

Girls' Access to Education Girls' Education Challenge

Sierra Leone



English Language Unit 2

Name of Learning Assistant _____

School _____

Tutor _____



The Open
University



Girls'
Education
Challenge



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Week 1

Work this week

This week you will read the first story about Betty. Perhaps you know a young woman like her? Betty has some choices to make about her life so she needs your help.

The grammar exercise this week is **should = advice**, and the study skill is circling, underlining or marking with * when reading, and being able to answer questions about a reading.



1.1 Speaking practice

Imagine there are two friends who like to help each other. One has a problem and the other one gives advice.

"I want to get better at English."

"That's a good plan. You should remember you are clever. You should find some newspapers to read every day and come to my house to listen to the radio."

"I want to do something about the girls' toilets at school."

"We should form a group and go and talk to the headteacher."

"I don't know what to do. I have to go to the hospital tomorrow but I don't have money for transport. What should I do? "

"I'm glad you told me. I think you should go to my brother and ask for his bicycle."

Find a Learning Assistant to be your speaking partner and think of a different problem and some advice for what your friend should do. Keep talking using different problems.

"I don't know what to do."

problem

"You should..."

advice

2.1 Understanding grammar: should and modal verbs

Should is a **modal** verb. This means it helps other verbs. It is never alone; it is an auxiliary verb, which means that It helps the infinitive of the verb express a particular meaning. The infinitive of the verb is the **root** of the verb. In the list below the root is the word that follows 'should' – for example: 'stand' and 'help'.

- Should is for advice
- Should is for rules

Students **should stand** when the head teacher comes in the classroom. (rule)

Schools **should help** children with special needs. (rule)

He **should send** money for his sisters. (advice)

You **should study** Science if you want to be a doctor. (advice)

You **should not** start writing until you have read the instructions. (advice)

1.3 Grammar practice: should and should not

- Write three sentences with 'should not'.

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- Give advice to a friend who is nervous about how to study with this book using 'should'.

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- Write three sentences of advice to a child in primary school using 'should'.

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1.4 Reading and re-reading

You have already met Betty in the LA handbook. Here we tell her story in a slightly different way so we can notice the language and use the words. Read it three times.

- First read it to enjoy it and to understand it.

Eighteen-year-old Betty is the second child in a family of six. Her other siblings are a sister and two brothers. Musu, the eldest, did not go to school because of an early marriage arrangement. Betty was lucky; she completed primary school and went up to the second level in the junior secondary school, with the hope of becoming a teacher. She has one leg shorter than the other due to polio and cannot run quickly but her teachers helped her to be included in games at school.

Her Language arts teacher Madame Cecilia inspired her a lot. How can one small woman have so much knowledge in her head? Betty's dream was to be a teacher and pass on all she knows to little girls and boys.



But things changed dramatically when unfortunately her father fell from a palm tree and died while tapping wine for a livelihood. With four little mouths to feed, the mother could hardly keep Betty in school, so she had to drop out. This was five years ago.

Now at 18, fortunately her dream has still not died. When the local library was set up two years ago, the village head teacher recommended that Betty should be asked to work as a volunteer library assistant. In the evenings she eagerly helped her younger siblings and their friends with their studies.

Betty's inspirational teacher, Ms Parkinson, now retired to Freetown, continued to exchange letters with Betty when possible. Recently she wrote: "Betty there are opportunities in Freetown and I am pleased you still have this dream to become a teacher. You should think about coming here to college." This advice gave Betty enthusiasm once again and she dreamed about all the things she could do as a teacher.

Unfortunately Betty had family responsibilities. Her problem was that she could not abandon a rapidly ageing mother, also she could not leave her two junior brothers whom she was seeing through primary school. So she could not continue her education in Freetown.

Fortunately she heard about the Learning Assistant Programme with supported self-study. She was really delighted when she saw the self-study materials and met her tutors and the other learning assistants. She studied hard and went to her local school to offer to help in the classroom and to find out more.

- Then re-read it.
- Now read it again. This time you are looking for words you want to use in your writing, so with your pencil make a circle when you see **should** and **fortunately** and **unfortunately**.



1.5 Writing

Answer the following questions about the story.

For questions 1 to 3 re-read the story.

1. What were the problems Betty had? (Study skill: when you read again underline or put a mark like *.)
2. What choices did Betty make to make her life better?
3. Where did Betty work?

For questions 4 to 6 you have a free choice.

4. Think of a title for Betty's story.
5. Draw a picture to illustrate Betty's story.



6. Do you know any young women like Betty? Write about one of these women. Use three paragraphs with three sentences in each paragraph as you did in Unit 1.

Paragraph one: write about the young woman and her family, her schooling and her dream.

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Paragraph two: write about something unfortunate.

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Paragraph three: write about something fortunate.

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Writing with paragraphs

Paragraphs help us read and understand and organise our writing. A new paragraph means a new place or a new person or a new subject.

As you read think about how many paragraphs you see on a page. Look at the way there is a change when there is a new paragraph.

1.6 Speaking

Speak with another Learning Assistant about the reading in 1.4.

Show her the picture you drew of this story (Q5).

What would you say to Betty if you saw her on her way to Teachers’ College?





1.7 Reading comprehension

Study Skills – Re-reading and answering questions on reading

In school perhaps you did reading comprehension questions. You will also find reading comprehension in the teachers' entrance examination.

The study skill to re-read a story will help you to answer questions. Reading and underlining or circling or marking with * will help you find the answers because some answers are on the page.

However other answers need you to say what you think in your own words.

Imagine you are the teacher. Think of two new questions about Betty's story and ask your partner.

One question could have the answer in the reading.

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The other question could be asking your partner to say what she thinks about something.

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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.

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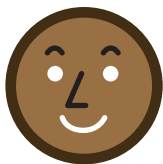
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Week 1: Thinking about my work this week

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



Which work do you need help with this week?

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Learning Assistant signature:

Date:

Tutor signature:

Date:

Week 2

Work this week

This week you will imagine what it is like to be Betty and give her advice in a letter.

The grammar exercise is practising more modal verbs. The study skill is developing a writing and paragraph plan for letters and stories.

2.1 Grammar: can and could

Last week you learnt that ‘should’ is a modal verb (a helping verb) used with another verb for advice or for rules. After modal verbs there is another verb. (Remember this is the root or infinitive but without the ‘to’.)

Can and could are also modal verbs.

You can use can and could with another verb to express the following: ability, possibility, impossibility and polite requests.

Examples of can and could are:

My teacher can speak four languages. (ability)

I am sure you could become a group leader and speak up for your community. (possibility)

He couldn't walk that far with such weak legs. (impossibility)

I wonder if you could explain how I can improve my pronunciation? (polite request)

He made me laugh because he couldn't dance. (ability)

2.2 Grammar practice

Look at the examples above for help.

Write about what you ‘couldn't’ do at school and compare this with what you **can** do now.

Write two sentences to give some encouragement to a young woman about what she 'could be' in future.

Write three examples of polite requests using 'could'.

2.3 Writing a letter with a plan

Read the story of Betty again and imagine you are Betty (page 5). Then write a plan for a letter from Betty to her inspirational teacher.

Here is an example of one plan that Vera used. Read this and then write your own plan.

Dear Madame Cecilia

Tell her why you want to become a teacher one day.

Say why you cannot come to Freetown to study at the moment.

Tell her about the Learning Assistant Programme and where you are helping in a school.

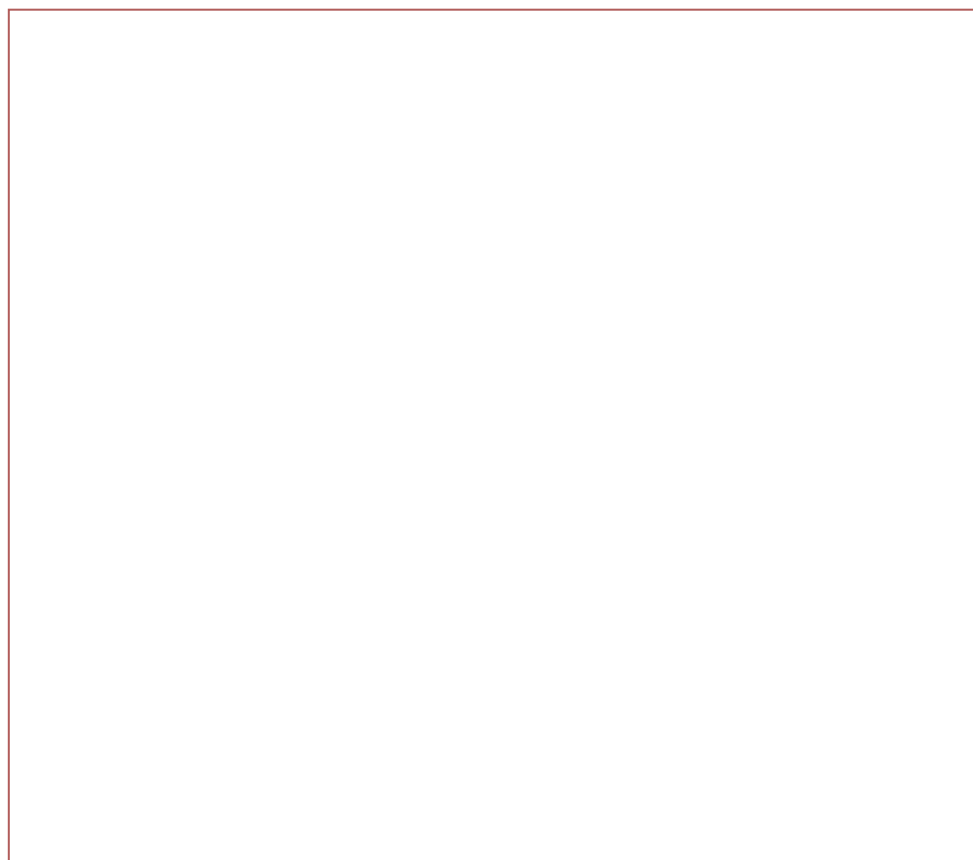
Tell her about some children you have been helping.

Tell her other news she would like to hear.

Best wishes

Betty

You can use this plan to help you and write a few sentences in each paragraph or if you prefer, write your own letter from your own plan.



Important note: When you are happy with your writing, take this letter to your tutorial and share it with others.

2.4 Study Skills – Writing plans

Plans and lists of what to do are ways to help us get ready for our work. Teachers and learning assistants write a plan of what to teach. Farmers plan when to plant and cultivate and sell although they may not write it down. In the family we plan how much money we will need for food and school uniforms.

A writing plan is a list of what we want to write so we don't forget and so we don't panic. It helps us organise our story, letter or report in a logical way.

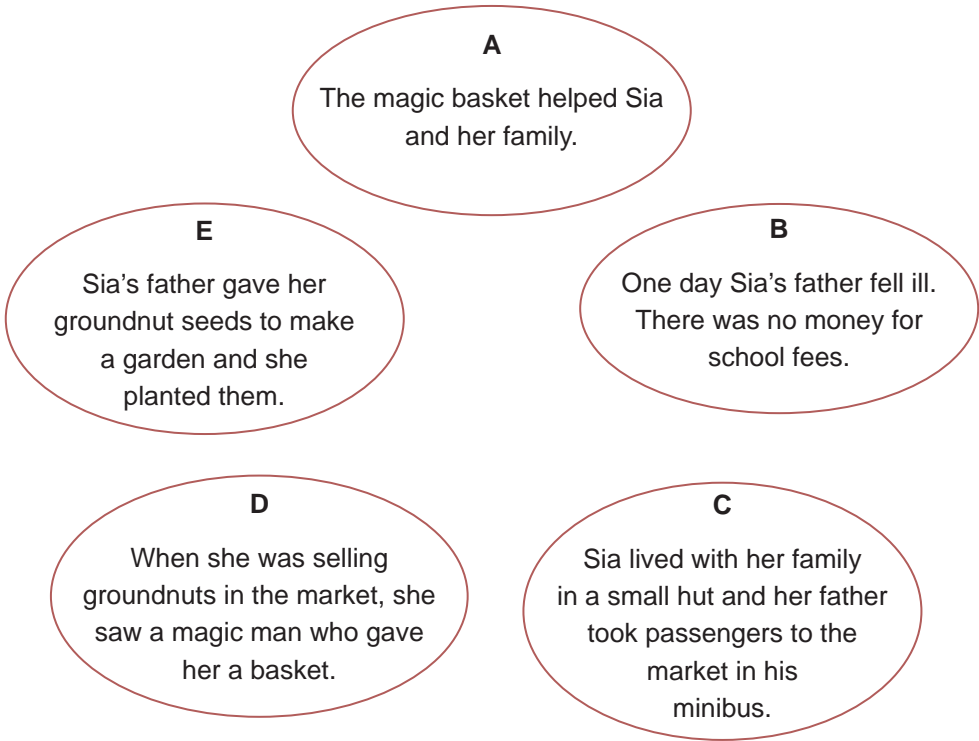
When you have to write more than a few lines or one paragraph it is a good idea to make a plan.

What do you think is the difference in how you might feel if you don't plan your writing and if you do make a plan?



2.5 Writing a plan for a story

This writing plan for a story is in the wrong order. Decide what should happen first and last and in the middle. Put the ideas in the correct order for the story (using numbers), then write out the plan.

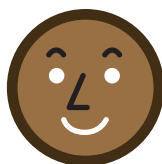


Week 2: My new words to learn

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

Week 2: Thinking about my work this week

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



Which work do you need help with this week?

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Learning Assistant signature:

Date:

Tutor signature:

Date:

Week 3

Work this week

This week you will read a new book *Sia and the Magic Basket* and learn from the language and the story ideas. You will learn about and practise using expressions of time. You will learn how to talk about a story and ask questions about it with another Learning Assistant.

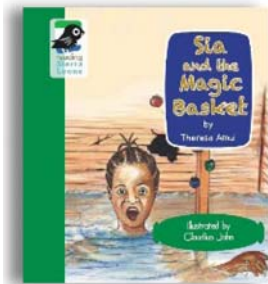
3.1 Reading *Sia and the Magic Basket*

This week your reading work is to read *Sia and the Magic Basket*. You already know something about Sia. The start of her story is similar to Betty's:

“ ‘Sia this money is too little. It is not enough to pay for your school fees,’ said Mama.”

“ ‘I want to be a doctor when I grow up. I cannot be a doctor if I don’t go to school,’ said Sia.”

“ ‘Some day you will go back to school,’ said Mama.” (page 10)



But the end of the story is different when Sia meets the magic man. It is more like a traditional story than a real life story. In traditional stories surprising and wonderful things can happen. In a traditional story there is often a lesson or moral to think about:

“I weave bamboo, wonder and magic into these tiny baskets.”

“ ‘Where is the magic and the wonder?’ she asked. ‘Is magic going to fall from the sky?’ asked Sia.”

“ ‘No it comes from my heart,’ says the man.” (page 21)

Allow one hour to read and re-read this book. First read for enjoyment and then re-read it so you can discuss it with a partner.



3.2 Speaking about the story

With another Learning Assistant talk about the story and look at the book together then answer these questions in your own words:

- Which parts did you find sad or funny or wonderful?
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- Which parts of the story are true to life?

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- Does this story remind you of a traditional story you may have heard with magic and wonder?

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- Which type of story do you prefer, traditional stories or true life stories?

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- Which stories do the children in your school know? Give the titles and say how well they know them and if they hear them spoken or read aloud.

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3.3 Learning from the language in the story: expressions of time

From the Sia story choose some new words, expressions and grammar constructions which you want to learn so you can use them in your own writing.

Copy the sentence with the new word or expression you want to learn and then do your own example.

Here are some examples of **expressions of time** to help the story.

- 1 “One morning she saw tiny plants in her garden.” (page 6)

One morning they heard the beautiful sound of rain.

One morning

One evening

- 2 “**After a while** she had only sold one tin-full of ground nuts” (page 9)

After a while = after some time

After a while she fell asleep.

After a while

After a while

3 “**Some day** you will go back to school,’ said Mama.” (page 10)

Some day = possible future

Some day I will go to university.

Some day

Some day

Now write some vocabulary you want to practise.

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3.4 Writing questions about the story



Write six questions about the Sia story for another person to answer. Some answers can be found in the book and some can be ones you need to think about.

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Write three questions about what happens in the book. (Use words such as where, when, why, how and who.)

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Write three questions about an experience similar to one in the book. (For example: Do you know someone in Sia’s situation? In your opinion, what is...? Why? Have you ever...?)

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Share your questions with another Learning Assistant and try to answer each other's questions.

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.

Week 3: Thinking about my work this week

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



Which work do you need help with this week?

Learning Assistant signature:

Date:

Tutor signature:

Date:

Week 4

Work this week

This week you will read a traditional story and think about what goes into writing one. You will also practise writing sentences using some more expressions of time, the word must, and various adjectives.

4.1 Finda's story

Read this story several times for yourself and for someone else.



Finda was a beautiful lady with a sweet voice. She always used to sing happily as she went through the forest every day to gather firewood and to fetch water from the stream. The tree spirits loved her singing and would always listen and wait for her as she passed with her firewood.

But in her heart Finda was unhappy because she had no child. For a long time Finda listened to her friends and prayed and tried many different things. What she dreamed of most was a child, a beautiful girl who would look like her. Sadly this dream never happened and after many years of hope, Finda's singing became lonely, sorrowful and bitter. The spirits did not like these sad songs and so they decided to help her so she would entertain them once more with her wonderful singing.

One day as she was collecting water and singing her sad song, she suddenly saw an old farmer who was standing in the shadow of a tree. She did not know him but he asked why she sang like that. She did not know that the tree spirits had sent him.

He gave her a smooth, round, white pebble and told her to listen carefully to his instructions.

"When you leave the forest, carry this pebble on your back just as mothers do with their babies. Don't look back until you enter your room and when you arrive home your wish will come true. But I give you this on one condition.

You must promise you will always be kind to the child; you must treat her well and never call her names or strike her. Do you promise?"

"Yes, I promise," said Finda and she took the pebble, put it on her back and went home as fast as she could.

As soon as she was back home in her room Finda loosened her wrapper and to her surprise there was a beautiful baby girl. The child was the spitting image of Finda herself. She named her Opanda which means 'handle with care'.

The years passed and Opanda grew into a young lady and was kind to her family and told stories and sang beautifully like her mother as they went up and down to the forest fetching and carrying wood and water. They were happy and so too were the spirits in the forest.

More years passed and one day there was a hard famine in the country and Opanda accidentally spilled a whole bottle of palm oil. Her mother was furious. She had got the oil after a lot of effort and sacrifice from another village. In her rage at the waste at a time of such great need Finda forgot herself and shouted at Opanda and struck her.

"You pebble child, see what you have done!" Immediately she realised her mistake and held her lips with her fingers and closed her eyes. But it was too late. Opanda disappeared from sight and where she had stood a second before, appeared a smooth round black pebble.

Finda became lonely again and went through the forest with the strange pebble searching for the old farmer. And since her singing has turned sorrowful, the spirits were no longer interested in her. Sometimes if you are alone in that forest you can hear some notes of her sad, sad song coming through the leaves of the trees. So listen carefully.

(Traditional story adapted by Nathaniel Pierce)



4.2 Speaking – telling a traditional story

Tell this story aloud to another person, perhaps in your school or family. Make your voice and face special. You can read it or say it in your own words.

Who did you tell the story to?

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Did they like hearing the story? Why?

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Did you like telling the story?

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In your tutor group talk about any other traditional stories like Finda's that you know.

4.3 Using words from the story

Write some **expressions of time** in the story – for example: **always, one day, immediately** – in your own sentences.

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Write three sentences using **must**.

“You must promise that you will always be kind to the child.”

You must promise that

You must promise that

You must promise that

Adjectives of emotions in the story are: sad, sorrowful, lonely, happy, furious, bitter.

Write your own sentences to show the meaning of these words.

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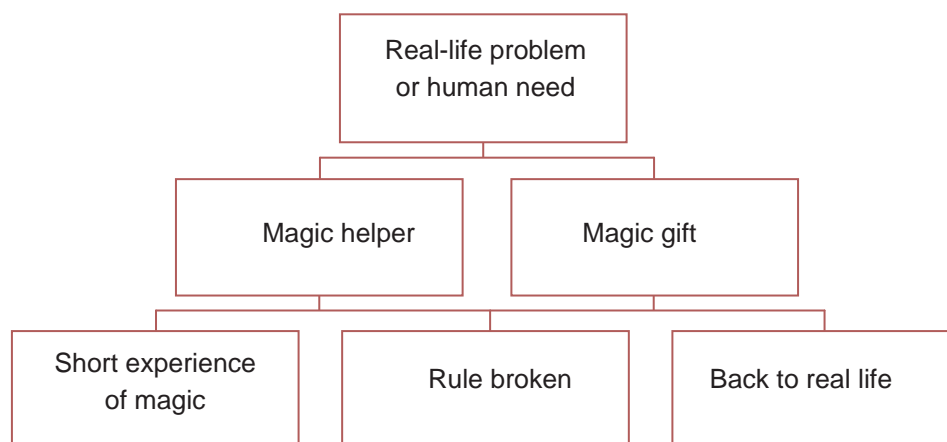
4.4 What goes into a traditional story?

People tell stories about their lives all over the world. Some of these stories are the same even if the names and places change. Some stories make us feel wonderful, others make us feel sad. We need stories to help us understand the world.

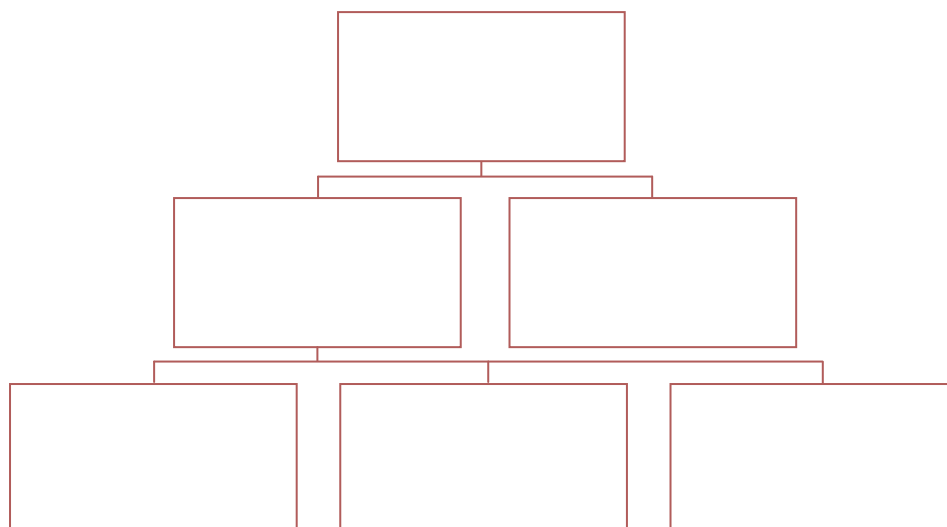
In a traditional story there is often a magic helper like the farmer or the basket man who can give us what we want. But sometimes we only have the magic wish if we promise something. If we break the rules we lose the magic.

“But I give you this on one condition. You must promise you will always be kind to the child; you must treat her well and never call her names or strike her. Do you promise?”

“Yes, I promise,” said Finda and she took the pebble, put it on her back and went home as fast as she could.



Write your own story ideas in the diagram below.



Week 4: 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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Week 4: Thinking about my work this week

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



Which work do you need help with this week?

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Learning Assistant signature:

Date:

Tutor signature:

Date:

Week 5

Well done for nearly finishing Unit 2.

Work this week

This week you will write more in your writing journal. You can look back on the work you have done and revise any new words and new study skills as well as catching up on any work you have missed ready for the tutorial. Finally you can evaluate your progress in Unit 2.



5.1 Writing in my journal

Look back at the readings and catch up on making notes of new words.

Write in your journal for half hour every day. Use Betty's story, Sia's story or Finda's story to give you ideas for your writing.

You do not have to write a full story. You can write about one place or one conversation or one surprise or one problem.

Suggestions for writing in my journal

Here are some suggestions. It is your choice.

- 1 Write about two friends walking home and talking. For example: look again at page 26 and page 28 of *Sia and the Magic Basket*.

The setting sun came out from behind the clouds and it was time to go home. All the people went home too. Some went back to their villages in minibuses with their goods tied to the top. Others walked home. Sia also carried her groundnuts on her head. They started their long walk home.

"Mama, I saw a funny looking man in the market today," said Sia.

"Really?" Mama asked.

"He said he was a magician and he gave me a magic basket," said Sia.

"Magic lives only in stories, Sia." Said Mama. (page 26)

- 2 Write about a child who finds a magic object like Sia's magic basket. What does the child wish for and why? Write about some ordinary things which change into wonderful things. (See page 22.)

"What do I do with the magic basket?" asked Sia.

"Anything you want. It is a magic basket. You can make it do anything and it will stay with you forever," he said.

- 3 Write about a young woman like Betty who has to drop out of school. Write about her feelings and the reasons for her dropping out. When you have finished your story, share it with another Learning Assistant or read it to the children in your school.

5.2 Self-evaluation

You have done a lot of work this unit. Now look back at your work and be honest about what was easy or difficult in Unit 2.

Use a tick for yes or no.

	Yes I did this and I understood it	No I didn't finish this I still need help to understand it
I read Betty's story		
I read <i>Sia and the Magic Basket</i>		
I read Finda's story		
I wrote a letter with a plan		
I learnt new words every week		
I practised modal verbs: should, could		
I wrote new ideas and stories in my journal		
At tutorials I spoke up		
At tutorials I shared some of my writing		

Week 5: Thinking about my work this week



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

Week 5: 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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Learning Assistant signature:

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English Language Unit 2

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Page 15: Thumbnail of 'Sia and the Magic Basket' book cover: PEN Sierra Leone

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