

Girls' Access to Education Girls' Education Challenge

Sierra Leone



English Language Unit 1

Name of Learning Assistant _____

School _____

Tutor _____



The Open
University



Girls'
Education
Challenge



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English Language Unit 1

Welcome

These study materials will support your reading, writing, speaking and grammar practice in English. Some work will be for you to do alone and some work will be with other learning assistants. Some study will be for you to do alone and some study will be with other learning assistants. Some activities will be on study skills; these help you to learn better and become a more confident learner. All these activities will help you to prepare for the Teachers' College entrance exam as well as help you with your placement in a primary school classroom.

This unit has 5 weeks of English work. Do some English work every week and every day if possible because even a little will help.

A journey is made up of small steps. Take small steps to: speak more, read more, and write more.

Week 1: Our Dreams

Start here.

Work this week

This week we will read, write and talk about our dreams and hopes and learn some new words.

1.1 Our Dreams

Speak these words aloud in a strong voice. Each sentence is from a different person. Each sentence tells you something about their hopes or dreams

Our dream is to bring peace to our country.



I hope to be a politician and I am working hard so that I can study Law at university.

I hope to get stronger so I can run in sports day.





4

My ambition is to see my children go to college in Freetown.

What I want most of all is a healthy happy child.



5



6

My dream is to become a scientist and to discover new medicines.

1.2 Now do this speaking practise

Find another learning assistant to be your partner. **Talk** to her about the photos. Do not write.

- **Who says these words?**
(draw in lines to show how they match)

Keep talking and listening.

- **Do you share any of these dreams? What is your dream? Why?**
Talk about your dreams, hopes and ambitions. Listen to each other.

1.3 Reading: My Dream

Read this.

My Dream is to become a teacher one day.

I am nineteen years old and I went to King Fahad Primary school. What I want most of all is to go back to secondary school to finish my education. Unfortunately I had to leave school after my mother died because my aunt could not afford the school fees or uniform. Fortunately my aunt has helped me and she has encouraged me to think of my future so that our family will be proud of me.

When I was In Primary school my favourite teacher was Isata Swaray because she always helped me understand what I had to do to make my work better. I found it easy to understand. I have always liked the sounds of words in different languages and songs. After finishing my work in the evenings I used to sing songs to my younger brothers and sisters and tell them the names of birds and trees and colours. I like to see them laugh when I tell stories.

When I was younger I thought Maths was difficult and a bit scary and so I never asked questions in class. Now I am not afraid to speak up and ask for help. I am more confident now than when I was younger. This is because after years of helping my aunt with her business buying and selling in the market I can see the patterns in numbers and do sums quickly in my head.

Last term I started evening classes and went back to studying again. I have made a new friend Hawa Kamara. We help each other with Maths and English and share a text book. We both plan to study hard for the teachers' entrance examination so that our dreams can come true.

Then read it again.

1.4 Speaking

Talk about this young woman in the My Dream story with another Learning Assistant.

- Do you think the young woman's dream will come true?
- What were her difficulties and disappointments in the past?

1.5 Study Skills – reading, re-reading and underlining

A study skill is a method to help our learning. For example:

One study skill is underlining new words when reading and another is drawing pictures to help us to learn.

When we return to study as adults we are in charge of how we learn and how we use our time. Perhaps we used to be afraid if we did not understand something but now we are curious and confident to go back and to try again. It is a good idea to ask for help and to think about how to learn best with study skills.



An important study skill is gaining confidence with our reading.



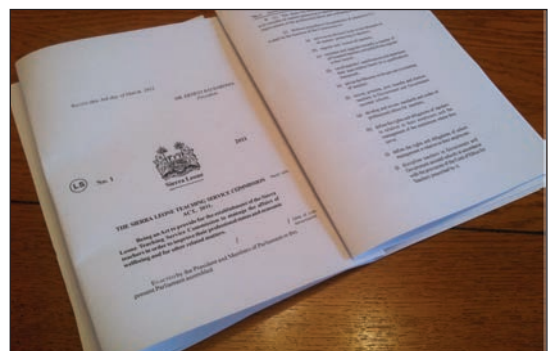
We can **read quickly** for information. We do not have to read every word.

We can **read slowly** for pleasure. We do not have to understand every word.

We can **read quickly** and **then slowly** for understanding.

This week's study skill is **reading, re-reading** and **underlining**.

Reading more than once is important because each time we see new things as we read. Underlining helps us see more words and language patterns in the story. When we read again we see the person in the story more clearly.



Re-reading My Dream

Now re-read My Dream on page 4 for a third time this time with a pen or pencil to help you look closely.

First underline new words you want to learn. Later you will put them in a list to learn every week.

Next circle any good examples you want to use in your own writing.

1.6 Learning new words – vocabulary and constructions

- We learn to write when we read more. It is a good idea to underline and circle words when you read. Later you can add them to a list and use them when you speak or write.

Choose three words you underlined and three words you circled from My Dream and write sentences to show you understand them.

For example: Encourage

She has encouraged me to sell necklaces in the market.

- Make a list of good examples of language constructions you want to practise. Start with the highlighted phrases in My Dream below:

For example:

I used to find Maths difficult

Used to = a habit in the past

This means: before Maths was always difficult for me but now it is not

My Dream is to become a teacher one day.

I am nineteen years old and I went to King Fahad Primary school. What I want most of all is to go back to secondary school to finish my education.

Unfortunately I had to leave school after my mother died because my aunt could not afford the school fees or uniform. Fortunately my aunt has helped me and she has encouraged me to think of my future so that our family will be proud of me.

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Week 1: My new words to learn

Use this space to write any new words you have heard on the radio or in the primary school or in this unit this week.

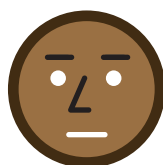
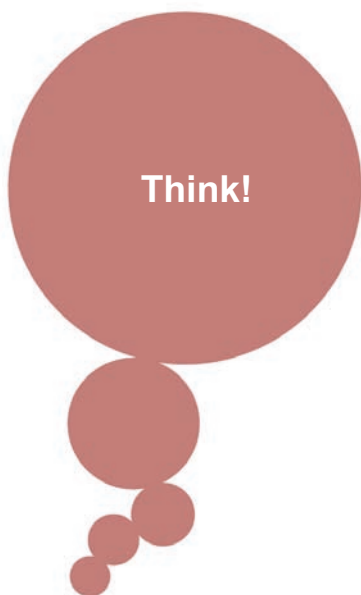
Example:

So that

Fortunately

Unfortunately

Week 1: Thinking about my work this week



Circle the picture which shows how you feel about your work in English this week.

Which work did you do best this week (reading, writing, talking or speaking about dreams or learning new words?)

Which work do you need help with this week?

Signed (by Learning Assistant):

Signed (by Tutor):

Date:

Week 2:

Start here.

Work this week

This week we will use speaking games to help us write. We will build our writing from 3 sentences and we will revise the simple past.

You have already spoken more English and read more English so you can be more confident this week.

2.1 Activity: Speaking game

We all know stories. We tell them and children love to hear them and maybe draw them. Remember most stories have a problem to make them interesting: love, death, a quarrel, a secret, a surprise, getting lost, finding something, a special person. A story can be very short even as short as 3 sentences like this:

There was...

Unfortunately...

Fortunately...

The story can be serious or amusing, true or imagined. Here are two short stories that follow this pattern.

There was a young man took the bus home to Bo to go to his uncle's wedding. Unfortunately the bus broke down for eight hours and when he arrived he was too late for the wedding. Fortunately he met a wonderful woman on the bus and later they had their own wedding.

Once there was a rich man who quarrelled with his brother. Unfortunately his wife had died and he had no children only a big empty house with no laughter. Fortunately his brother came with his children and they filled the house with laughter.

Now you play this speaking game with another learning assistant as your partner and tell a story. You could do this one lunchtime at school.

You both have to tell a story using **fortunately**, **unfortunately** in turns. Do not write. Use three sentences only to tell your story.

2.2 Writing: 3 is enough

In the fortunately and unfortunately game you spoke three sentences. That was enough for a story.

Now you are going to write three sentences. The sentences can be true or imagined, funny or touching. For now three sentences is enough as long as there is a simple story.

New words: Try to use these words in your sentences

fortunately/unfortunately

First/Later/Finally

- Write three things about your experience of primary school

- Write three sentences about a young woman's dream for the future

- Write some advice to a younger friend who needs your help. Use three sentences

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Well done for this writing! Three sentences is easy! Which writing did you like best?

2.3 Grammar practice: Simple Past

When we tell stories or read newspaper reports we often need to use the past tense about events which have happened a few minutes ago or years ago. Although there are several past tenses (past continuous, past perfect) for now start to revise the simple past.

	Present	Simple Past
Some simple pasts are regular:	laugh.....	laughed
	hope.....	hoped
but many are irregular:	go.....	went
	think.....	thought
	feel.....	felt
	keep.....	kept
Try to learn these or other irregular verb forms every week.		

For example:

Present	Simple Past
She hopes to be a teacher.	She hoped to be a teacher.
I go to the mobile library.	I went to the mobile library.
We speak on the phone every week.	We spoke on the phone last week.
The child cannot do it alone.	The child could not do it alone.

Now complete these sentences to revise simple past tense.

Example:

The children.....in school (to be)

The children **were** in school

A She.....in college in Freetown. (to be)

B The people in the bus.....Nigerian (to be)

C Once there.....a fierce lion (to be)

E When I saw his face I.....(to laugh)

F When I heard the story I.....sad (to feel)

G After I.....about it I agreed (to think)

H They.....for a hundred miles to safety (to drive)

Grammar practice: Used to

Write three sentences to show you understand the verb 'used to'.

For example:

At first I **used to** sit at the back of the class until my teacher encouraged me to sit at the front.

I **used to** be afraid to speak up until I joined a youth group in our village.

I **used to** be shy but now I am confident.

This image shows a full page of blank primary-ruled paper. It features ten sets of horizontal lines across the page. Each set consists of a solid top blue line, a dashed middle blue line, and a solid bottom blue line, providing a guide for letter height and placement in handwriting practice. The background is white, and there are no margins or other markings present.

2.4 Writing practice

You have learnt new words already. In week 1 you made a list of new words, for example, used to. Now it is time to look at these words and write three sentences for each word to show you understand the word.

Week 2: My new words to learn

Use this space to write any new words you have heard on the radio or in the primary school this week.

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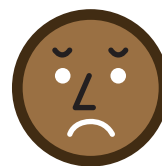
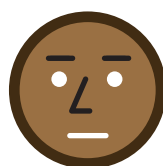
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Week 2: Thinking about my work this week

How do you feel about your work this week?



Think!

Circle the picture which shows how you feel about your work in English this week.

Which work did you do best this week (reading, writing, talking or speaking or learning new words in vocabulary and grammar?)

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Which work do you need help with this week?

.....

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Signed (by Learning Assistant):

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Signed (by Tutor):

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Date:

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Week 3: Our Bird

Work this week

This week we will look at a book for our reading and speaking practice. We will revise *some* and *many* and **adjective** use to make strong beautiful descriptions.

3.1 Reading

Find a copy of ***Our Bird*** by Rainny Richard Ansumana. It is a very special book for you to enjoy. Please look at the pictures, read it aloud and share with others. You do not have to know every word. The purpose is reading for pleasure. You will learn as you enjoy the story.

- Read this book at least once this week

3.2 Writing

Did you enjoy the book? Why or why not?

When you have finished reading this book. Write three sentences or more saying what you think of this book and the illustrations.

Example of words to use. Please use other words.

Enjoyed, enjoyable, stunning, colourful, helpful, full of surprises, different characters, taught me about birds.

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3.3 Grammar practice: some, many and any

Some and many are countable nouns, both are used to count things.

How many coconuts are on the tree? How many girls study medicine ?

Some is a smaller number or group.

Read these words from page 2 of **Our Bird**:

As you read underline the word some and circle the word (many)

“There are many kinds of birds in the world. Some live in the forests. Some live in the deserts. Some live by the sea. Some live in the dark caves and some live in towns and villages.

Birds are alike in many ways.”

Some = a few

Any means ‘some’ in a question or in a negative sense.

- Complete these exercises to show you understand the difference between **some** and **any**

A *In our area there aren’t.....female teachers.*

B *We saw.....elegant buildings in Freetown.*

C *He brought.....rice.*

D *He hasn’t brought.....beer.*

E *Are there.....birds in the dark caves?*

- Now check your answers with another learning assistant.
- Then write three sentences to show you understand the word **‘some’**

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- Write three sentences using the word **'any'**

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3.4 Vocabulary development: Adjectives

An adjective describes a noun.

Underline the **adjectives** here:

Nice bird good bird bad bird

brown bird wonderful bird

fast bird slow bird

ugly bird beautiful bird

There are simple **adjectives** such as **good** or **bad** and there are many more interesting and powerful words to learn. Since birds also have different colours, different sounds and different characters then the right choice of adjective will give us a different picture in our mind.

There are many wonderful describing words to help us know the birds. Look at some of the adjectives used to describe birds in this book:

Sounds Noisy, quiet, spooky

Colours Black, golden, brown,

Character Perfect, happy, wonderful, lovely, romantic, fearless, aggressive, cunning, scary, wicked

- Which word do you like best?
- Which words are new to you? (*underline new words*)
- Learn some new words to describe sound, colour, character and write some here:

Examples

Deep red, bright yellow, dark black, light green, shiny eyes, flashing, multi-coloured, rainbow-coloured, camouflaged, lonely, musical

3.5 Speaking: Guessing game

This game will help you practise and enjoy your new vocabulary. You do not have to write anything.



- Imagine you are going to the market. Close your eyes and think of the colours of the fruits and the taste.

With another learning assistant as your partner, play a speaking game.

Think of a fruit or vegetable. Do not say the name of the fruit or vegetable. Describe the colour, taste, size.

Your partner has to guess the fruit.

Now swop. Your partner describes and you guess.

- Imagine an animal in a forest. Do not say the name of the animal. Describe how it looks and sounds and moves.

The other learning assistant has to guess the animal.

- Think of a place you know well and what you can see. Do not say the name of the place.

The other learning assistant has to guess the place.

Week 3: My new words to learn

Use this space to write any new words you have heard on the radio or in the primary school or in this unit this week.

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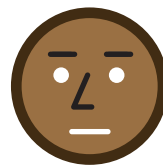
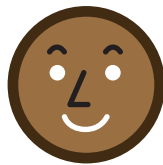
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Week 3: Thinking about my work this week

How do you feel about your work this week?



Think!

Circle the picture which shows how you feel about your work in English this week.

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Which work do you need help with this week?

.....

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Signed (by Learning Assistant):

.....

Signed (by Tutor):

.....

Date:

.....

Week 4 :

Well done for finishing the work of week 3.

Work this week

We will learn from ***Our Bird*** to help us write from our imagination and start writing in **my journal**. Reading and speaking helps develop our ideas and vocabulary in writing.

4.1 Writing

- Now imagine a market you know. Write a short description here using adjectives. You can start with these sentences and then write more if you wish.

There are many kinds of fruits in the market.....

.....

Some are.....

.....

Some are.....

.....

and some are.....

.....

There aren't any.....

.....

.....

- Next imagine a classroom of children. Write a short description using these sentences and phrases to help you.

There are many kinds of children in my school.....

.....

.....

Some children are.....

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Some children are.....

.....

They are all

.....

.....

But our children.....

.....

.....

Well done for writing the descriptions! How many adjectives did you use in your writing? Did you use any new adjectives?

4.2 Speaking: Tell me more game

Find a quiet place to sit with another learning assistant.

Do not write.

- One person talks for 3-5 minutes about a young child she knows and loves. Talk about how the child looks. How do they sound? How do they move? What is special about this child?

The other person listens and asks prompt questions...“tell me more about....?” Try to ask this question 3 or 4 times about the child.

- The other Learning Assistant now speaks about a person they know well. This might be a mentor, an auntie, a grandmother. The other person listens and keeps asking “tell me more about...”

4.3 Writing more

Was it easy to speak to another Learning Assistant using the “tell me more game”? Why? Perhaps you have real experience and a picture of the person in your mind.

Many radio and television dramas are about people’s lives and problems. There are lots of stories to tell about human experience. You are an expert on your family, your friends and your life and you can write about this.

If you wrote as much as you spoke then it might take five or ten pages. That is a lot!

We do not need to write lots of pages. One page is enough in an examination.

A page can be made up of three or four paragraphs. A paragraph can be three or four sentences. You can write sentences and another and another.

You can write a page like this.

I saw a large group of
birds in a mango tree.
Their feathers were
bright yellow like the sun.
I was on my way home
but I stopped to watch
and listen.

It was evening and the
tree was full as noisy as a
classroom full of children
when the teacher leaves
the room. The birds were
waiting for their food

The hungry little birds
made me think of my
little sister when she was
a tiny baby. Like them
these birds were loud
and seemed to be saying
“look at me.”

This week spend time writing in **My journal**. Here are some choices of topics to write about. Choose only **one** topic this week. Try to sit quietly and write for 30 mins on one of these topics.

What is your wish or dreams for yourself in the future?

Or What is your experience of a situation where something was not fair?

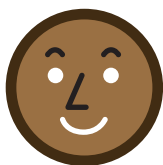
Or Write about a person you know or knew well.

Or Imagine a new animal you have discovered. Write about its colours, character, and give it a name. It does not have to be true. Also do a simple drawing if you like.

Or Imagine a beautiful place and describe it. You come back after some time and everything has changed. Why? Describe it before and after.

Week 4: Thinking about my work this week

Circle the picture which shows how you feel about your work this week?



Think!

Circle the picture which shows how you feel about writing in your journal?



Which work do you need help with this week?

.....

.....

Signed (by Learning Assistant):

.....

Signed (by Tutor):

.....

Date:

.....

Week 5: Self Evaluation

Work this week

You have done a lot of work in this unit and it is time to look back on what you have learnt. There is no test or examination in this book. We hope you speak more, read more, write more. Every week you have made a note of what you did best and what you needed help with. This is called **self-evaluation**.

5.1 Study skills: Self-evaluation

In distance study you decide **what** you need to learn and **when** you are going to do it.

- Remember why you are studying. Write your reasons here:

- Is studying difficult or enjoyable for you? Write what is difficult and what is enjoyable here:

- Where will you find more books and newspapers to read and when will you read them?

- Where will you hear more spoken English and when will you listen to English?

This image shows a full page of primary-ruled notebook paper. It features ten sets of horizontal lines across the page. Each set consists of a solid blue top line, a dashed blue middle line, and a solid blue bottom line, providing a guide for letter height and placement. The background is white, and there are no margins or other markings present.

- What help do you want from your tutor with English difficulties? Write your questions here:

5.2 Self-evaluation

Have you spoken more? Read more? Have you written more? Have you learnt new words and grammar and practised them in speaking and writing?

Be honest with yourself about what you have learnt in unit one and what exactly you need to do more of.

Use a 'tick' for yes or no

	Yes I do this	No I don't do this yet
I read more		
I read and re-read		
I underline and circle words		
I write down new words every week		
I learn the spelling and sound of new words		
I can write three sentences at a time		
I write three paragraphs on a page		
I write in my journal		
I speak more in English		
I use past tenses correctly		
I use adjectives to describe		

5.3 Reading: Close reading

Read ***Our Bird*** again. This time look for patterns in the language. This will give you ideas for your own writing in English.

Look especially at the last paragraph on the bottom of every page and how it matches the first sentence of each page.

Now copy some words and phrases you like from the book. Choose words you think are good examples to use in your writing and speaking.

For example:

On page 16 I like this part:

Some birds are too noisy.

But ours is a very quiet bird. It does not have time for noise, as it flies among branches of short trees, looking for grasshoppers to eat.

Your examples:

[illegible]

5.4 Writing my journal

Write more in your journal. You decide how much to write this time.

- You can choose another of the topics from 4.3 'Writing More' or your own idea.
- Look at *Our Bird* for ideas and patterns in the language.

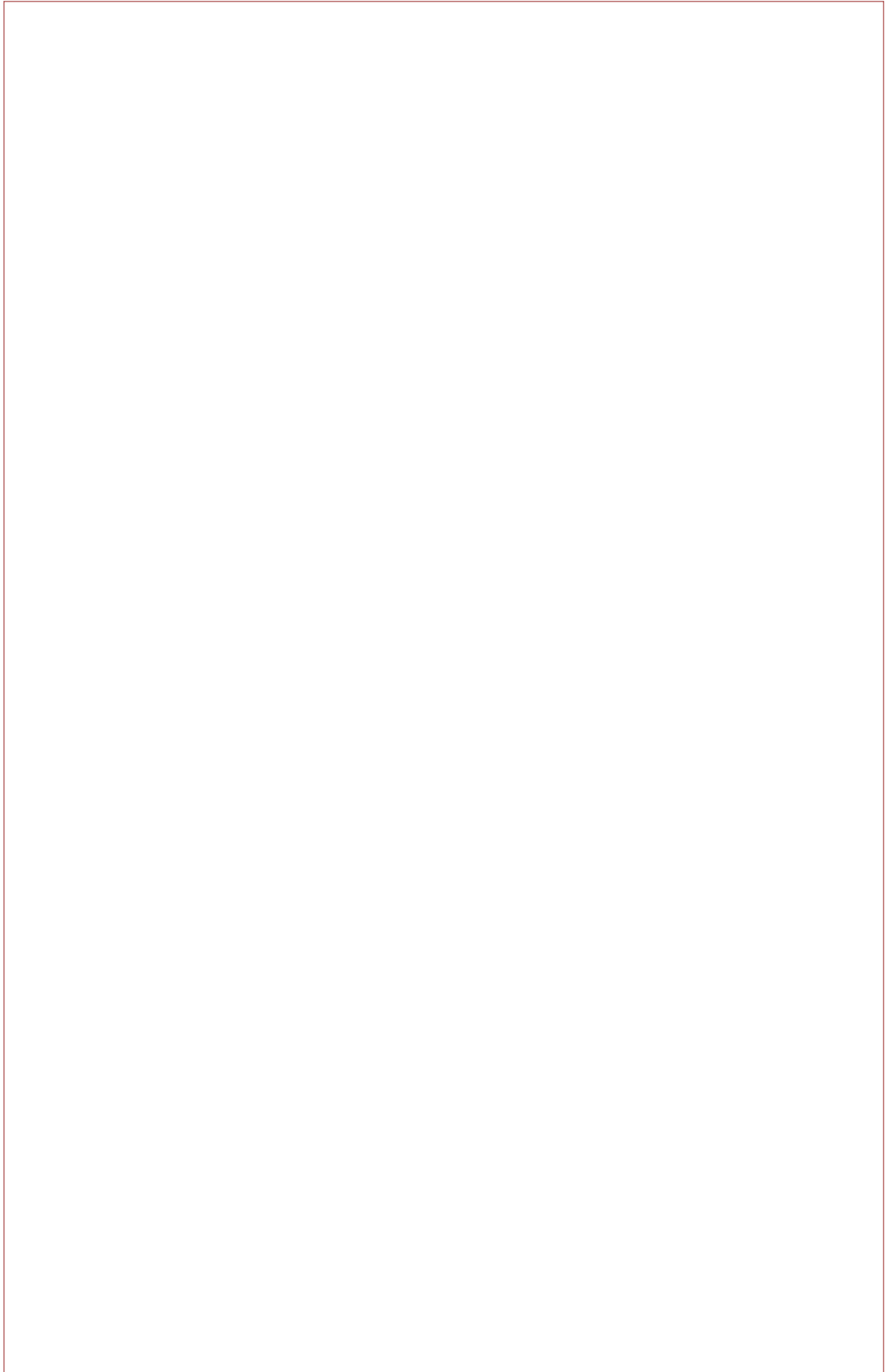
Looking ahead to work in Unit 2

In Unit 2 we will read a new book, speak more, write more and keep revising grammar. We will also develop study skills especially visual methods.

- Draw a very simple picture of yourself working on unit 2



- Draw a picture of two learning assistants helping each other. What are they saying in the speech bubbles ?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing and speech bubbles. It occupies the central portion of the page below the instruction.

Use this space to practise to revise vocabulary from Unit 1:

She encouraged me to.....

I used to.....

Fortunately, unfortunately

First, Later, finally

Some are....., some aren't....., some were.....,
some were not.....

There are many kinds of

He brought some beer, he hasn't brought any rice.

Only a few children have their own dictionaries.

Many older people wanted to go to evening classes.

Adjectives: Noisy, quiet, scary, golden, dark, bright, perfect, wonderful,
lovely, romantic, fearless, aggressive, cunning, scary, wicked

Irregular verbs simple past: speak–spoke, go–went, fly–flew, eat–ate,
see–saw, thin–thought, keep–kept, feel–felt

Learning Assistant signature:

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Date:

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LA Tutor signature:

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Date:

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Acknowledgements

English Language Unit 1

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources:

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Page 19: Market near Marbella slum, Freetown (Photo: Simon Roughneen, taken Dec. 2009)

