

## Preface to the Second Edition

### The Value of Text

There is no point in learning a language without getting inside its cultural wealth which is stored in the texts created by outstanding users of that language.

Imagine that the words of a language are like a heap of colourful treads and the grammar of that language is like the canvas waiting for the words to be woven into the texture of a rug. Almost each of us can produce reasonably tolerable patterns of rugs for everyday usage. Few are those who can weave a heap of treads into a bare framework to form the intricate pattern of a masterpiece.

I have known a number of people who have learned thousands and thousands of words but have never dared enter into conversation with a native speaker of English.

There are also people who believe in studying grammar and making hundreds of grammar drills demanding the use of *The Past Perfect Simple* or *The Past Simple Tense*, and never thinking that verb tenses express the self-awareness of the speaker or writer as to where and when they belong in this newly-found space of verbal self-expression where our personal universe has found an opening into the fascinating and yet strange English-speaking world.

Language as a means of communication relies on our common nature and experience as human beings. What connects us is our common planet with its environmental imperatives; our merging histories; our need for food, shelter, company, fun, space; our likes and dislikes; our dreams of adventure and travel; our fears and our joy; our mutual interests and our controversies.

Languages, however, are not the same. Thus, original users of Bulgarian make poor outcome in English for the simple reason that they try to make a verbal picture using words and phrases like in a puzzle and forget that they cannot make a picture of Big Ben using a set of pieces designed to produce the picture of an alarm clock. This is so because languages reflect different cultures.

Understanding other cultures in a globally connected world and the ability to express our own identity are the two sides of the same medal. Being an efficient English language user has nothing to do with 'translating' words that have been used to form a mental picture or a concept in a Bulgarian contextual environment. Learning to be efficient in language production is the first step to learning how to become an internationally recognized professional person. Language as a means of self-expression is the set of tools which is used to reshape our innermost universe into speech and text which are to be shared with the rest of the world.

Therefore, the efficiency of language learning depends on our comprehension of culturally varied texts and ability to reproduce their contextual framework in our own production.

This exercise book contains 48 excerpts from original, not adapted texts, taken from various functional fields and generated to the best standards of British and American English for artistic and academic use.

They can be used as given, but also they can make good dictations, listening comprehension interactive tasks, background to your oral and written text production and mainly – as demo set of varying styles of writing.

*Feb. 2007*

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## Part One

# ***LEARNING MODE***

***Task:***

***Read and translate  
the texts into  
Bulgarian***

***Try to work out the meaning of the language units  
within the framework of each text and  
preserve its style and register***





The history of civilization is an uninterrupted sequence of wars and violence. The count of those killed in wars and inter-state conflicts runs to hundreds of millions. However, there are no statistics whatsoever for the victims of domestic violence, such as despotic and government terror, religious and civil wars, persecutions and repressions, and crime. Some sources say that mankind has probably spent twice or twice and a half as much resources on wars and postwar restoration, as it has on peaceful life and constructive activities. Such is the bitter price of violence.

History, however, can be viewed from a different angle: as a ceaseless effort to contain violence, to hold it within certain limits, to control it and to make its impact less destructive, particularly in the spiritual sphere. Indeed, the confrontation of humanism and violence is at the core of history – both in politics and in the human mind. The fact that the confrontation has been going on through the ages, testifies against its random nature.

This is an important point. Violence has, at times, wiped out entire nations and civilizations. Violence has led to monstrous crimes. There were times, when it seemed that all spiritual life had ceased, morality had become dumb and living and bold thought was lying low. At times humanism fell victim to circumstances. More frequently, however, it was knowingly and purposely persecuted, often with sadistic cruelty. Nonetheless, humanism has survived and is increasingly becoming an imperative of our times.

The striking viability of humanism can be accounted for neither by chance, nor by miracle.

The accretion of civilized tradition is, in effect, an assertion of humanism.

#### **Key to contextual meanings and suggested Bulgarian versions:**

runs to – reaches (възлиза на)  
 no statistics whatsoever – no statistics of any sort (каквато и да била статистика)  
 persecutions – the state of being allowed no peace – *pl.* (преследвания, гонения)  
 repressions – suffering from being allowed no outlet – *pl.* (репресии)  
 to contain – to limit (да ограничим)  
 impact – force on collision (въздействие; действие; сблъсък; *без превод – с редуция към "насилие"*)  
 testifies against – gives evidence (свидетелства срещу; е свидетелство срещу)  
 random nature – without aim or purpose (случаен, произволен характер)  
 wiped out – destroyed completely (заличавал/о, унищожавал/о напълно)  
 dumb – speechless (занемял)  
 was lying low – kept quiet and hidden (се е снишила)  
 fell victim to – made the victim of (става жертва на)  
 nonetheless – nevertheless (независимо от това)

viability – capability of surviving without outside help (жизнена устойчивост)  
accounted for – explained (да бъде обяснен/а)  
accretion – growing (нарастване)  
in effect – in fact (всъщност, на практика)  
assertion – insisting upon the rights of (утвърждаване)

## 2

## *Field: Fiction (AE)*

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The professor had two houses, one inside the other. He lived with his wife and child in the outer house, which was comfortable, clean, disorderly, not quite big enough for all his books, her papers, their daughter's bright deciduous treasures. The roof leaked after heavy rains early in the fall before the wood swelled, but a bucket in the attic sufficed. No rain fell upon the inner house, where the professor lived without his wife and child, or so he said jokingly sometimes: 'Here's where I live. My house.' His daughter often added without resentment, for visitor's information, 'It started out to be for me, but it's really his.' And she might reach in to bring forth an inch-high table lamp with fluted shade, or a blue bowl the size of her little fingernail, marked 'Kitty' and half full of eternal milk; but she was sure to replace these, after they had been admired, pretty near exactly where they had been. The little house was very orderly, and just big enough for all it contained, though to some tastes the bric-a-brac in the parlour might seem excessive. The daughter's preference was for the store-bought gimmicks and appliances, the toasters and carpet sweepers of Lilliput, but she knew that most adult visitors would admire the perfection of the furnishings her father himself had so delicately and finely made and finished. He was inclined to be a little shy of showing off his own work, so she would point out the glass-fronted sideboard, the hardwood paneling, the Venetian blinds.

The inner house stood on a low table in an open alcove, called 'The bookshelf end', of the long living room of the outer house. Friends of the family checked the progress of its construction, furnishing, and fitting out as they came to dinner or for a drink from time to time, from year to year.

*Ursula Le Guin*  
*The Professor's Houses*

### **Key to contextual meanings and suggested Bulgarian versions:**

deciduous – short-lived (мимолетни)  
leaked – allowed rain to enter (течеше)  
swelled – became greater in volume (издуваше, подуваше)



sufficed – was enough (бе достатъчна, стигаше)  
 resentment – bitterness (горчивина, обида)  
 bring forth – bring forward, produce (изнасям)  
 fluted – with vertical grooves cut on the surface as a decoration (нагънат на хармоника)  
 eternal – lasting for ever (вечен/о)  
 pretty – quite (съвсем, почти)  
 bric-a-brac – old and curious bits of furniture, ornaments (старинните предмети, дребните антикварни предмети)  
 parlour – sitting-room, living-room (хол)  
 excessive – too much, extreme (прекален/и, претрупан/и)  
 gimmicks – articles  
 of Lilliput – very small, coming from the country described by Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* (от Лилипутия, миниатюрни)  
 sideboard – table usually with drawers and cupboards placed against the wall of the room (шкаф, бюфет)  
 panelling – series of decorative wooden panels on a wall (ламперия)  
 Venetian blinds – Venetian window shades (жалузи)  
 alcove – enclosed extension of a room (ниша)  
 fitting out – supply with what is needed, equip (оборудване, снабдяване с необходимите неща).

### 3

### *Field: Fiction (BrE)*

Lord Emsworth continued gazing at the cow.

The ninth Earl of Emsworth was a fluffy-minded and amiable old gentleman with a fondness for new toys. Although the main interest of his life was his garden, he was always ready to try a side line, and the latest of these side lines was this telescope of his. Ordered from London in a burst of enthusiasm consequent upon the reading of an article on astronomy in a monthly magazine, it had been placed in position on the previous evening. What was now in progress was its trial trip.

Presently, the cow's audience-appeal began to wane. It was a fine cow, as cows go, but like so many cows, it lacked sustained dramatic interest. Surfeited after a while by the spectacle of its chewing the cud and staring glassily at nothing, Lord Emsworth decided to swivel the apparatus round in the hope of picking up something a trifle more sensational. And he was just about to do so, when into the range of his vision there came the Hon. Freddie. White and shining, he tripped along over the turf like a Theocritan shepherd hastening to keep an appointment with a nymph, and a sudden frown marred the serenity of Lord Emsworth's brow. He generally frowned when he saw Freddie, for with the passage of the years that youth had become more and more of a problem to an anxious father.

Unlike the male codfish, which, suddenly finding itself the parent of three million five hundred thousand little codfish, cheerfully resolves to love them all, the British aristocracy is apt to look with a somewhat jaundiced eye on its younger sons. And Freddie Threepwood was one of those younger sons who rather invite the jaundiced eye.

*P. G. Wodehouse  
Blandings Castle*

**Key to contextual meanings and suggested Bulgarian versions:**

fluffy-minded – with mind unable to concentrate (заваян, отнесен)  
amiable – good-tempered, kind-hearted (мил, любезен, приветлив)  
a side line – something outside the main field of interest (нещо странично)  
wane – become weaker (отслабва, избледнява)  
sustained – kept up, maintained (поддържан, продължителен – продължителността)  
surfeited – having too much of (преситен)  
chewing the cud – chewing the food from its first stomach again (преживяше)  
swivel – turn (да завърти)  
the Hon. – title given to the children of peers below the rank of Marquis (почитаемият, достопочтеният)  
tripped – walked with quick light steps (вървеше леко, припикаше, вървеше с танцуваща походка)  
turf – soil-surface with grass-roots growing in it (трева, поляна)  
Theocritan shepherd – a shepherd from the idyllic lands of Ancient Greece (сиракузки пастир, овчар от древногръцката митология)  
marred – spoiled (развали, помрачи)  
serenity – tranquility (спокойствие, безметежност)  
codfish – large sea fish (риба треска)  
jaundiced – jealous, suspicious (ревниво, с предубеждение, с неприязън, с подозрение)  
invite – encourage (насърчавам, търся си)

**4**

***Field: Fiction (BrE)***

That summer was a particularly rich one; it seemed as if the sun had drawn up a special bounty from the island for never had we had such an abundance of fruit and flowers, never had the sea been so warm and filled with fish, never had so many birds reared their young, or butterflies and other insects hatched and shimmered across the countryside.