

## Australian English

### A variety of accents

In the different parts of the world where English is used, different accents have developed. Australian English sounds quite different from American English and British English. We all speak English, yet we do not sound the same.

Australia is also home to many people who have migrated here from different parts of the world. This means that in Australia, students can hear a variety of accents in English, both native speaker and non-native speaker.

### Australian English

You might have noticed that Australians seem to speak quickly and it sounds as though they run their words together or leave off the ends of words. This is a feature of Australian English.

If you are finding it difficult to understand a conversation, try and guess what is being said from the situation or topic of the conversation. Otherwise, a useful strategy is to ask the speaker to repeat the words at a slower speed.

### Slang

Australians frequently use slang words. Some slang comes from either British or American English, but much is Australian. Some slang comes from shortening words and adding “ie”, “y”, or “o” to the ends of them. The following are some examples:

Breakfast → brekky    Chocolate → chockie    Afternoon → arvo

If there are words you do not understand, ask someone, or write down the word and ask someone about it at a later date.

### Politeness

You may find that Australians have a casual way of talking to one another. Even strangers may smile and say, “Good morning” if you are walking along the street.

Spoken Australian English does not use many politeness markers. You will notice that Australians use people’s first names once they have been introduced, especially within the age range of 18 to 50. However, “please” and “thank you” are commonly used, and it is important to use them in everyday situations like at a shop or buying a bus or train ticket.

### Swearing

Some Australians do use swear words in their everyday speech, especially when they are talking to each other. In public, most Australians are more careful of the language they use.

### Finishing conversations

It is quite common to hear Australians finish conversations with phrases like:



See you around.



You'll have to come over sometime.

**These phrases are not to do with making future plans or invitations, but are a way of finishing the conversation and are often used instead of saying “Good bye”.**

## Making suggestions

Often you will hear Australians make suggestions about plans for the future.

### Example 1



We should go to the movies one day.

Australian student to friend

**This is not an invitation; it is a suggestion. It depends on the response as to whether it becomes a plan to do something together.**

Mmmmm. (not very interested)



Friend's response no. 1

**This tells the Australian student that his/her friend is not interested in the suggestion. The friend might not continue with this conversation topic or perhaps make another suggestion about another activity.**

Yes, that sounds great. When would you like to go? What would you like to see?



Friend's response no. 2

**This tells the Australian student that his/her friend likes the idea and this leads to more questions about the activity. So the conversation could go on until a specific plan has been agreed upon.**

### Example 2



Are you going to Kim's party? We could go together.

Australian student to friend

**This is not an invitation to go to Kim's party. The Australian student assumes his/her friend is already going and so suggests they go together.**

## Use of indirect questions

To avoid being impolite, Australians will often use indirect language instead of direct language. To International students it might sound as if people are only making suggestions.



You could look at these types of issues in your reading.

Tutor to student

**The tutor is not making a suggestion which the student has the choice of rejecting, but is actually telling the student what he/she should be doing.**



You might like to help with the cleaning on Saturday.

Homestay parent to student

**This is not a suggestion. The homestay parent expects the student to help.**



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