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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 second in a set of two books; the first book – **Level Up Your English 1** – follows a similar format, although the second book includes several 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 12 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. **bring** and **take**, **on time** and **in time**, and **lend** and **borrow**).

Introduction

- **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 Russian cuisine 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.
- **Remember!** Explanations and examples of problematic language points related to the theme of the unit.
- **False friend warning:** Common false friends (false cognates) between Russian and English.
- **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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Introduction

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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

BE MY GUEST

Being a good host and guest

WARM-UP

When was the last time you visited someone's home
or had guests at your place?

Was it a special occasion?

What do you think makes a good host?

What about a good guest?



Language in context

David and Sarah have invited their friends Pavel and Yulia over for dinner. Read the dialogues from the beginning and end of the evening. How do the hosts make their guests feel welcome? What makes Pavel and Yulia good guests? After you've read the dialogues, focus on the parts in **bold**.

David: Hi guys! Welcome. **Come on in**¹.

Pavel: Hi David, great to see you. Thanks again for **inviting us over**².

David: It's our pleasure. There's no need to **take your shoes off**³ – you can just **wipe your feet**⁴.

Pavel: Oh no, they're a bit muddy. I think it's better if we leave them here.

David: OK, in that case, I've got some slippers for you. **Let me take your coats**⁵. Sarah's in the kitchen getting dinner ready, so let's go through to the living room. Oh, and the toilet is just at the end of the hall if you need it.

Yulia: Thanks. We've brought this for you – it's a bottle of red wine we picked up on holiday in Georgia.

David: That's very kind of you. That will go perfectly with dinner.

Pavel: I really like the new place. It seems more spacious than the last one, and it's less noisy out here in the suburbs.

David: Yes, it's definitely nicer than where we lived before. But **please excuse the mess**⁶ – we haven't quite finished unpacking yet. There's stuff lying around because of the redecorating as well, so just move anything that's in the way.

Yulia: Oh, don't worry. We know how much **hassle**⁷ moving house can be. I'm sure you'll **settle in**⁸ soon enough.

David: Well, **make yourselves at home**⁹. I'll just go and check on Sarah in the kitchen. What can I get you to drink?

Yulia: It's been a wonderful evening. **Thank you for having us**¹⁰. Sarah, dinner was delicious – the best lasagna I've ever had!

Sarah: Thank you for the compliment. You're more than welcome. **We'll have to do it again sometime**¹¹.

Yulia: Yes, we'd love to **have you over to our place**¹² next time.

David: That sounds wonderful. Well, good night.

Pavel: Take care – and thank you both again.

- [1] **come on in** = a more enthusiastic way of saying 'come in'
- [2] **to invite someone over/round/around (to your place)** = to invite someone as a guest to your home
- [3] **to take your shoes off** (~~NOT to put your shoes off~~) ≠ **to put your shoes on**
- [4] **to wipe your feet** = to wipe/clean your shoes on a **doormat**
- [5] **let me take your coats** = a more polite way of saying 'give me your coats'
- [6] **please excuse the mess** = a phrase said by a host if they feel their home is untidy
- [7] **hassle** /'hæs(ə)l/ (countable/ uncountable noun) = difficulty or trouble
- [8] **to settle in** = to start to feel comfortable or relaxed in a new house, job, etc.
- [9] **make yourselves at home** = relax and make yourselves comfortable (~~NOT feel yourselves at home~~)
- [10] **thank you for having us** = thank you for hosting us
- [11] **we'll have to do it again sometime** = we should meet, have dinner, etc. again sometime
- [12] **to have someone over/round/around to your place (for lunch, dinner, etc.)** = to have someone as a guest at your home

EXERCISE 1

Complete the sentences using words from the box.
You may need to change the form of the word.
In some cases, more than one option is possible.

come hassle take kind make hang have invite wipe excuse

- 1 We've had so much _____ at work lately because of all the new regulations. It's been a nightmare.
- 2 Thank you for the lovely flowers you sent me. It was very _____ of you.
- 3 Hi guys, _____ on in. _____ yourselves at home.
- 4 Your shoes are muddy. Make sure you _____ your feet before you come into the house.
- 5 Please _____ all the mess. The kids haven't tidied up after themselves, as usual.
- 6 We'd like to _____ you over for lunch sometime next week, if you're free?
- 7 It was Mother's Day last Sunday, so I _____ my mum over for dinner.
- 8 Let me _____ your coats. I'll _____ them up just over here.
- 9 It's a bit warm in here. I think I'll _____ my jumper off.
- 10 Thank you so much for _____ us. It's been a wonderful evening.

EXERCISE 2

Match the questions and statements with the responses. Would a host or guest be more likely to ask each question or make each statement on the left? (If you are unfamiliar with some phrases, the box below the exercise will help.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 How do you take your tea? | a Of course. The more the merrier! |
| 2 Is there somewhere I can freshen up? | b Oh, don't be silly, stay as long as you like! |
| 3 I'll just lay the table for dinner. | c Yes, your directions were very helpful. |
| 4 Help yourselves to snacks. | d OK. Let me know if you need a hand. |
| 5 What would you like to drink? | e Just tap water is fine, thanks. |
| 6 Would you like a top-up? | f Thanks, I'll have some peanuts. |
| 7 Can I bring my friend to the party? | g Milk with one sugar, please. |
| 8 Did you manage to find us OK? | h Yes, please. It's delicious! |
| 9 It's getting late. I don't want to impose any longer. | i No, thank you. I'd better not drink any more. |
| 10 Would you like another helping of casserole? | j Yes. The bathroom's just down the hall on the left. |

 PHRASE BOX
Being a host/guest

- **How do you take your tea/coffee?** = Do you like milk or sugar with your tea/coffee?
- **to freshen up** = to wash yourself to feel fresher (e.g. after a journey)
- **to lay/set the table** = to arrange the table ready for a meal by placing knives, forks, etc. on it
- **Please, help yourselves.** = people can take food/drink themselves, without waiting to be served
- **a top-up** = a refill of someone's glass when it's almost empty
- **What would you like to drink?** – a polite way to offer someone a drink; informally, we also ask **What can I get you to drink?**
- **to impose (on someone)** = to stay longer than you are wanted; synonyms: **to outstay/overstay your welcome**
- **a helping/serving** = a portion of food
- **The more the merrier!** = the more people there are at a party, event, etc., the better it will be

 ACTIVATE

Write your own dialogues similar to the ones at the start of the unit, including phrases from this section. If you have a study partner, role-play your dialogues together.

What's the difference?

stuff and things

These words are often used in the same way, especially in spoken English when talking in a **vague** /veɪɡ/ (less specific) way about physical items, tasks, topics, etc.:

- There's **stuff**/There are **things** lying around because of the redecorating. (= physical items) / I've got lots of **stuff/things** to do this weekend. (= tasks) / We shouldn't talk about **stuff/things** like that at the dinner table. (= topics)

Stuff is an uncountable noun (~~NOT a stuff/one stuff~~) and is more informal than **things**. We typically use **things** (rather than **stuff**) when talking about a situation in general:

- How are **things** with you? (~~NOT How's stuff with you?~~) / **Things** are going well at the moment. (~~NOT Stuff is going well...~~)

in the way and on the way

- **in the/someone's way** = blocking a path, view, etc. — e.g. 'Just move anything that's **in the/your way**.'
- **on the/someone's way** = in the process of a journey — e.g. 'I'm **on my/the way**. I'll be there in 10 minutes'; **on the way** can also refer to something that will happen soon — e.g. 'There's a storm **on the way**.'
- **in a way** = to a certain extent — e.g. '**In a way**, I regret moving out of my old place.'

bring and take

Similarly to **come** and **go**, these words typically depend on the perspective of the speaker/listener; **bring** is often related to 'here', while **take** refers to 'there/somewhere else':

- We've **brought** this for you. (= brought it here from another place) / Could you **take** this cup of tea to your mum, please? (= take it from here to another place)
- Can I **bring** my friend to the party? (= the speaker and listener will both be at the party) / I'm **taking** my friend to the party. (= the speaker is going to the party, but the listener might not be)

Some party invitations might include the abbreviation **BYOB**, meaning **bring your own bottle** (a way of encouraging guests to bring a bottle of wine or other alcoholic drinks with them).

toilet, bathroom, restroom, etc.

- The word **toilet** is widely used in British English without any sense of vulgarity — e.g. 'The **toilet** is just at the end of the hall if you need it.' Informally, people also use **loo** /lu:/ in British English — e.g. 'Is there a **loo** here?'

UNIT 1: BE MY GUEST / What's the difference?

- In North America, using the word **toilet** is considered less polite. **Bathroom/ washroom** are more common when talking about the house and home, while **restroom** is typically used for public places. These words might also be used in British English when people are being more formal/polite, although **bathroom** more commonly refers to the part of the house where there's a bath, shower, etc.
- In public places, signs often say **WC (water closet)** or **lavatory** /'lævətəri/, although these words are not common in spoken language. Restaurants, bars, cafés, etc. may have signs reading **ladies** or **gents** (meaning **ladies'/gentlemen's room**); you can say 'I'm just going to the **ladies' room/men's room/gents**'.

renovate, decorate, refurnish, do up, etc.

In the dialogue at the start of the unit, David mentions that he and Sarah are **redecorating** their house. There are various ways of talking about **home improvements** and **renovations** in English. Informally, we often talk about **doing up** (phrasal verb) a room or building — e.g. 'We're planning to **do up** the sitting room.' A more formal word is **refurbish** (noun: **refurbishment**) — e.g. 'The bathroom has been fully **refurbished**'.

If we want to be more specific, we talk about **painting and decorating/redecorating** (e.g. putting up new wallpaper) or **refurnishing** a room (getting new furniture). Informally, you can give a room or house a **makeover** or **spruce it up** (a person can also have a makeover, meaning they get a new image).

You can **fix** or **repair** specific problems in a house or building — e.g. 'We need to **fix** the plumbing.' / 'The library is closed for **repairs**.' We also talk about parts of a building such as lifts or toilets being **out of order**, meaning they aren't working. (Informally, if you describe a person as being out of order, it means their behaviour is unacceptable.)

When people make home improvements by themselves rather than paying someone else, this is often called **DIY** /,di: ai 'waɪ/ (= **do-it-yourself**; uncountable noun) — e.g. 'My dad's really keen on **DIY**'.

When talking about larger projects, we often use **renovate**, **reconstruct** and **redevelop** — e.g. 'The city centre is being **redeveloped** ahead of the international summit.' / 'The museum is being **renovated** to mark its centenary.' **Revamp** (verb/noun) is a more informal word to describe extensive improvements or changes to a house, building or other place — e.g. 'They've **revamped** the old cinema in town; it's very modern now.'

FALSE FRIEND WARNING

We get water from a **tap** (**NOT** ~~a crane~~). A **crane** is a tall metal structure used in construction, or is a type of bird with long legs and a long neck. In American English, a **tap** is commonly called a **faucet** /'fɔ:st/.

EXERCISE 3

Choose the correct or more natural option in each sentence. Both options may be possible.

- 1 I had a tough period at work last year, but I think **stuff is/things are** finally improving.
- 2 One **stuff/thing** I really love about our balcony is that it gets so much natural light.
- 3 Do you know whose **stuff this is/things these are**? I've asked everyone, but no one knows.
- 4 Could you **bring/take** this screwdriver to your dad, please? He's up in the loft doing **a/some** DIY.
- 5 Vlad is **bringing/taking** his new girlfriend to the party tonight. It will be good to finally meet her.
- 6 All these boxes are **in/on** the way – can you shift them?
- 7 The electrician is **on/in** his way. He's coming to **renovate/fix** the broken light in the hallway.
- 8 We wanted to visit the gallery while we were in town, but it was closed for **fixing/refurbishment**.
- 9 They've given the city centre a £1 million **makeover/overmake**. It's unrecognisable now.
- 10 We're planning on **updoing/doing up** the utility room, then we'll put the house up for sale.

☒ **ACTIVATE**

Use vocabulary from this section to write a list of buildings or areas that need to be improved in your town/city. If you have a study partner, discuss your sentences together. — e.g. 'The centre definitely needs a **makeover**. I think the main concert hall is also looking a bit run-down, so it needs **refurbishing**.'