



Learn English Through Stories

**Upper-Intermediate
Vocabulary**

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A Race against Time by K S Sandhu

Mia was a young journalist who loved her job, but lately she felt constantly under pressure. She worked for a popular online news site, not a tabloid, but the deadlines were still tough. Every day she was snowed under with work – writing articles, interviewing people, and trying to upload a video or two for their social media. She often overworked, staying late at the office, and sometimes she felt burnt out from all the stress and exhaustion.

Her best friend, Alex, was the only person she could really count on. They had been close to each other since university and loved to hang out together on weekends. Alex wasn't just a casual acquaintance; he was like family. He often told Mia to slow down. "You're going to get exhausted if you don't take a break," he said. Mia would laugh and say, "I know, but the blogosphere is full of competition. If I don't keep going, someone else will take my place.

"One evening, after a long day, Mia decided to relax. She listened to her favourite podcast about travel while cooking dinner. But the next morning, everything went wrong.

Her alarm clock didn't go off because she had forgotten to set the clock properly the night before. She was a heavy sleeper and didn't wake up until 8:30. When she finally opened her eyes, she realised she had overslept badly. "Oh no!" she cried, jumping out of bed. She was in a terrible rush. She dashed to the bathroom, brushed her teeth in a hurry, and grabbed her bag. She felt breathless already, and she hadn't even left the house.

Running to the bus stop, she was out of breath and yawning non-stop. She had a nightmare vision of her boss shouting at her for being a latecomer again. The bus was late too, so she decided to run the last part of the way to the office. By the time she arrived, she was completely exhausted, her hair messy and her face red.

She burst into the meeting room where her team was waiting. "Sorry I'm late!" she said, still panting. Everyone looked at her with surprise. Her editor smiled kindly. "Mia, take a seat. We were just starting. You look like you ran a marathon!"

After the meeting, Alex called her. "How was your morning?" he asked.

"A disaster," Mia replied. "I overslept, I dashed to work, and I felt like I was in a nightmare. I'm so exhausted I could sleep for a week.

"Alex laughed, "See? You need to rest more. Why don't we hang out this weekend? No work, no stress. Just friends."

Mia thought for a moment. "You're right. I count on you to remind me of that. Let's do it."

"That afternoon, Mia wrote a short blog post about work-life balance. She uploaded a video of herself talking about how easy it is to become burnt out and why it's important to be close to people who care about you. To her surprise, the post got a lot of likes in the blogosphere. Maybe slowing down wasn't such a bad idea after all."

A few days later, when a colleague asked how she was, Mia smiled and said, "I'm feeling much better now. No more overwork for me!"

Study unit 2

Organising a vocabulary notebook

A Organising words by meaning

Try dividing your notebook into different broad sections, with sections for **words for feelings**, **words to describe places**, **words for movement**, **words for thinking**, etc.

Charts and tables of various kinds can help you organise your vocabulary. Here is an example for words connected with music:

| Instruments | Types of music | Verbs | Related words |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <i>guitar cello piano</i> | <i>classical (not classic) folk (not folkloric) world</i> | <i>play strum (a guitar) perform</i> | <i>practice (n.) practise (vb) track release (an album)</i> |

B Building networks of meaning

A network diagram is useful. It can grow in whatever direction you want it to.



C Collocations and fixed phrases

It is important to know how a word combines with other words (its collocations).

Always record the common collocations of a word as you meet them, e.g.

win (prize, award, medal) earn (money, a high salary) gain (time, an advantage)

Where a word is often used in a fixed phrase, always record the whole phrase, e.g.

in a hurry out of touch to and fro now and again

D Synonyms and antonyms

When you find a synonym (same meaning) or an antonym (opposite meaning) of a word you already have in your book, enter it next to that word with a few notes, e.g.

urban ≠ rural stop = cease (cease is very formal)

E Organising by word class

Make a note of the word class of a new word (whether it is a noun, verb, adjective, etc.). Record words from the same word family together, e.g.

produce (verb or noun) product (noun) productive (adjective)

F Stress

Record where the stress falls on a multi-syllable word, especially if the stress changes between word classes, e.g. *produce (verb) p^roduce (noun) p^roductive (adjective)*

Language help

Note any typical errors you make or which your teacher has mentioned.

Exercises

2.1 Organise the words into the topics below. Use a dictionary if necessary.

tabloid **stress** hang out with sb exhaustion podcast overwork
upload a video burnt out blogosphere journalist snowed under with work
casual acquaintance blog be close to sb count on sb be under pressure

| topic | words |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| working too much / too hard | <i>stress</i> |
| friendship | |
| media | |

2.2 Here is a list of words a learner of English made in a vocabulary notebook in class. Organise them in a more efficient way, using the chart.

rush oversleep ~~latecomer~~ alarm clock set a clock deep sleep fast asleep
out of breath heavy sleeper in a hurry breathless nightmare dash yawn
exhausted

| nouns | verbs | adjectives | collocations | fixed phrases |
|------------------|-------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| <i>latecomer</i> | | | | |

2.3 Change the sentences using a synonym (S) or antonym (A) of the words in bold using words from the box.

~~glad~~ spicy deprive sb of sth shot dissatisfied chilly

- I was **pleased** *glad* to hear you'd passed your exam. (S)
- I got some excellent **photos** of the Grand Canyon on my trip to the US. (S)
- She was **happy** with the conditions they offered her in the new job. (A)
- The prisoners were **supplied with** food and medical care. (A)
- I don't like **mild** curries. (A)
- It's a **cold** day today. (S)

2.4 Fill in the missing word forms. Then mark the word stress for each item.

| noun | verb | adjective | person |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| perfection | <u>perfect</u> | <u>perfect</u> | <u>perfectionist</u> |
| information | inform | | |
| politics | | | |
| economics | | * | |

* Give two adjectives.

2.5 **Over to you**

Think about your own learning style and which ways of organising vocabulary would work best for you.

Answers

Unit 2

2.1

| topic | words |
|-----------------------------|--|
| working too much / too hard | stress exhaustion overwork burnt out snowed under with work be under pressure |
| friendship | hang out with sb casual acquaintance be close to sb count on sb |
| media | tabloid podcast upload a video blogosphere journalist blog |

2.2

| nouns | verbs | adjectives | collocations | fixed phrases |
|-------------|-----------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| latecomer | rush | breathless | set a clock | out of breath |
| alarm clock | oversleep | exhausted | deep sleep | in a hurry |
| nightmare | dash | | fast asleep | |
| | yawn | | heavy sleeper | |

2.3 2 shots 3 dissatisfied 4 deprived of 5 spicy 6 chilly

2.4

| noun | verb | adjective | person |
|-------------|-----------|---------------------|---------------|
| perfection | perfect | perfect | perfectionist |
| information | inform | informative | |
| politics | | political | politician |
| economics | economise | economic/economical | economist |

2.5 Possible ways to organise your vocabulary include relating new words to your own personal experience (e.g. if you learn new colour words, what things do you have in those colours - *a purple sweater, an orange mug?*). You can also divide your notebook (whether paper or digital) into topic areas (e.g. *words to do with food, with travel, etc.*). You could keep a digital notebook on your computer or mobile device; lists or words you type in can then be sorted alphabetically or searched very quickly.