



Learn English Through Stories

**Adopted and modified by
Kulwant Singh Sandhu**

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An Arranged Marriage by K S Sandhu

After completing his M.A. in Political Science, Banta came to England. In fact, he came on a marriage basis. He got married, but the marriage did not work.

Banta had met his wife, Preeti, through a family friend in India. Everyone said it was a highly successful match because Preeti was from a good family and worked as a teacher. At first, Banta felt deeply committed to making the marriage work. He moved to a small town in the north of England, where Preeti lived with her parents. The house was ridiculously small, with only one bedroom for them, but Banta tried to stay positive.

However, things changed quickly. Preeti was strongly opposed to many of Banta's traditions. She did not like him speaking Punjabi on the phone with his family, and she found his food too spicy. Banta felt deeply hurt by her words. He tried to explain his culture, but Preeti would bitterly complain that he was not trying hard enough to fit in. Their arguments grew louder, and soon they were utterly miserable together.

One winter evening, it was bitterly cold outside. Banta wanted to go for a walk to clear his mind, but Preeti said it was absolutely ridiculous to go out in such weather. They argued again. Banta felt deeply ashamed of the situation because in his culture, marriage was supposed to be for life. He had always believed he would be highly successful in his new life abroad, but now he felt like a failure.

After six months, Preeti said she wanted a divorce. Banta was utterly devastated. He had never imagined this could happen. He felt absolutely alone in this foreign country. His friends back in India were highly unlikely to understand, and he was too proud to tell his parents the full truth. He bitterly regretted coming to England on a marriage visa. The dream he once had now seemed utterly impossible.

Banta decided to stay in England anyway. He found a job in a local shop, where the hours were ridiculously long, and the pay was ridiculously low. But he worked hard and slowly made new friends. One day, he met Amit, another Indian man who had come to England for studies. Amit strongly recommended that Banta join a college course to improve his English and maybe study for a PhD. Banta listened carefully because Amit's advice seemed highly effective.

Over time, Banta started to feel better. He joined a class and met people from many countries. The teacher was highly recommended by other students, and the lessons were interesting. Banta learned to speak more confidently. He also realised that he was deeply concerned about other immigrants who felt lonely. He began helping them with small things, like translating letters or explaining how to fill in forms, etc.

One year later, Banta looked back and thought about his failed marriage. It had been bitterly disappointing, but it taught him a lot. He was no longer deeply unhappy. Instead, he felt strongly determined to build a new life. He even started to believe that love might come again one day, though he was highly unlikely to rush into anything.

In the end, Banta understood that life can be absolutely unpredictable. What seems utterly wrong at first can lead to something highly unusual and positive. He smiled when he thought about his journey. England was no longer a place of pain; it was his new home.

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6 Intensifying adverbs

In English there are lots of other ways of saying *very* or *very much*. For example, we can use words such as *highly*, *utterly*, *bitterly*, *deeply*. These alternatives collocate strongly with specific words, and other combinations often sound unnatural.

A *Highly*

collocations	comments
(un)likely unusual successful competitive profitable effective controversial recommended	<i>Highly</i> is used with some probability words (<i>likely</i> , <i>unusual</i>). With the exception of highly controversial it usually combines with very positive words. Extremely can also be used with all the opposite adjectives except <i>recommended</i> .

It is **highly unlikely** that I'll finish my work on time.
Julia's **highly unusual** behaviour began to worry her parents.

B *Absolutely, utterly*

collocations	comments
ridiculous stupid impossible wrong alone appalled convinced devastated miserable	<i>Absolutely</i> and (slightly more formal) <i>utterly</i> combine with adjectives with very extreme meanings where we can't use <i>very</i> . For example, we say absolutely/utterly exhausted , not <i>very exhausted</i> , whereas we say <i>very tired</i> , but not <i>absolutely</i> or <i>utterly tired</i> . Often, but not always, these words have negative connotations.

It was an **absolutely stupid** comment to make.
The whole area was **utterly devastated** after the earthquake.

C *Bitterly, deeply, ridiculously, strongly*

word	collocations	comments
bitterly	disappointing/disappointed resent criticise regret complain cry weep	carries a feeling of deep sadness; used slightly more in writing than in conversation
deeply	ashamed concerned shocked committed moved affected hurt (of feelings) regret care religious unhappy	collocates mainly with words associated with feelings; used slightly more in writing than in conversation
ridiculously	cheap expensive easy low high long short small large early	suggests something extreme, which seems unbelievable or unreasonable
strongly	oppose influence believe deny recommend support condemn suggest feel argue object	collocates with verbs, particularly verbs that relate to having an opinion

I was **bitterly disappointed** when I failed the exam.
Professor McDellvit was always **deeply committed** to her students.
The restaurant was **ridiculously expensive**. I don't think we'll go there again.
I would **strongly recommend** that you learn a foreign language.

Exercises

6.1 Choose an adverb from the box to replace *very* in each of these expressions.

utterly strongly bitterly ridiculously highly deeply

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1 very ashamed | 6 very disappointing |
| 2 very cheap | 7 very opposed |
| 3 very controversial | 8 very ridiculous |
| 4 very stupid | 9 very easy |
| 5 very successful | 10 very concerned |

6.2 Use a collocation from exercise 6.1 to complete each of these sentences.

- The flight from London to Rome was It only cost 20 euros.
- Some people love her new book, others are very angry about it. It is
- His father was a peace campaigner all his life and was to war.
- The exam results were for the whole class. We had all expected to do much better.
- When I realised how much my selfish behaviour had upset everyone, I was
- In the 1990s she ran a(n) company which made outstanding profits.
- Everyone got more than 95% correct in the test; it was
- You must apologise immediately. It was a(n) remark to make.
- She has always been about the environment and would like to work for a conservation agency.
- That you should even *think* that I would steal money from you is ! You must be crazy!

6.3 In each of these sets of phrases, one is not a correct collocation. Cross out the incorrect one.

- strongly recommend strongly influence strongly love strongly dislike
- highly educated highly profitable highly unusual highly exhausted
- bitterly regard bitterly regret bitterly resent bitterly criticise
- absolutely convinced absolutely tired absolutely devastated absolutely absurd
- deeply unhappy deeply religious deeply successful deeply committed

6.4 In this short text, the writer has often misused the word *strongly*. Correct the wrong collocations using adverbs from the box. Use each adverb once only.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Everyone was complaining *strongly* when they heard about the new plan. People were *strongly* shocked to hear that children would be *strongly* forbidden to use the sports ground and most people were *strongly* opposed to the new rules. Even people who normally never expressed an opinion were *strongly* appalled by the proposals.



bitterly strictly deeply utterly

Answers

Unit 6

- 6.1**
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 deeply ashamed | 6 bitterly disappointing |
| 2 ridiculously cheap | 7 strongly/utterly opposed |
| 3 highly controversial | 8 utterly ridiculous |
| 4 utterly stupid | 9 ridiculously easy |
| 5 highly successful | 10 deeply concerned |
- 6.2**
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 ridiculously cheap | 6 highly successful |
| 2 highly controversial | 7 ridiculously easy |
| 3 strongly/utterly opposed | 8 utterly stupid |
| 4 bitterly disappointing | 9 deeply concerned |
| 5 deeply ashamed | 10 utterly ridiculous |
- 6.3** *The incorrect collocations are:*
- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 strongly love | 4 absolutely tired |
| 2 highly exhausted | 5 deeply successful |
| 3 bitterly regard | |
- 6.4** Everyone was complaining **bitterly** when they heard about the new plan. People were **deeply** shocked to hear that children would be **strictly** forbidden to use the sports ground and most people were strongly opposed to the new rules. Even people who normally never expressed an opinion were **utterly** appalled by the proposals.