

Daily Routines of a Police Detective

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

12 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

follow up on something

DEF

To take the next necessary action after an earlier conversation, event or investigation.

Follow up on is followed by the subject; follow up with is followed by the person you contact.

The detective followed up on the witness's statement.

I will follow up with the client tomorrow.

2

case file

DEF

A collection of reports, evidence and records connected with one investigation.

A file may be a physical folder or a digital record; case file is a common professional collocation.

Tom begins his morning by reading a case file.

The lawyer reviewed the case file before the meeting.

3

piece things together

DEF

To connect separate details until the whole situation becomes understandable.

This figurative phrasal verb compares information with pieces of a puzzle.

The detectives pieced the timeline together from several accounts.

I pieced together what happened from her messages.

4

working theory

DEF

A temporary explanation used to decide what should be examined next.

It guides an investigation but must change when new evidence contradicts it.

Their working theory helped them choose the next interview.

We have a working theory, not a final conclusion.

5

keep an open mind

DEF

To avoid deciding too early and remain willing to consider different explanations.

The expression suggests intellectual flexibility, not uncertainty or lack of principles.

A good detective keeps an open mind until the facts are clear.

Keep an open mind when you hear the other proposal.



6

prove yourself

DEF

To demonstrate through your actions that you are capable or worthy.

Often used when someone is new to a role and feels pressure to earn other people's confidence.

As a rookie detective, Tom wants to prove himself.

She proved herself during her first difficult project.

7

follow a lead

DEF

To investigate information that may help move a case forward.

A lead is a possible direction, not confirmed evidence or a guaranteed solution.

Tom followed a lead that came from a witness.

The reporter travelled abroad to follow a promising lead.

8

go nowhere

DEF

To produce no useful progress or result.

With an investigation, conversation or plan, it means the effort reaches a dead end.

The team checked the lead, but it went nowhere.

Our discussion went nowhere because nobody would compromise.

9

stay sharp

DEF

To remain alert, focused and ready to notice or react.

Informal and positive; sharp refers to mental attention rather than a physical edge.

Detectives must stay sharp when reviewing small details.

A short break helps me stay sharp in the afternoon.

10

feel off

DEF

To seem slightly wrong, unusual or not quite normal.

Informal and deliberately vague; it describes an impression that may need checking, not proof.

Something about the timeline felt off to Tom.

I cannot explain it, but the room feels off today.

11

put someone at ease

DEF

To help a person feel calmer, safer and more comfortable.

Often used in interviews, healthcare and social situations where reducing pressure improves communication.

Tom uses a calm tone to put a witness at ease.

Her friendly introduction immediately put me at ease.



12

train of thought

DEF

The connected sequence of ideas that someone is thinking or expressing.

Common verbs are follow, lose, interrupt and break someone's train of thought.

Tom avoids interrupting a witness's train of thought.

The phone call made me lose my train of thought.

