

110 Other spoken features

SID: How are you feeling now?
 DAISY: **Mustn't complain**, a bit better.
 SID: What did the doctor say?
 DAISY: Well, I can't come home yet. **I mean**, he wants to do some more tests ...
 SID: **Mmm**.
 DAISY: **You know**, blood tests, to see if I've got enough iron and things in my blood.
 SID: I see. Oh, yes. **Bunch of flowers** for you.
 DAISY: Thanks.



1 Leaving out words

We sometimes leave out words when we are speaking: *Mustn't complain. Bunch of flowers for you.*

We only do this in very informal speech, and rarely in writing.

To be more exact, we say: *I mustn't complain. Here's a bunch of flowers for you.*

The words that we leave out are often the words that come at the beginning of a sentence (e.g. pronouns (*I, you*) and/or the auxiliary verb (*do, is*)) as these are usually clear from the situation:

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| A <i>How you doing?</i> | (How are you doing?) |
| B <i>Fine, thanks.</i> | (I'm fine, thanks.) |
| A <i>Coming to the party at the weekend?</i> | (Are you coming to the party ...?) |
| B <i>Don't know yet.</i> | (I don't know yet.) |

2 Common words and phrases

There are a few words and phrases that we use a lot in spoken English, but not in writing:

<i>Well,</i>	to pause before saying something to start talking about a subject that you have just mentioned	<i>It was quite ... er, well, it was embarrassing. Do you remember Chloe? Well, I've just heard that she's getting married.</i>
<i>Right,</i>	to get everyone's attention	<i>Right, have you all finished?</i>
<i>I mean,</i>	to explain/to correct something	<i>I mean, he wants to do some more tests. She plays the violin, I mean, the guitar ...</i>
<i>You know,</i>	to ensure the listener understands	<i>We went to the shop, you know, the one on the corner.</i>

3 Listening and responding

We often make noises or say things in a conversation to show we are listening:

'... he wants to do some more tests ...' **'Mmm.'**

'They're back over here for the summer ...' **'Really?'**

'And we want to see them but ...' **'Yeah, I know. It's difficult when you're working, isn't it?'**

4 things, stuff, kind of

There are times when we don't know or can't think of the exact words for what we want to say. If we don't know the words for nouns, we can use words like *thing(s)* or *stuff*:

- *thing(s)* for countable nouns: ... to see if I've got enough iron and **things** ... (e.g. minerals)
- *stuff* for uncountable nouns: *Have we got enough food and **stuff** for the party?* (e.g. drink)

We often use the word *thing* if we want to explain something but don't know the word for it: *It's a **thing** you use to open bottles. Have you got a **thing** for opening bottles?*

We can use *sort of* or *kind of* before a word if we don't want to be exact: *It's a **sort of** piano. He's **kind of** difficult – he wants everything to be exactly right. She just **sort of** walked out.*



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