Santillana Spotlight on English

Academic English for success in content and literacy

Student Book
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Exploring Agriculture
Topics to explore:

- life on a farm
- foods from North and South America
- acting in a play
Key Words

chores
breakfast
barnyard
stalls

Exploring Agriculture
Narrator 1: Andie Walters woke to the buzz of her alarm clock. The clock blinked 4:15 a.m. Andie smiled as she turned off the alarm.

Andie: I’m fifteen today! Dad’s finally going to let me drive the tractor!

Narrator 2: Andie’s ten-year-old cousin, Marcus, had arrived the day before. It was Marcus’s first extended stay on the farm.

Andie: I’m glad Marcus is staying with us this month. I’ll have someone to help me with all of my chores.

Narrator 3: Andie got dressed quickly. She knew that her father would be calling her soon to head out to the barn.

Narrator 4: It was going to be a hot day, so they wanted to get started early.

Narrator 1: When Andie came into the kitchen, she found her mother already at work. Andie’s mom turned and smiled.

Mom: Happy Birthday, Andie! Here’s your milk.
Narrator 2: Andie’s father came in from the yard. He carried a basket of strawberries he’d just picked from the garden.

Dad: It’s the birthday girl! Are you ready to get out to the fields?

Narrator 3: Andie had been begging her dad since she was thirteen to let her drive the tractor.

Narrator 4: After all, most of her friends on nearby farms were already driving tractors. Andie was sure she could do as well as they could.

Narrator 1: But her dad had insisted that she wasn’t old enough. He always said, “When you’re fifteen.”

Mom: Andie, why don’t you call up to your cousin?

Narrator 4: Just as Andie was about to yell up the stairs, Marcus came down frowning.

Marcus: It’s still dark out.

Dad: Well, the sun’s just about ready to rise.

Mom: On the farm, we start early so we don’t have to work during the heat of the day.

Dad: Let’s get going, you two.

Marcus: What about breakfast?
Andie: The animals come first. We’ll eat after we’ve collected the eggs from the chickens, milked the cows, and sent the cows out to pasture.

Mom: Don’t worry. I’ll have breakfast waiting for you when you’re done.

Narrator 1: Marcus nervously followed Andie and her dad out to the barnyard.

Narrator 2: They walked out to the henhouse first. They opened the door and let the chickens out into the fenced-in barnyard.

Narrator 3: As they threw the feed on the ground, the chickens gathered around and pecked at the kernels of corn and grain.

Marcus: Why do you put the chickens in the henhouse at night?
Andie: To keep them safe from wild animals.

Marcus: Well, couldn’t the wild animals get them during the day?
Andie: A lot of the wild animals are nocturnal, so they come out at night. During the day, the roosters and the dogs protect the chickens.

Narrator 4: Andie’s attention turned back to the henhouse.
Andie: Come on. Let’s collect the eggs while the hens are eating. We have to be quick, though. Hens don’t like it when someone takes their eggs.

Narrator 1: They collected the eggs that the hens had laid the day before, carefully placing them in the baskets so they would not break.

Narrator 2: Then, they took them in to the house to give to Andie’s mother.
Marcus: Can we have breakfast now?
Andie: Not yet. We have to help Dad milk the cows.
Narrator 3: Marcus and Andie headed toward the barn.
Andie: It takes about an hour to milk all eighty cows. Then, we send them out to pasture. After that, we can eat breakfast.
Marcus: Do I have to milk the cows, too? What if one tries to kick me or something?
Andie: We have machines to milk the cows. Come on, I’ll show you.
Narrator 4: Andie took Marcus into the milking parlor. She showed him the five stalls on either side of the parlor and the pit in the middle.
Andie: The cows stand in the stalls, and we stand in this pit.
Narrator 1: Andie’s father walked over to join them. He pointed to the stalls.
Dad: We bring in five cows at a time, wash them, and get them ready to be milked.
Marcus: Do the cows mind getting milked?
Andie: We give them food, so they don’t get too anxious.
Dad: We let them eat for a minute and then attach the milking machines to their udders.
Marcus: Their what?
Andie: Their udders, where the milk comes out. That’s where we attach the cows to the milking machines.
Narrator 2: Andie’s dad pointed across the barn.
Dad: While the machines milk the cows on this side of the parlor, we bring in cows from the other side and get them ready.
Andie: They’ll be milked next.
Marcus: Where does the milk go?
Andie: See that room over there? It’s the milk house. There’s a huge tank in there.
Narrator 2: Marcus peered into the milk house.
Narrator 3: Andie showed Marcus how the milk flowed through hoses into the tank.
Andie: The tank keeps the milk cool until the truck comes to pick it up every other day. Now, let’s get these cows out to pasture.
Narrator 4: Marcus and Andie led the first five cows out of the barn to the north pasture.
Narrator 1: The cows had eaten most of the grass in the east pasture, so Andie and Marcus took them to the north pasture.
Andie: This rotational grazing gives the grass in each pasture time to grow back.
Narrator 3: After all of the cows had been milked, Andie, her dad, and Marcus headed back to the house for breakfast.

Narrator 4: A pile of pancakes and a bowl of fresh strawberries sat on the kitchen table.

Narrator 1: A pan of scrambled eggs, vegetables, and cheese simmered on the stovetop.

Mom: Hungry?

Marcus: Yeah!

Narrator 2: Marcus dug into the stack of pancakes.

Marcus: This is the best food I’ve ever tasted!

Narrator 2: After breakfast, Marcus and Andie walked to the vegetable garden on the way to the fields.
Andie: I’m growing squash and tomatoes. I hope to have some to enter in the county fair this year.

Marcus: They look really healthy.

Andie: I use only organic fertilizers, like compost.

Marcus: What’s compost?

Andie: It’s basically old food and dead plants. We mixed compost and some cow manure into the soil before we planted the fruits and vegetables.

Marcus: Really? That sounds gross.

Andie: It is! But that mixture helps plants grow really well. Let’s go find my dad.

Narrator 3: Andie’s dad was at the other barn, attaching the hay baler and wagon to the tractor.

Dad: Are you ready, Marcus? We’ve got a lot of hay to bale today. Andie, do you think you can drive the tractor while Marcus helps me pile the bales on the wagon?

Narrator 1: Andie could hardly hide her excitement.

Andie: Yes, I can. I’ll be really careful, I promise.
Before they started, Dad explained to Marcus that the hay was winter food for the cows, because in the winter the cows could not graze in the pastures.

**Dad:** We cut the hay last week and left it in the fields to dry. Now that the hay is dry, we can bale it and bring it into the barn. Then, we’ll store it until winter for the cows to eat.

**Narrator 3:** Andie’s mom walked out of the house with some hats in her hands.

**Mom:** Don’t forget your hats! It’s going to be hot out there. Marcus, here’s one for you.

**Marcus:** Thanks, Aunt Melanie.

**Narrator 4:** Andie got into the seat of the tractor. Her father watched as she started the tractor and shifted it into gear.

**Dad:** It’s like you’ve been driving forever, Andie!

**Andie:** It feels that way to me, too, after so many years of riding with you.

**Narrator 1:** They baled hay for about two hours. Andie drove the tractor, and her father lifted the bales onto the wagon.

**Narrator 2:** Marcus tried to help, but the bales were too heavy for him to lift by himself. They weighed about forty or fifty pounds each!

**Dad:** Are you ready for lunch, Marcus?

**Marcus:** I’m starving! I’ve never worked so hard! But I love it! Can I drive the tractor, Uncle Bob?

**Dad:** When you’re fifteen. But for now, let’s go see what your aunt has made us for lunch.
Narrator 3: Andie and Marcus sat on the porch for a while after lunch. Then, they went back to the field to bale more hay.

Narrator 1: They worked for another two hours in the afternoon with the sun blazing down on them.

Narrator 2: Andie’s dad could see that Marcus was getting hot and tired. He decided that the kids had worked enough for one day.

Dad: Andie, why don’t you take Marcus down to the lake for a dip? I think you both have worked enough for one day.

Narrator 3: Marcus and Andie headed to the house to change into their swimsuits.

Marcus: What about Uncle Bob? Is he going swimming with us?
Andie: Probably not. He has to bring the cows in for the afternoon milking.

Marcus: You have to milk the cows again?
Andie: The cows have to be milked twice a day. If we don’t milk them often, they won’t produce as much milk. That’s bad for us.

Marcus: I never knew that farming was so much work! But it’s fun, too. I can’t wait until tomorrow!
Use the graphic organizer to summarize the plot of *Living the Farm Life*. Include where Andie and Marcus go and what they do. Draw the organizer on a separate sheet of paper. In the boxes, write the events in the order in which they happen.
Character Web

A character is a person or other being in a story. The main character or characters are the people the story is mainly about. The other characters are minor characters.

Use the graphic organizer to describe one of the two main characters in *Living the Farm Life*: either Marcus or Andie. Draw the web on a separate piece of paper, and fill in the details about the character you chose.

Setting the Scene

The setting is the time and place in which a story’s events happen. It can change throughout the story.

Use the graphic organizer to describe the setting of *Think about these questions: Does the story take place in the past, present, or future? At which places on the farm does the story take place? When do the events take place? Draw the organizer on a separate sheet of paper, and fill in your answers. In the third column, write clues from the story that helped you understand the setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
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</table>
On the farm, we start our days early, early. Chores to do, we cannot be lazy, lazy. Up at four and run like crazy, crazy, Before we have breakfast.

The first chore of the morning is feeding the chickens, chickens. We feed them on the ground in front of the henhouse, henhouse. Gather their eggs while they’re eating, eating, Before we have breakfast.

The next chore of the morning brings us to the milking parlor. We line up the cows, hook them up, and milk them, milk them. Then, we send them out to pasture, pasture, Before we have breakfast.

On the farm, we start our days early, early. Chores to do, we cannot be lazy, lazy. Took care of them, it was easy, easy. Now we can have breakfast!
The cows on the farm live a good life, a good life, a good life.
The cows on the farm live a good life. We take care of them.
They start off their day with a bath and snacks, bath and snacks, bath and snacks.
They start off their day with a bath and snacks, before they are milked.

The milking machines hook to the cows, to the cows, to the cows.
The milking machines hook to the cows, and the cows don’t mind.
The hose brings the milk to a big tank, a big tank, a big tank.
The hose brings the milk to a big tank, where the milk stays cool.

A truck comes to take the milk away, milk away, milk away.
A truck comes to take the milk away, away from the farm.
The milk then goes to a factory, factory, factory.
The milk then goes to a factory, and from there to market.

Everyone has chores to do
On the Walters’ farm.
We pitch in and do our part
On the Walters’ farm.
We wake up and start our day
Out of bed, in the dark,
Get our work out of the way
On the Walters’ farm.

We take care of what we eat
On the Walters’ farm,
Eat fresh eggs and drink fresh milk
On the Walters’ farm.
We work hard for what we have
On the Walters’ farm,
A full day’s work done before dawn
On the Walters’ farm.

Exploring Agriculture
Foods from the Americas

Long before Europeans traveled to the Americas, Native Americans raised more than 300 different food crops. When European explorers arrived in the 1500s, Native Americans introduced them to many foods they had never tasted before. When the explorers returned to Europe, they brought some of these unique foods with them. From there, use of the foods spread around the world. Two of the best-loved foods that originated in the Americas are tomatoes and chocolate.

Explorers brought tomatoes to Europe from South America, Central America, and Mexico. People around the Mediterranean accepted the new food quickly. They soon developed delicious dishes using tomatoes. But in other parts of Europe, people feared that tomatoes were poisonous. They thought that their bright red color was a warning, so they grew them only as ornamental plants. Finally, in the 1800s, people in Northern Europe and the United States began to eat tomatoes. They became one of the world’s most popular vegetables. Now, people grow more than 120 million metric tons of tomatoes every year.

Chocolate also came from Mexico. The first chocolate was a bitter but flavorful drink. It was made from the beans of the cacao tree. Chocolate was so special that the Aztecs of Mexico used cacao beans as money. Spanish explorers brought the beans to Spain as treasure. Soon, Europe’s royalty were drinking chocolate, too. Later, Europeans added sugar, milk, and other ingredients to chocolate, creating a solid candy. Factories made processing cacao beans easier and less expensive. Today, chocolate is a sweet treat enjoyed around the world.

Answer the questions in complete sentences.

1. What foods and dishes do you know that are made from tomatoes?
2. What foods and dishes do you know that are made from chocolate?
3. Are any of these foods or dishes your favorite? Why or why not?
More Favorite Foods from the Americas

avocado  beans  blueberries  chilies

corn  cranberries  papaya  peanuts

peppers  pineapple  potatoes  pumpkins

squash  strawberries  sunflowers  sweet potatoes

A Look at these favorite foods from the Americas. Do you eat any of these foods at home? Which ones? How are they prepared? Are any of these foods eaten in your family’s country of origin?

B Draw a picture of a food you remember tasting for the first time. Then, write a paragraph describing your experience. Did you like this food right away? Do you like it now? Who introduced you to the new food? How did it look? How did it taste?
Making Farm Sets

Design sets for the play Living the Farm Life. The first set will have two sides: the kitchen and the henhouse. The second set will also have two sides: the barnyard fence and the milking parlor.

Supplies

• two large appliance boxes, cut open and flattened
• paint
• paint brushes
• black markers

Steps

1. Sketch the designs for both sides of each set. Check the pictures and text of the play for important details about each setting and include them in your set designs.

2. On both sides of the cardboard, label the top edge Top, and label the opposite edge Bottom. Stand the cardboard on its bottom edge. Check that the edge marked Top is at the top on both sides.

3. Copy your set designs onto the cardboard using a black marker. Adjust the size to fit the cardboard. Use the Top and Bottom labels to make sure your design is right-side up.

4. Paint one side of each set. Use bright colors, and cover the cardboard completely. Paint over the Top and Bottom labels. Allow the paint to dry completely.

5. Repeat step 4 for the second side of each set.

6. Stand each completed set piece on its bottom edge. Bend the cardboard at its creases to allow the set to stand on its own.

Exploring Agriculture
Actor’s Experience

In the play *Living the Farm Life*, Marcus is nervous about the farm chores at first, but he has fun in the end. When someone is very nervous about performing in a play, it is called “stage fright.” Many actors feel a little stage fright, but they still have fun performing in plays. Write an article of at least three paragraphs telling about your experience as an actor in the play *Living the Farm Life*.

Think about these questions:

• As you rehearsed the play, what did you do and how did you feel?
• During the play, what happened and how did you feel about it?
• After the play, how did you feel about your experience?
• Would you like to act in a play again? Why or why not?

The Writing Process

Remember, the writing process includes a series of steps:

• **Developing Ideas:** Use the Internet, visual elements, or other references to help you gather and develop ideas.

• **Organizing:** Choose the ideas you want to use. Put them in order, connect them, or discard the least important ones.

• **Drafting:** Use the ideas you organized to write paragraphs.

• **Revising:** Read your paragraphs again and correct your writing, keeping in mind what you learned in this unit.

• **Rewriting:** Produce a clean copy of your piece, applying all the corrections, to display in class.

Remember, you can always repeat a step if you need to.