

- **Read the dialogues** below to see how English is used in everyday situations.
- **Look at the tips** for the dos and don'ts of social English.
- **Study the vocabulary lists** and learn useful words and phrases.
- **Complete the exercises** and test your language knowledge.
- **Pull out this page** and use it as a reference tool and learning aid.



Listen to exercises
on looking after pets
on our CD/cassette

EVERYDAY ENGLISH

LANGUAGE

Language tips by Robert Parr



Looking after pets

Keeping pets is fun, but it is also a responsibility. They have to be fed, exercised and taken to the vet. When you're not at home, you need someone reliable to take care of them. Read these scenes and learn some expressions you need to talk about pets.

1. Did you hear that?

Ruth and her mother are in a pet shop, buying a hamster.

Mother: Right. What else do we need?

Assistant: Let's have a look. The cage with the wheel, the water bottle, the salt...

Ruth: What about food?

Assistant: Yes, give him some dry food. It comes in these small **packets**.

Ruth: What about fresh **stuff**?

Assistant: Carrot or apple's good. Cucumber as well.

Mother: How often do we have to clean the cage out?

Assistant: Once a week.

Mother: **Did you hear that**, Ruth?

Tip! A "packet" is a small plastic, paper or cardboard (Papp-) container with food that has been weighed and is ready to be sold: "a packet of biscuits".

Tip! In informal situations, you use "stuff" to talk about any substance, material or object. Here, Ruth means food.

Tip! Ruth's mother says "Did you hear that?" to remind Ruth that it will be her responsibility to clean the hamster's cage.

cage [keɪdʒ]

Käfig

cucumber ['kju:kʌmbə]

Gurke

2. You're a brick!

Jack rings up his elderly mother to ask her a favour.

Jack: Mum, **would it be OK** if we **left** Leo with you while we're away?

Mum: **When are you off?**

Jack: On the 29th. That's a Saturday. Early, though.

Mum: You'd better bring him round on the Friday, then.

Jack: Thanks, Mum. You're a **brick**!

Mum: And don't forget his **lead** this time. You want me to go out with him, don't you?

Jack: Well, twice a day if possible.

Mum: I don't know what you're going to do when I'm not **around** any more.

Tip! Jack uses the polite conditional form ("Would it be OK...?") because he knows he is asking his mother a delicate question.

Tip! The verb "leave" means to give something to somebody before you go away: "Leave me your number, and I'll get back to you."

Tip! "When are you off?" means "When are you leaving?".

Tip! If someone is "a brick", he or she is a nice, helpful person. This is a slightly old-fashioned British expression.

Tip! The word "lead" (*Leine*) is pronounced [li:d]. The US word is "leash".

Tip! The adverb "around" means "existing". Jack's mother is talking about the time after she has died.

3. So neglected!

Steve and Cathy have recently **had a baby**. Julia wants to know how Jerry, their cat, is **coping** with the new member of the family.

Julia: Where's Jerry?

Steve: Jerry? Where he always is: on top of the **fridge** — **sulking**.

Julia: Poor Jerry! So **neglected**!

Cathy: Hardly! We spoil him.

Steve: No, we don't.

Julia: Yes, you do. I **remember you getting** that **fluffy** basket for him. It cost a fortune! And he's extremely **fussy** about his food, isn't he? Aren't you, Jerry?

Tip! In English, you "have" a baby; you don't "get" one.

Tip! "Cope" is a common verb in English. It means to deal with a difficult situation successfully: "Despite his injuries, he's coping very well."

Tip! "Fridge" is the short form for "refrigerator".

Tip! When "remember" is followed by an "-ing" form (gerund), it refers to the past: "I still remember buying my first computer." Used with an infinitive, it refers to the future: "Remember to buy some milk on your way home."

fluffy ['flʌfi]

flauschig

fussy ['fʌsi]

heikel

neglect sb. [nɪ'glekt]

jmdn. vernachlässigen

sulk [sʌlk]

schmollen

LANGUAGE

Language tips to pull out and keep

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4. I wouldn't be so sure

One morning, Susan and Kevin see that their **budgie** is not in its cage.

Susan: Kevin! Sandy's gone! The cage door's **wide** open!

Kevin: She can't have gone far.

Susan: I wouldn't be so sure. The kitchen window's been open all night.

Kevin: **Christ!** What idiot left the cage door open?

Susan: Maybe you didn't shut it properly yesterday.

Kevin: You **have a look** upstairs. I'll check the garden.

Susan: Maybe we can put a **note** through people's doors.

Kevin: Let's see if we can find her first.

Tip! "Budgie" is the short form for "budgerigar" (*Wellensittich*).

Tip! The word "wide" in "wide open" is an adverb meaning "as far or as much as possible": "I was wide awake at five o'clock this morning."

Tip! Kevin says "Christ!" to express his anger. Some people think this use of the word is offensive.

Tip! It is common to use "have" and the noun "look", rather than "to look", to talk about a specific action: "Can I have a look at your homework?" (See also scene 1.)

Tip! A "note" is a short letter: "I left her a note saying that her dinner was in the fridge."

5. It's the dust

Chris and his father have taken their **guinea pig** to the **vet**.

Vet: He's got an infection, **I'm afraid**. He can't close his eyes.

Chris: Is there anything I can do?

Vet: Well, we can give him some antibiotics, but you'll have to remove the **straw** from his cage and use newspaper instead.

Father: Oh, why's that?

Vet: The straw's not good for him. It's the dust, **you see**.

Father: Right.

Vet: And you'd better come back in a week **or so**, so that I can see how he's **getting on**.

Tip! "Vet" is short for "veterinary surgeon" (*Tierarzt*).

Tip! "I'm afraid" is a common expression in spoken English, often used to tell someone some bad news.

Tip! In spoken English, "you see" is used when you are explaining something: "You see, my brother's coming over this afternoon, so I won't be able to help."

Tip! The expression "or so" is used to show that a number is not exact: "It won't take long — ten minutes or so."

Tip! In Britain, you use the verb "get on" to talk about how well someone has done something: "How did you get on in your exams?"

guinea pig ['ɡɪni piɡ]
straw [strɔː]

Meerschweinchen
Stroh

Spotlight 1/05

EXERCISES

1. What did the shop assistant say?

Right. You'll need a cage with a wheel and a water

a) _____ in it. You'll also need some dry food. It comes in small **b)** _____ like these. Oh, yes, and give him some fresh food, too, such as carrot, apple or **c)** _____. And don't forget: you have to clean the cage out **d)** _____ a week!

2. Use verbs to complete the following sentences. The first letters are given.

- Can we l_____ Leo with you for a week, Mum?
- OK. You'd better b_____ him round on Friday.
- Could you g_____ out with him twice a day?
- What will you do when I'm not around to t_____ care of him?

3. Choose the correct word.

- If you **neglect** – **spoil** someone, you let him have everything he wants.
- If people are **fluffy** – **fussy**, they are happy only if things are exactly as they want them.
- A person who **sulks** – **cope**s shows you that he is angry by not talking to you.

4. What is "it"?

- You attach **it** to a dog's collar. _____
- You write **it**. It's a short letter. _____
- You keep a budgie or a hamster in **it**. _____
- It** keeps food cool. _____

5. Complete the sentences below, using these words.

afraid • see • so • well

- I'll be back in five minutes or _____.
- Bad news, I'm _____.
- _____, thanks for coming. We'll be in touch.
- You _____, it's all a bit complicated.