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Four Dinner Parties

The next dinner party was Jane's.

Of the four of them, Jane was the real foodie. She thought of herself as a bit of an amateur gourmet and went on any course **pertaining to** food, cooking and entertaining. Aside from going on cooking courses on everything from Costa Rican to Mongolian, she also attended courses on – knife skills, decorative table skills, cutlery courses, wine tasting and pairing, dining manners, cultural dining etiquette. She would travel all over the country to visit a food festival. Her last holiday had been a food holiday in Morocco.



She had also recently started her own blog and was writing and sharing a food journal of her tips and experiences in the food world.

She had also **forked out** a lot of money for a food photography course which she said would augment her food journaling. Yes, it would seem that she was the one to beat.

She took ages finalising her menu but very quickly decided that no expense would be spared. She was going to win the competition. It was **a done deal**.

pertaining to: relating to something; **forked out**: paid a lot of money for; **a done deal**: something that has already been decided

When the 3 friends arrived at Jane’s house (once more armed with wine, chocolates and flowers), they were speechless when they saw the dining room. It had been completely refurbished since the last time they had all gathered here – a mere 2 weeks ago for a Saturday brunch.

What had been a very nice, modern dining room in beige and creams had now been transformed into a space of **lavishness and opulence**. A **magnificent** dining table stood majestically in the centre of the room with richly **upholstered** chairs around it. A gorgeous **rug** sat underneath and there was even a chandelier shining down on the room.



“Err – is this the same room as we had the brunch in?” gasped Chrissie.

“I just did a quick refurb, nothing too dramatic,” smiled Jane, “I was going to get it done soon anyway so I just brought the date forward. Take a seat and I’ll bring in the first course.”

“Feels like we’re in a stately home,” remarked Rubi, “what if we break something? Just look at these plates! They don’t look cheap.”



lavishness and opulence: great luxury and richness; **magnificent:** extremely beautiful or impressive; **upholstered:** covered with soft material and fabric (furniture); **rug:** a thick fabric floor covering

The table set up did indeed look **splendid**. There was an atmosphere of refined luxury and meticulous attention to detail. A crisp, white linen tablecloth covered the table with tall crystal candleholders in the centre. Large porcelain dinner plates with delicate gold edging were layered with smaller starter plates. Polished silver cutlery, crystal glasses for water, red and white wine goblets were arranged in perfect **alignment**.

An elegant floral arrangement ran down the centre of the table, featuring white roses, pale pink peonies and fresh eucalyptus leaves. Personalised name cards rested gently on each napkin which was folded neatly and tied with a thin, satin ribbon.



Jane was so engrossed in her self-admiration that she also failed to notice odd looks passing between the other three.



At the end of the meal, when the last plates had been taken away, Jane returned with her “entertainment”. She presented each of them with a perfectly and beautifully wrapped gift box with shiny ribbons and glossy paper.

“Go on,” she **urged**, “open them. I can’t wait for you to see what’s inside. I wanted everything to be perfect this evening.”

splendid: very impressive or beautiful; **alignment**: correct positioning in a straight line; **urged**: strongly encouraged someone

Tricky pronunciation



**Check how to
say it**

beige

page 69 - line 8

gorgeous

page 69 - line 13

chandelier

page 69 - line 14

glaring

page 71 - line 12

anxious

page 72 - line 6

incredulity

page 75 - line 4

effort

page 80 - line 11

**with an
App**

**with an
online
dictionary**

**with a
teacher,
parent,
friend**

TOASTING TRADITIONS

In France
always make eye
contact and hold it until
you've taken the first
sip

In Russia
you should **drain** your
glass after toasting

In Spain
it's bad luck to toast
with water



In Greece
expect lots of toasts,
especially through family
dinners

In Japan
wait for the most
senior person to begin
the toast and hold glass
at lower level to show
respect

In Sweden
don't drink until
everyone has made eye
contact and said the
word "Skål"

In China
elders toast first

In Germany
eye contact is essential

a sip: a small amount of a drink; **drain** your glass: drink everything;
elders: older people

TABLE DECORATIONS

Last week I went to a dinner party. As is usual in my culture, I was going to take along a bottle of wine. However, the host, Olivia, told me that she had won a case of wine in a competition so I didn't need to.

But I wanted to contribute something and I decided to be creative. I would make a table decoration.

I went online to get some ideas - Pinterest is fabulous for this. I then hunted around my house for things I could use.

I found an old **mason jar** in our garden shed. I remembered I had a collection of **pebbles** from a beach holiday and unearthed them from the cellar. I discovered some old **string** in a box. I noticed my neighbour had thrown out a dried flower arrangement.

Armed with my **bits and bobs**, I cleaned up the mason jar, washed the pebbles, freshened up the old string and dried flowers. I then arranged them all in the mason jar. It looked fabulous and Olivia was very impressed.

Next time I am going to make candles.



mason jar: a glass jar with a metal lid often used for storing food;
pebbles: small, smooth stones; **string**: strong thread used to tie things;
bits and bobs: small things of different types

TABLE DECORATIONS

HOW TO MAKE CANDLES



Ingredients

wax - **wick** - a **heat-proof container** - **fragrance** (optional) - colour - optional - **skewers** or sticks to hold wick in place

- Heat the wax in a pot until **melted**
- Add colour and fragrance to the wax
- Position the wick into your heat-proof container
(you can tie the end of the wick onto a skewer and place over the container to keep the wick in place)
- Pour the hot wax into your container
- Let the wax cool
- Cut the wick to the size you want



wick: the string inside a candle that burns; a **heat-proof container**: a container that does not break or burn in high heat; **fragrance**: a pleasant smell; **skewers**: long, thin sticks used to hold piece of food together; **melted**: became liquid because of heat

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Also by Joanne Glen

All About Food B1
Tommy T's English Tense Training
Test your English Tenses
A Tale of the English Tenses
A Tale of the English Tenses The Workbook
The Big English Tense Check
Perfect your English Tenses
Transform your Business Emails

