

# English for Everyone: 101 Tips



*by*

*June Edverson*

©

2005

International copyright protected

# *Table of Contents*

## **Ten Introductions**

1. Say Hello!
2. Use body language
3. Hi! How are you?
4. Hey, what's happening? What's up?
5. Isn't that something?
6. I just love . . .
7. I really like your . . .
8. Can I help you?
9. Aren't you . . .
10. Excuse me, but . . .

## **Fifteen Easy Conversations**

11. English Language Courtesies, in General
12. The Weather
13. The News
14. Directions
15. Preferences
16. Favorites
17. Recommendations
18. Casual Chatting
19. Formal Occasions
20. Describing Places
21. Describing People
22. Describing Your Opinions
23. Taking Turns Talking
24. Taboo Topics
25. The 'Language' of Friendship

## Twenty Top Grammar Tips

26. Think of words most related to your purpose.
27. Who is doing what when? Where and why?
28. Use English articles.
29. Use personal references.
30. Practice description. Add 'How.'
31. Practice order.
32. Use "-ing" nouns more.
33. Use noun phrases more.
34. Use all of our verb tenses – all 31 flavors!
35. Practice creativity.
36. Troubleshoot translation problems.
37. Learn by reading English.
38. Practice changing formality.
39. Discover style in the grammar.
40. Yes, rules can be broken!
41. Expand your vocabulary!
42. Ask questions effectively.
43. Use the imperative effectively.
44. Use English language reference materials.
45. Recognize your grammatical options.

## Twenty Top Tips on Speeches & Presentations

46. Create 3 to 5 main points.
47. Use the "power" words.
48. Decide on a particular 'voice' for your purpose.
49. Present your "plan" in advance.
50. Develop an interesting "opening."
51. Be direct.
52. Be explanatory.
53. Refer to reputable resources.
54. Make good transitions.
55. Create a sense of camaraderie.
56. Care about your audience.
57. Determine the correct level of detail.
58. Use visual aids.
59. Be consistent in your approach.
60. "What did you say?"
61. "I can't hear you..."
62. Tell us something we didn't know.
63. Vary your speech to 'keep' your audience.
64. Summarize effectively.
65. Develop a great 'closing.'

## **Twenty Top Tips on Writing in English**

66. Remember *the* big difference in writing
67. Explain more, not less.
68. Outline more, not less.
69. Consider your purpose up front.
70. Find language to fit your purpose.
71. Use the best verb type for your purpose.
72. Keep your subject references parallel.
73. Keep track of your verbs for parallelism.
74. Remember English, commas?
75. Remember English - hyphenation?
76. Remember English ...Capitalization?
77. Vary your sentence structure.
78. 'Less' is not always more!
79. Keep your context clearly set forth.
80. Use personal references more effectively.
81. See it with English.
82. Our confounded spellings!
83. Acronyms, Etcetera
84. Don't be afraid of editing.
85. Get feedback from others, then revise again.

## **Ten Goodbyes**

86. Never say "Goodbye"
87. "Take care. See you later."
88. "Bye for now."
89. More Informal Departures
90. More Formal Departures
91. Getting 'Closure'
92. Leaving 'Openings' for the Future
93. Remember 'the way you were.'
94. Note what's next.
95. Never say "Never."

## **Six Special Occasions**

96. Dinner Parties
97. Cocktail Parties
98. The Symphony, Theater, and Opera
99. Birthdays and Special Holidays
100. "Merry Christmas"...?
101. "What are you doing later?"

## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to my English students,  
both in the U.S. and Norway,  
who have given me much more than an opportunity to  
teach them, by enriching my own love for the  
language with their determination and hard work.

# *1*

## **Say "Hello"**

So, you're ready to 'get going' with English. Congratulations! Let's start with greetings.

When my husband and I were in southern China some years ago, we were amazed by how friendly everyone seemed. What did they do? They all said "Hello!" They just said, "Hello!" Perhaps it was their only word of English, but they used it readily, and we often heard small children call to us from down the street, proud of their small English knowledge, friendly, and happy that we were visiting their town.

It's easy to say "Hello." Many languages have adopted this greeting and use few other English words. But my point is also to emphasize to you how friendly English speakers can be. First, don't be surprised if someone unexpectedly says "Hello!" to you. Say "Hello" back!

So often, I have been walking in Europe, England or the United States, and wanted to say a simple "Hello" to someone, a tradition not shared in all cultures. I came to a point some years ago when I decided I would always say "Hello" to someone if I had even the slightest desire to do so. Since then, I've followed that resolution. Not all reply, of course, but I have met and chatted with many interesting and kind passers-by in life. You, too, will find the friendliness of English speakers, in general, to be almost complete. When they're not, you've not risked much. Just begin. Just say "Hello!"

## Use Body Language

“What does this tip have to do with English?” you ask. Everything! English speakers, in general, like to express themselves with their hands, their heads, their feet. This means, with their hearts. See arms flailing in dramatic arcs? It could be just an average day in the life of an Englishman or an American.

Don't be timid. Express yourself. You can help yourself be understood by using appropriate hand, face and body expressions. Everyone relies on these to identify the feelings of others in their own cultures, Yet, many cultures discourage displays of body language, either in subtle ways or in direct instructions.

In general, if you are among English speakers, you can safely inquire from someone by lifting your arm at a questioning point – that is, without offending anyone. Standard body language includes nodding in agreement or disagreement, smiling, frowning, and a wide range of arm expressions. These are reduced for most ordinary formal occasions.

Research among babies has confirmed that facial expressions result in immediate understanding of expressions such as love, happiness, joy, sadness, anger, and frustration. If you need something, you might say so...and show so, too, in some way. When describing events, you will also have an opportunity to illustrate, for example, how big that fish was . . . the one that got away. . .

### 3

## ***“Hi, how are you?”***

When using English, it is common to illustrate, generally, that you care for the person you are speaking to or with. In many formal and informal situations, this is done by saying “Hi, how are you?” You may or may not get a reply; some people say “Hi, how are you?” and then proceed with whatever they were already doing. Others wait for a real answer. If you are at the receiving end of this question, you don’t have to feel obliged to provide any details. A friendly response can be minimal.

Here’s an example of a perfectly acceptable and extremely common, friendly exchange: “Hi, how are you?” “Fine, how are you?”  
“Just fine, thanks.”  
That’s it! Scary, isn’t it?

If you are truly bold, you can carry this opening a little further. You might discover that your English speaker says, “Well, not very well, today; I was feeling a little sick” or “Fine, but I certainly wish the weather were better” or some such. Then it’s your turn, again!

If you have trouble responding in English in a situation such as this, imagining that you are in a play can be quite helpful. You are playing the part of an accomplished conversationalist. Before you know it, you’ll be learning new expressions to add to your vocabulary.

## 4

### *“Hey, what’s happening? What’s up?”*

No, I am not kidding! You can very readily use this formerly hip-hop style of inquiry with almost anyone you meet. They will safely assume that you are a sane person, not prone to reciting poetry in dark coffeehouses, or patching your pants with the British flag.

But, perhaps, you would most likely use “What’s happening?” with friends and acquaintances in your new English conversation.

This is an excellent, up-beat way to inquire whether others you are meeting or travelling with are interested in making plans, or are in need of some socializing assistance. Just say “Hey, what’s happening?” and you may find yourselves surfing, sunning, swimming, sipping cocktails on a new friend’s patio, or planning an evening of music, theater, or dining out. And it doesn’t hurt to have an idea what you would like to do, yourself, when inquiring from others. English speakers are very democratic, and they will usually truly appreciate your input.

The expression, “What’s up?” is more likely to elicit a response from the heart. Use it tenderly, or in an upbeat way – both are common. Are you wondering how your new English friend is feeling? Or anxious that something has upset that delicate balance with travel acquaintances? Try, “What’s up?” You’re likely to get the ‘scoop’ while you gain confidence in your casual communication elegance, enhance your new friendships, and learn more words!

## 5

### *“Isn’t that something?”*

Not every conversation can be started with a direct greeting. We are more likely to strike up a conversation with someone we don’t know by an indirect reference.

When out and about in the world, working, travelling or shopping, English speakers constantly find themselves together, standing in lines, observing common events, experiencing the world around them in the present. Whatever the occasion is, we all share one world. How much more sharing we can do by sharing language!

The plane is delayed, the parking lot is closed for construction, the sunset is amazingly pretty, the rain is terribly strong, the train is, of course, late. Whatever the occasion, feel free to make a comment to the English speakers next to you. They will usually appreciate it, and respond in kind. It’s about sharing our common humanity, and English speakers like doing that.

“Isn’t that something?” Comments of this type include, “My goodness!,” “Well, what about that?,” “Amazing,” “Quite remarkable,” “Isn’t that terrible,” and similar remarks.

Here is a little dog. “Isn’t he cute?” How about a handsome guy? “Good day, isn’t it?” A pretty girl? Please don’t say “How-dee-doody!” as one fellow addressed me once. Please say, instead, “Nice day, Ma’am, isn’t it?”

# 6

## *“I just love . . .”*

This draft is the work of June Edverson.  
This book is scheduled for draft completion by the end of this year, 2005.  
This small sample is for your enjoyment.

Further inquiries can be made directly to June Edverson,  
by phone, mail or e-mail.

For further information on June’s writing, consulting and teaching services, see:

<http://www.edversonconsulting.com>



\*\*

June Edvenson is an American attorney, auditor, writer, and teacher of English. She has worked for individuals and companies in Norway and the United States. Her company, Edvenson Consulting, provides consulting services in the English language, management auditing, and American legal services. She lives with her Norwegian husband in Norway, where she writes for pleasure and publication.