

Portfolio.

English Portfolio. Year 1 - Term 1.

General

The aim of the personal English portfolio is to track, record and reflect upon your learning process in your English language skills.

What must be included?

- **All assignments.**
- **Vocabulary and grammar bank.**
- **Any tests and results.**
- **Any other English activities.**
- **Reflecting journal.**

Assessment
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English 1
Language portfolio
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Written assignments

About myself

I was ordered to write something about myself in order to check my level of English grammar. I learned about 90% of the English I know from watching movies or TV shows. This causes me to have poor spelling skills and sometimes a grammar mistake.

I didn't know any English in high school until I was about 16. I remember my first show I watched in English, it was Family Guy at a friend's house. I didn't understand the jokes, or even the plot, but I kept watching because I didn't want to confess that I couldn't understand. I started watching movies every weekend(,) still not getting what the movie was all about. At some point, you're starting to see patterns in words, making connections and to understand what the movie is about, without understanding every conversation.

But enough about my English. Let's see if I can come up with some sentences about my hobbies. I like to take pictures. I bought a Coolpix S9700 last year. It recently broke down so I have to decide whether I want it fixed or buy the next generation of the Coolpix S series: the S9900. I always bring it on holidays in both the summer and in the winter to take pictures of mountains. Since I was a little kid(,) I go skiing every year. I usually go to Austria, but the nicest area I've been would be Val Thorens in France. I've been there twice; we don't go there very often because everything is extremely expensive. Buy a coke in the mountains and it costs you 7 euros. In the summer I usually go to Greece. It is my favourite European country by far. My aunt has a boat there so we cruise around on the sea, not knowing where to go to tomorrow. The freedom is amazing, the country is beautiful, and the people are very friendly.

My aunt and uncle have a boat in the Mediterranean Sea. They bought it in Spain a couple of years ago and they have been sailing around Greece, Italy, Turkey and Spain for about 6 years now. They live on that boat for about 3 months a year.

They love to take visitors with them. I've sailed with them for about 5 times now and all 5 were the most wonderful holidays I've ever had. This is mainly because of the freedom. You can do whatever you want on a boat, which makes you really feel free, you're your own captain. You can sail to whatever island you want and choose to sleep in a harbour or bay, whatever you prefer that night. The harbour is nice because of the restaurants and the little shops. The bays are nice because you can sleep outside, you're alone with only darkness all around you and a beautiful night sky full of stars. When you wake up, you take a dive in the water and make yourself some pancakes to start off the day.

In daytime you usually sail across the sea to another island or place to stay for the upcoming night. You can stop the boat on the middle of the sea, looking at the radar to find out that there is 800 metres of water underneath you, and dive in the water. Sometimes while sailing, dolphins swim with you and play with the boat.

Corrected assignments

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I **didn't know much English in high school** until I was about 16. I remember my first show I watched in English, it was Family Guy at a friend's house. I didn't understand the jokes, or even the plot, but I kept watching because I didn't want to confess that I couldn't understand. I started watching movies every weekend(,) still not getting what the movie was all about. At some point, you're starting to see patterns in words, making connections and to understand what the movie is about, without understanding every conversation.

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Corrected by Florian Konings

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In daytime you usually sail across the sea to another island or place to stay for the upcoming night. You can stop the boat **in** the middle of the sea, looking at the radar to find out that there is 800 meters of water underneath you, and dive in the water. Sometimes while sailing, dolphins swim with you and play with the boat.

Comment Helena:

General comment: although this is a very well written piece, you don't actually answer the question in the task and this affects your overall grade, which is a great pity. You would score very well on language and organisation but not on content and communicative achievement. Remember, you must RTFQ.

Correction of the assignment about the unusual experience.

I didn't quite get what I had to do before.

Not based on a true story.

Dear Editor,

My name is Gerard. I have a wife, three kids and a job as a truck driver. This job forces me to be away from home quite often. This wasn't considered to be a problem by my wife and kids though. In the weekend, I had lots of fun with my kids. I used to go see football games with them, go to museums or play games. I did consider it to be a problem. I was on the road all week and I missed home a lot.

One time I was on the road to Helsinki. I was driving in the mountains and I suddenly lost consciousness. Originally I thought this was due to a lack of oxygen or I had not adapted to the air pressure yet. I went home and decided to do a brain scan. It turned out to be brain cancer. Chances of living: 40%.

It was a big shock to me and my family. Fortunately, after a few weeks of chemotherapy, the doctors managed to heal my brain. I quit my job and began working as a package delivery man for Amazon. This is closer to home so I can spend time with my kids more often.

I live my life knowing what I have to lose. It changed my life and attitude in a positive way and I'm aware of the dangers and beautiful things in life. It was a real turning point.

Yours Faithfully,

Gerard Janssen

Progress tests

Language development: fixed phrases – starting again

2 Complete the sentences 1-10 with the most appropriate clause (a-j).

- 1 I stood on the table and shouted in order to **f**
- 2 Sometimes you just have to **g**
- 3 When she first set off on her solo voyage nobody knew if she would **i**
- 4 I explained it to you clearly so don't **a**
- 5 I'm fed up with my job. I'll need to find a new one. That will **e**
- 6 I'd like a cheese sandwich please. No, in fact I'll **b**
- 7 I don't want to do my homework today but Dad will **h**
- 8 I don't know if the business will succeed, but I've decided to try and **d**
- 9 It's not much of a story but I expect it will **c**
- 10 I haven't been to the shops yet so you'll just have to **j**

a make like you don't understand.
 b make that two.
 c make the evening papers.
 d make do with whatever's in the fridge.
 e make two of us then.
 f make myself heard.
 g make the most of what you have.
 h make me do it.
 i make it.
 j make a go of it.

3 Replace the underlined part of each sentence with one of the phrasal verbs below. Make any grammatical changes necessary.

make off make out make up
 make off with make something up make up for

- 1 They jumped in the car and headed towards the port. **make off with**
- 2 I'm sorry for the way I behaved. Let me **make up for** by taking you out to dinner.
- 3 There was too much background noise so I **couldn't hear** what they were saying. **make something up**
- 4 Gerry didn't really go on the expedition – he **invented** that part of the story. **make up**
- 5 I trusted Jim so it came as a complete shock to me that he **left and took with him** the company funds. **make off with**
- 6 Peter promised to work late all this week to **compensate** for the time he missed when he was ill. **make up for**

1 Beginnings

Getting started

1 Complete the crossword using the clues provided and the words in the box.

embark	generate	kick off	prompt	stimulate
establish	inaugurate	launch	provoke	trigger
found	initiate	produce		

Across

- 1 Officially make someone your leader with a special ceremony.
- 5 She him whenever he forgets his times in the play.
- 6 Pull this to make a loud noise – and start a sequence of events.
- 8 Blow the whistle – the game begins!
- 10 Make it, create it and sell it.
- 11 Get it out on the water or out on the shelves.
- 12 To encourage something to happen, develop or improve.

Down

- 1 Be the first to get something going.
- 2 Begin a journey, a new life, a career.
- 3 Do something to get a negative or violent reaction.
- 4 Get it up and make it work.
- 7 Start something that begins to grow by its own power.
- 9 Set up and begin a new organisation.

The progress test was very useful in the sense of that you know what you're capable of. We discussed certain topics in class and it's helpful to see what your strengths and weaknesses are. The funny thing about English is that you become aware of what you are saying. Some grammar is being done right or wrong without noticing it because I never thought about it. This was for example the case with „the deeper darker past“. Someone tells a story about what they did in the past, and in that story he was reflecting on the past. I never thought about the consequences on the grammar.

I took a good look at the test and the only mistakes I made were in question 3. There were some words that were all related to „make“ and the different way to use this. I never heard of some of them. It is good to realize this. I will put it in my personal word/grammar bank to learn from them.

Personal word/grammar bank

Everyday there are lots of words I would like to become proficient in. It's easy to know the word and explain what it is if needed. It's another thing to actually use it in daily life without giving it extra thought. In my personal word/grammar bank I list the words/grammar I either learned or I intent to use.

I know the teacher would rather not see a table of all the words, but I feel like this is the best way to learn and understand them for me.

English word	Synonym	Dutch	Sentence
Proficient	Competent	Bekwaam/Beheersen	I am not fully proficient of certain words.
Entrepreneur	-	Ondernemer	The butcher opened his own shop. This makes him an entrepreneur.
Prompt	Instant	Stipt/accuraat	She would have died if it wasn't for the prompt action of the pedestrian.
Instigate	Start/stimulate	Aansporen/aanwakkeren	They instigated the action.
Incite	encourage	Aansporen/prikkelen	They screamed to incite chaos.
Inaugurate	Induct	Inhuldigen	They inaugurated the President.
Engender	Instigate	Veroorzaken/verwekken	They engendered the car crash.
Hoarse	-	Schor	Because Holland lost their football match last night, his voice is hoarse.
Clamber	Climbing	Klauteren	The kid clambered to the other side of the playground.
Bat an eyelid	Did not care	Zou me worst wezen	The Polish girl from class didn't bat an eyelid for the Dutch losing their football match.
Petrified	Frozen	Versteend	The girl was petrified after seeing the robbery.
Bias	prejudice	Vooroordeel	There was a strong bias against him.
Superficial	Shallow	Oppervlakkig	The article was written in a very superficial way.
Yield	Harvest/ Earnings	Opbrengst	The yield of corn was very high this year.
Craves	Hunger for	Hunkert	The man craves for success in his career.

English	Definition	Sentence
Make off	To leave quickly	The burglars made off before the police arrives.
Make off with	Leaves and take something with	He made off with his shoes.
Make out	Deal with a situation	How is he making up in his new job?
Make something up	form something as a whole	It was so noisy, I could barely make something up of what she was saying.
Make up	Forgive something/make it right	We often fight but make it up later.
Make up for	Compensate for something bad	No amount of money can make up for the death of a child.

Courses: Cambridge dictionaries

Grammar.

I've had a lot of grammar in high school already. I never really learned how to apply it in sentences though. I think the Past Simple, Present Perfect, and the Present Perfect Continuous are relevant and worth discussing.

Past Simple

The past simple are about action that happened in the past. This is one you could do automatically correct, but can be confused with the Present Perfect. This one is easy though. An example would be: *I passed my drivers test 6 months ago.*

Present Perfect

The present perfect is about action that started in the past but relate to the present. An example would be: *They have lived in this town for several years.*

Present Perfect Continuous

It focusses on the duration of an action that started in the past and continues up to the present. An example would be: *The universe has been expanding for over 13 billion years.* This can be confusing. When you look at the example of the present perfect, you could argue that the same thing is happening. You started living in that town in the past, you are still living there and you will probably still live there tomorrow. Just like the expanding universe. I should watch out for mixing them up.

Other English activities

I perform a lot of English activities outside school. In fact: I've done this for years.

Podcasts

I recently started listening to Podcasts. I prefer comedy, technology, games, or science. In science I specifically prefer physics or space related events or facts. I am also subscribed to 3 TedTalks channels: TEDTalk Science and Medicine; TEDTalk Technology; and TEDTalks Business. I listen to them in the bus to and from school or before sleeping at night.

Video (Youtube, TV Shows and Programs)

I watch a lot of video and I think this impact on my English must not be underestimated. I actually learned about 70% of my English from videos or tv. Even silly shows like Family Guy can really help you out in improving your English. It helps you to keep track of what they're saying and understanding the English that is not taught in school.

On Youtube I watch Late Night Shows, especially those by Conan O'Brien. Watching English programs from different areas, places, subcultures can help you get the big language picture. I also watch science related Youtube channels, my favorites are:

- Vsauce <https://www.youtube.com/user/Vsauce/videos>
- Veritasium <https://www.youtube.com/user/1veritasium/videos>

I think video has been my most important teacher.

Movies and series of course also help me understand certain things. One of the most difficult series I've watched was *Games of Thrones*. It is non common or old English, at least I never heard of some words. By watching this show (only 2 seasons by the way), I learned words like *I yield* as in *I give up*, *ought* as in a variation of *to have*, *realm* as in some kind of *kingdom* and *craves* as in *hunger for*. Craves is also included in the vocabulary bank.

I learned more useful English by watching the show *Suits*. This show is about a law firm and therefore it uses words from that business, for example *subpoena*.

Reading

I read a lot of articles in English. I read the BBC Football section on a regular basis. I also read the main BBC site sometimes and CNN. When a special event occurs in the world, I often try to read it in newspapers from other countries. Sometimes to get new insights or out of curiosity for how the other countries bring the news across. But also because I simply find it interesting and I want to read as much as possible about the subject. Last time I went to other country's newspapers to read a specific article, it was about the discovery of floating water on Mars.

Reading English news articles helps me improving my vocabulary. It helps to learn new words but also how to use them and use them in correct order and sentences.

Reflection

Because my basics come from video, I sometimes had a hard time writing and talking in the beginning. I didn't put much effort into hearing, reading and understanding other people's message. The hardest thing is to actually come up with the words yourself. When writing and speaking, words should roll off the tongue without giving it too much thought.

Sometimes my texts can look a bit clumsy. It really seems like I go from one sentence to another and only giving information without giving it a human touch to make it a fluent story, so to say. This really was the case in the text about the unusual experience. It wasn't my best day I guess.

Starting an English study doesn't necessarily mean I'm great in English. People in my class went studying in London, USA, or Australia before. I did not do such things. Sometimes I'm struggling getting my message across but I have to say that as time goes by, my English dramatically improves and it gets easier every day. Even a little chat in the IBIS launch during a 10 minutes break contributes in my development of English.

In the beginning I found speaking the hardest thing to do. You don't have time to think and you have to focus on pronunciation. My speaking and writing might seem very juvenile, without using complex words and keeping it basic, but I feel like after week 7 it all got much more familiar. Starting conversations wasn't really a big task anymore. When you don't know a word, simply work your way around it and use synonyms or make the sentence a couple of words longer. I still use Google Translate a lot, but I think for the right reasons. I rarely use it as Dutch-English. I usually write something, start overthinking it and doubting whether or not I use the right word. Usually I am right and I don't have to change anything. But of course sometimes a typo slips through without me noticing it.

I have never learned so much English before compared to the past term. It is incredible. I'm very far from done though. I still have a lot of learnings to do but if I continue the latest developments, I think it will improve so much more in a short notice. I remember my very first interview on IBIS on the study check day. I feel like a completely different person since then and I can't wait to see what comes next.