

## Easy Street

### Hello? Hello? Can You Hear Me Now?

WE can hear you—and we *don't* want to hear you! Come on, admit it. We know it's happened to you, too. You were sitting quietly on the bus, reading your newspaper, when she took the seat next to you. **Yak**, yak, yak! You heard all about her boyfriend's cooking skills. You heard about her sister's new chocolate diet. You heard about the neighbor's dog. Do you care? *We don't care!*



Okay, we all love cell phones. They make it easy to stay **in touch** with friends and family at all times. The convenient features of smartphones are **irresistible**: hi-tech cameras, HD video, high speed Internet access, cool **ring tones**, even GPS **guidance** to help you get where you want to go! We remember when **voicemail**, **flip phones**, and **QWERTY keyboards for texting were cool!** Come on, admit it. You love those **touch screens**, games, and **applications** that can help you do just about anything you need to do. Want to find a restaurant near your class tonight? Check your phone. Need a map of the neighborhood? Check your phone. Want to know what movie is showing at the theater on Tuesday? Check your phone. It may be hard to imagine, but even the simplest early phones had keypads with a **multi-tap function** for texting.

Oh, and if you just want to make a phone call, you can do that, too. Haha! All of these **communication** conveniences come with a cost. And we're not just talking about the monthly bill! But now that we've mentioned it, let's talk about the monthly bill. Most companies offer a **bundle of services** for a set price each month. You can add **features** to your **plan**, but that will usually add to your bill, too. You'll have to pay for some special apps (applications) or games that you **download**. And if you want unlimited access to the Internet, you'll need to have a more expensive plan for that, too.

But the biggest cost of all this convenience is suffering when people don't **observe** simple phone **etiquette**. It's **rude** to speak loudly on the phone in a public place. It's rude when your phone rings or vibrates in a meeting. It's rude when you **interrupt** a **face-to-face** conversation to **answer** a phone call. Many places **ban** cell phone use. Some trains have special "quiet cars" where no cell phones are allowed. Good cell phone etiquette means that you are respectful of others around you. No matter how interesting your **bowl of cereal** is to you, trust us: The guy sitting next to you does not want to hear about it!

## DIALOGUE 1: TRACK 49

**ALAN:** Good morning, Officer. Was I speeding when you pulled me over? I thought I was being very careful.

**POLICE OFFICER:** I didn't pull you over for speeding. I pulled you over because you were talking on a cell phone while driving.

**ALAN:** For talking on the phone? Is that a problem? My wife just called to remind me about an appointment when I get back from my business trip.

**POLICE OFFICER:** Sir, using a **handheld device** while driving is **illegal** in this state.

I can see from your **plates** that you're from out of town, so I'll **let you go** with just a warning this time. But, sir, next time just check the law before your trip. Maybe you should buy a hands-free device if you do a lot of driving for business.

**ALAN:** I will do that, Officer. In fact, I was thinking about buying a **Bluetooth earpiece** when I bought my phone. I will **definitely** get one as soon as I get home. Thanks.

**POLICE OFFICER:** By the way, I hope you weren't texting when I pulled you over. Texting while driving is even more dangerous than talking.

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TIP 1



It is illegal in many states to use a cell phone while driving. You should check ahead if you're traveling. Actually, it's a good idea to turn off the phone while you're in the car no matter where you are!

TIP 2



Have you ever been lost while driving? Many phone plans let you order GPS just when you need it.

## VOCABULARY

- **answer:** take the phone call
- **application:** a game or tool that you can download to your phone; things your phone can do
- **ban:** not allow; forbid
- **Bluetooth:** the special system that lets electronic devices work without wires or hands
- **bowl of cereal:** a typical American breakfast made of dried grains like wheat and oats
- **bundle of services:** a group of things your phone can do
- **communication:** giving and getting information; for example, TV, radio, telephone, computer
- **definitely:** for sure; absolutely
- **download:** take from the Internet so that you can use it on your phone
- **earpiece:** part of a phone that you can wear so you don't have to use your hands to hold the phone and talk
- **etiquette:** ways to be polite
- **face-to-face:** in person; with the person right there
- **features:** special things something can do
- **flip phone:** phone that folds
- **function:** use
- **guidance:** help
- **handheld device:** a phone or other device that needs hands to operate
- **illegal:** against the law
- **interrupt:** stop something while it's going on
- ① **in touch:** connected by talking
- **irresistible:** so great you *have* to have it!

- ① **let someone (or something) go**: not hold someone responsible for something; ignore something (to let someone *off the hook*)
- **multi-tap**: selecting a letter on a phone by tapping the number key that corresponds to that letter
- **observe**: obey; use
- **plan**: the services you select for a certain price per month
- **plates** (also **tags**): license plates on a car
- **QWERTY keyboard**: letters arranged as on a typical English computer keyboard (look at the top row of letters!)
- **ring tone**: the sound your phone makes to let you know someone is calling
- **rude**: not polite
- **texting**: sending typed messages by cell phone
- **touch screen**: instead of typing, just touch to select an option
- **voicemail**: system of keeping recorded messages when you can't answer a call
- ① **yak**: have a very casual conversation (usually about nothing!)



## PRONUNCIATION POINTER

**Cell** and **sell** are both pronounced the same way. The fancy word we use to talk about these words is *homophones*. Homophones are words that sound the same but are spelled differently.

## GRAMMAR REMINDER 1: The Past Continuous Tense with the Past Simple Tense

The past continuous tense is often used with the simple past tense to show one longer action that was interrupted by a shorter action.

### For example:

He **was speeding** when the police officer **stopped** him.

**Was speeding** is the long action; **stopped** is the action that interrupts the longer action.

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## The Easy Way

Remember books? We remember books. The paper kind. With pages. (Hey, you're reading one now! Unless you have the e-book, haha.) In the **good old days** before computers, people read printed books and newspapers to get information. Students spent hours and hours in the library, looking for information in **dusty** old books for class assignments. **Essays**

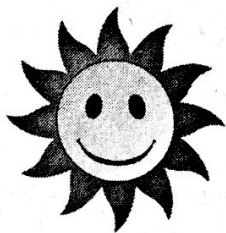
were **handwritten**; if students made a mistake, they would **toss** the paper and start writing all over again. Now? Information is **instant**! Students can find anything on the Internet in minutes and then **compose a document** on their **laptops**, all while sitting on the sofa. If they make a mistake, they can just **delete** or **cut, copy, and paste** to move bits of text around. Maybe the most important computer skill is knowing how to **back up** your files in case your computer **crashes**, or you drop your device in the lake. Documents and files can be sent to "the cloud" for storage. We're not really sure what "the cloud" is, but we know it makes it easy to find stuff from any device! Ha, we remember when all we got from clouds was rain! We still like to keep another backup file, just to be doubly-sure that our hard work won't be lost forever in **cyberspace**.

We also remember the library in the good old days. It was a place where everyone was quiet. **Hum** along to an iPod **tune**? Never! Send an **e-mail** while working? What's e-mail? Watch a movie on the **HDTV** while you work? Impossible! Download **MP3s** to your **hard drive** or **device**? No! But now students can watch **YouTube** videos about their **research** topic as they write a paper. And as they are writing, they can **IM** friends in another **window** on their computer **screen**. A simple **click** of the **mouse**, **hit SAVE**, and students can take a quick chat break. Wait. Did you think we were talking about chatting with someone in the same room? No! We're talking about **online** chat rooms. You don't even need to **hook up a webcam**; just open an app and it's party time instead of homework time!

Do we sound like **dinosaurs**? Actually, we love technology. With social networking apps, and **cable** and **satellite signals**, electronic devices and HDTVs can **broadcast** important local information instantly. In areas where **severe** weather is a problem, TV is an excellent **source** of **warnings**. Your local radio or TV station can give information about where to get help or what to do to keep your family and home safe. Hurricane updates can help you prepare your house. If a tornado is coming, you can get to a safe area. If there's a **snowstorm**, people often turn to radio or TV to hear about school



closings. School is closing? Yay! Quick—text your buddy the good news! Technology is our friend! Instant communication is convenient, fun, and easy. But for those of us who still like to hold a piece of paper with the words of friends, there is always **snail mail**.



### **Fun Fact!**

It's the latest thing: cell-phone **sniffing** dogs! Yes, many American prisons are using specially trained dogs that can smell and find any part of a cell phone that a prisoner may have hidden.

## **DIALOGUE 2: TRACK 50**

**ALAN:** Uh-oh.

**LIA:** That sounds like trouble. What happened?

**ALAN:** I was answering an e-mail, and I hit **Reply All**.

**LIA:** So, what's the problem?

**ALAN:** Well, the problem is that my e-mail reply said, "I don't want to go to this meeting! I want to go to lunch!"

**LIA:** *Aaackkk!* Were you thinking that the e-mail would just go to your friend?

**ALAN:** Yes! I wasn't reading the other names on the list, so I didn't see that the boss was also on the list!

**LIA:** Well, you really need to be careful about sending e-mail. Once you hit *Send*, it's gone. You can't get it back.

**ALAN:** I know. And even if the e-mail comes from a friend, I have to remember that there are other people on the list, too. The boss sent me a reply: "Is it your lunchtime, Alan?"

**LIA:** Well, I don't think you'll get fired over an e-mail that says you want to go to lunch, but maybe you should explain to your boss that you were only kidding. It was just a little joke about going to lunch instead of going to the meeting. Was he wondering why you were so hungry?

**ALAN:** No. He wasn't wondering why I was hungry. I think he was wondering why he hired me in the first place!

## **VOCABULARY**

Before you  
Reply or  
person or  
you don't

acronym: a word  
(page 210)

broadcast: air (se

cable: a way to re

compose: write

dinosaur: ancient  
to describe people

dusty: with a light

essay: a piece of v

good old days: ho

handwritten: writte

HDTV: short for **Hig**  
on the screen

hook up: connect

hum: sing a song w

instant: right away!

research: careful st

satellite: a way to re

severe: very harsh

signal: a message c

communicate (Don't ask

snail mail: the poste

sniffing: smelling

snowstorm (also **bli**

source: a place to ge

lose: throw in the tra

tune: a musical song

waning: advance p

YouTube: a we

TIP 3



Before you reply to an e-mail, be sure to check if you are hitting **Reply** or **Reply All**. *Reply All* means your note will be seen by every person on the list. This could be embarrassing if you write something you don't want your boss to see and his or her name is on the list!

## VOCABULARY

- **acronym**: a word formed by the first letters of a phrase (see list on page 210)
- **broadcast**: air (send) information over TV or radio signals
- **cable**: a way to receive TV service through fiber-optic wires
- **compose**: write
- ① **dinosaur**: ancient creatures that lived on earth millions of years ago; used to describe people who don't use new technology
- **dusty**: with a light covering of dirt
- **essay**: a piece of writing about a single topic
- ① **good old days**: how things were when you were younger
- **handwritten**: written with a pen or pencil on paper!
- **HDTV**: short for **H**igh **D**efinition **T**ele**V**ision; yields a very clear TV picture on the screen
- **hook up**: connect
- **hum**: sing a song without the words
- **instant**: right away! this second! no waiting!
- **research**: careful study about a topic
- **satellite**: a way to receive TV service from satellites in space
- **severe**: very harsh
- **signal**: a message carried by light waves that lets electronic devices communicate (Don't ask us—it's science-y!)
- ① **snail mail**: the postal service
- ① **sniffing**: smelling
- **snowstorm** (also **blizzard**): lots of snow
- **source**: a place to get information
- **toss**: throw in the trash
- **tune**: a musical song or melody
- **warning**: advance notice about something
- **YouTube**: a website with videos about everything



## PRONUNCIATION POINTER

They look exactly the same! They are spelled exactly the same way. But the present tense and the past tense of the verb *read* are pronounced very differently.

The present tense is pronounced **reed**.  
The past tense is pronounced **red**.

## GRAMMAR REMINDER 2: The Past Continuous Tense— Affirmative Statements, Negatives

The past continuous tense is used to talk about a long continuing action in the past.

Form it by using the past tense of the verb *to be* and the *-ing* form of the verb. To form the negative, simply add *not* or *-n't* after the verb *to be*.

Take a look at these examples from the readings and dialogues in this unit:

### Positive:

You **were sitting** quietly on the bus.  
I thought I **was being** very careful.

### Negative:

I hope you **weren't texting**. (*were not*)  
I **wasn't reading** the other names on the list. (*was not*)  
He **wasn't wondering** why I was hungry. (*was not*)

## GRAMMAR REMINDER 3: The Past Continuous Tense— Questions

To form a question using the past continuous tense, just put the form of the verb *to be* first, then the subject, and finally the *-ing* form of the verb.

Take a look at these examples from the readings and dialogues in this unit:

**Was** I speeding?

**Were** you thinking that the e-mail would just go to your friend?

**Was** he wondering why you were so hungry?

Remember to add a question word at the beginning as you need it, e.g.,  
“**What** were you thinking?”

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# COMPUTER WORDS

- back up:** save your files in another place in case the computer stops working
- click:** the word we use to mean press the **key** (computer mouse button)
- copy:** the computer choice that lets you copy something you want to move
- crash:** when the computer stops working and you can't open your files
- cut:** the computer choice that lets you remove something from a document
- cyberspace:** where computers all communicate (It's a mystery to us ☺.)
- delete:** erase something you've written
- desktop:** a large computer that sits on a desk and does not move easily
- document:** something written on the computer
- e-mail:** electronic mail; notes you send from your computer
- hard drive:** the important part of the computer with all the parts that make it work
- hit:** a casual word meaning *click*
- IM:** Instant **M**essage (If you write to a person who is online, they can answer instantly.)
- laptop:** a small computer that you can carry and use on your lap
- mouse:** a small device to make the computer do what you want (not a rodent!)
- MP3:** a file that lets you put music on your computer or iPod
- online:** connected to the Internet
- paste:** the computer choice that lets you move something you copied
- Reply:** what you click to answer e-mail; sends *only* to the person who sent the message
- Reply All:** what you click to answer e-mail if you want everyone on the list to get your message
- save:** the computer choice that keeps whatever you're working on in a file
- screen:** the part of the computer that you look at; on a desktop it's called the **monitor**
- webcam:** the camera that you connect to your computer
- window:** what you see on your screen when you open the computer

## TEXT TALK!

It may seem like a whole new language, but using **acronyms** while texting or chatting can really save time. And because they're used as shortcuts, people often don't bother with capital letters.

Just make sure you keep these to text talk. A boss does *not* want to see these in reports!

**ASAP:** as soon as possible

**b/c:** because

**bf:** boyfriend

**gf:** girlfriend

**bff:** best friends forever

**btw:** by the way

**FAQ:** frequently asked questions

**FYI:** for your information

**GL:** good luck

**gtg** or **gg:** gotta go

**j/k:** just kidding

**K:** okay

**L8R:** later (see you later)

**LOL:** laughing out loud

**ROFL:** rolling on the floor laughing

**thx:** thanks

**ttyl:** talk to you later

**txt:** text

**ty:** thank you

**ur:** your

**VM:** voice mail

**xoxo:** hugs and kisses

## MORE FUN WITH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS: Technology

- **bells and whistles:** extra features to make something even more special.  
*Jane bought a new cell phone with all the **bells and whistles**. She can play games, access the Internet, and even make phone calls!*
- **cutting edge:** very new technology  
*My computer is **cutting edge**. It can recognize my voice from the next room!*
- **computer geek:** someone who knows about computers and spends lots of time with them  
*My nephew is a real **computer geek**. He spends hours every day just finding new things to do with his computer.*
- **dead zone:** an area where your cell phone won't work  
*I need to find a new company for my cell phone. My house is in a **dead zone** for the one I have.*
- **waste of minutes:** not worth talking to; not worth using your cell-phone plan minutes  
*He never has anything interesting to say. It's yak, yak, yak about nothing. Talking to him is a **waste of minutes**.*