



## PHRASE GUIDE FOR THE BOOK **SAY IT BETTER IN ENGLISH**

### *Useful Phrases for Work & Everyday Life*

**Directions for use:** This guide contains all the phrases included in the book *Say it Better in English*. If you do not already have a copy of the book, you can order one from the publisher, Language Success Press ([www.languagesuccesspress.com](http://www.languagesuccesspress.com)). Print out this file and take the phrases for the book on-the-go with you. Study in your free time!

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PHRASE	DEFINITION
A	
<b>a fortune</b>	<b>a lot of money</b>
<b>a no-win situation</b>	<b>a situation that can have only bad results</b>
<b>a win-win situation</b>	<b>a situation that has good results in many ways</b>
<b>about to</b> do something	<b>going to</b> do something <i>very soon</i>
2 weeks <b>ago</b>	2 weeks <b>before now</b>
<b>ahead of / on / behind schedule</b>	<b>faster than planned / as planned / slower than planned</b>
<b>almost all</b> something	<b>90%</b> of something
<b>any minute now</b>	<b>very soon</b>
<b>Are we still on for...?</b>	<b>Are we going to meet at the time that we already planned?</b> Say this to confirm an arrangement.
<b>as a result</b>	<b>consequently; as an effect</b>
<b>as far as I know</b>	<b>based on the information I have</b>
<b>as for</b> something	Say this to introduce a topic.
<b>as long as</b>	<b>on the condition that; providing that</b>
<b>at least</b> 21	21 <b>or more than 21</b>
<b>at the most</b>	<b>not more than</b>
<b>at 3 sharp</b>	<b>at exactly 3 o'clock;</b> not 2:59 and not 3:01
<b>away on business</b>	<b>in another city or country on a business trip</b>

<b>B</b>	
someone is <b>back</b>	someone <b>has returned from somewhere</b>
<b>back and forth</b>	<b>in one direction, then in the opposite direction, repeated many times</b>
<b>a bad connection</b>	<b>an unclear phone connection</b>
<b>better off doing</b> something	Say this to show a better choice.
<b>book</b> someone <b>into a hotel</b>	<b>make a reservation</b> for someone <b>at a hotel</b>
<b>bring</b> something <b>up</b>	<b>start talking about</b> something
<b>bring</b> someone <b>up to date</b>	<b>tell</b> someone <b>the most recent information</b>
<b>by</b> 9 o'clock	<b>at</b> 9 o'clock <b>or before</b> 9 o'clock - but <b>not after</b> 9:00
<b>by far</b>	<b>by a large amount</b>
<b>by the way</b>	Say this when you say something that is not connected to topic you are talking about.
<b>C</b>	
<b>call</b> someone <b>back</b>	<b>phone</b> someone <b>who tried phoning you earlier</b>
<b>call in sick</b>	<b>phone your boss to say you can't go to work because you are sick</b>
<b>calm down</b>	<b>become relaxed</b>
<b>can afford / can't afford</b>	<b>have enough money / don't have enough money</b>
<b>Can I ask what it's regarding?</b>	Say this to know why someone wants to speak to someone.
<b>Can I get by?</b>	Say this when you need someone to move so you can go past them.
<b>Can I have a word with you?</b>	<b>Can I speak to you for a short time?</b>
<b>Can I make a suggestion?</b>	You can say this before you suggest something.
<b>Can I put you on hold?</b>	<b>Please wait.</b>
<b>Can I take a rain check?</b>	<b>Can we change the plan to another time in the future?</b>
<b>Can you tell me how to get to a place?</b>	Say this to ask for directions politely.
I <b>can't figure out how to</b>	Say this when you can't understand how to do something.
<b>can't get</b> something <b>down/ in/ out/ open</b>	Say this when something is difficult to do.
I <b>can't get</b> something <b>to work</b>	I <b>can't make</b> something <b>function</b>
<b>can't make it</b>	<b>not able to attend</b>
x <b>caused</b> y / y <b>was caused by</b> x	x <b>made</b> y <b>happen</b> / y <b>happened because of</b> x
<b>cheers</b>	Sometimes we say this before drinking alcohol to offer good wishes.
<b>chip in</b>	<b>contribute money</b>
<b>come off</b>	<b>become detached</b>

<b>come up with</b> something	<b>produce an idea or solution</b>
<b>come with</b>	<b>be served with and included in the price of something</b>
<b>comes in</b>	Say this to show the different ways you can buy something.
it <b>comes to</b>	Say this to show the total amount.
<b>Could I ask you a favor?</b>	Say this before asking for someone's help.
<b>Could you go over that again?</b>	Say this if you need someone to repeat a lot of information.
<b>Could you press</b> 15?	Say this in an elevator if you can't reach the buttons.
<b>Could you tell me where something is?</b>	NOT <del>Could you tell me where is something?</del>
<b>D</b>	
<b>despite something</b>	<b>not affected by</b> something
<b>discuss something</b>	NOT <del>discuss about something</del>
<b>do well</b>	<b>be financially successful</b>
<b>Do you know where</b> Mr. Smith <b>is?</b>	NOT <del>Do you know where is</del> Mr. Smith?
<b>Do you mind if I join you?</b>	Say this to ask permission to be with someone.
<b>don't mention it</b>	This is a polite response when someone thanks you.
we <b>don't see eye to eye</b>	This is a polite way to say we <b>don't agree</b> .
<b>double-check</b>	<b>check again when you are not sure about something</b>
<b>dressed up</b>	<b>wearing their best clothes</b>
<b>drop by</b>	<b>visit for a short time</b>
<b>drop</b> someone <b>off</b>	<b>take</b> someone <b>to a place and leave them there</b>
<b>drop</b> something <b>off</b>	<b>take</b> something <b>to a place and leave it there</b>
<b>during something</b>	<b>at the same time as something</b> <b>during + noun</b>
<b>E</b>	
<b>end up</b> doing something	<b>finally do</b> something
<b>enough</b>	<b>adjective + enough / enough + noun</b> NOT <del>enough tall / NOT the space is not enough</del>
<b>even if</b> it rains	<b>it might</b> rain, but rain is not important – rain <b>will not change the situation</b>
<b>even though</b>	Say this when you show 2 contrasting or opposite ideas.
<b>F</b>	
<b>fed up with</b> something	<b>unhappy about</b> something that has been happening for a long time
<b>find out</b>	<b>get a piece of information</b>
<b>fine with me</b>	<b>I accept the suggestion</b>

<b>for good</b>	<b>forever, permanently</b>
<b>For here or to go?</b>	<b>Do you want to eat/drink here in the restaurant, or do you want to take it away?</b>
<b>for the next 4 days</b>	<b>starting now and continuing for 4 days</b>
<b>for the time being</b>	<b>at this time only; not forever</b>
distance <b>from</b> a place	Say this to show the distance between two places.
<b>from now on</b>	<b>starting now and continuing forever</b>
<b>G</b>	
<b>get a move on</b>	<b>go faster</b>
<b>get back to</b> someone	<b>contact</b> someone <i>as a reply</i> by phone, email, fax, etc.
<b>get by</b>	<b>manage but with difficulty</b>
<b>get cut off</b>	<b>lose the connection during a telephone call</b>
<b>get it</b>	<b>answer the phone</b>
<b>get on / get off / get in / get out</b>	get on / get off = for buses, trains and planes get in / get out = for cars and taxis
<b>get rid of</b> something	<b>make</b> something <b>go away; eliminate</b> something
<b>get sidetracked</b>	<b>become distracted from something important</b>
<b>get something done</b>	<b>finish</b> something
<b>get something in writing</b>	<b>have a signed agreement or contract</b>
<b>get through</b>	<b>make contact with someone by phone</b>
<b>get together with</b> someone	<b>meet</b> someone <b>socially</b>
<b>give someone a hand</b>	<b>help</b> someone
<b>give someone a ride</b>	<b>drive</b> someone <b>to a place they need to go</b>
<b>give me 5 minutes</b>	Say this when you need someone to wait.
<b>give up</b>	<b>quit; stop doing something</b>
<b>go ahead</b>	<b>do it</b> (Say this if you want someone to start or do something).
<b>go over</b> something	<b>check the details</b> of something
<b>go through</b> something	<b>search or examine</b> something <b>carefully</b>
<b>gone for the day</b>	Say this when someone leaves and is not coming back today.
<b>good at</b> something	<b>able to do</b> something <b>well</b>
<b>H</b>	
<b>half-way through</b>	Say this when you have finished 50% of something.
<b>hands-on experience</b>	<b>experience where you learn by doing something, not by studying</b>
<b>hang up</b>	<b>end a phone call by cutting the connection</b>
<b>has nothing to do with</b> something / someone	<b>does not concern or involve</b> someone / something
<b>have a good time</b>	Say this before someone goes somewhere enjoyable.

<b>have a sense of humor</b>	<b>enjoy funny things; enjoy laughing</b>
<b>have change</b>	<b>have smaller units of money</b>
<b>have</b> something <b>done</b>	Say this when <i>you</i> arrange something but <i>someone else</i> does it.
<b>have</b> time <b>off</b>	<b>have non-working time arranged by the company</b>
<b>have trouble with</b> something	Say this when something is a problem.
<b>Have you been waiting long?</b>	This is a polite question to ask someone waiting for you.
<b>Have you</b> done something <b>yet?</b>	Say this to find out if something has <i>already</i> happened.
<b>hear from</b> someone	<b>receive communication from</b> someone
<b>hear back from</b> someone	<b>receive a reply from</b> someone
<b>hear of</b> something / someone	<b>know that</b> something / someone <b>exists</b>
<b>held up</b>	<b>delayed</b>
<b>help yourself / yourselves</b>	<b>serve your own food or drink</b>
<b>How are you getting</b> somewhere?	Say this to find out if someone is going to take a plane, train, car, bus, etc.
<b>How can I help you?</b>	This is often used when answering the phone in a workplace.
<b>How did</b> something <b>go?</b>	Say this to learn if something was successful.
<b>How long does it take to get to</b> a place?	<b>How much time is needed to arrive at</b> a place?
<b>How long have you been in</b> this place?	Ask this to know the amount of time spent in the place someone is <i>now</i> .
<b>How would you like to pay?</b>	<b>Do you want to pay by cash, check or credit card?</b>
<b>How's</b> something <b>coming along?</b>	<b>tell me about the progress</b> of something that is <i>not</i> finished
<b>how soon</b>	<b>what is the earliest time</b>
<b>How was</b> something?	It's polite to ask about someone's recent experience. Ask this to know if it was good or bad.
<b>I</b>	
<b>I didn't get</b> your <b>name</b>	Say this when you didn't hear someone's name, or you can't remember it.
<b>I didn't mean that</b>	Say this when someone does not understand what you said.
<b>I don't know offhand</b>	<b>I don't have the information in my memory</b> Say this when you need to go and find the answer.
<b>I haven't seen</b> you <b>for</b> years	<b>the last time I saw you was</b> many years <b>ago</b>
<b>I heard it through the grapevine</b>	<b>someone told me something as gossip or a rumor</b>
<b>I see your point</b>	<b>I understand your opinion or feelings</b>

<b>I wish you all the best</b>	Say this to wish someone success and happiness in their future or with a big project.
<b>I'd better get going</b>	Say this to politely leave a conversation.
<b>I'd better let you go</b>	Say this to end a phone call politely.
<b>I'd like</b>	This is a polite way to say what you want. NOT I want
<b>I'd recommend</b> something	Say this to suggest something.
<b>I'll put you through</b>	<b>I will connect you</b>
<b>I'm not following you</b>	Say this if you don't understand instructions, directions or an explanation.
<b>I'm positive</b>	<b>I'm 100% sure</b>
<b>I'm sorry to hear ...</b>	When something bad happens to someone, say this to show you care.
<b>if I were you, I'd ...</b>	Say this to give advice by imagining you are in the other person's situation.
<b>in</b> May / <b>on</b> Tuesday, May 2 <sup>nd</sup> <b>at</b> 9 o'clock	<b>in + month; on + day; at + time</b>
do something <b>in</b> 5 days	<b>it takes</b> 5 days <b>to complete</b> something
<b>in a row</b>	<b>one thing directly after another thing</b>
<b>in case</b> something happens	<b>because</b> something <b>might happen</b>
<b>in luck / out of luck</b>	<b>lucky / unlucky</b>
<b>in other words</b>	Say this if you need to repeat something a different way.
<b>in the short term / in the long run</b>	<b>temporarily / over a long period of time</b>
<b>in those days / today</b>	<b>then / now</b>
<b>instead of</b> something	<b>to replace</b> something
I'm <b>interested in</b> something	NOT I interesting
<b>Is this seat taken?</b>	This is polite to say before sitting beside a stranger.
<b>it depends on</b> something	something <b>will decide for me</b>
<b>it's easy to / it's difficult to</b>	NOT I'm easy to / NOT I'm difficult to
<b>it's not worth it</b>	<b>it requires too much effort for a small result</b>
<b>it's</b> someone's <b>turn</b>	<b>it's</b> someone's <b>time</b> to do something
I've <b>been waiting for</b> a long time	Say this for something you are still doing now.
<b>in a good mood / in a bad mood</b>	<b>feeling happy / feeling unhappy</b>
<b>in</b> an hour	one hour <b>after now</b>
<b>in charge of</b>	<b>responsible for; supervisor of</b>
<b>in good condition / in perfect condition</b>	<b>not broken / like new</b>
<b>in that case</b>	<b>because of the thing you just said</b>
<b>in the</b> lighting <b>business</b>	Say this to show the industry someone works in.

<b>in the same boat</b>	<b>in the same bad situation</b>
<b>Is something included?</b>	<b>Is the price of something already added on to the price?</b>
<b>it doesn't matter</b>	<b>it is not important</b>
<b>it slipped my mind</b>	<b>I forgot</b>
<b>it's about time</b>	<b>it is overdue, but it is finally happening</b>
<b>it's for you</b>	<b>the caller wants to speak to you</b>
<b>it's not the end of the world</b>	<b>the situation is not very bad</b>
<b>it's on the tip of my tongue</b>	<b>I can <i>almost</i> remember it</b>
<b>it's up to someone</b>	someone <b>decides</b>
<b>J</b>	
<b>he just stepped out</b>	<b>he went out for a short time</b>
<b>K</b>	
<b>keep going</b>	<b>continue</b>
<b>keep in touch</b>	<b>continue to have contact</b>
<b>keep someone posted</b>	<b>give someone information when there are new developments</b>
<b>know how</b>	<b>have the skill</b>
<b>L</b>	
<b>last 20 years</b>	<b>can function or can be used for 20 years</b>
<b>last 3 hours</b>	<b>continue for 3 hours</b>
<b>an hour late</b>	<del>NOT late an hour</del>
<b>leave something somewhere</b>	<b>let something stay somewhere; forget something somewhere</b>
<b>lend someone something</b>	<b>give something to someone for a short time – they will return it later</b>
<b>he let me go / he made me run</b>	<b>he allowed me to go / he forced me to run</b>
<b>let someone go</b>	<b>take away someone's job</b>
<b>let someone know</b>	<b>give someone information</b>
<b>look / look like</b>	<b>look + adjective / look like + noun</b>
<b>look into something</b>	<b>investigate; research</b>
<b>look something up</b>	<b>find a piece of information in a book or on the Internet</b>
<b>M</b>	
<b>make sure</b>	<b>confirm; ensure</b>
<b>make up my mind</b>	<b>decide</b>
<b>make yourself / yourselves at home</b>	<b>please feel relaxed and comfortable</b> Say this to welcome guests to your home.
<b>I might</b>	<b>It's possible that I will</b>
<b>move on</b>	<b>begin a new topic</b>
<b>move something out of the way</b>	<b>move something so that it doesn't block you</b>

<b>move something up</b>	<b>change a plan to an earlier time</b>
Mr. Lee	NOT Mr. Alan
<b>must be</b>	Say this when you are 95% sure about something.
<b>must have</b> done something	Say this when you guess about something that happened in the past, and you are quite sure.
<b>N</b>	
<b>nice to see you again</b>	Say this when you see someone who you don't see often.
<b>no wonder</b>	<b>now I understand why</b>
<b>O</b>	
<b>on average</b>	<b>about; around</b>
<b>on leave</b>	<b>having planned absence from work</b>
<b>on me</b>	Say this if you want to pay for someone's food or drink.
<b>on sale / for sale</b>	<b>cheaper than the regular price / available to buy</b>
<b>on second thought</b>	Say this when you change your decision.
<b>on the other hand</b>	Say this before you give an opposite or contrasting idea.
<b>on the other line</b>	<b>talking on a different phone line</b>
<b>on the right track</b>	<b>doing the right thing</b>
<b>on the way</b>	<b>going to a place - but not at the place yet</b>
<b>on top of that</b>	<b>in addition; also</b>
<b>once a year</b>	NOT <del>one year one time</del>
<b>once every 4 years</b>	NOT <del>four years once</del>
<b>oversleep</b>	<b>wake up later than planned</b>
<b>P</b>	
<b>pick someone up</b>	<b>stop to get someone</b>
<b>pick something up</b>	<b>collect something</b>
<b>play it by ear</b>	<b>do it <i>without</i> a plan</b>
<b>plug something in</b>	<b>connect something to an electrical power point</b>
<b>pull strings</b>	<b>use personal contacts to get something</b>
<b>put someone in charge</b>	<b>give someone the job of leader or supervisor</b>
<b>put clothes on</b>	This is not the same as 'wear' clothes: first we <b>put</b> clothes <b>on</b> ; <i>then</i> we are wearing clothes.
<b>put up with</b> something	<b>accept</b> something bad
<b>R</b>	
<b>reach</b> someone	<b>contact</b> someone <b>by phone, email, fax, etc.</b>
<b>ready to order</b>	Say this when you want to order your meal.
<b>really like / really enjoy / really want</b>	NOT <del>very like</del> / NOT <del>very enjoy</del> / NOT <del>very want</del>
<b>remind</b> someone <b>to</b>	<b>say something to help</b> someone <b>remember</b>
<b>right away</b>	<b>immediately; now</b>
<b>run into</b>	<b>meet someone unexpectedly</b>
<b>run out of</b> something	<b>use something until it is finished</b>

<b>running short of time</b>	<b>getting close to a deadline</b>
<b>S</b>	
<b>say that / say to</b>	NOT <del>you said me</del> ; NOT <del>I said him</del>
<b>send my regards to</b> someone	Say this if you want someone to give your greeting to another person.
<b>set up</b>	<b>establish; start</b>
<b>shoot</b>	This is a way to show anger or frustration.
<b>short by</b>	Say this when you don't have enough. This shows how much you need.
<b>short for</b> something	<b>a shorter way to say a word or phrase</b>
<b>short notice</b>	<b>without much advance warning</b>
<b>should have</b> done something	Say this when something was a good idea, but you didn't do it. You made a mistake and now it's too late.
<b>show</b> someone <b>around</b>	<b>take</b> someone <b>for a tour</b>
<b>sleep in</b>	<b>wake up later than usual - by choice</b>
<b>so far, so good</b>	<b>everything is fine now, but there may be problems later on</b>
<b>sold out</b>	<b>all sold</b> so that <b>there is no more</b>
<b>sorry to interrupt</b>	Say this when you want to talk to someone who is already speaking.
<b>speaking of</b> something	Say this when a word makes you think of a new topic.
<b>split</b> the check	<b>each person pays the same amount in a restaurant</b>
<b>stand for</b>	<b>mean</b> Say this when only the first letters of words are used.
<b>stay up</b>	<b>stay awake later than the usual bedtime</b>
<b>stuck in traffic</b>	<b>in a traffic jam</b>
he was <b>successful</b> / he <b>succeeded</b> / he <b>had success</b>	NOT <del>he success</del> ; NOT <del>he successful</del>
<b>suggest that he / you / we</b>	NOT <del>suggest him to</del> ; NOT <del>suggest you to</del> ; NOT <del>suggest us to</del>
<b>T</b>	
<b>a table for 3</b>	Say this when you want the restaurant staff to find you a table.
<b>take a chance</b>	<b>do something that might result in danger or failure</b>
<b>take it apart / put it back together</b>	<b>dismantle it / assemble it</b>
<b>take longer than</b> someone <b>expected</b>	<b>need more time than originally planned</b>
<b>take</b> the highway	<b>go on</b> the highway

<b>take time off</b>	<b>decide not to go to work for a short time</b>
<b>take turns</b> doing something	<b>alternate (i.e. you, then me, then you, then me)</b>
<b>tell someone</b>	NOT <del>tell to someone</del> ; NOT <del>tell that</del>
<b>that sounds</b>	Say this to give your opinion based on what you just heard.
<b>that's funny</b>	<b>that's strange</b>
<b>that's K for</b> Korea	Say this to help people understand the spelling of a word.
<b>that's it</b>	<b>nothing more</b>
<b>that's too bad</b>	When someone tells you bad news, say this to show that you care.
<b>the bottom line is</b>	<b>the main idea is; the thing I'm really trying to say is</b>
<b>the day after tomorrow</b>	NOT <del>tomorrow after tomorrow</del>
<b>the day before yesterday</b>	NOT <del>yesterday before yesterday</del>
<b>the other day</b>	<b>a few days ago</b>
<b>the same as</b>	NOT <del>same like</del>
<b>the second one from the right / left</b>	<b>the thing beside the thing on the right / left</b>
<b>the second to last</b>	<b>the thing before the last thing</b>
<b>the week after next</b>	<b>the week after next week</b> NOT <del>next next week</del>
<b>there is</b> something left	something <b>is remaining</b>
<b>there's been a delay</b>	Say this when something is late.
<b>there's no point</b>	<b>there's no reason</b> Say this when it is not useful to do something.
<b>there's nothing I can do (about it)</b>	Say this when you cannot help someone.
<b>there's something wrong with</b> something	Say this when you are not sure what the problem is.
<b>they say</b>	<b>some people say</b> Say this when you hear something, but it's not important who said it.
<b>think it over</b>	<b>take time to think before deciding</b>
<b>this is</b> Jenny	Say this to identify yourself on the phone.
<b>throw it away / put it away</b>	<b>put it in the trash / put it in a special storage place</b>
<b>tied up</b>	<b>busy doing something that you can't stop</b>
<b>to</b> someone / something	When people drink together, they say this to wish success to someone or something.
<b>to tell you the truth</b>	Say this when you want to speak honestly – often before saying something negative.
<b>U</b>	
<b>under a lot of pressure</b>	<b>feeling stress</b>

<b>upside down / right side up</b>	<b>with the top part at the bottom / with the top part at the top</b>
<b>W</b>	
<b>was / were supposed to</b>	Say this to talk about a plan that <i>didn't</i> happen.
<b>watch out</b>	<b>be careful of something that can be dangerous</b>
<b>What are you up to these days?</b>	tell me about your recent life
<b>What do you think about doing something?</b>	NOT How do you think about
<b>What does this mean?</b>	NOT What mean this?; NOT This mean what?
<b>what if</b>	<b>what will happen if</b>
<b>What's something for?</b>	<b>What is the purpose of something?</b>
<b>What's something / someone like?</b>	<b>Tell me about</b> something or someone.
<b>What's something made of?</b>	<b>What materials were used to make something?</b>
<b>What's taking so long?</b>	<b>Why is something taking a long time?</b>
<b>What's the difference between two things?</b>	<b>How are 2 things different?</b>
<b>What's this charge for?</b>	Say this when you don't understand an amount on your bill or receipt.
<b>When is a good time?</b>	<b>When is a convenient time for you?</b>
<b>Where is something held?</b>	Say this to ask about the location of an event.
<b>Will that be all?</b>	<b>Is that the only thing you want?</b> Servers say this in restaurants.
<b>within the hour</b>	<b>less than one hour after from now</b>
something <b>works / doesn't work</b>	something functions / <b>doesn't function</b>
it's <b>worth</b> \$199	its <b>real value is</b> \$199
<b>Would it be possible for someone to...</b>	This is a polite request. Say this when you don't know if someone can help you.
<b>Would you mind doing something?</b>	Say this to make a very polite request.
<b>Would you prefer a or b?</b>	<b>Do you want a or b?</b> Say this when you give someone a choice.
<b>wrap up</b>	<b>finish a meeting</b>
<b>Y</b>	
<b>you shouldn't have</b>	Say this to show appreciation when receiving a gift.
<b>you're not allowed to do something</b>	doing something <b>is not permitted</b>