



Learn English Through Stories

**Adopted and modified by
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<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

Learning English with Banta by K S Sandhu

Banta was a young man from Punjab who moved to Birmingham for work. He wanted to improve his English because it was not his first language. At the B1 level, he recognised the need to expand his vocabulary. His teacher said, "To make your English better, study synonyms, antonyms, word formation, collocations, and idioms. Practice every day!"

"Synonyms are words with similar meanings. For example, 'permanent' means lasting forever, like a synonym 'enduring'. Banta got a permanent job in a factory, not a temporary one. Antonyms are opposites. 'Kind' is nice, but its antonym is 'cruel'. Banta was kind to his new friends, always helping them.

One day, Banta felt soft-hearted when he saw a lost dog. 'Soft' means gentle, antonym 'hard' or 'tough'. He took the dog to the entrance of the animal shelter. 'Entrance' synonyms with 'entry', and antonym 'exit'.

At home, Banta was dead tired after a long day. 'Dead' here is an idiom for very, like 'dead serious' or 'dead end'. He refused to go out with friends. 'Refuse' synonyms with 'reject', antonym 'accept'. Instead, he made a choice to study. 'Make a choice' is a collocation, meaning decide.

His argument for studying was strong: "If I expand my vocabulary, I can communicate better." 'Expand' means grow, word formation 'expansion'. 'Communicate' synonyms with 'talk', antonym 'silence'.

Banta opened his notebook – wait, 'note book' is two words, but usually 'notebook'. He wrote down words to revise. 'Revise' means review, synonym 'edit'. Before sleep, he would say it aloud: "Permanent – lasting. Kind – nice. Soft – gentle."

To practice, Banta talked to his friends in English. "Let's discuss idioms," he said. One friend replied, "Sure, like 'hit the books' for study hard." They laughed over collocations like 'strong argument' or 'deep sleep'.

Over weeks, Banta's English expanded. He no longer felt like a fish out of water – that's an idiom for uncomfortable. Now, he could argue in debates, refuse bad ideas kindly, and communicate clearly.

One evening, at a party, Banta met a girl. "Your English is impressive," she said softly. He smiled, thinking of his permanent effort. "Thanks, I revise daily and say it aloud."

Banta's story shows that learning vocabulary is key. Synonyms help variety, antonyms show contrast, word formation builds new words, collocations sound natural, and idioms add fun. So, grab your notebook, talk to friends in English, and get some sleep after revising. Success will come!

A Using this book

It's a good idea to have a **routine** when you use this book. [something you do often and usually in the same way] For example:

- a **weekly** routine when you study a new unit for **at least** [not less than] 30–45 minutes;
- a **daily** routine when you **revise** that unit. [study it again] You may only need to revise for five or ten minutes each time.

1.1 Over to you

Write your answers.

1 How often can you spend at least half an hour or forty-five minutes on a unit?

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2 How often can you revise? How much time can you spend when you revise? Where will you do it?

.....

B Studying a new unit

When you are studying a unit for the first time, you need to be **active** when you are learning.

- With a new word or phrase, **say it aloud** [speak it so you can hear it], and repeat it to yourself **silently** [in your head, not speaking]. If you have the eBook that goes with the book, use it to check the pronunciation.
- Use a **highlighter pen** to mark words you think are important or difficult.
- Write down new words and phrases in your notebook. (See [Unit 2](#) for more information.)
- Always try to write an example sentence for new words. You can choose an example from this book or a dictionary, but an example from your own life will often help you to remember a word, e.g. *I shared a flat with an Australian girl when I was in London last year.*
- Do exercises in pencil, then you can **rub them out** (using a **rubber**) and do them again later. This is a good way to revise vocabulary.

1.2 Over to you

Write your answers.

1 Which of these things do you do now when you are learning vocabulary?

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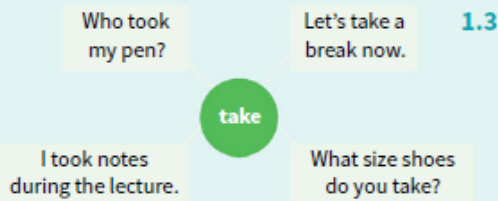
2 What will you do in the future?

.....

C Revising a unit

When you are revising a unit one or two days later, it is also important to be as active as possible.

- Test yourself, e.g. look at a word and cover the meaning. Can you remember what the meaning is? If you can't, check the meaning, then come back to the word in five minutes' time and test yourself again.
- Look at what you wrote in your notebook when you first studied the unit. Is there any new information you want to add, e.g. something about the pronunciation, or a common word partner? (See [Unit 2](#).)
- Diagrams may help you to organise some of the vocabulary differently, and help you to remember it.



Over to you

Write your answers.

- 1 Do you revise vocabulary that you study? If so, how often?
- 2 Will you try to revise more often in the future? If so, will you use some of the ideas above?

D Expanding* your vocabulary

- When you learn a word, e.g. *dirty*, think of **synonyms** (*syn*) [words with a similar meaning] or **opposites** (*opp*) in your language. Look them up in a bilingual dictionary to find the English words, then look up the English words in an English dictionary to check the meaning. From this, you will find that the opposite of dirty is clean, and you may also find **filthy** [very dirty].
* making something bigger

1.4 Using this method, find opposites for the words in bold.

- My room is very **clean**. *opp* *dirty*
- It's a **permanent** job. *opp*
- He was **kind** to all of his animals. *opp*
- Babies have very soft, **smooth** skin. *opp*
- Where's the **entrance**? *opp*
- Was the bird **dead**? *opp*
- Did they **accept** the invitation? *opp*

- Building word families (see [Units 70–72](#)) will also help to expand your vocabulary. From a noun, verb or adjective, you can often find related words in the dictionary with a similar meaning. So, you can often learn two or three words, and not just one, e.g. **argue** v = have an angry discussion; *n* = **argument**.

1.5 Use a dictionary to find the related parts of speech for the words in bold.

- She gave me some **advice**. *verb* *advise*
- We mustn't **argue**. *noun*
- I will have to **revise** this unit. *noun*
- Is there a **choice**? *verb*
- I want to **expand** my vocabulary. *noun*
- The two boys are very **different**. *noun* *verb*
- They need to **communicate** more. *noun* *adj*

- Try to read and listen to English as much as possible. The more you read and listen, the more you will learn. When you read, try to:
 - **Highlight** or **underline** interesting new words.
 - Highlight words if they are familiar but you can't remember the meaning.
- There is a lot of spoken English on the Internet which you can play again and again. Try to make a note of interesting words and look up the meaning.

1.6 Over to you

Now choose a unit that interests you. Study the left-hand page, then do the exercises in pencil. Wait for at least 24 hours, revise the unit, then answer these questions.

- How many answers did you get right the first time?
- How many answers did you get right the second time?

Answer key

Unit 1

- 1.1 *Your own answers*
1.2 *Your own answers*
1.3 *Your own answers*
1.4 2 temporary 3 cruel/unkind 4 rough 5 exit/way out 6 alive 7 refuse
1.5 2 argument 4 choose 6 difference; differ
3 revision 5 expansion 7 communication; communicative
1.6 *Your own answers*

Unit 2

2.1	food	garden	numbers
	diet, lay the table, flour, raw, butcher, frozen, e.g. frozen peas	branch, dig, ground, leaf, butterfly, frozen, e.g. the ground is frozen	count, add up, minus, thousand, zero

2.2 Possible answers:

- 2 translation
3 a person who sells meat
4



- 5 translation
6 put plates, knives, forks, etc. on a table before a meal
7 translation is probably the easiest way
8 six minus four is two (6-4 = 2)

- 2.3 2 (synonym) A synonym for *awful* is *dreadful*.
3 (opposite) The opposite of *necessary* is *unnecessary*.
4 (word partner and part of speech) You *translate* something *into* another language; the noun is *translation*.
5 (meanings) *Tip* has two meanings: a piece of advice, and money you give a waiter for serving you.
6 (grammar and part of speech) *Enjoy* is followed by an *-ing* form; the noun is *enjoyment*, the adjective is *enjoyable*.

2.4 Your own answers

Unit 3

- 3.1 2 really 5 clothes 8 beautiful
3 unfortunately 6 comfortable 9 unbelievable
4 especially 7 accommodation 10 necessary
3.2 1 knee (k) 2 comb (b) 3 castle (t) 4 salmon (l) 5 receipt (p)
3.3 2 amount 3 behave 4 official 5 emphasise 6 relating to
3.4 2 The 'z' spelling is usual in American English, but both are possible in British English.
3 an adverb
4 uncountable
5 on
6 She's an **old** friend; he's my **best** friend; you **make** friends with people. You may also have found these common word partners (a **close** friend, a friend **of mine**)