



Learn English Through Stories

Intermediate Vocabulary

**Adopted and modified by
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Keeping a Diary by K S Sandhu

Hello, my name is Jagga. I am 17 years old, and I study for A levels at a local college in Manchester. My family moved to England from Pakistan two years ago. Life here is very different, but I like it. I am quite good at maths – numbers are easy for me. However, I struggle a lot with physics. The teacher explains the lessons well, but I often don't understand because of my English. New words appear all the time, and I spend hours looking them up in the dictionary.

One day, my English teacher, Mrs Khan, saw me looking worried in class. She asked, "Jagga, what's the problem?" I told her about my difficulties. She smiled and said, "Why don't you start keeping a diary? It will help you improve your vocabulary and feel more confident when you speak or write."

That evening, I bought a nice notebook with a blue cover. I decided to write in it every day. At first, I just wrote simple sentences: "Today I went to college. The weather was rainy." But soon, I wanted to do more.

Now, my diary is special. I don't only write new words – I also write their translation in Urdu so I can remember them better. For example, I learned the word "fondness". "I have a fondness for Pakistani food, especially biryani."

I also look for synonyms. For example, "mess" means something dirty or not clean. A synonym is "untidy". My bedroom is sometimes untidy, with books and clothes everywhere!

I write collocations too – words that often go together. Like "friendly chat" (a nice conversation with a friend) or "friendly crowd" (a group of nice people). I wrote: "Yesterday I had a friendly chat with my classmate Ahmed."

My favourite part is learning idioms. An idiom is a phrase with a special meaning. For example, "break the ice" means to start talking when people feel shy. I wrote: "At the college party, I told a joke to break the ice with new students." Another one is "as dry as a bone" – it means very dry. "After the long walk, my throat was as dry as a bone."

I also practise phrasal verbs. These are verbs with a particle, like "come around". It can mean visit: "My cousin will come around this weekend." Or it can mean change opinion: "At first he didn't like the idea, but then he came around."

Finally, I work on word families. From “enjoy” I write: enjoyment (noun), enjoyable (adjective). “The film was very enjoyable, and I felt a lot of enjoyment.”

Every week, I read my old pages. I see my progress. My sentences are longer now, and I make fewer mistakes. Physics is still hard, but I can concentrate better because my English is stronger.

Keeping a diary is not just homework – it’s my secret weapon. It helps me feel at home in England. One day, I hope to write a whole story in English without any help!



A What do you do?

This is what some students do.



RAFAEL I **write down** new English words and phrases in my notebook, and next to each one I write a Spanish **translation**. I usually write down if a word is a *noun, verb, adjective*, and so on.



KAZUO I sometimes write a word in phonemics because English pronunciation is very difficult for me. But my notebook is a **mess** [nothing is in a good order; *syn* **untidy**]. I like to **draw** pictures.



EUN I sometimes **make a note of** new words in my notebook, but I often **forget** [don't remember]. I usually write a translation, and sometimes I write example sentences as well.



ANDREY I've got a notebook. I don't use it much but when I do, I try and list words by **topic**, so I put all the animals together, and all the clothes words together, and so on. I find it's easier to remember the words this way.



DONATA I **note down** new words and phrases. Sometimes I **translate** them **into** Polish, and sometimes I write an **explanation** [a description of what something means] in English if it is not difficult. For example:
kitten – a very young cat

B Tips for your notebook

A **tip** is a piece of advice to help you. Here are some tips for your notebook.

- Put words from one **topic** in the same place, e.g. food in one place, clothes in another, etc. Don't **mix** them **up** [put them together with no order]. You can also have grammar topics, e.g. 'uncountable nouns', or a page for words that all have a connection, e.g. words and phrases that were all in a story you read in English. Some words and phrases will go in more than one topic.
- If you can't find a topic for a new word or phrase, e.g. *useful* or *in particular*, put them in a different place in your notebook, e.g. a page for each day or each week, or perhaps one page for every English lesson you have. Write the **date** clearly at the top, e.g. Monday 14th May.
- When you write down new vocabulary, write a translation if it is **necessary** [you need it; *opp* **unnecessary**], but also write the meaning in English if it is possible, or draw pictures.
- If possible, add synonyms, opposites, other parts of speech, etc. (See [Unit 1](#).)
awful *adj* = terrible (*syn* **dreadful**)
enjoy *v* = like something and get pleasure from it *n* = **enjoyment** *adj* = **enjoyable**
- Example sentences help you with the grammar of a word, or with word partners (collocations).
I **enjoy living** in a big city. (NOT I enjoy ~~to live~~ in a big city.) (See [Units 87–8](#).)
I **spent two weeks in** Rome. (NOT I ~~passed~~ two weeks in Rome. You spend time in a place.) (See [Unit 74](#).)
- Remember, words often have more than one meaning that you need to know, e.g. a **tip** is also money that you give, for example, to a waiter for serving you in a restaurant.

Exercises

2.1 Organise the words into the topics below. One word can go in two different topics. Use a dictionary to help you.

diet	branch	lay the table	count v	dig v	ground	flour	add up
raw	leaf	minus	butcher	thousand	frozen	zero	butterfly

food	garden	numbers
<i>diet</i>		

2.2 Explain these words in English, or draw a picture, or if you think an explanation is too difficult and a drawing is not possible, write a translation instead.

- raw *not cooked*
- dig
- butcher
- leaf
- flour
- lay the table
- add up
- minus

2.3 What information could you include with these words? The answers are all on the opposite page.

- forget *opposite – remember*
- awful
- necessary
- translate
- tip
- enjoy

2.4 Over to you

Answer the questions. If possible, compare your answers with someone else.

- Look again at what the students said on the opposite page. What are the good things that they do? Underline them.
- Do you do all of these things?
- Is there anything you don't do now, but will do in the future?
- At the moment, which person's notebook is most like your notebook?
- What are the most useful tips on the opposite page for you?

Answers

Unit 2

2.1	food	garden	numbers
	diet, lay the table, flour, raw, butcher, frozen, e.g. <i>frozen peas</i>	branch, dig, ground, leaf, butterfly, frozen, e.g. <i>the ground is frozen</i>	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