

First Time in England

by Ted Power

(c) 1997

A graded reader for beginners and elementary level English language learners

This PDF contains the complete story.

See <http://www.tedpower.co.uk/first.html> for accompanying

work scheme including interactive crosswords to test the vocabulary.

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Chapter 1 **Preparing for the journey**

Rosa is from Spain. She lives in a small flat in Madrid with her mother. Rosa's mother is called Maruja.

Tomorrow is a big day for Rosa. She is going to the airport. She is flying to London. She will stay with an English family in Wembley, West London.

Maruja is a little sad. She likes her daughter, but tomorrow she will have to say goodbye.

Rosa is putting three books in her suitcase. Maruja is watching her. The suitcase looks very heavy.

“Do you need all those books?” Maruja asks.

“Yes, mummy! The yellow book is a Spanish English dictionary and the red one is a Tourist Guide to London.”

“But do you need that big, black book?”

“Yes, of course, mummy! The black book's very important. It's about children. My English family has two young children and I'm going to look after them.”

Rosa is very interested in children. Last year, she studied Psychology at university. Maruja likes children too, but she does not know about Psychology.

“But, Rosa ... the black book's in Spanish! It's about Spanish children!”

“No, mummy! It's about European children. We're all Europeans now! My psychology book's international!”

“I don't know about psychology, but I know about you. You're my child. You've got Spanish culture and habits.”

“What do you mean, mummy?”

“I mean that you have a good Catholic education, you like good food, you have lunch at 3 p.m. and dinner at 10 p.m. You like sun and you don't like rain. British children are different!”

Chapter 2 Meeting the English family

We are now in a street in West London. The sky is very dark and it is raining. This is Rosa's big day. Her first day in England.

Rosa is getting out of a London taxi. The taxi driver is carrying a very heavy suitcase. They walk through the rain to the front door of a big Victorian house.

A small girl opens the door. She is four years old. Her brother is standing behind her. He is only two years old. One minute later, a young woman comes to the door.

"Welcome to Wembley!", she says and she offers Rosa her hand. "These are my two children, Elisabeth and Isaac."

"Pleased to meet you, Mrs Frost!" says Rosa with a strong Spanish accent.

The two children run back into the living-room.

"Don't worry about them! They're a little shy. And please call me Diana! Now let me show you your room and then we can have a nice cup of tea. Or would you prefer coffee?"

"I'd like to try a cup of English tea, made in England."

"This is your bedroom. There's a nice view of the football stadium and here's a little desk where you can study. The bathroom and toilet are just opposite your door. Now I'll just go and put the kettle on."

"Excuse me. What's a kettle?"

"In England, we use a kettle to make hot water. We can then put the hot water in a teapot or use it to make instant coffee."

Rosa is happy with her new home, but she is thinking about her mother's opinions. Perhaps Maruja is right. The British are not normal people. They do not kiss when they meet and they live in large Victorian palaces. Their favourite drink is tea and they use strange metal kettles to make the water hot. What is she going to say to Elisabeth and Isaac? How can she make friends with two shy English children? Perhaps the answer is in the big, black psychology book.

Chapter 3 **Getting to know English children**

It is Saturday. Mr and Mrs Frost are shopping at their local supermarket. Rosa is alone for the first time with Elisabeth and Isaac. They are in the living-room. The two Frost children are sitting in front of the television. They are watching a Tom and Jerry cartoon.

Tom is a cat and Jerry is a mouse. The mouse is very intelligent and gives the cat a difficult time. The cartoon is popular in many countries and Rosa often watches it in Spain, but she is not watching it with the children.

Rosa is taking some coloured crayons and some paper from a plastic bag. First, she draws a picture of her English family's kitchen. She then draws Tom and Jerry. Tom the cat is on the kitchen table and Jerry is under it. The mouse is drinking the cat's milk.

Soon Elisabeth and Isaac are looking at Rosa's picture. Rosa is very happy because she has the two English children's attention. She quickly takes some coloured paper from her bag. The paper is for Japanese Origami.

“What are you doing?” Elisabeth asks.

“Watch me and you'll see!” she says.

Soon the children are drawing their own pictures and playing with paper models of Tom and Jerry.

Later that morning, Mr & Mrs Frost arrive home. They are very happy to see their children together with the young lady from Spain.

“What a surprise!” Mr Frost says. “The children usually watch television all the morning, but now you have their full attention. How do you do it? Do you have a Spanish secret?”

“Your children don't understand Spanish and I don't have any secrets”, says Rosa modestly. She does not tell them about the big, black book.

In the evening, Rosa phones her mother in Madrid. Maruja is glad to hear that her daughter is safe and well. Rosa is happy to tell Maruja about English children, Tom & Jerry and international psychology.

Chapter 4 **First morning at a language school**

It is 9 o' clock on Monday morning and the sun is shining through the windows of a tall building in Central London. Inside, a line of students is walking slowly up the stairs to a large room on the first floor.

Two middle-aged women are sitting at a table at the front of the room. They are looking at a list of students' names. A tall man is standing just inside the door. He is telling the students where to sit.

“Please fill the chairs at the back of the room!” he says in a loud voice.

The tall man is a teacher, but this is a big school. There are many teachers. The other teachers are waiting in a room on the second floor.

One of the middle-aged ladies stands up. Most of the chairs are now occupied. She can see faces from many different countries. She looks at the students to get their attention.

“Good morning!” she says in a lively voice.

Some of the students say “Good morning!” but many are silent. She is not happy with their silence.

“You're all here to speak English! ... Let's try again! ... Good morning!” she repeats in a louder voice.

All the students say “Good morning!” in very loud voices. Then she smiles at them.

“My name's Mary Palmer and I'm your Course Director. This is my assistant, Angela Leach. She's going to check your passports. We're both very happy to welcome you to the English Language College. We've got the best teachers in London and we're sure that your English will get better. You'll also make a lot of new friends. There are people in this school from all over the world! Stand up all the students who come from Japan! ... Thank you! ... Now stand up if you come from Spain!”

There are eleven students from Japan - eight young ladies and three young men. But there are only two students from Spain. One of them is a waiter from Gijon. His name is Arturo. The other is a psychology graduate from Madrid. She is called Rosa.

Chapter 5 The entry test

At exactly half past nine, four women and two men enter the large room. Mrs Palmer introduces them one by one. They are all teachers. The women look smart, but one of the men is wearing an old pair of jeans. Mrs Palmer is not happy with his clothes, but she knows he is a good teacher.

“I’d like to introduce you to Kevin, one of our most popular teachers!” she says, “and I’d like the eight students sitting in the front row to go with him to Room 21. You’re going to do a little test!”

It is now ten o’ clock. Arturo is with a teacher in Room 11. Her name is Anne Evans. Arturo is looking at four pictures on his question paper. The pictures tell a story. Arturo is writing the story in English on his answer paper.

Rosa is with Kevin in Room 21. He is testing her listening and speaking.

“How do you spell your surname?” he asks.

“I don’t understand?” says Rosa.

“Your surname ... your family name,” Kevin explains.

“Do you mean my family in England or in Spain?” Rosa asks.

Kevin is very patient. “My name’s Kevin Foster. My first name’s Kevin and my surname’s Foster. Here’s a picture of Elvis, the king of rock & roll. His first name’s Elvis. Can you tell me his surname ... his family name?”

“O.K.! O.K.! Now I understand!” answers Rosa. “But in Spain we have two family names - one from our father and one from our mother. My family names are Garcia and Fernandez!”

“How do you spell Garcia?” Kevin asks. Rosa thinks for a moment.

“J. ... I’m sorry ... G. ... A.R.C.I.A. - Is that good?” she asks.

Kevin writes a few words about Rosa’s English and then looks at his watch. He has to speak to five more students before the coffee break at half past ten.

“Thank you, Rosa!”, he says. “You understand some English, but your vocabulary and pronunciation are not so good. I have to check your writing

so please finish the grammar questions and the story and put them on my table. Now I need to speak to Yukiko! Tell me Yukiko ... Are you learning English for love or for money?!”

Chapter 6 **Lunch-time in the English family**

“Roger, your lunch is on the table!”

Roger Frost is writing in English on his computer, but there are many French books on his desk.

“I’m coming, dear!” he shouts.

Downstairs in the kitchen, Diana is serving the potatoes. She puts a potato on Isaac’s plate and cuts it up into small pieces.

“How many potatoes would you like, Elisabeth - one or two?”

Elisabeth is already eating sausages and beans. She has a good appetite.

“Two please, mummy!” she answers quickly.

On weekday mornings, the two children go to a play group in the centre of Wembley. Some mothers and fathers help with the play group, but usually parents are free to do shopping and other jobs.

“It’s just a simple lunch, today!” Diana tells Roger. “Monday’s my busy day!”

Diana is a nurse at a hospital in West London. She works four days a week from 3 o’clock in the afternoon to 10 o’clock in the evening.

“Every day’s your busy day!” Roger tells her. “That’s why you’re my wife!”

Roger is also very busy, but he does not often leave the house. He works upstairs on his computer. He translates books from French, Italian and Spanish into good English.

“Well, today you can work very hard with your translation. Rosa’s coming home at half past two and she can look after the children.” Diana tells him.

The dessert is also very simple, but the children enjoy it. It is jelly and ice-cream - a hospital favourite because it is quick to serve and easy to eat!

Diana leaves her husband with the children and goes upstairs to get ready for work. It is his job to put the kettle on and do the washing up.

Chapter 7 **Coffee-time at the language school**

It is coffee time on Tuesday morning at The English Language College. Arturo is standing near Angela Leach's desk in reception. He sees Rosa coming down the stairs.

"Hello! Rosa!" he says. He does not want to speak Spanish because Angela is listening to him. She tells the Course Director everything!

"Rosa! Do you like your new class?" he asks.

"I'm not sure," she answers. "The teacher is good, but the course book is very easy."

"Don't worry!" says Arturo. "The first lessons in course books are always very easy. I'm sure your book will get more difficult."

"Well, how about your class?" asks Rosa.

"I like it when the teacher's speaking," says Arturo, "but there's too much pairwork."

"What's pairwork?" asks Rosa.

"It's when you practise your English by speaking to the person next to you," Arturo explains.

"But that's good!" says Rosa. "All the students have more speaking time!"

"It isn't good for me!" Arturo answers. "The student next to me reads his dictionary all the time. He looks for words to say, but he says nothing. When I speak to him, he doesn't understand me!"

"Don't worry!" says Rosa. "Pairwork is very difficult the first time. Tomorrow it will be very easy!"

"Don't make fun of me!" says Arturo. "You're a very bad person, so I'm only going to ask you one more question."

"What?" asks Rosa.

"I'm alone here in England. Would you like to go shopping and sightseeing with me on Saturday?"

“I’m a very bad person,” says Rosa, “so the answer to your question is yes!”

Chapter 8 **In a West London hospital**

It is Thursday afternoon in West London and Diana is starting work in the hospital. Rebecca, another nurse is talking to her.

“Today you’ve got three patients. Mr Miles is no problem. He is very independent. The two problems are Mr Knight and Mr Blythe. Mr Blythe likes to read quietly, but Mr Knight has a lot of visitors. One of the visitors is his wife. She likes to talk. She talks all the time and Mr Blythe is becoming very angry!”

“Is the doctor coming round today?” asks Diana.

“Yes,” says Rebecca. “She’s coming at about five o’clock. Could you ask her to look at Mr Blythe’s left foot? It’s giving him a lot of pain. Here’s a list of jobs for this evening. I’m going home now. I’m very tired. Good luck!”

“Goodbye, Rebecca! See you on Monday!” Diana says.

Diana is also tired, but she is happy. Thursday is the end of her week. But Mr Blythe is not happy. Mrs Knight is still talking to her husband.

“You have three pairs of socks and two clean shirts in this bag. Tomorrow, I’m going to wash your green pullover. Do you want your red pyjamas and your small alarm clock?” She asks him.

Mr Knight does not answer his wife. She talks all the time, but he sleeps nearly all the time. He is sleeping now.

Diana feels sorry for Mr Blythe and plans to help him.

“Mr Blythe,” she says. “There’s an empty bed near the window and the view from the window is very nice. Would you like to move there?”

“That’s very kind of you, nurse!” Mr Blythe answers.

Diana asks Fiona, another staff nurse, to help her. Together, they move Mr Blythe’s bed. He can now read in peace.

Chapter 9 **First letter home**

72 Cowper Street,
Wembley,
London,
W3 4AL

7th February, 1997

Dear Mum,

I hope you can understand me because I'm writing this letter in English. I'm going to ask Roger, Mr Frost, to correct my mistakes. His job is a translator and his English is perfect. He also speaks Spanish and French. At the moment, he is translating a French novel into English.

I usually have to work hard after school, but on Fridays Diana, Mrs Frost, does everything in the house. After working for four evenings as a nurse in a hospital, she likes to spend three evenings with her own children. At the moment, she's putting Elisabeth to bed. Elisabeth asks a lot of questions. It takes a long time to put her to bed. Isaac doesn't say very much, but needs a lot of attention.

I'm sure you want to know about my new life in England. Well, every morning after a normal breakfast, I walk to the Underground Station. It's on the Central Line so it's very easy to get to my language school.

I have a Spanish friend called Arturo and we meet in reception before class. We're going shopping and sightseeing in London tomorrow. His English is a little better than mine so I think he can help me with my vocabulary.

There are only four other students in my class and they're a little slow. The book is not very exciting. All the questions are very general, for example:

Do you prefer tea or coffee?

Do you wash before or after you clean your teeth?

How many oranges do you eat each week?

Where do you usually go in the autumn?

I'd like to ask the other students about particular times in their lives, but then we need The Past Simple, which is not in our book!

In my next letter, I'm going to tell you more about my English family, but now I need to prepare my sightseeing trip. Remember the big, red "Tourist

Guide to London". It's the biggest thing on my desk!

All the best,

Rosa

Chapter 10 **A supermarket shopping trip**

Diana and Roger Frost are in a large supermarket in Wembley. They shop here every Saturday morning. Their two children are at home with Rosa.

“I’ll get the fruit and you get the vegetables!” Diana tells her husband.

Roger puts four small lettuces into his basket. Then he sees some large tomatoes from Holland and some very small cherry tomatoes from Spain. He likes tomatoes very much so he takes both types.

Diana always buys a lot of bananas. They are good value and the children like them. The Frosts have apple and pear trees in their garden so they do not buy any green fruit. They also have a lot of raspberries in their freezer.

“Have you got the potatoes?” Diana asks.

“Yes, English ones - King Edwards!” answers Roger.

“Well, you can get the ham, cheese and olives. I’ll get the butter, milk, yoghurt and pizza bases.”

Roger takes a ticket from a small machine and waits for his number. Then an assistant in a white uniform serves him with 200 grammes of Honey Roast ham, 350 grammes of Cheddar cheese and 100 grammes of small, black olives.

Diana is very quick. Her basket is now very full. She has also got a packet of Mozarella cheese for the pizza topping and a large free-range chicken for Sunday lunch. She meets her husband near the bread counter. They buy two loaves of French bread for the weekend and some large square tin loaves of white and brown bread to put in the freezer.

“Let’s get the ice-cream and go home.” Roger says. “Supermarkets aren’t my favourite places!”

“I know!” answers Diana. “You’d like to do all your shopping by computer! There are two more things on my list. We need toothpaste and toilet paper!”

Chapter 11 **Sightseeing & shopping in London (1)**

A young lady is waiting on the steps of the British Museum. She is looking at her watch. It's twenty to three in the afternoon. A young man arrives. He is ten minutes late.

“Do your girl-friends in Spain always wait for you?” Rosa asks him.

“Only the old and ugly ones!” answers Arturo.

Rosa is not happy with him.

“Well, this is my afternoon and I'm going to do what I want. First, I want to look at the Egyptian mummies in the museum. They're very old and ugly and they're waiting for you!”

The two young students spend an hour in the museum and then buy picture postcards to send to their friends.

“We need at least a week to visit such a big museum. One hour isn't enough!” says Arturo.

“You can stay here a week,” answers Rosa, “but I'm going to two bookshops. One is near London University just north of the museum and the other is a little way south in Charing Cross Road. Are you coming with me?”

“Yes,” says Arturo, “but later I'd like to go to the big music stores in Oxford Street to look for CDs.”

“If you are patient for the next hour, we can go there later.”

Arturo is not very patient. He also wants to look at the computer shops in Tottenham Court Road. He arranges to meet Rosa in the Psychology Department of the first bookshop at five o'clock.

Rosa likes the bookshop near the university, but she is looking for a particular book about Piaget, the Swiss Psychologist. She cannot find it in the first shop. Arturo returns ten minutes early. The new super-computers are interesting, but much too expensive.

Chapter 12 **Sightseeing & shopping in London (2)**

“Can we go to Oxford Street now?” he asks her.

“You’re ten minutes early,” she answers, “and I need to go to the second bookshop in Charing Cross Road. It’s just for one book. It won’t take long!”

“O.K., but please hurry!” says Arturo. “British shops close very early! Many of them close at half past five!”

They go to the second bookshop. Rosa is very lucky. The shop assistant is Spanish and studies Psychology. He finds the book very quickly. But Arturo isn’t so lucky. Rosa has to wait in a long queue to pay for the book. It is nearly half past five and Arturo is becoming very impatient.

“Don’t worry!” says Rosa. “London is an international city. I’m sure the big music stores close later than other shops!”

Rosa is right. When they arrive in Oxford Street, the large music stores are still open. Arturo finds what he wants and pays for it very quickly. He is happy now and tells Rosa about his new CD.

“It’s a collection of songs by the American folk-singer Peggy Seeger!” he explains. “The CD is an American import. I can’t find it in Spain.”

“What does she sing about?” Rosa asks.

“That’s a good question,” answers Arturo, “because the words of her songs make you think. Some of them are about the social situation of women. Others are about green politics and the world we live in. I’m sure you’ll like them!”

“When can I hear them?”

“Not now,” answers Arturo, “because now we’re going to visit a very interesting London pub in Holborn. The pub was the home of Britain’s oldest folk club. Peggy Seeger was one of the resident singers. Her husband and singing partner was Ewan MacColl. He’s dead now, but he was the father of British folk music and writer of many great songs.”

“When can I hear these songs?” Rosa asks again.

“Well, my CD player is at home in my flat. I don’t want to take my CDs to

school, so perhaps I could invite you home one day next week. Now, I'm going to invite you to drink the best beer in London!"

"That's very kind of you, but I think I'll have an orange juice!" Rosa answers with a smile on her face.

Chapter 13 In the Course Director's Office

"Come in, Rosa!"

Mary Palmer is sitting at her desk in the Course Director's office at The English Language College. She is expecting Rosa.

"Angela tells me that you want to change your class. There are only five students in your present class so you have a good opportunity to practise your pronunciation. Do you really want to move to a class with eleven other students?"

Rosa answers Mrs Palmer's question very carefully.

"It's true that I have a lot of speaking time in my present class, but I'm becoming bored. The teacher speaks very clearly, but the book is always the same and the other students are very slow."

Mrs Palmer can see that Rosa really wants to change, but she must be careful. She doesn't want all the students to change their classes.

"Well, it's possible to move you up to the next level. There's just one place in that class. You'll need to learn a lot of new words and the grammar is much more difficult. How often do you use the Study Centre?"

The English Language College has three special rooms where students can practise after school. The Study Centre contains a language laboratory, a video room and a modern library with cassette players and computers. Many students use the rooms every day, but Rosa has to look after Elisabeth and Isaac.

"I can only use the Study Centre on Friday afternoons. On other days, I have to arrive home before three o'clock to help my English family!" answers Rosa.

"O.K." says Mrs Palmer, "you can move to Room 11 after coffee, but I want you to practise in the Study Centre every Friday afternoon!"

Rosa is very happy to change class, but now she has to work every afternoon. When can she visit Arturo's flat? When can she hear his CDs?

Chapter 14 **First lesson in a new class**

There are now two Spanish students in Anne Evan's class. Arturo from the north of Spain and Rosa from Madrid. Anne is happy to have twelve students

because they can all do pairwork! Rosa is happy because the level is more difficult. On the board, there is a list of irregular verbs in the Past Simple:

- | | | |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. lost | 8. came | 15. became |
| 2. felt | 9. went | 16. hid |
| 3. saw | 10. were | 17. lay |
| 4. said | 11. ate | 18. stood |
| 5. led | 12. heard | 19. woke up |
| 6. was | 13. got out | 20. told |
| 7. rang | 14. had | |

Anne gives her students very clear instructions:

"I'd like Rosa to sit next to Yukiko so that we've got six pairs. You all have a copy of the list of words on the board. I'm going to tell you a short story. Listen carefully and tick the words you hear."

Rosa does not have a copy of the word list, but Yukiko is very kind. The two students share one photocopy. They do not disturb their teacher. Anne starts her story:

"Yesterday, on my way home from school, I lost all my money. Suddenly, I felt very hungry, but at the same moment I saw an interesting sign. It said: FREE FOOD, THIS WAY! The sign led to a nice restaurant, but it was closed. I rang the door bell. Nobody came so I went inside. On the first table, there were three plates of sushi. I ate two of them. Then I heard the noise of a taxi. A large man got out. He had two glasses of saki in his hands. I became afraid and hid under the table. I lay there for nearly an hour while the large man stood by the door. Then I woke up. The man by the door was my husband. He told me that it was morning and that I was in my own bedroom. In his hands, he had two cups of strong, black coffee."

Anne is a good teacher and her lessons have a lot of variety. The students have to tell the same story again to their pairwork partners, but first they have to ask questions in the Past Simple. Anne is listening carefully to her new student. She tells Rosa that there are two types of questions with the words WHO, WHAT, HOW MUCH and HOW MANY. Then she writes some examples on the board for all the class to see:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Who lost all her money? | <u>Anne</u> did. | SUBJECT |
| Who got out of the taxi? | <u>A large man</u> did. | SUBJECT |
| How many glasses of saki did he have? | <u>Two</u> . | OBJECT |
| What did Anne lose? | <u>All her money</u> . | OBJECT |
| How much sushi did Anne eat? | <u>A lot</u> . | OBJECT |

Chapter 15 **Looking after English children**

It's Wednesday evening and Isaac is already in bed. Elisabeth is asking Rosa a lot of questions. "Where's mummy?"

"You know where mummy is."

"Where's daddy?"

"You know where daddy is."

"Where's your daddy?"

Rosa does not want to answer this question. Her father is dead, but what can she say to a small child with her bad English vocabulary?

"My daddy's in the sky?" Rosa answers.

"Is he a pilot?" Elisabeth asks. Rosa does not want to continue this conversation.

"No, he isn't a pilot, but we're pilots and we're going to fly three times round the living room, out of the living room into the hall, up the stairs, along the landing, past your daddy's door, into your bedroom and you're going to land right on your bed."

"Where are you going to land?" Elisabeth wants to know.

"I've got to do many things before I land and you're going to help me. We're going to fly all the way to the bathroom. Then we're going to wash your aeroplane's face and clean all its little teeth."

"Don't be silly", Elisabeth says, "Aeroplanes don't have teeth!"

"Well, you've got very nice teeth!" Rosa tells her. "First, we're going to clean them. Then, I'm going to land on your bed and tell you a story!"

"I don't want a story!" Elisabeth says. "I want to ask you another question!"

"But I want to read you a story." Rosa answers. "It's good for my English! You can correct my mistakes!"

“Mummy and daddy don’t make mistakes when they read me stories!”

“That’s because English is their first language. My mummy and I live in Spain and our first language is Spanish!”

“Why does your daddy live in the sky and what language does he speak?” asks Elisabeth.

Chapter 16 **Practising English in a Study Centre**

Kevin Foster is responsible for the Study Centre where students come after their lessons. It's now Friday. Rosa and Arturo are coming to practise their English.

"Welcome to self-study!" Kevin says. He knows it's their first time.

"What can we do in the language laboratory?" Arturo asks.

"Some students like to listen and fill in information, but I think it's better to use the lab for speaking practice," Kevin replies.

"Yes, I need to practise my pronunciation!" Rosa says.

"Then try this cassette. It has all the English sounds which are difficult for Spanish speakers and some exercises on rhythm and stress. There's also a worksheet which you can take home," Kevin explains.

"Can I take the cassette home?" Rosa asks.

Kevin hates this question, but answers politely.

"No, I'm sorry! We like all the cassettes to stay in the language laboratory. The machines here are special. They play the teacher's voice on Side A and record the student's voice on Side B at the same time. You can't do that on a normal cassette recorder."

"What other types of speaking practice can we do?" Arturo asks.

"Well, the grammar practice drills are very useful at your level. Some students write all their grammar in their workbooks very slowly. They never learn to speak correctly at normal speed. Some grammar drills are very boring, but this cassette presents the language in interesting situations."

"Is there a book?" Arturo wants to know.

"Yes, here it is," answers Kevin. "Use the book to find the place on the cassette, but then shut it. Use your ears and your memory. Then speak! Don't read the answers from the book."

"How many exercises should I do?" Arturo asks.

“It’s best to repeat just one or two exercises every day. Record and play back your answers several times. Try to do better each time. When you get tired, do something different. Practise your conversation or test your vocabulary on one of the computers!”

Chapter 17 **A visit to a London flat**

Arturo's flat is in the attic of a tall house in Greenwich just south of the river Thames. It's now Friday evening and Arturo has a visitor. He is still with Rosa.

When they left the Study Centre, they stopped at a supermarket and bought food and drink for the evening meal. Then they went to Charing Cross Station and caught a train to Greenwich.

Arturo's kitchen is very small, but there is a gas cooker, a fridge, a sink and a table big enough for two people. Rosa takes the shopping out of the bag and puts it on the table. Then she lights the oven of the gas cooker.

"I hope you're hungry," she says, "because now I'm going to show you the quick way to make pizza. Mr Frost taught me how to do it yesterday!"

Arturo is hungry, but he is not giving Rosa his full attention. He is reading a letter which he found when he arrived home.

Rosa has got two pizza bases, four tomatoes, two mushrooms, 100 grammes of ham and a small packet of Mozarella cheese. First, she cuts the vegetables and meat into small pieces and puts them on the pizza bases. Next, she adds the Italian cheese. She is going to bake the two pizzas in the gas oven. Suddenly, she hears music.

"Who's singing?" she asks.

"Peggy Seeger!" Arturo answers. "The song's called The Housewife's Alphabet." The song is an A to Z of all the jobs which housewives have to do.

Rosa enjoys cooking, but she is happy that she doesn't have to look after Diana's children this weekend. The Frost family are spending the weekend with friends in Oxford so she will be alone in their house.

"The pizzas only need 15 minutes in the oven. Can you help me lay the table?" she asks.

Arturo is a waiter so this is not a difficult job for him, but his face is very sad. Rosa sees that he is not happy.

"What's the matter, Arturo! Are all your family O.K.?"

“Yes, but my parents have some money problems. My father’s lost his job. I have to return to Spain at the end of February.”

Arturo is worried about his father, but he is sad about leaving England. It is difficult for middle-aged men to find new jobs. It is also difficult for young men to find new friends as beautiful as Rosa.

Chapter 18 A weekend in Brighton

It is Sunday morning in Kemptown, part of Central Brighton where there are many small hotels. It is still early and there are not many people on the streets. It is Rosa's first time in Brighton. Arturo knows the town well. Today he is her guide. They arrive in Madeira Drive and make their way down to the promenade. There is a small railway line which runs east along the sea front to Brighton Marina.

"This was the first electric railway in the world!" Arturo says. "Queen Victoria travelled on it over a hundred years ago. They open it later in the year when the weather's warmer."

"I need a second cup of coffee and some more breakfast! Do you think we can find a snack bar on Palace Pier?" she asks.

It is windy and a little cold on the sea front and Arturo has another idea.

"I'd like to take you to a vegetarian restaurant in Prince Albert Street. They bake their own bread and serve very good breakfasts!"

"Is it near here?" Rosa wants to know.

"Yes, it's in the old part of Brighton just north west of the pier. It's in the Lanes. These are small streets where fishermen lived many years ago. Brighton was once a small fishing village before it became a large tourist town".

Arturo takes Rosa's hand and they walk along the sea front past the Royal Albion Hotel towards Hove. After a little way, they turn right and enter Brighton's historic Lanes. Soon, they are sitting in a warm restaurant eating croissants and drinking fresh coffee.

"You're the guide! What are we going to do next?" Rosa asks.

"We're going to continue through the Lanes and then we're going to visit a big oriental palace!" Arturo answers. Rosa pretends to be surprised.

"An oriental palace in Brighton? Are you crazy?"

Arturo is sure that Rosa knows the palace. They both saw the Royal Pavilion just twelve hours ago on their night out in Brighton. Nobody can miss the Royal Pavilion at night. Bright coloured lights make it look grand and romantic.

“I’m not crazy. I’m only dreaming. I’m walking towards an oriental palace in England with a beautiful Mediterranean princess.

Chapter 19 **Working from home**

It's Monday afternoon and Mr Frost is asking Rosa about her weekend.

"Were you lonely all by yourself in the house while we were in Oxford?" Rosa decides to tell him the truth.

"Actually, I spent Saturday and Sunday in Brighton with a friend."

Before they can finish the conversation, the door bell rings and Mr Frost leaves the room. There are two large boxes for him. He thanks the delivery man who helps him carry the boxes to his office. Then he returns to the living-room where Rosa and the children are waiting with interest.

"Daddy, what have you got?" Elisabeth asks.

"Come and see!" is Mr Frost's answer.

They all go upstairs. The children do not often enter Mr Frost's office.

"This is daddy's new toy." he says.

Rosa and Mr Frost unpack the boxes and take out a very modern computer. The children watch them connect the monitor, keyboard and mouse to the computer base. Finally, Mr Frost plugs the machine in and presses the ON / OFF button.

"This computer is very easy to use!" Rosa tells him. "All the software is already on the hard disk."

Mr Frost bought his old computer many years ago. He does not have Rosa's confidence in new technology.

"All the new software is already there," he says, "but all my work is on these large floppy disks."

The old disks are too large for the new computer, but Rosa has the answer to every problem.

"Why don't you buy a small external disk drive for your old computer!" she suggests. "Then you'll be able to save all your data on small modern disks and you'll have two compatible computers!"

The two children enjoy the paint program on the new machine and fill the screen with colour. But they are not interested in their daddy's technical problems. Mr Frost is very impatient. He cannot wait to transfer his customer database and translation programs onto the super new machine.

Chapter 20 A Spanish meal

Today Mr Frost is a happy man. It is Friday afternoon, his wife is at home and his work is going well. He took Rosa's advice and bought an external disk drive from a shop in Tottenham Court Road. All the programs and files he needs for his job are now on the hard disk of the new computer.

Rosa is happy too, but she is not working in the Study Centre of the school. She is in the Frosts' kitchen with Arturo. They are preparing a Spanish meal for all the family and it is nearly ready.

Diana is relaxing in an armchair with a big pile of magazines. She enjoys reading about food, health, fashion and the home. Elisabeth and Isaac have their books, toys and games all over the living room carpet. They are playing happily.

Arturo can lay a table very quickly. He and Rosa work well together. Soon the Frosts are sitting round the dinner table and are ready for the first course. They are guests in their own home.

"The table looks beautiful!" Diana says.

"Wait until you taste the food!" Rosa exclaims.

The first course is gazpacho, a cold vegetable soup made with tomatoes, green peppers, olive oil, salt and bread.

"The recipe is from the south of Spain. We usually eat it in the summer, but Rosa likes it very much!" Arturo explains. Rosa looks a little worried.

"Don't give Isaac too much!" she warns. "We put a lot of peppers and olive oil in it. The next course will be better for the children!"

"Yum! Yum!" Elisabeth says. She does not want to miss any of the Spanish meal. Rosa fetches the next course quickly and serves the children.

"What's that?" asks Elisabeth.

"It's a special type of potato omelette," Arturo answers. "It's called tortilla."

The two children enjoy eating the tortilla. Elisabeth is ready for everything that Rosa and Arturo can serve. But the other members of the Frost family are full up before the main course arrives. The final recipe contains chicken, prawns, mussels, rice, tomatoes, peppers, beans, onions, salt, garlic

and olive oil.

“Here you are Elisabeth! Your first Spanish paella! Can I serve anybody else?” Rosa asks.

Chapter 21 **The end of course test**

The main course at The English Language College runs for four weeks. On the last Thursday, students have to do a progress test. If they score 75 % or more, students who are staying longer can continue at a higher level. If they do badly, they usually have to repeat the same level.

It is now lunch-time. The progress test is finished. Most students are happy, but Rosa is a little worried. “Relax!” says Arturo. “The test isn’t so important!”

“It isn’t important for you because you’re leaving tomorrow, but I don’t want to repeat the same level!”

“I’m sure you’ll pass,” says Arturo. “English is easy for European students!”

“What do you mean?” Rosa asks.

“I mean that usually students from Asia and the Arab world have a lot more work to do. Word order and grammar are very different in their first languages. Fewer words are similar and they usually have to learn a new alphabet” Arturo explains.

“But the Asian students in our class write very well and have very good English grammar!” Rosa says.

“That’s because they practise writing and grammar a lot at school in their countries. Some of the students in our class have practised English grammar for many years. But they usually do more writing than speaking!” Arturo says.

“That’s interesting!” answers Rosa, “because in Spanish culture, speaking is probably more important than writing!”

“Yes,” says Arturo, “but we make a lot of mistakes and have big pronunciation problems when we’re speaking English!”

“This is why I’m worried about my test,” Rosa explains. “I didn’t spend enough time in the language laboratory!”

“But I’m sure your listening and reading were very good,” says Arturo.

“Elisabeth Frost gives you a lot of listening practice and your food vocabulary is now very big!”

“Let’s go and have lunch!” Rosa says. “My appetite is very big too!”

Upstairs, on the second floor, there are many hungry teachers. Their appetites are very big, but they have to correct the students’ tests quickly. Both the students and Mary Palmer are waiting for the test results.

Chapter 22 A trip to Gatwick Airport

It is the last Friday in February and Arturo's last day in England. Rosa is with him. They are standing at the Charter Flight desk at Gatwick Airport. Last week, Arturo phoned a travel company and bought a cheap flight with his credit card. The company gave him a booking reference and told him to collect the ticket at the airport.

"Do you think you're going to get a ticket?" Rosa asks.

"I'm not worried!" Arturo answers. "I have to wait until the agent from the Charter company arrives. She has all the tickets for late bookings."

"Well, while you're waiting," Rosa says, "I want to give you a small present. Put it in your hand luggage!" She gives him a small box.

"Can I have a look at it first?" Arturo asks.

"No, you'll hate it!" Rosa answers.

Arturo opens the box and takes out two small tea-cups. They are decorated with pictures of the Royal Pavilion. At the bottom of the box are some cards from the British Museum.

"Thank you, Rosa!" he says. "I'll read the cards when I'm on the plane. I don't want to cry in the airport. But why did you buy me two teacups?" he asks.

"Tea for two!" Rosa answers. "One for you and one for your guest. I'm coming to visit you at Easter!" A broad smile appears on Arturo's face.

"Well, I've got something for you too!" He gives her a large envelope with her name on. Inside, Rosa finds a picture of a London pub and a CD of songs by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger. She looks at Arturo warmly.

"Learn these songs," he tells her, "and you'll speak perfect Scottish and American English!"

"Which is your favourite song?" she asks him. "I'll learn it first!"

"My favourite," Arturo answers, "is The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face. It's a very romantic song. I'd like to sing it to you every day!"

"Well, wait until I come to Gijon and then you can!" Rosa promises.

Both Rosa and Arturo are very happy. The language course was a success. They both passed their test. On Monday, Rosa is going to study at a more difficult level and at Easter both Rosa and Arturo will be together again.