

112 English in conversation



GRANDFATHER	So, we're ready for your birthday dinner now, right?
DAD	I think so, don't you Jonas?
JONAS	Oh, yeah.
MUM	You having beans, Jonas?
JONAS	Mmm ... don't really like them, Mum.
GRANDMOTHER	Really? Some beans for you, Selina?
SELINA	Not sure ... yeah, I'll have some.

1 Speaking

There are a lot of differences between the way we speak English and the way we write it.

- We usually use short forms when we are speaking:
So, we're ready for your birthday dinner now.
*I think so, **don't** you?*
Yeah, I'll have some beans.
- We don't always use pronouns (*I, you, etc.*) or auxiliary verbs (*do, is, etc.*):
*I don't know, Mum. → **Don't know**, Mum.*
*Are you coming to the party? → **You coming** to the party?*
*It's hot today, isn't it? → **Hot today**, isn't it?*
 We only do this when we are talking to people we know very well.
 We don't do this in writing.
- We can use an extra word, (*right?* or *OK?*) when we want to check something:
*We're ready for dinner now, **right**?*
*We'll order the taxi for seven o'clock, **OK**?*
 We usually use *right?* to check that what we are saying is correct.
 We usually use *OK?* to check that an arrangement is good for the person we are speaking to.

2 Listening

When we are listening to someone speaking, we often make noises or say things to show we are listening:

'You know your friend Jake ...' 'Mmm ...'

'I've got tickets for the match on Saturday ...' 'Really?' 'Yeah. Do you want one?'

NATURAL ENGLISH *Yeah* is a very informal way of saying *yes*.

Practice

1 Find and write the words that are usually short forms. There are two in each sentence.

- 0 I do not understand why you are so unhappy. *don't* *you're*
- 1 I have not had curry for years. I will enjoy this.
- 2 There is a bus stop on the corner. We will meet you there.
- 3 Jack and Alice can not join us because they are busy.
- 4 You must not leave your shoes there. It is dangerous.

2 Decide which words are missing from these conversations and add them.

- 0 A ^{Have you} ~~Seen~~ Jason recently? 3 A Ready?
 B No, ~~I~~ don't know where he is. B Not sure ... I can't find my passport.
- 1 A Awful weather, isn't it? 4 A Hi. Want a quick coffee before we go?
 B Yes, really bad for the time of year. B Mmm, great idea.
- 2 A OK, then, call you later. 5 A More potatoes, Jen?
 B Right. Speak to you then. B Mmm, love some, and some carrots, too.

3 Complete the conversation with *Mmm, Really, Yeah, right* or *OK*.

- DYLAN Hi, Eddie. Coming to the match tonight?
- EDDIE (0) *Mmm*, not sure. I might have to work late.
- DYLAN (1)? That's unusual. You don't often stay late.
- EDDIE (2), I know. You've got the tickets for the match, (3)?
- DYLAN (4), but my brother will come if you can't, so don't worry.
- EDDIE Good. Look, I'll call you at about 6.00, (5)?

4 **GRAMMAR IN USE** Write lines 1–3 again with short forms. Then complete lines 4–6 to make the conversation more informal.

- 0 DENISE Hi, Lynne. I have not seen you for a long time. Have you been away?
- 1 LYNNE We have been to Australia. We went to Sydney for the New Year celebrations.
- 2 DENISE I did not know you were going away. How long were you there?
- 3 LYNNE We were not there for long – only two weeks. Did you do anything for New Year?
- 00 DENISE We didn't do much. Your daughter lives in Australia, doesn't she?
- 4 LYNNE Yes, she does, in Perth. We went there for a week before we went to Sydney.
- 5 DENISE Do you want a coffee? I'm not too busy right now.
- 6 LYNNE I'd love one. I'll be with you in ten minutes.
- 0 *Hi, Lynne, I haven't seen you for a long time.* Have you been away?
- 1 We went to Sydney for the New Year celebrations.
- 2 How long were you there?
- 3 only two weeks. Did you do anything for New Year?
- 00 *Not much. Your daughter lives in Australia, right?*
- 4 , in Perth. We went there for a week before we went to Sydney.
- 5 a coffee? I'm not too busy right now.
- 6 with you in ten minutes.