

16 I can talk about study

DEZI I wasn't very good at English when I started, but **it wasn't for want of trying**. I worked really hard **night after night**, but I **couldn't make head or tail of** the grammar, and it really **held me back**. Then one day things just seemed to make sense, and I started **showing signs of** improvement. My teacher says it's all part of the learning process. I hope she's right.

MATTEI For a long time I did **next to nothing**, until my teacher told me one day that if I didn't **pull my socks up**, I'd fail my English exams and then I'd **have nothing to show for** three or four years' studying. So, I decided to **turn over a new leaf**. I really began to **apply myself**, and I'm pleased to say I've just passed my university exams **with flying colours**.

ORLA One of my problems is that I make silly mistakes in my writing, and I only just **scraped through** my last exam. My teacher's always **telling me off** for this, and says I should check my work carefully **as a matter of routine**. She's right, because if I don't **cut out** the errors, I'll **be marked down** in the next exam.

URSULA I went to the States three summers **running**, and that helped me a lot. My English **came on in leaps and bounds** as a result.



1 Is the speaker pleased or unhappy with these situations? Write P or U.

- 1 The teacher marked me down.
- 2 I'll have to pull my socks up.
- 3 My English is coming on.
- 4 I've cut out the errors.
- 5 My pronunciation is holding me back.
- 6 I passed with flying colours.
- 7 The grammar goes over my head.
- 8 My son has turned over a new leaf.

2 Complete the dialogues. Then circle the whole idiom or phrasal verb.

- Was the dictionary expensive? ~ No, it was second hand, so it cost next *to nothing*.
- 1 Did she get through the exam? ~ Yes, she passed with flying .
 - 2 Ben's not doing well at school, is he? ~ No, but it's not for want .
 - 3 Was the teacher annoyed with you? ~ Yes, she told .
 - 4 Did you understand the lecture? ~ No, I'm afraid it went over .
 - 5 He's got to work harder, hasn't he? ~ Yes, he needs to . himself.
 - 6 Is the writing preventing him from getting better? ~ Yes, it's definitely holding .
 - 7 Are the boys getting better? ~ Yes, they're showing . improvement .
 - 8 Is Mariko actually doing some work now? ~ Yes, she turned over a .
 - 9 How did you do in the exam? ~ Badly. I think they . down for my spelling.
 - 10 Can you understand this article? ~ No, I can't make head .
 - 11 Did you check your spelling? ~ Yes, I use the spelling checker on the computer as a matter .
 - 12 Is Gary working hard enough? ~ No, he'll have to pull his .

3 Replace the words in italics with an idiom or phrasal verb that keeps a similar meaning.

- ▶ I was *given a lower grade* in the exam for lack of clarity. *marked down*
- 1 His English is *getting better*.
 - 2 I can't *understand this at all*.
 - 3 She worked *every night for a long period of time*.
 - 4 This dictionary cost me *hardly anything*.
 - 5 I *only just passed* my exams.
 - 6 His lack of qualifications is *stopping him from being more successful*.
 - 7 I need to *stop making* these silly mistakes if I want to improve.
 - 8 My brother went to Japan three years *ago, and again two years ago, and again last year*.
 - 9 I could do well, but I need to *work harder*.
 - 10 She's worked hard at her tennis and she's progressing *very quickly*.

4 Complete the sentences.

- 1 Has a teacher ever _____ you off in class? If so, what for?
- 2 Has a teacher ever told you that you need to pull your _____ up? If so, why?
- 3 Have you passed any exams with _____ colours? If so, which ones?
- 4 Do you feel your English:
 - a) is coming _____ in leaps and _____ ?
 - b) is showing _____ of getting worse?
- 5 When you're studying, are there certain things you always do as a _____ of routine?
- 6 Do you feel you have a lot to _____ for the years you've been learning English?

1. In / by leaps and bounds	a. INF used to tell sb that they are not doing well and must work harder.
2. hold somebody back	b. change your life by stopping a bad habit or becoming a better person.
3. pull your socks up	c. very well; with a very high mark / grade.
4. have nothing / something / little / a lot to show for sth	d. succeed in doing something with difficulty, especially passing an exam.
5. turn over a new leaf	e. as a habit; as the usual way of doing sth.
6. with flying colours	f. very quickly; in large amounts.
7. tell somebody off	g. two weeks / three years / four times etc., one after another.
8. scrape through something	h. improve
9. as a matter of routine/course	i. reduce the mark / grade given to sb in an exam.
10. two weeks / three years / four times etc. running	j. have achieved nothing / something / little / a lot as a result of sth that you have done.
11. come on	k. stop sb being as successful as they should be.
12. mark somebody down	l. INF talk angrily to sb for doing something wrong.

