

# WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

## Serial Killer's Head in a Jar

28/10/21 / Keyword: Jar

Scientists hoped serial killer's head would contain the secrets of evil. Now the head sits in a jar spooking\* passersby.



Looking for inspiration for my first Weekly English Practice article of the new term, I googled “**quirky** stories” with the intention of finding something funny. However, after reading and reading and searching, I eventually came across what you are about to read. Although it’s far from funny, I decided to go with it. So instead of a fun loving story, I present you with a more **gruesome** but still “**quirky**” story. Enjoy.

Considered by many to be Portugal’s first serial killer, Diogo Alves was born in Galicia in 1810 and travelled to Lisbon as a young child to work as a servant in the affluent homes of the capital city.

It wasn’t long before young Alves realised that a life of crime was better for turning a profit. At age 26, he began working in homes along the Aqueduct of Free Waters, a giant waterway that not only carried water into the city, but also acted as a bridge and roadway for farmers and merchants entering to **trade**. This is where Alves began his string of murders.

Despite the fact that those travelling across the Aqueduct were humble farmers returning home with the money they had sold their **goods** for, Alves would lie in wait for them on

the bridge at nightfall and would rob them of their earnings. After robbing his victims, he pushed them off the 213-foot (70m) tall aqueduct.

At first, police thought it was merely a series of copycat suicides, but local residents soon began whispering of an aqueduct killer. Over the next three years, Alves sent 70 people to their **doom**, and police eventually shut the bridge down.

However, Alves wasn’t done. He formed a gang to murder and rob the wealthy residences he had worked in, but was eventually caught. The Aqueduct Killer was executed by means of hanging, but his story didn’t end there.

At this time, an era of enlightenment **fuelled** many people’s curiosity about what could be learned scientifically about the workings of the mind. Many felt they could explain what made Alves evil by pursuing phrenology—a

### Useful vocabulary

**\*to spook:** to frighten or unnerve

**quirky:** unusual, especially in an interesting or appealing way

**gruesome:** inspiring horror or repulsion

**trade:** the business of buying and selling

**goods:** something manufactured or produced for sale

**doom:** death, destruction, or some other terrible fate

**fuelled:** something that maintains or stimulates an activity or emotion

**passersby:** a person who passes by, especially casually or by chance

**to gaze:** to look steadily and intently, with great interest or wonder

### Let’s chat about that!

1. Do you prefer to watch fictional movies or films based on real events? Why?
2. What’s the scariest movie you have ever seen? Why did you find it so scary?
3. Do you believe serial killers should be given the death penalty? Why/not?
4. Do you know a quirky story? If not, google one and tell the class or your ECP coach.

# LIVE! English Events

Come and socialise in English!

## Coffee Saturdays

2021-22

11:00-12:30

Panadería Bertiz C/Francia 10

2nd October	5th March
6th November	2nd April
4th December	7th May
5th February	4th June



To attend ECP Cine Nights, send a WhatsApp to John on **657731354**

study of the bumps on one's head. After Alves was dead, doctors severed his head and preserved it for study.

Though the secret to evil wasn't discovered in the preserved head of Diogo Alves, the serial killer, even 180 years after his execution, still frightens unsuspecting **passersby** who meet his cold **gaze**. His perfectly preserved head sits in a glass jar at the University of Lisbon's Faculty of Medicine.

Adapted from <https://www.ripleys.com/weird-news/diogo-alves/> by ECP coach Darren Lynch

The use of "would" when talking about past habits

In the text, there is a sentence which reads, "Alves would lie in wait for them on the bridge at nightfall and would rob them of their earnings." That could also be rewritten as "Alves used to lie in wait for them on the bridge at nightfall and used to rob them of their earnings."

When speaking, and telling a story, instead of repeating **used to** 3 or 4 or maybe even 5 times, we prefer to use **would** in its abbreviated form 'd.

For example: I **used to** finish work at 5pm. I **used to** get home at 5.30pm. I **used to** ask my girlfriend if she wanted a beer. She **used to** say no but I **used to** drink a beer anyway.

I'd finish work at 5pm. I'd get home at 5.30pm. I'd ask my girlfriend if she wanted a beer. She'd say no but I'd drink a beer anyway.

Therefore when talking about a past habit, would = used to

Much better, as it improves your fluency

Remember, you can only do this when talking about a past habit. When talking about a past state, you cannot use would.

For example, "There used to be a castle on top of the hill." Not, "There would be a castle on top of the hill." Arrrrgh!