



Learn English Through Stories

T Series

Upper - Intermediate

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Banta Learning Present Tenses 2 by K S Sandhu

The Ravenmaster and the Mysterious Book

Every day at the Tower of London starts early for Barney Chandler. He is the Ravenmaster. He lives in an apartment inside the famous Tower. Barney wakes up at 5.30 in the morning during the summer months. He looks after eight intelligent black ravens. These birds protect the kingdom according to an old prophecy: if the ravens ever leave the Tower, the kingdom falls. Barney knows this legend well.

Barney feeds the ravens twice a day. Their diet includes raw meat, mice, chicks, eggs, and special blood-soaked biscuits as a treat. He prepares fresh water every morning and cleans their enclosures. Sometimes he trims their flight feathers a little so they stay near the Tower and do not fly too far. The ravens follow him around their territories during the day. They respond only to Barney and his team. Visitors watch the birds, but they do not feed them because the ravens sometimes bite if they feel threatened.

Barney works long hours. In summer, his day ends at 9.30 at night when he locks the ravens up safely. He checks each bird for health problems and records everything carefully. The job requires patience and calm because ravens are clever and sometimes cause chaos if routines change.

Away from the Tower, many people read books about history and mystery. Kate Mosse writes popular historical novels. Her book *Labyrinth* is a bestseller in many countries. Its successor, *Sepulchre*, tells two intricate stories from different times that connect in surprising ways. In the first story, set in the late nineteenth century, Léonie Vernier lives in Paris with her family. An aunt invites her and her brother Anatole to the south-west of France. Things seem strange when they arrive. In the second story, Meredith Martin, a young American professor, researches in Paris. She uncovers the sad secrets of Léonie and Anatole.

Does *Sepulchre* bring nineteenth-century France to life? Yes, it does – the descriptions feel real and atmospheric. Does it provide a perfect successor to *Labyrinth*? No, not completely. The two stories do not link as strongly as in the first book, and the modern part adds less excitement.

Does Switzerland have a coastline? No, it doesn't. Do horses eat meat? No, they don't. Does water boil at 100°C? Yes, it does. Facts like these stay true, just as the ravens stay at the Tower.

Barney enjoys his unusual job. He says the ravens bring magic to the ancient walls. Every evening, as the sun sets, he watches them settle and feels proud to keep the old tradition alive.

Questions:

Question 1: What job does Barney Chandler have, and where does he live?

Question 2: According to the old prophecy, what happens if the ravens leave the Tower of London?

Question 3: What does Barney do twice a day for the ravens, and what kind of food do they eat?

Question 4: In Kate Mosse's novel *Sepulchre*, where do the two main stories take place, and who are the main characters in each?

Question 5: Does *Sepulchre* provide a perfect successor to *Labyrinth* according to the narrator? Why or why not?

Answers:

Answer 1: Barney Chandler is the Ravenmaster at the Tower of London, and he lives in an apartment inside the Tower.

Answer 2: According to the old prophecy, if the ravens ever leave the Tower, the kingdom falls.

Answer 3: Barney feeds the ravens twice a day. Their diet includes raw meat, mice, chicks, eggs, and special blood-soaked biscuits as a treat.

Answer 4: The two main stories in *Sepulchre* take place in different times. The first story is set in the late nineteenth century in Paris and the south-west of France, with Léonie Vernier and her brother Anatole. The second story takes place in modern times in Paris, with Meredith Martin, a young American university professor.

Answer 5: No, the narrator does not think *Sepulchre* provides a perfect successor to *Labyrinth*. The two stories do not link as strongly as in the first book, and the modern part adds less excitement.

27 Present simple

1 Form

POSITIVE	<i>I live in London. My sister lives in Madrid. My parents live in Glasgow.</i>
NEGATIVE	<i>I do not (don't) live in an apartment. He does not (doesn't) live in a house. We do not (don't) live in a block of flats.</i>
QUESTIONS	<i>Do you work in an office? (No, I don't.) Does she work from home? (Yes, she does.) Where do they work?</i>



Andrew Johnson **works** on a North Sea oil rig. He **works** there for two weeks every month. He regularly **climbs** to the top and **checks** that everything is safe.

- ⚠ Remember that the verb is different after *he, she* and *it*:
She lives near here. It eats a lot of meat.
~~X *Where do he work?*~~ ✓ *Where does he work?*
~~X *He don't like cities.*~~ ✓ *He doesn't like cities.*

- ⚠ We don't add -s to the main verb in questions and negatives: ~~X *Where does he works?*~~
Spelling rules after *he/she/it* ➤ page 350

🔊 Pronunciation ➤ 1.10

2 Facts, permanent situations and opinions

We use the present simple

- for facts (things that are always true): *Water boils at 100°C and freezes at 0°C.
The sun doesn't go round the earth. Cows don't eat meat. A red light means 'Stop'.*
- for permanent situations: *I don't live in the city. He works on an oil rig.*
- to describe opinions and ideas: *I think New York is exciting. You don't understand.*
- to describe likes and dislikes: *My grandfather likes the countryside. I prefer the city.*

3 Regular actions, habits and routines

We use the present simple for things that are often repeated, or that happen regularly:
He works there once a month. Do the children go out in the evenings? No, they watch TV.

To say how often the action happens, we use

- adverbs of frequency (e.g. *always, often*) after *be* or before a main verb:
*Angelo is often late for work. He always climbs to the top.
'Do you drive to work?' 'Not really, we usually use public transport. We rarely drive.'*
- other time expressions. They usually go at the end of the sentence:
*Do you come to the studio every day? I go on holiday once a year.
We go to our grandparents' for lunch on Sundays.*
These can also go at the beginning, for more emphasis:
Every morning, I start work at 8.30.

More on adverbs and word order ➤ Unit 24

4 Describing films, plays and books

We usually use the present simple when we describe what happens in a film, play or book:
The story takes place in the United States. The main character works on a farm ...

When a sports game is described live on TV, the present simple is often used for quick actions:
Giggs passes to Rooney. Rooney shoots – he scores!

Practice

- 1** **GRAMMAR IN USE** Complete the book review with the present simple of the verbs in brackets. **2.53** Now listen and check.

Sepulchre is Kate Mosse's follow-up novel to her bestseller *Labyrinth*. It (0) *takes* (take) the same idea of two stories from different times which (1) (connect) with each other. The first story takes place in the late nineteenth century. Léonie Vernier (2) (live) in Paris with her mother and older brother, Anatole. Then an aunt in the south-west of the country invites Léonie to stay with her. Léonie (3) (not know) her aunt but she (4) (agree) to go, with her brother. When they (5) (arrive), things (6) (not be) as they seem ...

In the second story, Meredith Martin is a young American university professor. Her research takes her to Paris, where she (7) (uncover) the sad story of Léonie and Anatole. (8) the novel (bring) nineteenth-century France to life? Yes, I think it (9) (do). (10) it (provide) a good successor to *Labyrinth*? No, I (11) (not think) so. The two stories (12) (not link) as well as the stories in *Labyrinth*; the second one didn't add anything, really.

- 2** Make questions from the words below. Then write true short answers.

2.54 Now listen and check.

- 0 horses / eat / meat? *Do horses eat meat? No, they don't.*
 1 water / boil / 100°C?
 2 the sun / always / rise / the west?
 3 Switzerland / have / a coastline?
 4 shops near you / usually / open / Sundays?

- 3** Read the information on the website. Then write about Derrick Coyle.

Unusual jobs: Ravenmaster, Tower of London

- (0) Name: Derrick Coyle
 (1) Age: 61
 (2) Job: Ravenmaster at the Tower of London
 (3) Lives: in an apartment at the Tower of London
 (4) Hours: dawn to dusk (summer 05.30–21.30)
 (5) Duties: look after ravens / prepare their food / give them water / lock them up at night

Derrick Coyle, with one of his ravens ▶



- 0 This *is Derrick Coyle*
 1 He years old.
 2 He is the
 3
 4
 5

Answers

UNIT 27

- 1** 1 connect 2 lives 3 doesn't know 4 agrees
5 arrive 6 aren't 7 uncovers 8 Does ...
bring 9 does 10 Does ... provide 11 don't
think 12 don't link
- 2** 1 Does water boil at 100°C? Yes, it does.
2 Does the sun always rise in the west? No, it
doesn't.
3 Does Switzerland have a coastline? No, it doesn't.
4 Do shops near you usually open on Sundays? Yes,
they do. / No, they don't.
- 3** 1 He's 61 (years old).
2 He is the Ravenmaster at the Tower of London.
3 He lives in an apartment at the Tower of London.
4 He works from 5.30 in the morning to 9.30 at
night in the summer.
5 He looks after the ravens, prepares their food,
gives them water and locks them up at night.