

Chapter 8

Not Improving



The next eight months went by slowly. And sadly, Amelia realized that her English wasn't improving at all. In fact, she rarely used it. She spoke only Spanish to Eduardo and his family. She spoke only Spanish to Dolores and most of the other housekeepers. While standing outside a guest's door, there was just one English word that she practiced repeatedly: "*Housekeeping!*" And when guests spoke to her, they usually asked for very familiar items, like bath towels or drinking glasses.

One afternoon, a hotel guest opened her door and motioned for Amelia to come into her room. Amelia liked to talk to the guests, and this was a good opportunity to practice her English. "Can you make this bed, please?" asked the guest, Mrs. Howard.

"Of course," said Amelia. "I can do that." Amelia knew she had already made both of Mrs. Howard's beds earlier. But now, the one on the left was completely ruffled because Mrs. Howard's child, a boy about five years old, was jumping on it.



“Please get down, Brandon,” said Mrs. Howard, dialing her cell phone, “and let the nice lady make this bed.” Brandon wildly leaped over to the bed on the right and continued to jump. So Amelia made the bed on the left again. But by the time she finished, the one on the right was completely rumbled.

“Hmm,” said Mrs. Howard, putting down her phone for a moment. “Maybe you can jump on the chair now, Brandon. And let the nice lady make that bed, too.”

Answer the questions.

1. How did the next eight months go by?
2. What did Amelia sadly realize?
3. How often did she use her English?
4. Who did Amelia speak only Spanish to?
5. What was the one English word that she practiced repeatedly?
6. What did guests ask for when they spoke to her?
7. What did a hotel guest do one afternoon?
8. What did Amelia like to do?
9. What did Mrs. Howard ask Amelia?
10. How was the bed on the left?
11. What did Brandon wildly leap over to?
12. What happened by the time Amelia finished the bed on the left?

Complete the story.

word	items	months	Housekeeping
afternoon	glasses	guests	opportunity
housekeepers	English	towels	Spanish

The next eight _____¹ went by slowly. And sadly, Amelia realized that her _____² wasn't improving at all. In fact, she rarely used it. She spoke only _____³ to Eduardo and his family. She spoke only Spanish to Dolores and most of the other _____⁴. While standing outside a guest's door, there was just one English _____⁵ that she practiced repeatedly: "_____⁶!" And when _____⁷ spoke to her, they usually asked for very familiar _____⁸, like bath _____⁹ or drinking _____¹⁰.

One _____¹¹, a hotel guest opened her door and motioned for Amelia to come into her room. Amelia liked to talk to the guests, and this was a good _____¹² to practice her English.

Meanings

Read the sentences. Look at the underlined word. Circle *a* or *b*.

- In fact, she rarely used it.
 - not often
 - many times
- There was just one English word that she practiced repeatedly.
 - in the afternoon
 - again and again
- But now, the one on the left was completely rumped.
 - dirty
 - messy
- Brandon wildly leaped over to the bed on the right.
 - carelessly
 - carefully

A Conversation with Mrs. Howard and Brandon

Practice the dialog with a partner.



A: Can you make this bed, please?

B: Of course. I can do that.

A: Please get down, Brandon, and let the nice lady make this bed.

C: But I like jumping on beds!

A: Oh, no! Now the other one looks completely ruffled.

B: Yes, it certainly does.

A: Hmm. Maybe you can jump on the chair now, Brandon. And let the nice lady make that bed, too.

Check the good ideas.

You really want to improve your English. Check (✓) the things that are good to do. Write other ideas on the lines below.

try to speak English at work

speak English with your neighbors

watch television in English

study English independently

take an English class

get a job where you have to speak English

listen to the radio in English

make friends with English speakers

write in a journal in English

try to speak English at home

Listening

Listen to the sentences. Write the missing word or words.

1. The next eight _____ went by _____.
2. Amelia realized that her _____ wasn't improving at all.
3. In _____, she rarely _____ it.
4. She spoke only _____ to Eduardo and his _____.
5. She spoke only Spanish to Dolores and most of the other _____.
6. There was just one _____ that she practiced repeatedly:
"Housekeeping!"
7. Guests asked for familiar items, like bath _____ or drinking glasses.
8. One _____, a hotel _____ opened her door.
9. She _____ for Amelia to come into her _____.
10. For Amelia, this was a good _____ to practice her English.

Pronunciation

Check (✓) *s*, *z*, or *iz* to show the pronunciation of the final sound in the plural nouns below.

- | | s | z | iz | | s | z | iz |
|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. words | _____ | _____ | _____ | 6. cell phones | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. opportunities | _____ | _____ | _____ | 7. guests | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. glasses | _____ | _____ | _____ | 8. housekeepers | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. beds | _____ | _____ | _____ | 9. towels | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. months | _____ | _____ | _____ | 10. chairs | _____ | _____ | _____ |

What about you?

Circle **Yes** or **No**. Then write questions and ask your partner.

Yes **No** 1. I think time goes by slowly.

Do you think time goes by slowly?

Yes **No** 2. I think my English is improving.

Yes **No** 3. I rarely use English.

Yes **No** 4. I speak my native language at home.

Yes **No** 5. I speak my native language at work.

Yes **No** 6. I practice the same words repeatedly.

Yes **No** 7. I like opportunities to practice my English.

Topics for Discussion or Writing

1. Are there some English words or phrases that you practice repeatedly? If so, what are they?
2. What opportunities do you have to practice your English?
3. Do you think Amelia needs to say something to Brandon or Mrs. Howard? If so, what do you think she needs to say?