

How to make the most of your free time during your holidays

1. Non-compulsory activities:

If you feel the need to work on your **grammar**, use page 237 to 263 of your English textbook (Shine Bright 1e).

- Read the grammar lesson on whichever subject you feel you need help with (for example: the uses of the present perfect, of quantifiers, when/how to use a genitive, etc.).
- Do the attached exercise(s)
- Then check your answers using pages 264 to 267 (all the answers are there).

I have also attached a non-compulsory worksheet on chapter 4 – and its correction so you can check your answers afterwards.

2. Some ideas on how to improve your listening skills: watch in English without subtitles or with English subtitles.

- Short videos:

- This short video of the BAFTA-winning English actor Ralph Fiennes performing one of Richard III's monologues from Shakespeare's play *Richard III*. It lasts 1min.49 (so no excuse not to listen, really) and is a testament to Fiennes's immense skills as an actor and ability to be terrifying without any props. You might know Fiennes from his other villainous roles: as Voldemort in the Harry Potter films or in Spielberg's film about the Holocaust: *Schindler's List*. More recently Ralph Fiennes has played the main character in the film *Conclave*; he has been nominated for the Academy Award for best actor for this part. Do watch this extract. It includes my favourite of Richard's quotes "I can add colours to the chameleon"!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6ji07tsI2M>

- TV series:



- "Victoria" (2016-2019): there have been 3 series so far. All 3 series deal with the first few years of Queen Victoria's reign. The series is about her life as queen of England (in the first series she becomes queen at the age of 18), her relationships with the famous men and women of her time (the Duke of Wellington, her Prime Ministers Lord Melbourne and later Robert Peel, Ada Lovelace, Florence Nightingale, etc.), as well as her personal life. Some famous historical events are shown or alluded to (the Great Irish Famine, or the Great Exhibition for example).

"The Crown" (2016-present): a very famous current TV series that highly romanticizes facts but which you might find enjoyable. It follows Queen Elizabeth II's reign, starting around her accession to the throne. So far, they have retraced her reign up until 2005. Several actresses have played the part of Queen Elizabeth II.

Claire Foy and Olivia Colman as Elizabeth II



- **Films** linked to our chapters that you could watch:

In cinemas at the moment: *A Complete Unknown*, a biopic about Bob Dylan's first years as a singer-songwriter. The song "Masters of War" whose lyrics we studied during our chapter on gun violence is performed by Timothée Chalamet in one of the scenes. It is a "blink-and-you-miss-it" moment really but it puts the song back into its historical context, which is interesting. Plus, the rest of the film is excellent, provided you do not hate folk music. Remember that Bob Dylan is the only songwriter to have ever been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.



The Lost King: This 2022 film by Stephen Frears tells the true story of Philippa Langley, the British Ricardian I mentioned in class who single-handedly discovered the location of Richard III's long-lost remains, despite not being a professional historian and also despite suffering from a debilitating disease. Philippa Langley is played by the always excellent Sally Hawkins (Mrs. Brown in the Paddington films!).

- The great English actress Judi Dench has played Queen Victoria twice in her career, both times under the direction of the famous English director Stephen Frears: first, in the film *Mrs. Brown* that revolves around her friendship with her Scottish servant John Brown. The film is from 1997 and, as I remember it, quite slow-paced. You might prefer *Victoria & Abdul* (2017) which focuses on Queen Victoria's famous friendship with her Indian servant Mohammad Abdul Karim.



- If you are more interested in Queen Elizabeth II and her family, you could watch the film "**The Queen**" (2006), with Helen Mirren in a prize-winning performance as Queen Elizabeth II.

Also directed by Stephen Frears, this film centers on Elizabeth II's reaction to the death of Lady Diana in a car accident in 1997, her initial decision not to treat her death as an official royal death (Diana and Charles had divorced) and the reaction of the British general public.

The film was very successful when it was released, and the actors' performances are really unforgettable. Queen Elizabeth II herself is said to have praised Helen Mirren for her performance in this movie.





- Another very successful film about the Windsors is *The King's Speech*. Released in 2010, it stars Colin Firth and revolves around the story of Queen Elizabeth's father, King George VI, who was never supposed to become king but who had to step up when his elder brother decided to abdicate. Becoming king under such circumstances was already a challenge, but the film also focuses on George VI's personal struggle to cope with the **stammer** (=bégaiement) he had developed in his youth.

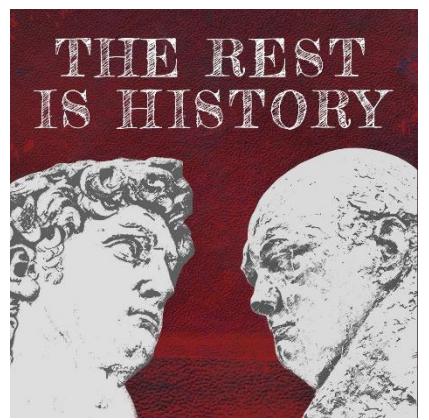
- In the *North & South* TV series which I already mentioned last October, there is an episode (not in the original book) in which the heroes visit the Great Exhibition.
- Online resources, not connected to our chapter but which you can use to work on your listening skills: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english> or <https://www.esl-lab.com/> and work on one or several podcasts/recording. Listen carefully, make notes, do your own mock exam for the listening comprehension! There is an introduction for each audio recording, there is even vocabulary to help you, as well as scripts thanks to which you can check your understanding after working on the documents.
- Listen to any type of podcast on the radio or to Ted Talks on topics related to your interests for example: [https://www.ted.com/playlists/441/talks that ll inspire you to l](https://www.ted.com/playlists/441/talks_that_ll_inspire_you_to_l)
- If you like History, you might enjoy the podcast called "The Rest is History" by Historians Dominic Sandbrook and (unrelated to the famous actor) Tom Holland. They've done 2 shows on Lady Jane Grey (the 9-day queen), as well as many others on all sorts of topics. Their series on Admiral Nelson or on the Titanic for example are really great. Do not be put off by the weird imitations they start their episodes with.
The episodes should be available pretty much everywhere you usually listen to your podcasts. I do not know about Spotify but if you use Apple Podcasts you can follow the written transcript of the episode at the same time. This should help you understand the tricky passages.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/3t6toXu7VLZ4r3Szmc6gOW>

or

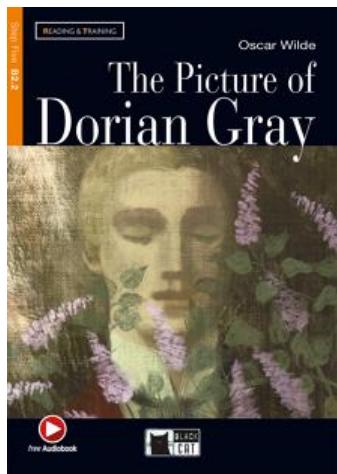
here:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/300-the-real-downton-abby/id1537788786?i=1000597624443>



3. How to improve your written skills:

- **I have attached some non-compulsory grammar and vocabulary exercises on chapter 4 to help you practise.**



- As usual, you need to read in English. Most newspapers are available online: *The Guardian* (its online edition is completely free), *The Times*, *the New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, etc.
- I have attached a series of press articles related to our chapters that I used with my students of *prépa* so you can practice your reading skills.
- Read books in English! If you do not feel like reading an original book straight away, "the 'Black Cat' collection is aimed at students. You can choose your level of difficulty (B1, B2 or if you feel up to the challenge: C1) and each chapter is followed by comprehension, grammar and vocabulary activities on the text. You can choose your book from a wide range of titles, usually adapted from famous stories. <http://www.blackcat-cideb.com/2-english-catalogue>

4. Improve your vocabulary:

- **Again, I have attached some non-compulsory grammar and vocabulary exercises on chapter 4 to help you practise.**
- If you enjoy word games, you could try the NY Times word games like Spelling Bee (the first few guesses are free): <https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee> or join the worldwide trend of Wordle (one 5-letter word a day to guess):

<https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html>



Spelling Bee

How many words can you make with 7 letters?

5. Work on your pronunciation:



If you want to check the pronunciation of or to work on specific sounds in British English, you can go to <https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/pronunciation> and to **Tim's pronunciation workshop**. Tim makes short videos that focus on specific tricky sounds. Thanks to him you can learn about specific sounds or phonemic mechanisms. His videos are interesting to understand how the language works, how people really speak in their everyday lives, and to hear several British speakers fluently pronounce full sentences. Towards the end of his videos, Tim also leaves you time to repeat some sentences, in order for you to truly realise what is happening as you pronounce the sounds under study.