

CONTENTS

Introduction	10
UNIT 1. NO PLACE LIKE HOME	14
Talking about the house and home	
Language in context	15
What's the difference?	18
Natural English: Helping out around the house	21
Talking points: Who should do the housework?	24
Grammar spot: Articles review	25
Key words: House and home	28
Language boost: Describing places	30
UNIT 2. FAMILY VALUES	32
Who's who in your family?	
Language in context	33
Grammar spot: Review of tenses (part 1)	36
What's the difference?	40
Key word: Family	43
Natural English: Relations within the family	44
Language boost: Describing family members	46
Talking points: Family life	48
Culture spot: What's in a name?	49
UNIT 3. LOVE IS IN THE AIR	50
Describing the stages of a relationship	
Language in context	51
What's the difference?	54
Grammar spot: Review of tenses (part 2)	56
Talking points: Finding love	59
Natural English: Romance and relationships	60
Key word: Heart	62

Culture spot: A Russian wedding	64
Talking points: Wedding traditions	65
UNIT 4. WHAT'S HE LIKE?	66
Talking about personality and first impressions	
Language in context	67
What's the difference?	70
Grammar spot: Pronouns and determiners	74
Key words: Think and opinion	78
Natural English: Types of people	80
Language boost: Adjectives to describe character	82
Talking points: An important person in your life	83
Culture spot: Same meaning, different language?	84
Talking points: What defines a person's character?	85
UNIT 5. HOW DO I LOOK?	86
Talking about clothes and appearance	
Language in context	87
What's the difference?	90
Grammar spot: Passives	93
Natural English: Clothes phrasal verbs	97
Natural English: Clothes expressions	100
Language boost: Describing clothes and appearance	102
Culture spot: Face control	104
Talking points: Attitudes to fashion and appearance	104
UNIT 6. MIXED FEELINGS	105
Describing a situation and how you feel	
Language in context	106
What's the difference?	109
Natural English: How's it going?	112
Grammar spot: Stative and dynamic verbs	115
Culture spot: Are you loving it?	117
Key words: Look, see, watch, listen and hear	118
Talking points: Sharing your feelings	120
Language boost: Talking about feelings and emotions	121
Gradable and ungradable adjectives	122

UNIT 7. YOU LIVE AND LEARN 124

Talking about studying and progress

Language in context	125
What's the difference?	128
Grammar spot: Countable and uncountable nouns	131
Natural English: School and studying	134
Key word: Know	137
Culture spot: Comparing approaches to education	138
Language boost: Academic English	140
Talking points: Aspects of education	141

UNIT 8. SMARTPHONE GENERATION 142

Talking about the impact of modern technology

Language in context	143
Talking points: The pros and cons of modern tech	145
What's the difference?	146
Grammar spot: Future forms	149
Natural English: Tech trouble	153
Using the telephone	155
Key word: Day(s)	157
Talking points: Comparing innovations	159
Culture spot: Talking tech	160
Talking points: Outside influences on languages	161

UNIT 9. OUT AND ABOUT 162

Talking about your weekend

Language in context	163
What's the difference?	166
Grammar spot: Verb patterns	169
Key word: Plan	173
Natural English: Free time and socialising	174
Language boost: Describing films, plays and performances	177
Culture spot: Is staying in the new going out?	179
Talking points: Staying in vs going out	179

UNIT 10. A TRIP TO THE SUPERMARKET	180
Talking about food shopping	
Language in context	181
Talking points: Types of shopping	183
Grammar spot: Quantifiers	184
What's the difference?	188
Language boost: Talking about quantity	191
Talking points: Consumerism	191
Key word: Go	192
Culture spot: Not my cup of tea	194
UNIT 11. WHAT'S NEWS?	196
Sharing and responding to news	
Language in context	197
What's the difference?	200
Key words: Talk and speak	202
Grammar spot: Direct and indirect speech	203
Natural English: Short responses	208
Talking points: Is it OK to gossip?	211
UNIT 12. A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH	212
Talking about health	
Language in context	213
What's the difference?	216
Grammar spot: Conditionals	219
Natural English: Informal phrases to talk about health	222
Key word: Sleep	226
Culture spot: Political correctness gone mad?	228
Talking points: Attitudes to language	228
UNIT 13. CRIME AND PUNISHMENT	229
Talking about crime and the law	
Language in context	230
Natural English: Phrases to talk about crime	233
Talking points: Tackling crime	233
What's the difference?	236
Grammar spot: Modal verbs review	240
Language boost: Talking about the legal process	244
Key word: Law	247

UNIT 14. HIT THE ROAD	248
Talking about driving and transport	
Language in context	249
What's the difference?	253
Grammar spot: Used to / get used to	256
Key word: Get	258
Natural English: Anger and arguments	260
Culture spot: Life's a journey	263
Additional Material	264
Pronunciation Guide	275
Key	276

To Larissa and Alexander.
This book would not have been possible
without your support.

INTRODUCTION

Who is this book for?

If you are a Russian-speaking learner of English, this book is for you.

The material is based on the author's extensive experience of working with Russian students, and targets many of the problem areas and questions that Russian speakers have when learning English.

More broadly, this book provides useful language for everyday situations, including work, study and leisure. It focuses on vocabulary, grammar and functional language, but also trains reading, speaking and writing skills. It can also help with preparation for various types of English exams.

This book is not aimed at a specific level, although you will benefit most from the material if you are at B1 (intermediate) level or above.

This is the first in a set of two books; the second book – **Level Up Your English 2** – follows a similar format but includes more advanced grammar points.

What is special about this book?

Many of the language points in this book have been selected with you in mind as a Russian-speaking learner of English. This includes typical errors to avoid, false friends and other problems that result from 'L1 interference'.

There are also sections that will help you describe aspects of Russian culture more clearly in English, as well as interesting and informative linguistic and cultural insights into English-speaking countries.

How can I use this book?

This book is divided into 14 units, each based on a particular theme. You do not necessarily need to work through the units in order.

The units broadly follow the same structure and contain these main sections:

- **Warm-up:** Questions to introduce the topic of the unit and activate your existing language knowledge on a particular theme.
- **Language in context:** A text or dialogue that introduces target vocabulary and grammar in context, followed by explanations and practice exercises.
- **What's the difference?** Explanations of words and phrases that are commonly confused in English (e.g. **come** and **go**, **say** and **tell**, **learn** and **teach**).
- **Natural English:** Aspects of English that can make your language sound more natural, such as collocations, phrasal verbs, idioms and functional phrases.

- **Grammar spot:** Easy-to-understand explanations and examples of a particular grammar point, followed by practice exercises.
- **Key word(s):** A key word (or words) commonly used in collocations, phrasal verbs and other expressions.
- **Language boost:** More advanced vocabulary or structures related to the theme of the unit.
- **Culture spot:** Language related to cultural themes that are specific to Russia – for example, how to describe a Russian wedding in English – or elements of culture in English-speaking countries. This section sometimes contains language-specific themes such as idioms, metaphors and proverbs.
- **Talking points:** Discussion questions based on the topic of the unit; these are often similar to the types of questions asked in various English exams.

Most of the main sections in this book include exercises for you to practise the target language. You can check your answers in the **Key**.

In addition to the sections above, you will find the following subsections throughout the book:

- **Avoiding errors:** Common errors to avoid, with a focus on the types of mistakes made by Russian-speaking learners.
- **False friend warning:** Common false friends (false cognates) between Russian and English.
- **Remember!** Explanations and examples of problematic language points related to the theme of the unit.
- **Good to know:** Additional information related to the topic of the unit, often in the form of idioms or cultural references.
- **Activate:** Opportunities for you to activate the target vocabulary or grammar; for example, by discussing questions or writing your own sentences and dialogues.
- **Extra task:** Follow-up tasks for you to do independently; these typically involve looking up the meanings of words and phrases related to a particular theme.
- **Study tip:** Advice on how to approach learning English.
- **Say it right:** Commonly mispronounced words, along with the phonemic transcriptions of how to say these words correctly.
- **Phrase box:** Useful functional phrases; these boxes often accompany the **Talking points** sections to provide phrases you can use during discussions.

This book takes a varied approach to working with the material. Sometimes you will be asked to read rules and study examples; in other cases, you will be asked to work out the rules yourself before checking the explanations in the **Key** or **Additional Material** sections.

You can work through this book alone, although you will also benefit from working with a study partner or teacher as many of the tasks were written with discussion and collaboration in mind.

What else do I need to know?

This book uses British English. This includes the spelling of certain words ('organisation' instead of 'organization', 'realise' instead of 'realize', etc.), while some of the idioms, phrasal verbs and other expressions may be more typical of British English than American.

References to American English equivalents are included in some cases, as well as explanations of the differences between British and American English.

Phonemic transcriptions /fə'ni:mɪk træn'skrɪpʃ(ə)nz/ are often provided for words that may be difficult to pronounce. There is a **Pronunciation Guide** at the end of the **Additional Material** section with a list of pronunciation symbols; you can also check the pronunciation of words using online resources.

In keeping with the overall style of the book, phonemic transcriptions indicate how British English speakers would typically say a particular word or phrase.

This book assumes that you are already familiar with certain grammatical terms (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, tense, etc.). However, explanations and examples are given where possible.

The following abbreviations and symbols are also used throughout this book:

- e.g. = for example
- etc. = et cetera ('and so on')
- i.e. = 'that is'; used to explain or specify something already mentioned
- AmEng = American English
- BrEng = British English
- ≠ antonym

This book has been written solely in English; any Russian words or phrases have been transliterated from Cyrillic into the Latin script.

A variety of names from English-speaking countries have been used in order to provide familiarity with these, although common Russian names are also included.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the many people who have contributed to making this book possible. This includes all of the students I have taught in Russia down the years. It has been my privilege to share the classroom with you, and this experience has provided the basis for much of the material in this book.

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Further reference

This book is my small contribution to the many excellent resources already available for learners of English. For more practice in areas such as grammar, vocabulary, collocations, idioms and phrasal verbs, the Cambridge 'In Use' series is exceptional.

Online resources such as the Cambridge Dictionary, Oxford Learner's Dictionaries and Collins Online Dictionary are also recommended.

For the finer points of English, Michael Swan's Practical English Usage, published by Oxford University Press, is, in my opinion, unrivalled.

About the author

Liam Tyler is an English teacher and copy editor. He was born in the UK but has lived and worked in Russia since 2006. He has taught English in a variety of settings, including schools, businesses and other institutions. He has also given teaching workshops and seminars in Moscow and other cities across Russia.

Liam lives in Moscow with his wife, Larissa, and their son, Alexander. He is a keen football fan and amateur runner.

UNIT 1

NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Talking about the house and home

WARM-UP

What does the word 'home' mean to you?

What makes a house a home?

What do you like most about the place where you live?

Are there any things you would like to change?



Language in context

Read the statements below and match them to the questions in the box. Then look again at the words and phrases in **bold** and note the comments below the statements.

- 1 Where's home for you? 2 What's your favourite part of the house?
3 Do you spend much time at home? 4 What do you like about the area you live in? 5 Where would you most like to live?

- a I love spending time in the kitchen. My mum's always in there, cooking or **pottering about**¹. It's so **cosy**², and there's usually the smell of home-cooked food. It's the centre of activity in our household.
- b I've just **moved into**³ a new two-bedroom flat **on the outskirts**⁴ of the city. I'm still **settling in**⁵, but I really like it so far. I have a lovely view of the forest from my window, and there's a supermarket just down the road, which is **handy**⁶.
- c For me, home will always be my parents' **place**⁷. I moved out quite a while ago, but I still visit them all the time. I have really **fond memories**⁸ of growing up in that house and playing out in the back garden when I was young.
- d I'd really like to live out in the countryside. I'm a native **Muscovite**⁹, but sometimes city life gets too **hectic**¹⁰. My apartment is also a bit **cramped**¹¹. Most of my friends spend their weekends at their dachas. I'd love to escape the city and move somewhere with a garden, and maybe even have a little **vegetable patch**¹².
- e I'm the type of person who likes to **get out and about**¹³, so I'm not in very often. I usually come home from work, get changed, then head straight out again. I don't like spending time **lounging around**¹⁴ at home.

[1] **to potter about (at home)** = to spend time doing small, pleasant tasks around the house

[2] **cosy** /'kəʊzi/ = comfortable and warm (AmEng spelling: **cozy**)

[3] **to move into a place** = to start living in a new house, flat, etc. ≠ **to move out (of a place)**

[4] **on the outskirts (of a town/city)** = on the edge (of a town/city)

[5] **to settle in** = to start to feel comfortable or relaxed in a new house, job, etc.

[6] **handy** = convenient, useful or within easy reach

[7] **a place** = an informal synonym for house/home

[8] **fond memories** = happy memories

[9] **a Muscovite** /'mʌskəvaɪt/ = someone from Moscow

[10] **hectic** /'hektɪk/ = very busy/full of activity

[11] **cramped** /kræmpt/ = without much space

[12] **a vegetable patch** = part of a garden where vegetables are grown

[13] **to get out and about** = to stay active and do things outside the house

[14] **to lounge** /laʊndʒ/ **around** = to spend time in a relaxing way, usually sitting/lying

EXERCISE 1

**Complete the sentences using words from the box.
You may need to change the form of the word.**

settle move potter handy cramped lounge hectic cosy home get

- 1 There's nothing better than a good _____-cooked meal.
- 2 We need to get rid of some of this furniture. It's too _____ in here.
- 3 I didn't really do much at the weekend. I just _____ about in the back garden.
- 4 How are you _____ in at your new place? Does it feel like home yet?
- 5 I was ill all last week, but I'm feeling well enough to _____ out and about again now.
- 6 We've already got the keys to our new place. We're hoping to _____ in next week.
- 7 A lot of people are fed up with the _____ pace of city life.
- 8 There's a bus stop right opposite my house. It's really _____ for me to get to work.
- 9 I had a really lazy weekend. I spent the whole time _____ around at home.
- 10 I love how you've decorated your living room. It feels so _____.

 AVOIDING ERRORS

- We have a **view of** the forest. (**NOT** ~~view on~~)
- I live **near** the park. (**NOT** ~~near with~~)
- His place is **opposite** the train station. (**NOT** ~~opposite of~~)
- I spend a lot of time **at my dacha**. (**NOT** ~~on my dacha~~)
- I'm staying **at my friend's place**. (**NOT** ~~in/on my friend's place~~)
- We live **in the suburbs**. (**NOT** ~~on the suburbs~~)
- I've moved into a **two-bedroom flat**. (**NOT** ~~a two-bedrooms flat~~)
- We always have dinner **in the kitchen**. (**NOT** ~~on the kitchen~~)
- He works **downtown**. (AmEng; **NOT** ~~in downtown~~)

EXERCISE 2 Choose the correct option in each case.

- 1 We're having a get-together **at/on** our place on Saturday.
- 2 They live opposite **of/-** a large industrial estate, so the traffic is often busy.
- 3 If you're hungry, there are some leftovers from dinner **in/on** the kitchen.
- 4 A lot of Russians have vegetable patches **at/on** their dachas.
- 5 It's very handy living near **with/-** a big supermarket.
- 6 It's already late. When are you coming **to/-** home?
- 7 My son's school is only five minutes down **on/-** the road.
- 8 Our hotel room had a fantastic view **on/of** the sea.
- 9 If you ask me, it's much nicer to live **in/on** the suburbs than **in/on** the city centre.
- 10 Life is generally much more relaxed **on/at** the outskirts of the city.

NOTE: Check the **Additional Material** section for common prepositions related to the house and home.

 ACTIVATE

- Do you like pottering about at home?
- Is it OK to spend all your free time lounging around at home, or is it better to get out and about?
- Did it take you long to settle into the place where you live?
- What usually makes a house or apartment feel cosy or cramped?
- What's handy to have near your house?
- Do you find city life hectic?

 STUDY TIP

If you have a study partner, you can discuss the questions in the **Activate** sections throughout this book. If you are studying alone, you can record your answers and then listen to them to check your fluency, grammar and pronunciation. You can also write short answers to each question.

What's the difference?

house and home

- A **house** is a type of building that people live in — e.g. 'He lives in a really big **house** on the outskirts of the city.' Types of houses include **detached** (separate from other houses), **semi-detached** (a house joined to another house on one side) and **terraced** (part of a continuous row of houses built in the same style). **Blocks of flats/apartment buildings** are not described as houses in English.
- A **home** is also a place where people live (a house, a flat, etc.). However, a home is often more than just a building; it's a place that carries an emotional or personal attachment — for example, it's where someone lives with their family or it's where they grew up. Expressions which refer to this idea are '**Home is where the heart is**', '**There's no place like home**' and '**Home sweet home**'.
- Other phrases used with **home** include **come/go/get home** (~~NOT come/go/get to home~~), **be (at) home**, **spend time at home**, **home town** and **home delivery**.
- We talk about **being at home** and **returning home** in different ways — e.g. 'I **was in** all day yesterday.' (≠ **to be out**) / 'What time did you **get in** last night?' (= return/get home) / 'I **stayed in** and watched TV last night.' (= stayed at home) / 'What time will you **be back**?' (~~NOT What time will you back?~~)
- Some phrases use **house** rather than **home** — e.g. a **housewarming party** to celebrate moving into a new house. A **household** is a family or group of people who live together; **household** is also used in various noun phrases — e.g. **household appliances/bills/income**.

come home and go home

- The choice of **come** or **go** typically depends on the perspective of the speaker or listener. **Come** implies movement towards the place the speaker or listener is/will be; **go** implies movement to a different place — e.g. 'Peter told me he's **coming home** for Christmas.' (= the speaker or listener is/will be at home, and Peter will travel there from another place) / 'Peter's **going home** for Christmas.' (= the speaker or listener isn't/won't be at the place Peter considers to be home)

leave something at home and forget something

- We usually use **leave** when we mention the place where we have left something (either intentionally or unintentionally) — e.g. 'I **left** my coat **at home**.' When we use **forget**, it's not natural to mention the place — e.g. 'I **forgot** my coat.' (~~NOT I forgot my coat at home.~~)

comfortable and convenient

- **comfortable** /'kʌmfəb(ə)l/ = providing a pleasant or relaxing feeling — e.g. 'This chair is very **comfortable**'; we often use **comfy** /'kʌmfi/ (informal) for short.
- **convenient** = easy to use/reach or suitable for your needs — e.g. 'It's very **convenient** having a supermarket near your house.' / 'When would be a **convenient** time to meet?'

garden and yard

- In British English, a **garden** is an area of grass (or **lawn** /lɔ:n/) either in front of or behind a house (the **front/back garden**); it doesn't have to contain flowers or plants (although many gardens do).
- A **yard** in British English is typically an area with a hard surface, such as a **courtyard** (an open area of ground that is partly or completely surrounded by buildings or walls).
- In American English, a **front yard/backyard** is a grass or play area next to a house. A garden in American English usually means a place with plants or flowers.

dacha and country house

- The Russian word **dacha** is generally understood in English and is listed in many English dictionaries. A dacha can also be described as a **country house**, although in English this may give the impression of a luxurious /lʌg'zʊəriəs/ house belonging to a wealthy family. If you need to explain what a dacha is in another way, you can also call it a **summer cottage** or a **summer house**.

flat and apartment

- **Flat** is commonly used in British English to refer to a set of rooms on one floor of a building (a **block of flats**). In American English, this is typically called an **apartment** (part of an **apartment building**). British English also uses the term **apartment**, especially to add a sense of luxury.

ground floor and first floor

- In the UK, the floor level with the ground is called the **ground floor**; the next floor up is called the **first floor**. In American English (like in Russia), the floor level with the ground is called the **first floor**; the floor above it is called the **second floor**. Another difference is the use of **lift** in British English and **elevator** in American English.

in the street and on the street

These phrases are often used in a similar way when talking about a road in a town or city with pavements and buildings alongside it, although sometimes there can be a slight difference. **In the street** can imply you are surrounded by buildings or are standing in the street (road) where vehicles are; **on the street** means on the surface of the street (often a less enclosed space). Here are some typical examples:

- There are too many people sleeping rough **on the street(s)**.
- Children don't play out **in the street** as much these days.
- You can't stand **in the street** like that; you'll get hit by a car.
- People were dancing **in the streets** of Paris after France won the World Cup.

If children are playing **in the street**, the meaning is usually literal; if they are playing **in the garden, in the park or in the playground**, you can say they are playing **outside/outdoors** (**NOT** ~~in the street~~).

EXERCISE 3**Choose the right options in the sentences.****Both options may be possible.**

- 1 Oh no, I've **left/forgotten** my wallet at home. Could you pay for lunch?
- 2 We're all here waiting for you. When are you **coming/going** home?
- 3 Do you know the Smiths? They live in the big white **house/home** at the end of the street.
- 4 We're all going over to Mike's **house/home** later to watch a film.
- 5 I got **home/to my house** really late from work last night.
- 6 This armchair is so **comfortable/convenient**. I could sit here all day!
- 7 For some reason they held the meeting at 7 in the evening. It was really **inconvenient/uncomfortable**.
- 8 Russians really love their **dachas/country houses** because they are a great way to escape the city.
- 9 I was shocked by the number of people I saw sleeping **on/in** the streets.
- 10 Children need to get **outdoors/on the street** more often rather than just lounging around at home.

**REMEMBER!**

A **room** (countable noun) is part of a house or building that is separated from other parts by **walls, ceilings**, etc. — e.g. 'How many **rooms** does your flat have?'

Room (uncountable noun) is the amount of space needed or available for something — e.g. 'Is there **room** for a sofa in here?' (**NOT** ~~Is there a room...?~~)

A similar rule applies with **space** — e.g. 'There's **a parking space** (countable noun) over there.' / 'There's no more **space** (uncountable noun) in here.' You can **make room/space (for someone/something)** — e.g. 'More people will be arriving soon, so we need to **make room** for them.'

Remember that **furniture** is an uncountable noun — e.g. 'We need to move this **furniture**.' (**NOT** ~~these furnitures~~) You can say **a piece/an item of furniture**.

Accommodation is an uncountable noun in British English — e.g. 'We're looking for overnight **accommodation**.' (**NOT** ~~an overnight accommodation~~) American English uses the plural — e.g. 'The guests will be provided with **accommodations**.'

**EXTRA TASK**

Which parts of the house would you typically find these things in? If any words are unfamiliar, look them up in the dictionary.

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| • sink | • cupboard | • sofa |
| • wardrobe | • oven | • fridge |
| • fireplace | • bedside table | • armchair |
| • chest of drawers | • coat stand | • radiator |