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Lesson 1

Pub Talk and the King's English

Henry Fairlie

Additional Background Material for Teachers' Reference

1. Henry Fairlie

Fairlie was born in London, in a family of Scottish descent. His father, James Fairlie, was a heavy-drinking editor on *Fleet Street*; his mother, Marguerita Vernon, was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. Fairlie attended Byron House and Highgate School before studying Modern History at Corpus Christi, Oxford.

After taking his degree in 1945, Fairlie began his journalism career at the *Manchester Evening News*, followed by a brief stint working at the *Observer*. During this time he married Lisette Todd Phillips, with whom he would have a son and two daughters.

In 1950, Fairlie joined the staff of *The Times*, rising at an early age to become the chief writer of its leaders on domestic politics. In 1954, he gave up the security of that post to assume the greater independence of a freelance writer, which he remained until the end of his life. As the author of the “Political Commentary” column in *The Spectator*—first under the nom de plume “Trimmer,” then under his own byline—he helped define the modern political column.

In September 1955, Fairlie devoted a column to how the friends and acquaintances of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, two members of the Foreign Office, widely believed to have defected to Moscow, tried to deflect press scrutiny from the men's families. He defined that network of prominent, well-connected people as “the Establishment,”

explaining:

“By the ‘Establishment,’ I do not only mean the centres of official power—though they are certainly part of it—but rather the whole matrix of official and social relations within which power is exercised. The exercise of power in Britain (more specifically, in England) cannot be understood unless it is recognised that it is exercised socially.”

The term was quickly picked up in newspapers and magazines all over London, making Fairlie famous. Though he would later determine that he hadn’t been the first to use “the Establishment” in this fashion—awarding the distinction to Emerson—the *Oxford English Dictionary* would cite Fairlie’s column as its *locus classicus*.

In 1965 he visited America for the first time, and fell immediately in love with the country. A few months later, he moved there for good. Fairlie was an anomaly in Washington, a Tory whose unique brand of conservatism frequently left him more sympathetic to the Democrats than the Republicans. These heterodox politics helped him find a perch at *The New Republic*, where he was a regular contributor from the mid-1970s until his death in 1990. In the mid-1980s, when he was unable to keep up payments on his apartment, he was even reduced to living in his office there, sleeping on a couch next to his desk.

Fairlie devoted much of the second half of his career to trying to explain America to Americans. Between 1976 and 1982, he wrote “Fairlie at Large,” a bi-weekly column for *The Washington Post*. In those pieces he often abandoned political subjects to write about American manners and morals: for instance, why Americans would do well to give up showers in favor of more contemplative baths. His romantic attachment to the possibilities of American life found its fullest expression in a long essay titled “Why I Love America,” which *The New Republic* published on July 4, 1983.

In the winter of 1990, Fairlie fell in the lobby of *The New Republic*, breaking a hip. After a brief hospitalization, he died on February 25.

2. Exposition

“Pub Talk and the King’s English” is a piece of exposition or expository writing. The word “exposition” quite literally means “to put forth, expound.” The purpose or intention of the writer of exposition (informative writing) is to inform or explain. He appeals to a reader’s understanding with verifiable facts and valid information, explaining and interpreting that material so that the reader will accept his point of view or explanation. Thus he must organize and develop his thought objectively and present it with honesty and completeness so that the reader will have confidence in what he is saying.

Exposition is the most common kind of writing, for it is applicable to anything which challenges the understanding—the definition of a word, the structure of a plant, the meaning of a historical event, the significance of a philosophical system, etc.

The writer generally makes a statement of the central thought or of his purpose quite early. This statement is sometimes called the “thesis” and may even be the title of the piece. Sometimes the writer may first present and develop his facts and make his general statement as a conclusion at the end. The thesis may be supported and developed in a variety of ways. Some of the methods usually employed are: comparison, contrast, analogy, identification, illustration, analysis, definition, etc. The writer may use any one of these methods or any combination of these methods.

3. “Strange News of the Intercepting of Certain Letters”

Thomas Nashe took part in the Martin Marprelate controversy, answering attacks made on the Church of England by a Puritan group of writers known as Martin Marprelate. Using the pen name “Pasquil,” Nashe may have written several satiric pamphlets, of which *An Almond for a Parrot* (1590) is the only one attributed to him with conviction. Nashe also took part in a violent literary controversy with the poet Gabriel Harvey and his brother Richard. Richard Harvey had been extremely critical of Nashe’s “Preface to Greene’s *Menaphon*,” and Nashe retaliated in *Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil* (1592). The work, a prose satire, was in part an attack on the Harveys, as well as on Nashe’s opponents in the Marprelate controversy; it also protests against the public’s neglect of worthy writers. Gabriel Harvey wrote an unpleasant account of Greene’s final days in his *Four Letters* the same year, and Nashe responded by writing *Four Letters Confuted* to defend his dead friend’s memory. The latter was published in 1593, and is also known as “Strange News of the Intercepting of Certain Letters.”

Detailed Study of the Text

1. Pub Talk and the King’s English (Title)

It means an interesting pub talk which centered around the meaning of the phrase, “the King’s English.”

King’s English (or Queen’s English): Supposedly correct or standard English (especially British English) as to grammar and pronunciation, so called from the

notion of royal sanction. When the ruling monarch is a queen, it is called “the Queen’s English.”

2. Conversation is the most sociable of all human activities. (Para. 1)

More than any other human activity, conversation helps to promote an agreeable, pleasant and informal relationship among people. This opening sentence of Paragraph 1 is the thesis statement of the essay.

sociable: friendly or agreeable, especially in an easy, informal way

3. And it is an activity only of humans. (Para. 1)

And conversation is an activity which is found only among human beings (animals and birds are not capable of conversation).

4. However intricate the ways in which...name of conversation. (Para. 1)

No matter how complicated the manner in which animals make known their intentions to each other, they do not go in for any activity which might rightly be called conversation.

1) **however intricate:** no matter how intricate, complicated

2) **communicate:** to give or exchange information, signals or messages in any way, as by talk, gestures, writing, etc.

3) **deserves the name of:** to have a right to be called; to be worthy of the name of

5. The charm of conversation is that it does...or just glows. (Para. 2)

A mixed metaphor. The writer in the same sentence compares “conversation” to a stream which meanders and leaps, and also to fire which glows and sparkles. The writer may excuse himself by saying that he was not “composing a piece of prose for print.” It does not need a special topic to start a conversation. Anything may start a good conversation. And once started no one knows how or where it will end. That’s why conversation is delightful and charming.

1) **meanders or leaps:** (like a stream) to flow placidly and aimlessly or to flow swiftly and joyously onwards

2) **sparkles or just glows:** (like fire) to burn steadily without flame or to burn brightly throwing off sparks

6. The enemy of good conversation...“something to say.” (Para. 2)

Good conversation is generally spoilt by people who think they have a lot of important things to say.

7. Conversation is not for making a point. (Para. 2)

Conversation is not for persuading others to accept our idea or point of view. In a conversation we should not try to establish the force of an idea or argument.

8. **There is no winning in conversation. (Para. 2)**

In a conversation one doesn't try to prove oneself right and the others wrong. We may argue but we needn't try to convince others that they are wrong and we are right.

9. **In fact, the best conversationalists are those who are prepared to lose. (Para. 2)**

In fact a person who really enjoys and is skilled at conversation will not argue to win or force others to accept his point of view.

10. **They are ready to let it go. (Para. 2)**

They are ready to give up the opportunity to tell one of their best anecdotes (because the conversation has moved on to other subjects).

11. **Paragraph 2**

In Paragraph 2 the writer explains what a good conversation is. According to his opinion, a good conversation does not really start from anywhere, and no one has any idea where it will go. A good conversation is not for making a point. Argument may often be a part of it, but the purpose of the argument is not to convince. When people become serious and talk as if they have something very important to say, when they argue to convince or to win their point, the conversation is spoilt.

12. **Perhaps it is because of my upbringing...of its own. (Para. 3)**

Perhaps it is because I've spent so much of my time in English pubs that I think bar conversation has a special charm.

1) **upbringing**: the training and education received while growing up. This is an exaggeration of the author for he didn't really grow up in a pub. He was only a frequenter of pubs. Note the light tone of the sentence, which he uses throughout his essay.

2) **of its own**: belonging strictly to it (to bar conversation); specially belonging to it

13. **Bar friends are not deeply involved in each other's lives. (Para. 3)**

People who meet each other for a drink in a pub are not intimate friends for they are not deeply absorbed or engrossed in each other's lives.

14. **The fact that their marriages may be...not a concern. (Para. 3)**

It is not a matter of interest or importance if their marriages are breaking up, or their love affairs have broken or they are just cross or grouchy.

1) **on the rocks**: (*colloquial*) in or into a condition of ruin or catastrophe. Here the word "rocks" is used figuratively, originally used to describe a ship wrecked on the rocks.

2) **get up on the wrong side of the bed**: to be cross or in a bad temper for the day

15. **They are like the musketeers of Dumas who... and feelings. (Para. 3)**

A simile. The three musketeers in Dumas' novel were very close friends. They supported each other with their fortunes and their lives, yet they showed no curiosity in, nor tried to find out anything about each other's private lives. Bar friends, likewise, do not probe deep into each other's lives, nor do they try to find out the inmost thoughts and feelings of their drinking companions. This is only true of male bar friends, and all bar friends used to be men. Women are now bar friends and exchange great intimacies.

1) **delve**: to search energetically

e.g. He *delved* into the history of his village.

2) **the recesses of**: the inner hidden parts of something

16. **It was on such an occasion the other evening...was a focus. (Para. 4)**

The conversation rambled along aimlessly without a focal subject. They talked about the most common things and also made some remarks about the planet Jupiter. Then suddenly a magical transformation took place and there was a focal subject to talk about.

1) **desultorily**: (*formal*) done without any particular plan or purpose

2) **alchemy**: figuratively used here, meaning the seemingly miraculous change of a thing into something better

17. **...it was not something that was pressing on her mind... (Para. 4)**

It wasn't something in her mind that was calling for immediate attention.

18. **"Someone told me the other day...properly use." (Para. 5)**

This is a short transition paragraph, introducing the focal subject of the conversation—the King's English as a term of criticism. The term "the King's English" is generally regarded by most people as referring to standard or correct English, i.e. good English which everyone should try to imitate. Now the speaker says the term refers to English that should not be used. Instead of being praised, the term is now criticized.

19. **The glow of the conversation burst into flames. (Para. 6)**

A metaphor, conversation is being compared to a fire. The conversation became spirited and exciting.

20. **...and of course the promise, made in all such conversation...in the morning. (Para. 6)**

Some of us promised, as people usually do in all conversation when they come across an unsettled question, to look up reference books (dictionaries and so on) next morning to find out the exact meaning of the King's English.

21. That would settle it...go ignorantly on. (Para. 6)

By looking up reference books one could settle the right or wrong of an argument. The reference books would prove or refute the allegation of the speaker that the King's English is a term of criticism. However, there is no need to decide who is right or wrong in a conversation: It could go on without anybody knowing who is right or wrong.

22. It was an Australian who had given...of convicts. (Para. 7)

When the speaker explained that the definition was given to her by an Australian, her listeners immediately made some sharp cutting replies saying it was not surprising to hear Australians talk such nonsense because they were descendants of convicts.

1) **tart remarks:** sharp, cutting remarks

2) **descendants of convicts:** implying the Australians are crude, unrefined people. See Note 6 to the text about descendants of convicts. Australians take great pride in being descended from convicts these days.

23. We had traveled in five minutes to Australia. (Para. 7)

A metaphor. Though they were in an English pub, their conversation covered topics about Australia and the Australians.

24. Of course, there would be resistance to the King's English in such a society. (Para. 7)

Of course in Australia where the people are descendants of convicts, (hence belonging to the lower classes) there will be resistance to the use of the King's English, a language used by the upper class. And this is true in New Zealand too. Colonies resent the fact that the colonizer looks down on their accents. Local accents are acceptable in England on radio and TV now, but in the past only the Queen's English was used. Attitudes to accent have changed hugely in Britain and Australia.

25. Look at the language barrier between...Norman conquerors. (Para. 8)

The Norman rulers, king and nobles, spoke French at court and the conquered Saxon peasants spoke English and refused to learn the French of their masters, hence they had difficulty communicating with each other.

26. Who was right, who was wrong, did not matter. (Para. 8)

Reaffirming the same idea expressed in Paragraph 6: "but conversation does not need to be settled; it could still go ignorantly on."

27. The conversation was on wings. (Para. 8)

A metaphor, comparing conversation to a bird flying and soaring. The conversation soon became spirited and exciting.

28. worth the reconsidering (Para. 9)

Same as "worth reconsidering." The definite article "the" gives a greater noun

force to the gerund “reconsidering.” Some grammarians call such gerunds “verbal nouns.”

29. It is a pig in its sty; it is pork (*porc*) on the table. (Para. 9)

When the animal is still alive in its sty, it is called a “pig.” But when it is killed and its meat served as a dish on the table it (or its meat) is called “pork.” “Pig” is an Anglo-Saxon word while “pork” comes from the French word “porc.”

sty: a place where pigs are kept, also pigsty

30. They are cattle in the fields, but we sit down to beef (*boeuf*). (Para. 9)

These animals are called “cattle” when they are alive and feeding in the fields, but when we sit down at the table to eat, we call their meat “beef.” The word “beef” comes from the French word “boeuf.”

31. Even if our menus were not written...Norman English. (Para. 9)

In English restaurants, especially in high-class restaurants, the names of the dishes on the menus are quite often in French. This is done out of snobbery because in Western countries people consider French food to be the best. But even if they wrote their menus in English, they would have to use many words, such as pork, beef, veal, poultry, etc., derived from French words, which were first introduced into English by the Norman rulers.

1) **out of snobbery:** in order to show one’s superior tastes in the matter of food and to show one’s linguistic sophistication

2) **Norman English:** words and phrases introduced into the English language by the Norman rulers

32. What all this tells us is of...Norman Conquest. (Para. 9)

After the Norman Conquest, the Norman kings and nobles used French and tried to impose this language on the conquered English who persisted in using their own language. This resulted in a widening of the class gap in the culture of England.

33. The Saxon peasants who tilled the land...Norman tables. (Para. 10)

The poor Saxon peasants, who belonged to the oppressed class, could not afford the meat the Norman conquerors ate. Hence the names of the meat, derived from French, reflect the class difference at that time.

34. ...the Norman lords of course turned up their noses at it. (Para. 10)

Naturally the Norman rulers scorned the cheap rabbit meat. It would lower their social position if they ate the cheap rabbit meat eaten by the poor Saxon peasants.

35. So rabbit is still rabbit on our tables...of *lapin*. (Para. 10)

As the Norman rulers scorned rabbit meat, it is still called by its Anglo-Saxon

name “rabbit.” If the Norman rulers had liked it, they would have given it a name derived from the French word, “*lapin*.”

rendering: expressing or presenting something in a particular way

36. **As we listen today to the arguments...the Saxon peasant. (Para. 11)**

When we listen to the merits and demerits of bilingual education, we should try to think as the Saxon peasants did when two languages (English and Norman French) were being used in England.

1) **bilingual education:** using two languages in teaching, for example, using English and Chinese to teach Chinese students English; being educated through the use of two languages

2) **into the shoes:** to think as if one were in the position of the Saxon peasant, i.e., as if one were a Saxon peasant. The original expression is “to be in another’s shoes,” meaning to be in another’s position.

e.g. If I were *in your shoes* I would take the job in Shanghai.

37. **The new ruling class had built a cultural barrier...his own language. (Para. 11)**

The new ruling class, by using French instead of English, made it difficult for the English to accept or absorb the culture of the rulers.

barrier: originally, a fortress, stockade, etc. for defending an entrance or gate; a thing that prevents passage or approach; obstruction, as a fence, wall, etc.; here it means anything that holds apart, separates, or hinders.

e.g. racial *barrier*; *barriers* to progress

38. **There must have been a great deal...by the English... (Para. 11)**

The English must have felt greatly humiliated when they were forced to listen to and use a foreign language and to accept a foreign culture.

39. **“The King’s English”—if the term...become French. (Para. 11)**

If the term “the King’s English” had existed at that time it had become French, for then the King spoke French and not English.

40. **And here in America now...heirs to it. (Para. 11)**

The meaning of “it” is not clear. “It” perhaps refers to cultural humiliation. In America today we are facing the same problem that existed in England 900 years ago, the problem of having two languages (English and Spanish in some parts of the US) existing side by side. The Spanish speakers feel the same cultural humiliation as the Saxons, from English being the language of the powerful.

41. **...“thou clipst the King’s English.” (Para. 12)**

Middle English. In modern English it would read: “you clip the King’s English.”

clip: to abbreviate (as a word or a customary sequence of sounds) in speech or writing in some way (as “n’kyou” for “thank you”)

42. **Is the phrase in Shakespeare? That would be the confirmation...use. (Para. 12)**
Is the phrase “the King’s English” in Shakespeare’s works? If he used it, that would prove the term was in general use at that time.
Shakespeare: synecdoche, the person standing for his works
43. **...when Mistress Quickly in...in a rage... (Para. 12)**
Mistress Quickly is a character in Shakespeare’s play, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.
1) **Mistress Quickly:** the servant to Doctor Caius
2) ***The Merry Wives of Windsor*:** The exact date of this comedy or farce is uncertain. It was first published in 1602, though believed to have been written prior to 1597, during Shakespeare’s second period (1595–1601), a period of mature power in comedy and history plays. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is said to have been written at the request of Queen Elizabeth, who desired to see Falstaff (an immortal comic character created by Shakespeare in *Henry IV*) in love.
3) **master:** referring to Doctor Caius, a French physician in the play
44. **...“here will be an old abusing of God’s patience and the King’s English”... (Para. 12)**
There will be a great trying of one’s patience and plentiful misuse of the King’s English. This is a direct quotation from the play (see Note 12 to the text). “Old” means that it has happened before.
1) **abusing:** one word but used in two senses
a. take unfair or undue advantage of (one’s patience)
b. improper or incorrect use of language (the King’s English)
2) **God’s patience:** No matter how patient you are, you won’t be able to bear him, because he will even try God’s patience. God is more patient than any human being.
45. **...and it rings true. (Para. 12)**
It sounds true. It gives people the impression that Mistress Quickly’s statement is true.
46. **After five centuries of growth...the conqueror... (Para. 13)**
After 500 years of development, after struggling and contending with the French of the Norman rulers, English succeeded in absorbing the French elements. English survived and became once more the universal language of England.
1) **five centuries:** The Normans, under William I, conquered England in 1066 and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was probably written prior to 1597—a time span of roughly 500 years between the two events.
2) **the conquered conquering the conqueror:** This is true in both senses. The Norman rulers and the French language they used were both absorbed by

the English.

47. ...English had come royally into its own. (Para. 13)

The English language received proper recognition and was used by the king once more.

1) **come into one's own:** to receive what properly belongs to one, especially acclaim or recognition

2) **royally:** The King of England now spoke English (not French), so the term “the King’s English” became appropriate. English received the recognition of the King, too.

48. There was a King’s (or Queen’s) English to be proud of. (Para. 14)

The English of this period (Shakespeare’s time), whether called the King’s (or Queen’s) English, was something Englishmen could be proud of.

49. The Elizabethans blew on it as on...of the earth. (Para. 14)

A simile, the English language being compared to the seeds of the dandelion. The Elizabethan writers spread the English language far and wide.

Elizabethan: (*noun*) an English person, especially a writer, of the time of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603)

50. “The King’s English”...racial discrimination. (Para. 14)

The use of “the King’s English” (standard, correct English) was no longer a form of racial discrimination. The use of English was no longer restricted to a certain race or class. After the Norman Conquest the king and nobles used French and the oppressed Saxon peasants used English. Now, English is used both by the king and common people in England.

51. The phrase has always been used...lower classes. (Para. 15)

The phrase, the King’s English, has always been used disparagingly and jokingly by the lower classes. The working people very often make fun of the proper and formal language of the educated people.

52. ...will lose his control...ordinary folk. (Para. 15)

Dr. Caius may lose control of himself and use the strong language that ordinary people would use in such circumstances. The language of the ordinary people is more vigorous, direct and straightforward. The educated people would speak euphemistically or in a roundabout way.

53. If the King’s English is “English... should be spoke.” (Para. 15)

The educated people (teachers, grammarians, etc.) insist that one must use the King’s English, i.e. speak English as it should be spoken. But the working people,

members of the so-called lower classes, mock and jeer at the people by replying in non-standard English that one should speak “English as it should be spoke.”

“English as it should be spoke”: “Spoke” instead of “spoken” is considered a grammatical mistake of the uneducated. “Spoke,” however, did exist earlier as a past participle form.

54. The rebellion against a cultural dominance is still there. (Para. 15)

There still exists in the working people, as in the early Saxon peasants, a spirit of opposition to the cultural authority of the ruling class.

55. There is always a great danger...things for us. (Para. 16)

There is always a great danger that we might forget that words are only symbols and take them for things they are supposed to represent. For example, the word “dog” is a symbol representing a kind of animal. We mustn’t regard the word “dog” as being the animal itself.

56. ...and the King’s English, like...representation of reality. (Para. 16)

The term “the King’s English” or the Anglo-French used by the Norman rulers only represents the language used by the ruling class (or the king). It represents the language used by a certain class.

57. ...but it should not be laid down...change from below. (Para. 16)

People should not be ordered to speak the King’s English and they should be allowed to introduce changes into the language.

1) **lay down an edict:** to issue an order or decree (by an official authority)

2) **made immune to:** exempt from or protected against (something harmful)

58. I have an unending love affair with dictionaries... (Para. 17)

A metaphor, his eager interest in dictionaries is compared to having a love affair. I’ve always had an intense and eager interest in dictionaries.

59. The King’s English is a model...not to be an ultimatum. (Para. 17)

The King’s English sets up an excellent standard for us to imitate, for we can gain a lot of useful knowledge or information by studying it, but people shouldn’t be forced to accept it.

60. So we may return to my beginning. (Para. 18)

The writer realizes he has been digressing from his subject by discussing the King’s English at length, so he comes back to his central theme—conversation.

61. Even with the most educated...in conversation. (Para. 18)

Even the most educated and literate people use non-standard, informal, colloquial

English in their conversation. Even the most educated and literate people do not use standard, formal English all the time in their conversation.

the King's English slips and slides: A metaphor, to slide on a slippery surface, to lose footing, hence to make a mistake, fall into error. The English one uses is no longer absolutely correct.

62. ...punctuates his words as he speaks... (Para. 18)

He speaks as if he was inserting punctuation marks in his speech to emphasize and accentuate what he is saying.

63. When E. M. Forster...in the image. (Para. 18)

We become suddenly alert and interested because the phrase "the sinister corridor of our age" is so vivid and the image created by the metaphor in one's mind is powerful and even frightening.

1) **"the sinister corridor of our age"**: A metaphor, comparing the things we do, the road we travel in this age to a corridor. In our age people are traveling along a sinister road doing all kinds of evil things.

2) **sit up at:** (*colloquial*) to become suddenly alert

64. But if E. M. Forster sat in our living room...to leave. (Para. 18)

If E. M. Forster in an ordinary conversation in our living room used this kind of formal literary language we would have every right to ask him to leave the room. If Forster used this kind of language in an ordinary conversation he would be behaving in a very pompous manner, and no interesting conversation would be possible with a man using this kind of formal language, so the host would be justified in asking him to leave.

65. Other people may celebrate...18th century Paris... (Para. 19)

Other people may praise and honor the supposed grand conversations of distinguished and eminent people in the great salons of 18th century Paris.

1) **great minds:** people with great minds; distinguished eminent people

2) **salon:** a drawing room of a private home in French-speaking countries. In the drawing room of famous people, regular meetings of literary and artistic people were held. In such meetings conversation was supposed to be witty and learned. Paris in the 18th century was famous for such salon meetings.

66. ...but one suspects that the great minds...food and the wine. (Para. 19)

But we suspect that great minds also liked gossiping and commenting on the quality of the food and the wine. This supposition is supported by the example given in the next sentence.

67. **...the only difference...in their intentions. (Para. 19)**
The only difference between Mme. Deffand's cook and the supreme chef Brinvilliers lay in their intentions and attitudes, i.e. how they treated their cooking.
68. **Otherwise one will bind the conversation...here and there. (Para. 20)**
A metaphor. Looking up the dictionary in the middle of a conversation will, like a rope or band, tie up the conversation. Otherwise one will tie up the conversation and will not let it flow freely.
69. **We would never have gone to Australia...Norman Conquest. (Para. 20)**
A metaphor, comparing talking about Australians and language used during Norman ruling in England to going to Australia and going back in time to the Norman Conquest. We would never have talked about Australia, nor about the language barrier that existed in England after the Norman Conquest.
70. **Perhaps above all, one would not...raised the subject... (Para. 21)**
One would not have thought with interest about the woman who raised this topic.
musketeer: In Paragraph 3, the writer compares bar friends or companions to the musketeers of Dumas. Hence, this woman, a bar friend, is called a musketeer.
71. **The bother about teaching...all conversation. (Para. 21)**
A biting satirical sentence, deriding people who ruin good conversation by trying to talk "sense." They behave just like chimpanzees which have been taught to talk. Chimpanzees, like all other nonhuman animals, are not capable of conversation.

Key to Exercises

III. Paraphrase

1. And conversation is an activity which is found only among human beings.
2. Conversation is not for persuading others to accept our idea or point of view. In a conversation we should not try to establish the force of an idea or argument.
3. In fact a person who really enjoys and is skilled at conversation will not argue to win or force others to accept his point of view.
4. People who meet each other for a drink in the bar of a pub are not intimate friends for they are not deeply absorbed or engrossed in each other's lives.
5. The conversation could go on without anybody knowing who was right or wrong.

6. These animals are called cattle when they are alive and feeding in the fields; but when we sit down at the table to eat, we call their meat beef.
7. The new ruling class by using French instead of English made it difficult for the English to accept or absorb the culture of the rulers.
8. The English language received proper recognition and was used by the king once more.
9. The phrase, the King's English, has always been used disparagingly and jokingly by the lower classes. The working people very often make fun of the proper and formal language of the educated people.
10. There still exists in the working people, as in the early Saxon peasants, a spirit of opposition to the cultural authority of the ruling class.
11. There is always a great danger that we might forget that words are only symbols and take them for things they are supposed to represent.

IV. Practice with Words and Expressions

A.

1. *on the rocks: (colloquial)* in or into a condition of ruin or catastrophe
2. *get out of bed on the wrong side:* to be cross or in a bad temper for the day
3. *on wings (on the wing):* flying or while flying; in motion or while moving or traveling
4. *turn up one's nose at:* to sneer at, to scorn
5. *in another's shoes:* in another's position
6. *come into its own:* to receive what properly belongs to one, especially acclaim or recognition
7. *sit up at: (colloquial)* to become suddenly alert

B.

1. *Ignorant* implies a lack of knowledge, either generally (an ignorant man) or on some particular subject (ignorant of the reason of their quarrel); *illiterate* implies a failure to conform to some standard of knowledge, especially an inability to read or write; *uneducated* implies a lack of formal or systematic education, as of that required in schools (his brilliant, though uneducated mind); *unlearned* suggests a lack of learning, either generally or in some specific subject (unlearned in science).
2. *Scoff* implies a showing of scorn or contempt as a manifestation of doubt, cynicism, irreverence, etc. (they scoffed at his diagnosis of the disease); *sneer* implies a display of contempt, disparagement, etc. as by a derisive smile or scornful insinuating tone of voice ("You call this a dinner?" he sneered.); *jeer* suggests openly insulting, coarse remarks or mocking laughter (the crowd jeered at the speaker); *gibe* implies a taunting or mocking, either in amiable teasing or in sarcastic reproach (he kept gibing at me for my clumsiness); *flout* suggests a treating with contempt or disdain, especially by ignoring or rejecting (to flout the law).

C.

1. No one knows how the conversation will go as it moves aimlessly and desultorily or as it becomes spirited and exciting.
2. It is not a matter of interest if they are cross or in a bad temper.
3. Bar friends, although they met each other frequently, did not delve into each other's lives or the recesses of their thoughts and feelings.
4. Suddenly a miraculous change in the conversation took place.
5. The conversation suddenly became spirited and exciting.
6. The Elizabethan writers spread the English language far and wide.
7. I have always had an eager interest in dictionaries.
8. Even the most educated and literate people use non-standard, informal, colloquial English in their conversation.
9. Otherwise one will tie up the conversation and will not let it go on freely.
10. We would never have talked about Australia, or the language barrier in the time of the Norman Conquest.

V. Translation

A.

1. 动物之间的信息交流，不论其方式何等复杂，也称不上谈话。
2. 闲聊中常有争论，不过其目的并不是为了说服对方。闲聊之中不存在输赢胜负。
3. 或许是由于我年轻时常常光顾英国小酒馆的缘故，我觉得酒馆里的闲聊别有一番韵味。
4. 我不记得一起聊天的人是在什么情况下说出那句话来的——显然她不是有备而来，那也不是什么非说不可的要紧话——但是她那句话十分自然地融进了我们的闲谈里。
5. 每当上流社会想给“规范英语”制订一些条条框框时，总会遭到来自下层人民的抵制。
6. 词语本身并不是现实，它不过是用以表达现实的一种形式而已。标准英语就像诺曼人的盎格鲁式法语一样，也是一种对现实的阶级表达。
7. 让人们学着去讲规范英语也许不错，但不应当把它作为一条必须执行的法令，也不应当使它完全拒绝来自下层的改变。
8. 要是谁闲聊时像写文章那样标点分明，或者像写一篇要发表的散文一样咬文嚼字的话，那他一定是个最糟糕的聊天者。
9. 看到福斯特笔下写出“当今时代的阴森可怖的长廊”时，其用语之生动及由其所产生的有力甚至可怖的形象不禁令我们心头一震。
10. 那天晚上，如果我们当场弄清了“标准英语”的定义，也就不可能有那一场交谈了。

B.

第9段

有人举出了一个人所共知的例子，它至今仍然值得三思。我们谈到饭桌上的肉食时，使用法语词汇，而谈到提供此类肉食的牲畜时，则用盎格鲁—撒克逊语（英语单词）。在猪圈里

的是猪，饭桌上吃的是猪肉（来自法语 *porc*）。在地里放养的叫牛，餐桌上的叫牛肉（来自法语 *boeuf*）。鸡变成禽肉（法语叫 *poulet*）。牛犊变成小牛肉（法语叫 *veau*）。即使为了避免所谓的高雅，我们的菜单不用法语，但它所用的英语仍然是诺曼式的英语。所有这一切向我们表明在诺曼征服英国后所存在的深刻的阶级裂痕。

第 10 段

耕种土地、喂养牲畜的撒克逊农民吃不起肉，肉都到了诺曼人的桌上了。农民只能吃在大地上乱窜的兔子。既然这种肉很便宜，诺曼贵族自然不屑去吃。于是兔子肉和兔子用的是一个词，而没有变成法语 *lapin* 的某种翻版。

第 11 段

当我们今天听着关于用两种语言进行教育的争论时，我们应设身处地为当时的撒克逊农民想一想。新的统治阶级用法语来对抗撒克逊农民自己的语言，从而在农民周围建起一道文化屏障。当英国人在“觉醒的赫里沃德”这样的撒克逊领袖带领下起来造反时，他们一定在文化上经历了大量的羞辱。标准英语——如果那时候有这个的话——在当时已经变成法语。而九百年后我们在美国这儿仍然继承了这种影响。

Aids to “Read, Think and Comment”

“Life on the farm is an eternal battle against nature” is the topic sentence. This paragraph lacks unity. It is a bad piece of writing. The writer of this paragraph has completely forgotten about what he had started out to say. Instead of being an “eternal battle,” life in this paragraph becomes a pleasant and exciting experience, which it probably is, but which is not what the writer set out to prove.