures and sentence patterns without which an everyday conversation does not sound natural. The book follows the concepts and principles of the earlier editions. And although much of the original material has been retained it has been thoroughly reorganized into the more convenient form of a single book by uniting those two books of mine (*Essentials of Conversational English Syntax*, Moscow, 1998 and *Exercises in Conversational English Grammar*, Moscow, 2000) so that the two books may be more readily used together. In this new edition each of the peculiar forms and structures which are frequent in ordinary conversation is followed (after those peculiarities have been described) by an extended series of exercises in which this or that relevant form or structure is practised.

The rearrangement made in the new edition enables the student to use the book more productively and thus to gain an opportunity of consolidating the grammatical material contained in it. The new edition contains 571 paragraph, which are numbered in sequence. All paragraphs are short enough for comfortable study of the ways the English language works in everyday situations. The main thing of the book is that all illustrations that follow the grammatical material have, with a few exceptions, been contextualized, that is, they do not consist of separate, isolated sentences but take the form of dialogues on everyday topics. The exercise material has been drawn from numerous original fiction texts of modern talented British and American writers with additional material from newspapers, periodicals and recorded conversations. All the original sources represent current usage of informal conversational English dating from the very beginning of the 20th century to the present day.

Though I have attempted as far as possible to represent at least some grammatical peculiarities of conversational English, I am too far from claiming to give an exhaustive survey of spoken English grammar. The user might do well to have recourse to other books on the subject, mentioned in the bibliography, which is intended not only as a guide to further reading, but also in acknowledgement of those authors whose works I have constantly consulted and used.

It remains to me to express my best thanks to all those who have contributed to the edition with suggestions, criticism or additional information. They are too many for me to name them all here.

# INTRODUCTION

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF MODERN EDUCATED ENGLISH

§ 1. Depending on the level of education and social status of native speakers two main kinds of present-day English may be distinguished: **educated**, or **standard** English and **uneducated**, or **non-standard** English. They are marked by significant differences in their grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

§ 2. Educated, or standard English is the sort of English naturally used by the majority of educated people in speaking and writing. It is uniform-national, not limited socially or geographically.

At the present period of its development educated, or standard English is marked by a great number of different functional varieties, also called **styles**, or **registers**, appropriate to given situations. The most common **functional varieties**, or **styles** are: **written** English and **spoken** English\*. The main two varieties are treated as of equal importance, but the present book places rather more emphasis on spoken English than is commonly found in most grammar books. Other highly specialized varieties are ignored here.

§ 3. The written variety of English is the type of language taught at school and universities and generally used by press, radio and television. It is also used by educated speakers in formal situations for some serious purpose, for example, in literary prose, in official reports, scholarly articles, theses and reviews, scientific textbooks and essays, formal correspondence and business letters, and also in public speeches, addresses, or possibly in formal conversation (especially between strangers). Thus, written English, typically used in formal contexts, is informative and discursive.

§ 4. Spoken English is the type of language naturally used by the majority of educated speakers in private two-way everyday communication and partly in familiar letters to close friends. It is characteristically maintained in the form of a dialogue which is supported in its explicitness by the appropriate speech situation and the meaningful modulation of the

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\* The terms "written" and "literary" are used here synonymously; similarly, the terms "spoken" and "conversational" are used interchangeably, "colloquial" being a form of spoken variety.

voice: its rise and fall, its pauses and stresses, and all kinds of gestures. There is constant feedback between the speaker and the listener in dialogue intercourse whose main function is the mutual intelligibility and communicative effectiveness.

The written language, by contrast, has not any of these external aids to assist us and, therefore, it fails to carry much of English intonation.

Conversational spoken English, as its name indicates, seldom appears in writing in its purity even in the dramatic dialogue of plays and novels, where it is never a faithful reflection of actual conversation. But contemporary authors imitate everyday speech to the extent that it looks and sounds the way people talk in ordinary communication, thus presenting good patterns of spoken English of today.

The spoken variety of language is by its very nature spontaneous, momentary, fleeting. The written language, on the contrary, lives rather a long life; it changes more slowly than the spoken and is therefore far more conservative and homogeneous. Ordinary conversational speech is as highly personal and individual as is the written style of talented writers, while technical language tends to be impersonal.

§ 5. Within each variety of educated English (written and spoken) various **levels of usage** are generally distinguished. The most important of them are: **formal, informal, polite, familiar**; other levels of usage such as: **elevated, rhetorical, poetic**, etc. are ignored here.

Such features as formal, polite usually tend to go together with written English and those of informal, familiar with spoken English. But this need not always be the case as it is possible to express oneself politely in conversational English, and likewise it is possible to express oneself informally in written English.

§ 6. Although there are many common features between written and conversational English, there are also many differences (both in vocabulary and grammar) which may be regarded as opposed to each other.

The most appreciable difference between the two styles lies, of course, in the vocabulary used. Written English is remarkable for its wide and exact vocabulary, often more elaborate and specialized. Much of it is of “classical” origin (i. e. Latin, French and Greek). The vocabulary of conversational English is that of the everyday relaxed speech of educated people. Words and phrases of “classical” origin are generally replaced by those of Anglo-Saxon origin. Compare the two sentences containing two synonymous verbs:

The concert **concluded** with a performance of Shostakovich’s 7th symphony. (*formal*)

They **ended** the concert with Shostakovich’s 7th. (*informal*)

But here we are chiefly concerned with some grammatical peculiarities that distinguish one from the other.

Turning to grammatical characteristics we find quite obvious differences between the spoken and the written language.

The grammar of formal literary English is generally conservative, more closely organized and more complex, too. It makes use of longer sentences with more levels of subordination; it also prefers sentences with non-finite constructions (infinitival, gerundial and participial) which serve as a certain means of informational condensation. The arrangement of sentences is by no means accidental. Each sentence is logically connected with those preceding and following it, thus forming a syntactical whole (a paragraph). As a result, long complicated sentence-units are more frequent than short utterances. The written language usually avoids loose or mixed constructions. Contractions and other conversational forms and structures are out of place here.

Another syntactical peculiarity of the written style is that it prefers hypotactic constructions to paratactic ones. Hence it abounds in all kinds of conjunctions and connectives. Such connectives as *furthermore*, *moreover*, *nevertheless*, *therefore*, *in connection with*, *similarly* and some others have a decidedly bookish flavour and are rarely used outside of the written style.

Thus, written English, where exactness and clarity are of vital importance, is said to be “more grammatical” in the sense that it often indicates grammatical relationships more clearly. It does not, of course, follow that it is “more grammatical” in the sense of being more correct.

§ 7. Conversational English is a workaday language which communicates the facts of everyday life and reacts primarily to unofficial and private situations. It is characterized by its peculiar lexis, phonetics and grammar and it should not be treated as a poor version of the written language. In many ways, moreover, the spoken language, which follows the approved standard in grammar, is a far better vehicle of communication than the written. It would not be right, therefore, to account for the spoken grammar in terms of the written. Though they have many parallel features, they are too different communicational variations of the grammar of English, each having its own sphere of functioning in accordance with the type of communication.

The spoken grammar has certain morphological peculiarities but they are few in number. Thus, of morphological forms conversational English abundantly makes use of contracted forms like: *isn't*, *aren't*, *hasn't*, *can't*, *don't*, *won't*, *should've*, *could've*, *I'll*, *you'd*, *he's*, etc., which are proper in informal conversation, but not elsewhere. Another morphological feature typical of dialogue speech is the use of the analytical emphatic *do*-forms in the present and past tenses of the indicative mood and also in the imperative mood.

The colloquial character of everyday conversation also reveals itself in the use of the first and second person pronouns *I* and *you*, which are common in a dialogue. There are some other grammatical divergences between informal and formal English, for instance: the use of *who* and *whom*;

*I and me; he and him*, etc.; the preference in use of finite verb forms to non-finite forms (in sentences and clauses); the placing of a preposition at the beginning or at the end of a sentence (a clause) and others.

And again, the use of phrasal verbs in preference to their simple synonyms with more or less formal air is especially characteristic of informal spoken style. For example: *find out — discover; blow up — explode; give in — surrender*, etc. The same is true of multiword phrasal verbs of the type *have a bath; take a rest*, etc. Such combinations have the effect of a single word. In fact, they serve as synonyms to simple words: *have a smoke — smoke, take care of — care*, etc., and in a more formal style their place will be taken by the corresponding simple synonym (if there is one).

But generally conversational English is recognized by its more flexible and less rule-bound syntax. It makes extensive use of short and uncomplicated sentences and casual colloquial constructions, whose structure is simple, often elliptical to the utmost. Balanced sentences are accidental to ordinary conversation.

As a rule, coordination is preferred to subordination and such conjunctions as *and, or, but* also are in frequent use. On the other hand, it is quite typical and natural to have a string of sentences without any connective words. The word order is much looser than in the written style and there is a marked tendency to use the direct word order in questions, whose grammatical meaning is clearly understood from the intonation and speech situations.

The dialogue character of colloquial speech accounts for another syntactical peculiarity termed **sentence variety**, i. e. sentences of a dialogue do not follow a single pattern, but come out naturally in a variety of shapes and sizes. A dialogue, for example, may begin with a statement or a question, which may be followed by another question or a short answer, or an exclamation, or an imperative sentence, then interrupted by a casual side remark, and so on.

Streamlining sentences with many things left out because they are so clearly understood from the communicational situation are perfectly natural in dialogue speech. It is noteworthy that in ordinary everyday conversation interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences prevail over statements while in the written style (literary prose, scientific papers, official documents, etc.) it is vice versa.

One of the dominant and distinctive features of conversational English is word economy which is obtained by abundant use of contracted forms and abbreviations of any kind, word substitutes, elliptical sentences and even sentence fragments.

Conversational English regularly employs well-worn clichés, colloquial expressions, idioms and sentences with nonce words, and is at times quite inattentive to grammatical forms and sentence patterning and to careful choice of words.

Informal conversation usually abounds in numerous figures of speech. Since they are not the object of our description, we shall note here only

the most common ones. They include phrases of exaggeration, understatement and other metaphorical phrases, as in:

It's **ages** since we met.

I **was scared to death**.

Things get **a bit hot**.

It's **a spot** of trouble.

I'm **snowed under** with work.

John works **like the devil**.

In the literary language such expressions are rare.

It should be stressed here that colloquial English is very emotional. Emotions find their expression not only in lexical means, but also in grammatical forms and constructions that do not occur anywhere but in informal everyday intercourse.

Numerous social phrases of stereotyped and formulaic structure (greetings, thanks, apologies, invitations, toasts, etc.) also vocatives of various syntactic structure (*John, Dr Smith, my sweet, dear*, etc.), interjections, empty words (or "fill-ups"), imprecations and slang words — all are part and parcel of spoken English. All these specific features of conversational usage will be discussed separately and in detail in the subsequent sections of the book.

§ 8. Grammatical forms and structures which are not characterized as formal, informal, etc., are used in both styles of speech and belong to the "common core" of the language; they may be said to be neutral in style.

§ 9. Non-standard, or uneducated English is the sort of English commonly used by people with little or no education. It is characterized by its limited vocabulary, its extensive use of slang and non-standard words, and also by what is now considered to be ungrammatical usage (for example, the double or multiple negative constructions, the forms *ain't, youse, them* instead of *these* and the like):

I ain't saying nothing.

I ain't got no time for youse.

Who done it?

But as we shall not be concerned with non-standard English, we shall no longer discuss it here. For the same reason we exclude grammatical forms and constructions which are restricted to regional dialects.

## BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH

§ 10. Apart from the main two varieties of English (written and spoken) which we have discussed above, it is necessary to dwell upon some differences of the most important national variants: British English and

American English (BrE and AmE for short). In general, the description of conversational English given here applies equally to both national variants. It should be noted that American English itself is not uniform. It is divided into the most widely spoken General American and the Eastern and Southern dialects; the latter two dialects being not the object of our description. It is necessary to say that the most obvious linguistic differences between British English and American English are to be noticed chiefly in spelling, vocabulary and pronunciation, but we are not concerned with these divergences in the book.

§ 11. The strictly grammatical differences between the two variants are not very great when viewed on the level of standard usage. They mostly affect the colloquial style rather than the more formal varieties. In written English many of the distinctions tend to disappear entirely with time. Particularly on the level of educated speech the grammar of English is much the same throughout the English-speaking world. For the most part the differences observed in spoken grammar consist in the preferred use of this or that grammatical form or structure to some others.

1. Thus, in American English *gotten*, the past participle of the verb *get*, is preferred to *got*, which is the only form in British English:

Have you **gotten/got** the tickets for the match? (*AmE*)

Have you **got** the tickets for the match? (*BrE*)

*Gotten* is now obsolete in Great Britain, except in the set expression: *ill-gotten gains* and the proverb *ill-gotten, ill-spent*. The same is true of the American form *proven* (also *proved*) — participle II of the verb *prove* — as against the only form *proved* in British English. Similarly, American English employs in the past indefinite tense two forms: *dove* and *dived* of the verb *dive* and *woke* and *waked* of the verb *wake*, while British English uses only the forms *dived* and *waked* respectively.

2. Conversely, American English prefers to use regular forms of the past indefinite tense and the participle II of the verbs like *learn*, *dream*, *burn*, *leap*, etc., while British English favours the irregular forms. For instance, *learnt*, *burnt*, etc. (*BrE*) — *learned*, *burned*, etc. (*AmE*):

*BrE*

Wouldn't you like to read these before they're **burnt**, General?  
(*B. Shaw*)

The bad news has **spoilt** my holidays. (*A. S. Hornby*)

*AmE*

"Anyhow, there isn't any wood," he said. "We **burned** it all last night."  
(*J. Cheever*)

*Mary*: My father paid for special lessons. He **spoiled** me. (*E. O'Neill*)

3. In the future tense the auxiliary verb *will* prevails over *shall* in all persons in American English; it may even be said that in spoken Ameri-

can English *will* is the only auxiliary verb for all persons. But here again American English is not alone. The English of Scotland and Ireland as well as spoken varieties everywhere else know this uniform usage too. At present there is a marked tendency to carry over the auxiliary *will* to British English as well.

4. The preference of past indefinite to present perfect is observed in American English.

5. The present continuous form in the meaning of future is more frequently used in British English than in American English.

6. Passive constructions seem to be more preferable in American than in British English, and infinitive constructions are, on the contrary, more rare in American English than in British.

7. The use of the present subjunctive after verbs like *suggest*, *insist*, *demand*, etc., is more common in American English than in British, where it is restricted to rather formal contexts; in ordinary British English speech the analytical form “*should* + infinitive” (*should* for all persons) is used instead:

They suggested that John **be** dropped from the team. (*chiefly AmE*)

They suggested that John **should be** dropped from the team. (*BrE*)

8. Particularly common in American English are verbs with the hanging adverbial particles (postpositions):

*AmE*

meet **up with** a man

study **upon** a subject

*BrE*

meet a man

study a subject

In British English similar verbal collocations serve to add a new shade of meaning. On the other hand, there are many verbs which govern their object by means of prepositions (*protest against*, *battle with*, etc.) whereas in American English these verbs are used as transitive and take a direct object (*protest smth*).

9. There is a case of difference in the use of the infinitive particle *to*. For example, the verb *help* occurs without *to* in informal British English, as in *I helped him do this work*, whereas in American English it is the rule with both spoken and written style. The infinitive is also common American usage in: *Oh, look at him run*, *Listen to him talk*, etc., where British English will more usually have the *ing*-form or other means of expression, like *Look at him/his running*, *Look how he runs*, etc.

10. The use of prepositions also differs in some cases. Thus, Americans use the preposition *around* instead of *about*; *than* instead of *from* after the adjective *different*; *in* or *with* rather than *to* after the verb *belong*, etc. Compare:

*BrE*

Their house is different **from** ours.

“And Mr Davenheim left the house?” — “**About** half past five or thereabouts.” (*A. Christie*)

*AmE*

Their house is different **than** ours.

*Jamie:* When is he going to call up about Edmund?

*Tyrone:* **Around** lunch time. (*E. O'Neill*)

11. Another point of contrast is the use or non-use of the preposition *to* before the indirect object in passive sentences. Thus, *A letter was sent Mary* is much rarer in British English than *A letter was sent to Mary*, whereas it is the rule in American English.

12. Spoken American English has the tendency to extend the use of the preposition *for* to verbs and adjectives that do not normally take it. Thus, on the analogy with *It's time for you to go*, *He waited for her to come*, *It's bad for her to smoke*, etc. American speakers say: *I'd like for you to go*, *We'd be proud for you to be our guest*, etc.

13. Besides, American English takes certain liberties with some grammatical categories which are avoided or rarely used in British English. For example, nouns appear as verbs in expressions like: *to chair a meeting* (to act as chairman), *to pressure someone* (to exert pressure upon someone), *to vacation* (to spend one's holidays), *to captain a team*, etc.

Conversely, verbs appear as nouns: *a big push*, *a good buy*, *an athletic meet*, *a knock-down*, *a set-up*, etc. Thus, an American speaker will say: *They gave him a brush-off* instead of *They thrust him aside*; *Let's have a check-up* instead of *Let's check up/verify our results*.

14. There are certain adjectives freely used as nouns; they may even be inflected for the plural number like nouns: *funnies*, *comics*, *empties* (empty bottles), *young hopefuls*, *Reds* (communists and other progressives), *uppers and lowers* (berths in a train or ship), etc.

15. Colloquial American speech is particularly characterized by the frequent use of adverbs without *-ly*, e.g.: He's *real* (really) good. It *sure* (surely) will help. Drive *slow* (slowly). Whenever those syntactic Americanisms turn up in British English, they are restricted in their range of usage.

16. There are also some distinctions in certain patterns of syntactic usage. American English is inclined to form the negative and interrogative sentences containing the notional verb *have* (possess) with the auxiliary *do*, while British English ignores it:

*BrE*

**Have** you any bread?

**I haven't got** any money.

Nigel **hasn't** an artificial stomach actually.

*AmE*

**Do** you **have** any bread?

**I don't have** any money.

“He **didn't have** any children of his own,” she thought to add.  
(*J. Updike*)

17. The use of participle II in syntactic patterns with the verbs *order*, *want*, *desire* is typical of American English.

*BrE*

She wanted the story **to be told** her again.

The father ordered it **to be put back**.

*AmE*

She wanted the story **told** her again.

The father ordered it **put back**.

18. There is also a difference in the repeated subjects after the first expressed by the pronoun *one*.

**One** cannot succeed unless **one** tries hard. (*BrE*)

(*it is permissible to say*) **One** cannot succeed unless **he** tries hard. (*AmE*)

19. It is also worth noticing variations in the word order of such phrases which include words *river*, *lake*, *valley*, *country*, etc. In British English they say *the river Thames* and *University of London*, etc., while in America they say *Mississippi river* and *Michigan University*, etc.

§ 12. In general, it should be pointed out that naturalization of Americanisms is noticeable on the increase in present-day English, but on the whole there is a marked tendency in both variants towards a single grammatical standard.

# PART ONE

## SOME COMMON PECULIARITIES OF CONVERSATIONAL USAGE

### CONTRACTED FORMS

§ 13. One of the most persistent and characteristic features of ordinary informal conversation is the wide use of contracted forms of auxiliary and modal verbs.

The contractions are, in a sense, the key to English conversation and it should be stressed that no student will ever speak naturally and fluently until he masters them.

There may be several types of contractions in which auxiliary and modal verbs tend to be abbreviated and merged into one sound form in speech and apostrophized form in writing.

a. **The most frequent type of contracted verb forms is that with personal pronouns:** *I'll (I shall or will), he'll (he will), she'll (she will), we'll (we shall or will), you'll (you will), they'll (they will), I'm (I am), he's (he is), she's (she is), we're (we are), you're (you are), they're (they are), I've (I have), you've (you have), I'd (I should or would), he'd (he would), she'd (she would), we'd (we should or would), you'd (you would), they'd (they would), etc.*

b. **With the negative word *not*:** *can't (cannot), mustn't (must not), shan't (shall not), won't (will not), don't (do not), doesn't (does not), haven't (have not), hasn't (has not), isn't (is not), aren't (are not), wasn't (was not), weren't (were not), etc.*

c. **With some indefinite, negative and interrogative pronouns:** *somebody's (somebody is or has), nobody's (nobody is or has), who's (who is or has), what's (what is), etc.*

d. **With the demonstrative pronoun *that*:** *that's (that is).*

e. **With adverbs *where, here, now, how* and the introductory *there*:** *here's (here is), etc.*

f. **With proper names and other nouns (usually short):** *Sam's coming. The dog's barking. The soup'll be cold.*

Note. The use or non-use of a contraction with a preceding noun may also depend on its final sound: thus, the forms *'ll, 'd, etc.* are unlikely to replace *will, would* (or *had*) if the preceding nouns end in the same sounds:

**Bill will** be back soon.

Ned **would** come to the party if he were in town.

Ned **had** been ill for a week.

§ 14. All these contractions are colloquial forms of the corresponding full forms and they are especially common in lively conversation and in informal writing. In more formal speech contracted forms are rare and completely avoided in the literary language.

Note 1. The pronunciation of some contracted forms differs so much from that of the full forms as to make the corresponding forms of the same verbs almost unrecognizable.

Note 2. With some auxiliary and modal verbs (*be, be to*) two colloquial forms of negation are possible:

We're not ready. — We **aren't** ready.

He's not a sailor. — He **isn't** a sailor.

Note 3. There is no contracted form of *am not* in declarative sentences. The contracted form *I'm not going ...* of *I am not going + ...* has no alternative of the kind given above.

Note 4. There is no contracted form for affirmative questions; similarly for affirmative tag questions and affirmative short answers:

Is he ready? — Yes, he is.

Come on in and sit down a minute, will you? (*W. Saroyan*)

Note 5. The contraction *aren't I?* is widely used in British English as a colloquial question form replacing the stiltedly formed *am I not*, but it is felt by many educated speakers to be somewhat awkward.

In American English the contraction *ain't* is much used in the declarative and interrogative sentences for the full form *am not*. It is also used for the contracted forms *isn't, aren't, hasn't, haven't*, but it is considered by many to be substandard.

Note 6. The contraction *mayn't* is restricted to British English, where it is rare.

Note 7. The contraction *shan't* is rare in American English.

Note 8. The notional verb *have* (possess), though normally unreduced, tends to be contracted in informal conversation: *I've no such idea*.

Note 9. It is necessary to keep in mind that the contracted forms with the apostrophized *'d* and *'s* can correspond to both: *I'd* (*I should, or would, or had*), *he'd* (*he would or had*), *he's* (*he is or has*).

Which of the two (or three) auxiliaries is meant can be determined by the context (usually by the form of the following notional verb):

Even after **I'd** (= I had) told them it was actual poison to you. They were whipping it up in a bowl — with a fork. (*E. Davie*)

“You don't mind going, do you?” — “**I'd** (= I should/would) love,” cried Miss Matfield. (*J. B. Priestley*)

What I mean is, if he's (= he has) come out in the open, perhaps, you'd better not. (*A. Christie*)

## Exercises

I. Transcribe the following contracted forms from the list given below and notice the difference in pronunciation between the short forms and corresponding full forms. Continue the list with your own examples.

**Ex.:** aren't [ɑ:nt] — are not  
can't [kɑ:nt] — cannot  
  
couldn't — could not  
daren't — dare not  
shan't — shall not  
here's — here is  
who'd — who would  
etc.

II. Think of the words which might serve as homophones to some of the contracted forms from the list you have composed. Spell the pairs of homophones in their accepted spelling according to their meanings. Consult a dictionary, if necessary.

**Ex.:** [ɑ:nt]: aren't — aunt  
[hɪəz]: here's — hears  
[aɪl]: I'll — isle  
etc.

III. State the functional meanings of the 's in the following utterances by giving the full forms where possible.

1. *Mary*: I can never understand why people laugh at children's love. Love's painful at any age.

*Victor*: Oh come, Mary. I don't find it painful. (*Gr. Greene*)

2. *Florrie*: Oh, well, things are different now. Now a girl's got to be educated. Same as a fellow. (*W. S. Maugham*)

3. *Louisa*: Sssh! Someone's comin' out. Let's get back here! (*E. O'Neill*)

4. That kid's got talent. He can draw, and he's always been good at figures. (*S. Heym*)

5. "My mind's made up," said Mrs Watkins aggressively, ... "and I won't be talked out of it." (*J. Lindsay*)

6. "What's he do, anyway?" Gennie asked casually. "Does he work or something?"

"He just quit. Daddy wants him to go back to college, but he won't go." (*J. D. Salinger*)

7. "The man's one of these damned theatre fellows. I hate 'em. I told your mother I hate 'em. For heaven's sake marry a man who knows a bit about the government of this country." (*D. Robins*)

8. "I'm an old hand," he remarked with simplicity. "The captain's cabin's good enough for me." (*K. Grahame*)

9. *Arthur*: Hey, is it right your grandma's snuffed it? (*K. Waterhouse and W. Hall*)

10. One's likes and dislikes should be governed. (*A proverb*)

IV. State the functional meanings of the 'd in the following utterances by giving the corresponding full forms of the contractions. Pay particular attention to the surroundings in which it occurs.

1. ... I always said I'd never marry again and I meant it, but I did. It was a mistake of course, so I'm glad it's over. (*W. Saroyan*)

2. "It's only — well, it's New Year's Eve, isn't it?"

"So it is. I'd clean forgotten." (*J. B. Priestley*)

3. If he'd killed Taylor he'd've let me know before this. There was no reason why he should hide that from me. (*D. Hammett*)

4. It'll be most unpleasant and you might lose your temper and there'd be a row. (*D. Robins*)

5. If I'd wanted this place to fill up with every fat Irish rose that passes by, I'd've said so. Now, c'mon. Get out. (*J. D. Salinger*)

6. "I'm not broke, Alf," Danny said. ... "I'd see you through any hard times." (*K. Prichard*)

7. "If he'd of lived, he'd of been a great man. A man like James J. Hill. He'd of helped build up the country."

"That's true," I said, uncomfortably. (*F. S. Fitzgerald*)

8. "How come? Who'd you talk to?" the Lieutenant said to her. (*J. D. Salinger*)

9. I feel, if anything went wrong, Dad'd blame me for not looking after you better. (*D. Cusack*)

10. "What'd he do?"

"Frankly, I'd just as soon not go into details," said the young man. (*J. D. Salinger*)

V. Complete the following disjunctive questions by choosing the appropriate tags (tails) in the negative contracted form from the list below.

**Ex.:** John **speaks** French very well, ... ? — John speaks French very well, **doesn't** he?

Don't you, hasn't it, isn't it, aren't you, won't it, can't it, don't we, shan't I, aren't we, won't you, hadn't you, isn't it, mayn't I, isn't he, aren't I, couldn't you, won't you, wasn't she, didn't they, aren't you, haven't we, aren't I.

1. "Never mind," said my mother. "You go and have your supper. Then it'll be your bed time, ... ?" (*C. P. Snow*)

2. *Freda*: And life's **got** lots of dangerous corners, ..., Charles?

*Stanton*: It can have if you don't choose your route well. (*J. B. Priestley*)

3. *Kit*: I say, I may call you Bill, ... ? (*T. Rattigan*)

4. *Sir Robert Chiltern*: I'll **see** you soon again, Arthur, ... ?

*Lord Goring*: Certainly. Whenever you like. (*O. Wilde*)

5. *Louise*: Now, come and help me get your breakfast. You **could eat** an egg, ... ?

*Clive*: I suppose so. (*P. Shaffer*)

6. "Look here, father, you and I **have** always **been** good friends, ... ?"

"Up till now, yes, Gerry." (*D. Robins*)

7. "Howard, you don't really mean it's as serious as all that? The firm **can go on**, ... ?" He shook his head ... (*J. B. Priestley*)

8. *Mary*: Poor mother! But she **was mistaken**, ..., James? I haven't been such a bad wife, have I?

*Tyrone*: I'm not complaining, Mary. (*E. O'Neill*)

9. *Louise (lightly)*: I'm being vulgar, ... ?

*Walter*: You could never be. (*P. Shaffer*)

10. *Nina (in a tone of curt dismissal)*: You'd better go and shave, ..., if you're going to town?

*Evans (guiltily)*: Yes, of course, I forgot. I hadn't. Excuse me, will you? (*E. O'Neill*)

11. *Higgins*: You **find** me cold, unfeeling, selfish, ... ? Very well: be off with you to the sort of people you like. (*B. Shaw*)

12. "I'm just terrible to him, ... terrible?"

"Oh, no, no, no," said her host. "No, no."

"Well, for heaven's sake, we're all human beings! ... ?"

"Yes," said her host. "Yes, indeed." (*D. Parker*)

13. "I'm sorry to say, I'm not married."

"Oh, you poor thing! We **pity** him, ..., sweetheart?" (*R. Lardner*)

14. "I hope we'll have a nice trip. They **promised** fine weather for tomorrow, ... ?"

"Yes, they did, but you can never tell!" (*BBC English*)

15. *Christopher*: You **do ask** direct questions, ... ?

*Frederica*: Only when I think I might get a direct answer. (*J. Osborne*)

VI. Make the predicate of the following sentences negative so as to deny a previous affirmative statement. Make them more colloquial by using contracted forms where possible.

**Ex.:** My sister lives in the country. — My sister **doesn't** live in the country.

1. She **felt** rather ashamed now of her impulsive action. (*R. Keverne*)

2. "You **ought to have** this fire alight," he said. (*B. Tarkington*)

3. I'll **bring** them over this fall, when we're all back in the city again. (*J. Updike*)

4. She'll **make** a mess of your life. (*C. P. Snow*)

5. If I **can be** with you — that is all. (*J. Galsworthy*)

6. I **am going** to leave Paris. (*S. Heym*)

7. The company were holding a party and we **had to live**. (*C. P. Snow*)
8. "I wish he'd **leave off**!" said his elder sister Joan. (*D. H. Lawrence*)
9. You've **done** a lot of silly little things. Now you **can have** your time over again. (*C. P. Snow*)
10. "You'd better **leave** her alone for a few months. (*C. P. Snow*)
11. I'd **like** to be an old man and to really know. (*E. Hemingway*)
12. "Geri Lee, **let's get out** of here."  
"Okay," she said. (*H. Robbins*)
13. I **can give** something to eat. You **look** as if you might be hungry. (*J. Aldridge*)
14. If what you say **is** true, I'll talk to some of our people. (*A. Hailey*)
15. *Billy*: ... We could live in the New Forest. We could have a cottage there — a woodman's cottage — in a clearing.  
*Barbara*: I think I'd **be frightened**. Living in a forest. (*K. Waterhouse and W. Hall*)
16. "I **have been** here before."  
"I **know** it, sir." (*W. S. Maugham*)

VII. Find in the book you are reading at home examples of contracted forms, write them out and comment on their use.

## SUBSTITUTES (OR PRO-FORMS)

§ 15. Another marked peculiarity of English and particularly of ordinary colloquial speech is the extensive use of substitute words (or pro-forms). Substitution, like ellipsis, is a means of avoiding the repetition of various grammatical units (words and groups of words) already mentioned. Modern English has a large number of word substitutes. Here belong all the auxiliary and modal verbs, various classes of pronouns, some adverbs and particles.

The most frequent among them are: the auxiliary verb *do*, the personal pronouns (*he, she, it, they*), the pronoun *one*, the demonstrative *that (those)*. Most of the substitutes are anaphoric, referring back to an earlier unit.

He didn't give her an apple. — Yes, he **did**.

"You look wonderful," she said. "No, I **don't**," I said. "I look hungry. I am hungry. You look hungry too."

"I don't care if I **do**," she said. (*W. Saroyan*)

Here the *do*-forms replace the whole predicate groups *give her an apple*, *look wonderful*, and *look hungry too*.

Similarly all other auxiliary and modal verbs can act as substitutes in a parallel position to *do*:

He can cook as well as she **can**.

Are you going to clean the car? — I don't think I **will**.

Occasionally, two or three verbs (auxiliary and modal) are used in combination as substitute words:

He was working harder than he **ought to have been**.

Is the kettle boiling? — It may **be**.

Did you lock the door? — No, I **should have**, but I forgot.

In British English *do* or *done* is sometimes added after another auxiliary or modal verb:

He can't promise to come tonight, but he **may do**.

Would you please unlock the door? — I **have done**.

The response *I have*, alone, in the latter case, would therefore be regarded by many speakers as unacceptable.

§ 16. The substitute *do* can be followed by an object expressed by one of the substitute words *it*, *that*, or the adverb *so*:

They have promised to increase pensions. If they **do so**, it will make a big difference to old people.

If he told you to wait outside, you'd better **do it**. You can't stay in here. (*W. Saroyan*)

Tell him he'll probably be hearing from me ... O'okay? — I'll **do that**. (*A. Hailey*)

The substitute *do that* is generally more emphatic and informal.

*Do it* and *do so* cannot always replace one another. Notice the difference between them:

Bob's getting his house painted, and moreover, he wants me to **do it**. (= He wants me to paint his house.)

Bob's getting his house painted, and moreover, he wants me to **do so**. (= He wants me to get my house painted.)

§ 17. But the most common substitute, for the predicate group, is the adverb *so* with the meaning of addition when used together with the pro-form *do* in inverted constructions:

Mary wants a cup of coffee. — **So do I** (= and I want too). **So does** John, etc.

When negative meaning is expressed in the response, the function of substitution is performed by such *do*-phrases as *Neither do (does)* or *Nor do (does)*:

Mary doesn't want a cup of coffee. — **Neither do I**. (**Nor do I**.)

The same is true of all other auxiliary and modal verbs:

I've seen the play. — **So have I** (= and I have too).

She can speak French. — **So can** John.

Mary is not lazy. — **Neither (nor) is** John.

**Note.** Observe the difference between *So does (has) he* and *So he does (has)*, etc. Phrases with the initial pro-form *so* and subject predicate inversion can be regarded as elliptical and therefore, strictly speaking, they are not pro-forms:

John drives a car. — **So does** Bob (drive a car).

Phrases with the initial *so* without inversion are not elliptical since an expansion gives a very different sense.

In the utterance *John drives a car.* — *So he does* the response expresses emphatic affirmation or agreement.

The same in:

You've spilled coffee on your dress. — Oh, dear, **so I have.**

It's raining outside. — **So it is.**

The *so*-construction here expresses the listener's surprise at finding out that what the speaker says is true.

**§ 18.** The notional verb *have* admits the two parallel pro-form constructions such as *so have ...* and *so ... have* in addition to *have* alone:

John has a cold. — Yes, and **I have too.**

Yes, and **so have I.** (*BrE*)

Yes, **so he has.**

This use of *have* is much more common in British English, where it is formal and restricted in use. The pro-forms *do*, *so do ...* and *so ... do* are more common in American English:

John has a cold. — Yes, and **I do too.**

Yes, and **so do I.** (*AmE*)

Yes, **so he does.**

**§ 19.** The negative word *not* alone can be a substitute for the predicate, since it does not require an auxiliary or modal verb:

Do you like it or **not**?

*Not* in *why not* and *if not* is a negative pro-form for the whole of the antecedent clause:

I don't want to go in. — **Why not?**

**§ 20.** The infinitive marker *to* can be regarded as a substitute for an infinitive or an infinitive phrase:

I asked them to stay till the next day but they refused **to.**

**Note 1.** With some verbs such as *want* and *ask* the whole infinitive (or infinitive phrase), including *to* can be omitted in informal English:

You can borrow my pen if you **want**.

**Note 2.** The verb *be* is usually retained even in a short answer after *to*:

Are you on holiday today? — No, but I'd like **to be**.

**§ 21.** The substitute *one* is normally used when the antecedent is a countable noun. It can replace class nouns used in the singular and in the plural:

Thanks for the compliment if it is **one**.

I need a sharp knife. — I can get you several sharp **ones**, but this is the best **one** I have.

Notice that *one* cannot replace nouns of material; instead they are omitted:

Which tea would you like? The strong or the weak? (= the strong or the weak tea?)

Both countable and nouns of material can be omitted, but countable nouns cannot be omitted after the indefinite article.

Cf.

Countable nouns

Singular: I'd prefer the large bottle to **the** small (**one**).

I'd prefer a large bottle to **a** small **one**.

Plural: I'd prefer the large bottles to **the** small (**ones**).

I'd prefer large bottles to small (**ones**).

Nouns of material

I'd prefer (**the**) strong tea to (**the**) weak.

**Note.** The indefinite pronoun *one* is not a substitute:

When **one** is old, **one** becomes embittered very easily. (*A. Christie*)

**§ 22.** The pronouns *that* and *those* can also act as substitutes with definite meaning (*the one, the ones*). They are normally used to replace class nouns (singular or plural), usually modified by an *of*-phrase or any other modifier:

The problem confronting us today is not dissimilar from **that** (= the one) which Britain faced in the 1930s.

The paintings of Gauguin's Tahiti period are more famous than **those** (= the ones) he painted in France.

*That* can also be used as a substitute with a mass noun:

The plumage of the male pheasant is more colourful than **that** (= the plumage) of the female.

These uses of *that* and *those* are rather formal, and are restricted to written, literary English.

§ 23. The most common and obvious substitutes for nouns and noun-phrases are the third person pronouns in the nominative and objective cases and the corresponding possessive pronouns in their conjoint or absolute forms:

The mechanic is here. Shall I ask **him** in?

Could you mend this chair? I broke **it** yesterday.

§ 24. Many other pro-forms are found in the second item of coordinated phrases which are frequent in informal conversation. They are primarily absolute possessive pronouns, nouns in the genitive case and others:

his friends and **mine**

his son and **hers**

her idea and **John's**

this book and **those**

this method and the **other**

many people or **few**, etc.

Notice also the stereotyped expression *one way or another* and two other common phrases: *some reason or other* and *one or (the) other method*.

§ 25. There are also certain other words which can be used as substitutes of noun-phrases: *each, none, neither, either, all, some, the same*, etc.; *none* and *neither* being a combination of pro-form and negations:

Bob, John and George go to the same school as I do. **All** want to be doctors.

Bob, John and George were invited to the party. However, **none** came while I was there.

Can you give a few nails? I need **one**. — I'll get you **some** soon.

Can I have a cup of black coffee with sugar, please? — Give me **the same**, please.

These all (except *the same*) can be expanded by an *of*-phrase: *each of the boys, none of the girls, all of them*, etc.

§ 26. The word *so* can act as a substitute for a whole object subordinate clause representing repeated speech after the verbs *believe, expect, think, suppose, say, hope* and some more:

Oxford will win the next boat race. All my friends **say so** (= say that Oxford will win the next boat race).

*So* in this use can take initial position:

**So** all my friends **say**.

Here the inverted word order with the verb *say* is common:

**So say** all my friends.

*Not* replaces *so* in negative sentences: *I hope not/I'm afraid not*, etc. But it is more natural to say: *I don't think so, I don't suppose so*, etc.

In answers expressing certainty and doubt, *so* cannot be used, instead we have to say: *I'm sure they are/I'm sure of it/I doubt if they are/I doubt it*, etc.

*So* cannot be used after the verbs *know* and *ask* though the demonstrative *that* can be used:

She's having a baby. — I know./I know **that**.

How do you know? — She told me (**so**). Why do you ask?

After the verb *tell* the use of *so* is optional.

§ 27. The substitute *the same* can also be used as a pro-form for an object clause with a similar range of verbs to those that allow *so*:

(I say) Oxford are likely to win the next boat race. — I say **the same** (= that Oxford are likely to win the next boat race).

§ 28. *That* and *it* are also used as pro-forms for object subordinate clauses in direct or indirect speech when the reference is primarily to the actual words used:

Who said that I was crazy? — I said **that/it**.

Note. There is no negative pro-form for object clauses including direct statements. The negative *not* in: *Who said that I was crazy?* — *Not me* is a pro-form for the predication (= I did not say that...).

§ 29. The pronoun *that* used in the meaning *that time* can also be a pro-form for an adverbial modifier of time when it functions as subject and the finite form of the predicate is a link verb:

He'll arrive here **just before six**. — **That** seems early enough.

The pro-forms *then* and *that* can be used interchangeably when they function as subject of a sentence:

I'm meeting George for a drink **this evening**. **That/Then** would be the best time to discuss the matter with him.

§ 30. Some adverbs of place can be used as pro-forms for adverbial modifiers of place, expressed by noun-phrases, principally *here* (= at this place), and *there* (= at/to that place):

Look in the top drawer. You'll probably find it **there**.

§ 31. *That* (= that place) and *it* (= that place) are sometimes used as pro-forms for adverbial modifiers of place when they function as subject and the finite form of the predicate is a link verb:

I noticed where he put it. **That/It** seemed a good place.

§ 32. *There* can be used interchangeably with *that* or *it* as pro-forms for adverbials of place when they function as subject of a sentence:

They sat right in front of the stage. **That/It/There** was where the noise was greatest.

§ 33. *Yes* and *No* — substitutes for repetition. Where the response is merely repetition of material from the previous question, *Yes* alone can be used as a substitute for repetition. *No* alone is a substitute for the negation of repetition. The full form would of course be an expansion of both affirmative and negative responses with items added.

“I’m glad for you. You know that.”

“**Yes**,” she said. “I know.” (*A. Hailey*)

“Your name is Romaine Heilger?”

“**Yes**.”

“You are an Austrian subject?”

“**Yes**.” (*A. Christie*)

“Does the accused have any questions?”

“**No**, sir,” my father replied clearly. (*C. G. Hart*)

“Am I boring you?” she said.

“**No**, not a bit, Dr Gray.” (*M. Spark*)

## Exercises

1. Point out in the following utterances all substitute words and say to what earlier units they refer.

1. *Joe*: You haven’t got a driver’s license, have you?

*Tom* (*worried*): No. But I can get one, Joe. (*W. Saroyan*)

2. A policeman spokesman said: “The description of this man is very similar to that issued by Sussex police.” (*The Morning Star*)

3. “What the hell do you put it on the card for?”

“That’s the dinner,” George explained. “You can get that at six o’clock.” (*E. Hemingway*)

4. *Richard*: Hi there! Oh. Oh, Helen! Well, Helen! This is a surprise! And a very pleasant one if I may say so! (*G. Axelrod*)

5. “I’ll see him when he gets back to town.”

“Nicky, I don’t want you to, please —” She caught his arm and looked at him with beseeching eyes. (*D. Robins*)

6. *Nick*: You’re handsome, Carrie. But you always were.

*Carrie*: And you always remembered to say so. (*L. Hellman*)

7. “Mrs Christopher is not well,” said Billy. “She’s sick and tired. Tell everyone that.” (*M. Spark*)

8. “I haven’t a family, because I can’t afford one, and if I did, I wouldn’t see much of them.” (*The Morning Star*)

9. "Miss Stella —," he said slowly ...

"Don't call me that," she said at once, shaking her head at him. "Just call me Stella." (*E. Caldwell*)

10. He'll want tea. Let us have some. (*B. Shaw*)

11. "Well — you're my governess ..."

"So am I, but I can stop being that whenever I want to." (*B. Neels*)

12. *The Daughter*: Well, haven't you got a cab?

*Freddy*: There's not one to be had for love or money. (*B. Shaw*)

13. "Is it Mrs Bates?" she asked in a tone tinged with respect.

"Yes. I wondered if your Master was at home. Mine hasn't come yet." (*D. H. Laurence*)

14. "You'd better have a look at them."

"Is it necessary? On the whole, I'd rather not." (*A. Christie*)

15. *Rose*: You never think anybody loves me. Quite a few men have found me attractive —

*Griggs*: And many more will, my dear. (*L. Hellman*)

16. We don't get many painters in the islands, and I was sorry for him because he was such a bad one. (*W. S. Maugham*)

17. Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing! (*O. Wilde*)

18. "Why, you've got two cars!" said Ted.

"The new one isn't mine," said Tom.

"Whose is it?"

"Yours. It's the new model."

"Dad! That's wonderful! But it looks just like the old one." (*R. Lardner*)

19. *Robin*: ... Do you want your hair done?

*Evangie*: Oh, yes. (*J. Osborne*)

20. "Shall we pack up and go?" he said ...

"No," I said. (*M. Spark*)

21. "Would your children go to school with them?"

"Sure. Good heavens. Why not?" (*J. Updike*)

II. Think and say whether the *do*-substitute replaces the whole or part of the predicate group in the following utterances given below.

1. *Vivie*: Yesterday I was a little prig.

*Frank*: And today?

*Vivie*: Today I know my mother better than you do.

*Frank*: Heaven forbid!

*Vivie*: What do you mean? (*B. Shaw*)

2. "You look wonderful," she said.

"No, I don't," I said. "I look hungry. I am hungry. You look hungry too."

"I don't care if I do," she said. (*W. Saroyan*)

3. "I haven't nagged you," she sobbed. "I've wanted to speak before, but I haven't."

"Then don't." (*A. J. Cronin*)