

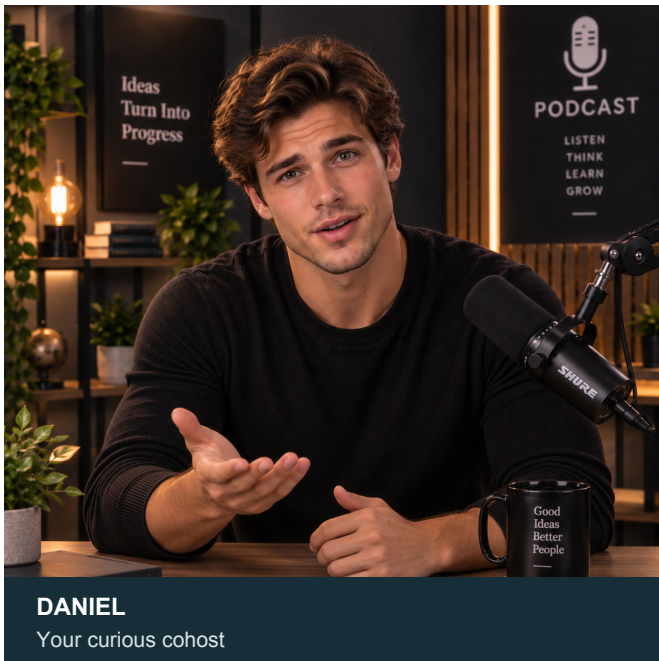


Planning a Trip

English listening & speaking with Daniel and Maya

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Practise useful English from this episode.

B1-B2 / 18:42 AUDIO / FULL TRANSCRIPT



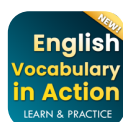
DANIEL
Your curious cohost



MAYA
Your English teacher

LISTEN. READ. SAY IT.

- 1 Listen once for the story.
- 2 Read along and notice useful expressions.
- 3 Choose one useful phrase and try saying it out loud.



Transcript edition 01

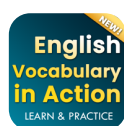
01 / 09



The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

00:00	What kind of trip?
Daniel	Welcome back! I'm Daniel, and I want a holiday. My current plan is "go somewhere nice." Maya says that plan contains fewer details than a blank postcard.
Maya	I'm Maya, your English teacher, and the postcard deserves some help. Start with the purpose: do you want to relax, explore a city, visit friends, or try something new? Then say how much time and money you have.
Daniel	I have five days and a budget that says "please don't book a private island." I want to see a new place, but I don't want a schedule that begins at five in the morning.
Maya	Good. You could say, "I'd like a five-day city break with time to explore, but I don't want to rush from place to place." "City break" means a short holiday in a city. "Rush around" is another way to describe moving too quickly.
Daniel	My friend says, "Let's just play it by ear." I imagine listening to a violin instead of booking a hotel. What does that expression really mean?
Maya	"Play it by ear" means decide as you go, without a fixed plan. That can be pleasant for a free afternoon, but you may still need to book transport and somewhere to sleep.
Daniel	So I can say, "Let's book the main things and play the rest by ear." That sounds more relaxed than either a minute-by-minute timetable or sleeping at a train station.
Maya	Exactly. Decide what is essential. Ask your travel partner, "What are your must-sees?" A "must-see" is a place or activity you strongly want to experience. Then ask what they would skip.
Daniel	I would skip an eight-hour museum marathon. I enjoy museums, but after three hours I start reading signs about emergency exits as if they're art.
Maya	That's useful information! You can say, "I'd rather visit one museum carefully than squeeze in four." "Squeeze in" means fit an activity into limited time. Your holiday should fit your energy, not only a list online.
Daniel	How do I suggest a destination without announcing it as a final decision? My friend has strong opinions about rain.
Maya	Try, "What do you think about spending a few days in Brighton?" or "Would you be interested in a coastal trip?" Questions invite a response. "I'm open to other ideas" tells them you haven't decided yet.
Daniel	And then we agree on a purpose, a budget, and two or three must-sees. That's already more useful than "somewhere nice."
Maya	It's a good starting point. Next we can compare how to get there without treating the cheapest ticket as the only cost.



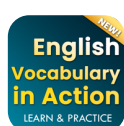


The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

02:41 Comparing ways to travel

- Daniel** I found a cheap flight, a train that looks comfortable, and a bus that might become a lifelong friendship with my knees. How do I compare them fairly?
- Maya** Compare total travel time, total cost, and convenience. A flight may look short, but include travel to the airport, check-in, and the journey from the arrival airport. Ask, "How long will it take door to door?"
- Daniel** "Door to door" means from my home to the place I'm staying. A one-hour flight could turn into seven hours of buses, waiting, and searching for my luggage.
- Maya** Right. Say, "The train costs more, but it takes us directly into the city centre." Or, "The bus is cheaper, whereas the train gives us more time to explore on the first day."
- Daniel** I see different fares: "flexible," "non-refundable," and "change fee." Which one should I read twice before clicking?
- Maya** All of them. "Flexible" often means changes are allowed under certain conditions, but the conditions vary. "Non-refundable" usually means you cannot get the money back if you cancel. Ask or read what happens if plans change.
- Daniel** The cheapest flight has a tiny bag allowance. My shoes might need their own ticket. How do I ask about luggage?
- Maya** "What luggage is included in this fare?" Check the size and weight limits, and whether a larger bag costs extra. A low starting price is less helpful if the things you need bring extra charges.
- Daniel** If we drive, can I say, "We'll split the fuel costs"? Or is "split" only for restaurant bills?
- Maya** You can split any shared cost. Also discuss parking, tolls, and who feels comfortable driving. Say, "Let's work out the total cost before we choose." "Work out" means calculate or figure out.
- Daniel** What about timing? I want to arrive while the hotel desk is open, not at midnight with a suitcase and a philosophical question.
- Maya** Exactly. Ask, "What time can we check in?" and compare that with your arrival time. If you arrive early, ask whether you can leave your bags. If you arrive late, confirm the check-in process beforehand.
- Daniel** My friend prefers the train, and I like the flight. How can I disagree without starting a transport debate that lasts longer than the trip?
- Maya** Try, "I see why you prefer the train. Could we compare the full journey times?" Acknowledge their reason, then ask for a fair comparison. You can make a joint decision from there.





The conversation

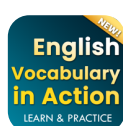
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

02:41 Comparing ways to travel (continued)

- Daniel** We did the maths. The train is only a little more expensive once the airport transfer and bag are included. I vote for a journey with fewer queues.
- Maya** A sensible choice. The phrase “once you include” is excellent for explaining why the headline price wasn’t the whole story.

05:36 Choosing somewhere to stay

- Daniel** Accommodation websites have fifty filters. If I choose them all, I will end up staying inside a search box. What should I decide first?
- Maya** Start with location, total price, and what you truly need. Say, “We’d like somewhere near public transport, with a private bathroom and a quiet room.” Then check the map and recent details carefully.
- Daniel** A place says “close to the centre.” That sounds good, but “close” might mean a brisk walk for an Olympic athlete. How do I make it specific?
- Maya** Ask, “How long does it take to reach the centre on foot or by public transport?” Also check the route yourself. A hotel can be near one attraction and far from everything else you plan to do.
- Daniel** I see a room for two people, but the bed looks narrow. May I ask whether it has one double bed or two single beds?
- Maya** Please do. “Could you confirm the bed arrangement?” is a useful phrase. You can add, “We’d prefer two separate beds.” Don’t assume a photo shows the exact room you’ll receive.
- Daniel** The rate says “breakfast available.” That doesn’t mean included, does it? I might pay extra for toast that costs more than the train.
- Maya** Correct. Ask, “Is breakfast included in the price? If not, how much is it?” Check taxes and other stated fees so you compare the total cost, not just the amount shown first.
- Daniel** What is the difference between “check-in” and “check-out”? I know they’re opposite, but I mix up which one happens while I’m half asleep.
- Maya** “Check in” is arrive and register; “check out” is leave and settle anything outstanding. Ask, “What time is check-in?” and “What time do we need to check out?” Those times affect your travel plans.
- Daniel** A guest review says the room was noisy at night, but another says it was peaceful. Which one do I believe?





The conversation

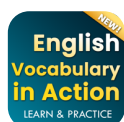
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

05:36 Choosing somewhere to stay (continued)

- Maya** Reviews describe individual experiences. Look for patterns and dates, then ask a direct question if noise matters: "Is there a room away from the street?" You can request one, but availability may vary.
- Daniel** I want to book before all the good places are gone, but I also want to understand the cancellation policy.
- Maya** Then pause and read it. "How late can I cancel without a charge?" and "What happens if I arrive after reception closes?" are practical questions. Keep a copy of your confirmation.
- Daniel** So the best room isn't just the prettiest photo. It has a clear total price, suitable location, and conditions we understand.
- Maya** Exactly. You're booking a real stay, not a photograph of a pillow.

08:22 Building a realistic itinerary

- Daniel** I made an itinerary with twelve places on day one. It looks impressive until I realise lunch has eight minutes and no location.
- Maya** An itinerary is a plan for what you'll do and when. Try grouping nearby activities. Leave time for travel, meals, and surprises. Say, "Let's do the museum and the market on the same day because they're close together."
- Daniel** How can I ask my friend which activity matters most? I don't want to remove their favourite castle just because I prefer a bakery.
- Maya** "Which two things would you be disappointed to miss?" is a useful question. Then explain yours. You can build around your top choices and leave the rest flexible.
- Daniel** I say, "I'd like to fit in a boat trip." Does "fit in" mean the same as "squeeze in"?
- Maya** They're similar. "Fit in" means find time for something. "Squeeze in" suggests the schedule is already tight. You might fit in a boat trip comfortably, but squeeze it in if you have no free time.
- Daniel** The museum needs advance tickets. Should we book that now and play the food stops by ear?
- Maya** That sounds sensible. Check opening hours and booking terms for time-sensitive activities. For ordinary meals, you can leave room to discover a place, unless you have a particular restaurant in mind.
- Daniel** What if it rains? My friend has made a dramatic speech about not trusting clouds.
- Maya** Make a simple backup plan: "If it rains, we'll go to the gallery instead of the park." "Instead of" introduces the alternative. A backup plan is especially helpful for outdoor activities.





FULL TRANSCRIPT / 05 OF 08

The conversation

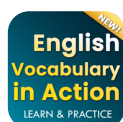
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08:22 Building a realistic itinerary (continued)

- Daniel** Could we keep one afternoon completely free? I want time to wander around, not only stand in lines behind other people with schedules.
- Maya** Definitely. "Wander around" means walk without a strict route. You can say, "Let's leave Friday afternoon open and see how we feel." Flexibility is part of a good plan.
- Daniel** I also need time to find breakfast. A holiday version of me is still a person who becomes strange when hungry.
- Maya** Then put meals and breaks in the plan. You don't have to book every sandwich, but you should allow time to eat. A relaxed itinerary is more likely to survive contact with reality.
- Daniel** Our new day one has a museum, lunch, the nearby market, and a free evening. It looks less impressive on paper and far more enjoyable in my mind.
- Maya** Exactly. A useful itinerary helps you experience the place; it isn't a contest to collect the most map pins.

10:59 Booking and confirming

- Daniel** We chose the train and a small hotel. I'm about to book both. What should I check before I press the final button?
- Maya** Check names, dates, times, the number of people, total cost, and conditions for changes. If you're booking for someone else, ask them to confirm their details exactly as required by the provider.
- Daniel** I once booked the right day in the wrong month. The confirmation looked beautiful until I read it carefully.
- Maya** That's why you check it again after payment. You can say, "I've received the confirmation, but the arrival date looks wrong. Could you help me correct it?" Contact the provider promptly.
- Daniel** What does "booking reference" mean? Is it the long code that looks like somebody dropped letters on a keyboard?
- Maya** Usually, yes. It's an identifier for your reservation. Keep it with your travel details. When you contact support, say, "My booking reference is..." and give the code they ask for.
- Daniel** The hotel asks for an arrival time. We're taking a train, so I know when it should arrive, but delays exist. How precise should I be?
- Maya** Give an estimate: "We expect to arrive around six in the evening." If your arrival changes, update them. "Around" shows the time is approximate.



Transcript edition 01

06 / 09



The conversation

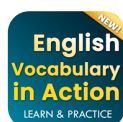
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

10:59 Booking and confirming (continued)

- Daniel** Could I write to the hotel, "Please confirm that breakfast is included and we have two separate beds"? I want to avoid discovering a surprise at midnight.
- Maya** That's clear and polite. Keep the answer with your booking. A written confirmation is especially useful for details you discussed separately from the original reservation.
- Daniel** So my final click isn't the end. I check the confirmation, save the reference, and tell my friend the details.
- Maya** Exactly. A quick review now can save a long conversation at the station later.

12:52 When plans change

- Daniel** The train company has changed our departure time. My first feeling is to stare at the message and hope the timetable feels sorry for me.
- Maya** Better to read what changed and what options are offered. Ask, "Is our ticket still valid for the new time?" or "Can we move to another service?" Use the provider's stated terms.
- Daniel** Our hotel check-in might be late. I could message, "Our train has been delayed. We now expect to arrive around nine. Is late check-in possible?"
- Maya** Perfect. It gives the reason, the new estimate, and a clear question. If you need a reply soon, use the contact method the hotel lists for urgent arrival issues.
- Daniel** My friend says, "The plan has fallen apart." That sounds dramatic. We still have a hotel, a museum ticket, and two sandwiches.
- Maya** "Fall apart" means stop working as planned. You can say, "The morning plan has fallen apart, but we can rearrange the afternoon." That is accurate and less frightening.
- Daniel** How do I rearrange without sounding like a manager giving orders on holiday?
- Maya** Offer options: "We could move the museum to Saturday, or skip the market. Which would you prefer?" That invites your friend into the decision.
- Daniel** If the museum ticket can't be changed, maybe we should contact them rather than assume. "Could we move our booking to a later time?"
- Maya** Yes. Ask as soon as you know the problem, and accept that the answer depends on the ticket's conditions. Keep track of any confirmed change.
- Daniel** We chose Saturday for the museum and kept Friday evening free. Our trip has not ended. My sandwich is also still here.
- Maya** A good plan can bend. Clear messages and flexible choices help it survive real life.





The conversation

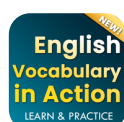
Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

14:44 Talking money with a travel partner

- Daniel** We have a shared budget, but I hate conversations about money. How do I tell my friend that a fancy restaurant is beyond my budget?
- Maya** Say it simply: "That restaurant looks lovely, but it's more than I want to spend on dinner. Could we find something less expensive?" You are talking about your limit, not judging their choice.
- Daniel** Can I say, "I can stretch my budget for one special meal, but not every night"? Is "stretch" natural here?
- Maya** Yes. "Stretch your budget" means spend a little more than planned or make limited money go further. Be clear which meaning you intend. "I can spend a little more for one special meal" is even clearer.
- Daniel** We paid for the hotel together. I covered the room, and my friend bought the train tickets. How do we make sure we end up paying fairly?
- Maya** Keep a simple list of shared costs. Say, "Let's work out what we've each paid and settle up after the trip." "Settle up" means pay what you owe so the amounts are fair.
- Daniel** I don't want to turn every coffee into a spreadsheet. Could we agree that small individual purchases are separate, while transport and the room are shared?
- Maya** Certainly. State the rule before the trip: "We'll split the hotel and transport, and each pay for our own food." It avoids guessing later.
- Daniel** What about an unexpected taxi if the train is late? Do we discuss it before getting in?
- Maya** If possible, yes. "This taxi will cost more, but it gets us to the hotel before reception closes. Are we both comfortable splitting it?" You can decide together.
- Daniel** Money talk is less awkward when it happens before somebody is standing at a counter with their card out.
- Maya** Exactly. Honest, early conversation is kinder than a surprise bill after the holiday.

16:37 Plan the trip with us

- Daniel** Let's do a quick role-play. We have five days, a moderate budget, and a friend who dislikes rushing. You ask me what matters.
- Maya** What are your two must-sees, and what kind of pace would you enjoy?
- Daniel** I'd love to visit the old market and take a boat trip. I'd rather leave one afternoon open than squeeze in every attraction. What would you like?





The conversation

Read along with Daniel and Maya. Times mark the start of each chapter.

16:37 Plan the trip with us (continued)

- Maya** I'd like a museum visit. The train takes us into the city centre, and the hotel is nearby. Shall we choose those before booking anything else?
- Daniel** Yes. Let's compare the full travel cost, confirm what the hotel price includes, and check whether the museum needs advance tickets.
- Maya** Good. Our train leaves in the morning. The museum has a timed entry on Saturday. What will we do if it rains on Friday?
- Daniel** We'll visit the market's indoor section and save the boat trip for a clearer day. We can play the rest of Friday by ear.
- Maya** Excellent. What will you say when you email the hotel about the beds?
- Daniel** "Hello, our booking reference is in the confirmation. Could you confirm that the room has two separate beds and tell us when check-in starts?" Short and clear.
- Maya** Listeners, pause and add one question of your own. Ask about a cost, a date, a journey, or an activity. A useful travel plan starts with useful questions.
- Daniel** Today's phrases: "play it by ear" means decide as you go; "squeeze in" means fit something into a tight schedule; "work out" means calculate; and "settle up" means pay your share.
- Maya** And remember "door to door" for the complete journey, and "check in" for arriving at your accommodation. Choose two expressions and make sentences about a trip you would enjoy.
- Daniel** Mine is, "Let's work out the train cost, then play the boat trip by ear." I have improved my blank-postcard plan.
- Maya** You have. Thanks for listening, everyone. May your itinerary have room for lunch, and we'll see you in the next episode.

