

LEARN ENGLISH WITH MUSIC

Every Breath You Take

The Police

COMPLETE LEARNING WORKBOOK

Go beyond the song

Collocations, relative clauses and the unsettling language of observation and control.

21 verified learning cards / Level B1 / guided practice

SECTION 00

Your learning journey

Watch first, explore second, practise from memory and finish with the complete card library.

1 WATCH	Follow the official lyric video and synced cards.
2 EXPLORE	Study language, extended vocabulary, culture and sound.
3 PRACTISE	Complete the guided challenges without looking back.
4 REVIEW	Use the final 21-card library by category.

Three sources of value

Song language gives you patterns to reuse. **Extended vocabulary** helps you discuss the themes and music. **Context** helps you understand cultural references and form your own interpretation.

Official lyrics

[Open the official lyric video](#)

Listen, read and return to the workbook whenever you want to explore a language point in greater depth.

SECTION 01

Map the song

Compare the smooth musical surface with language of ownership, watching and emotional dependence.

STAGE	LEARNING LENS
Refrain	Total observation through repeated every
Possessive turn	Romantic language becomes controlling
Bridge	Absence, loss and longing
Outro	Repetition intensifies surveillance

Listening challenge

For each stage, write one word for the sound and one for the speaker's emotional position. Then explain which language choice helped create that impression.

SECTION 02

Language Lab

Move beyond the quick cards: compare structures, notice register and learn how to avoid common mistakes.

LANGUAGE POINT	GO DEEPER	USE IT WELL
every vs all	Every focuses on members individually and takes a singular noun; all presents a group or total amount.	Every step matters; all the steps matter.
take, make and break	These verbs form fixed collocations that cannot be predicted through translation alone.	Take a breath, make a move, break a promise.
watch, look and see	Watch is sustained attention; look at is directed attention; see is perception.	Watch the road, look at the sign, see the danger.
belong to	With objects it marks ownership; with people it may imply intimacy or uncomfortable possession.	Choose wording that respects agency in real relationships.
since and for	Since gives a starting point; for gives duration. Both commonly accompany the present perfect.	Since Monday; for three days.
long for and miss	Long for is stronger and more literary; miss is neutral and frequent.	I miss home; she longed for freedom.
relative pronoun omission	Object pronouns may disappear; subject pronouns may not.	The person I saw; the person who called.
negative questions	They often expect agreement or express surprise rather than request neutral information.	Can't you see? differs from Can you see?

SECTION 03

Extended vocabulary: go beyond the lyrics

This bonus language expands what you can say about the narrative, emotion, performance and production.

to watch	verb	To look at someone or something carefully and for a period of time. <i>The security guard watched the entrance all night.</i>
a vow	noun	A serious promise, especially about future behaviour. <i>He made a silent vow never to be late again.</i>
to belong to someone	phrasal verb	To be owned by, or properly associated with, a particular person. <i>That old guitar belongs to my grandfather.</i>
faded	adjective	Having lost brightness, strength or intensity over time. <i>The photograph on the wall had faded almost to grey.</i>
to ache	verb	To feel a continuous, dull physical or emotional pain. <i>My legs ached after the long hike up the hill.</i>
lonely	adjective	Sad because you are alone or feel you have no one. <i>The house felt lonely once the children had moved out.</i>
to keep an eye on	expression	To watch someone or something closely, often to make sure they are safe or behaving correctly. <i>Could you keep an eye on the soup while I answer the door?</i>
to break apart	phrasal verb	To separate into pieces, or for a relationship or group to end. <i>The old band broke apart after years of touring together.</i>
a step	noun	A single movement of the foot in walking, or, figuratively, a single stage in a process. <i>Track every step of the project so nothing gets missed.</i>
sad	adjective	Feeling or showing unhappiness or sorrow. <i>She looked sad after saying goodbye at the airport.</i>
possessive	adjective	Wanting to control or keep someone entirely for yourself, often in an unhealthy way. <i>He got possessive whenever she made new friends.</i>
to swear	verb	To promise something very seriously and formally. <i>The witness swore to tell the truth in court.</i>

SECTION 04

Idioms and expressive English

Use these additional expressions to discuss the song's situations and themes in natural English.

every step you take	extension	A phrase meaning literally each single movement someone makes - used here to suggest constant, close observation. <i>The new manager seemed to track every step you take on the shop floor.</i>
to keep tabs on someone	extension	To watch or monitor a person closely, often without their full knowledge. <i>Her older brother always kept tabs on who she was texting.</i>
day and night	extension	Continuously, all the time, without stopping. <i>The new parents worked day and night to keep the café running.</i>
to fall apart	extension	For a relationship, plan or object to stop working or end badly. <i>Their friendship fell apart after the argument over money.</i>
with every breath	extension	A poetic way of saying 'constantly' or 'with every single moment of life'. <i>She promised to support him with every breath she had left.</i>

Make the language yours

Complete the exercises later in the workbook to check meaning, structure and register.

SECTION 05

Pronunciation as performance

A sung voice is not a neutral accent sample. Listen for concrete features, then compare theatrical delivery with everyday speech.

Sting's clipped, theatrical consonants	Sting enunciates final consonants unusually hard for a pop vocalist - the -k in 'take' and the -t in 'step' land sharply rather than trailing off. It gives the vocal a controlled, almost menacing precision that matches the song's real subject.
Non-rhotic R in Received-Pronunciation-adjacent singing	Southern English R-dropping is audible on words like 'heart' and 'apart' - the r softens into the vowel instead of being pronounced, unlike in American pop of the same era.
The flattened, reggae-influenced offbeat phrasing	The Police built their sound on Jamaican reggae rhythm, and Sting's phrasing sits slightly behind or ahead of the beat rather than directly on it - listen for how syllables land just off the strict pulse of Andy Summers' guitar figure.
Clear diphthongs on long vowels	Words like 'take', 'day' and 'stay' get a full, unhurried glide from one vowel sound to the next - useful models for practising English diphthongs slowly and clearly.

Three-pass shadowing

1. Tap only the stressed beats.
2. Reproduce the phrase slowly and clearly.
3. Contrast a natural spoken version with the musical performance.

SECTION 06

Context and creative choices

Discover the cultural and creative decisions that shaped the song, then listen again with this context in mind.

Sting wrote Every Breath You Take in 1982, not long after separating from his first wife, the actress Frances Tomelty, and at the start of his relationship with Trudie Styler - who, in one of pop music's odder coincidences, had been Tomelty's close friend. Wanting to escape the pressure of the breakup and the band's punishing schedule, Sting retreated to Goldeneye, the Jamaican estate once owned by James Bond author Ian Fleming, where he woke in the middle of the night with the song's central line already forming and wrote the rest at the piano within the hour.

The Police released it as a single on 20 May 1983, ahead of their fifth and final studio album, *Synchronicity*, which followed on 17 June 1983. It became the band's biggest hit by far: eight weeks at number one on the US Billboard Hot 100, two weeks atop Canada's RPM chart, and a fourth spell at number one in the UK - the band's fifth chart-topper there. Billboard later named it the best-selling single of 1983.

At the 26th Annual Grammy Awards in February 1984, the song won Song of the Year and Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal. Sting wasn't there to collect either trophy - the Police were on tour in Australia - so Bob Dylan and Stevie Wonder accepted Song of the Year on his behalf.

Guitarist Andy Summers' rippling, arpeggiated guitar figure is as much a part of the song's identity as the vocal melody; Summers has said plainly, 'Without that guitar part there's no song,' and drummer Stewart Copeland has credited him with finding the exact shape that ties the whole arrangement together.

Despite its gentle, romantic surface, Sting has repeatedly explained that the lyric is not a love song at all. He has called it 'a nasty little song, really rather evil,' built around jealousy, surveillance and possessiveness rather than devotion - a duality that still surprises people who have heard it played at weddings for over forty years.

The black-and-white music video, directed by Godley & Creme and inspired by the 1944 jazz short film *Jammin' the Blues*, won cinematographer Daniel Pearl the very first MTV Video Music Award for Best Cinematography at the inaugural ceremony in September 1984 - and by 2022 had passed one billion views on YouTube, decades after its original release.

SECTION 07

Practice zone

Complete every activity without looking back, then use the answer key to correct your work independently.

A. Complete

1. Every ___ matters. (detail/details)
2. She has lived here ___ 2020. (since/for)
3. Please ___ at the screen. (look/watch)
4. He ___ a promise. (broke/made)

B. Choose

5. Sustained attention: watch/look at.
6. Duration: since two years/for two years.
7. Strong literary desire: long for/look for.
8. Correct: the person called/the person who called.

C. Correct

9. Every people is ready.
10. I have waited since three hours.
11. Look the road.
12. The woman which called left.

SECTION 08

Answer key

Check each answer and return to the Language Lab when a form or distinction is still unclear.

1. 1. detail
2. 2. since
3. 3. look
4. 4. broke
5. 5. watch
6. 6. for two years
7. 7. long for
8. 8. the person who called
9. 9. Every person is ready
10. 10. I have waited for three hours
11. 11. Look at the road
12. 12. The woman who called left

Review again

Cover the answers and repeat the activities after a few days. A delayed second attempt is a better test of learning than immediate rereading.

SECTION 09

Complete 21-card library

Use this compact summary for quick revision or return to the video cue when you want to hear a point again.

Vocabulary / 6 cards

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 0:24

Take, make and break

The hook contrasts common collocations: take a breath or step, make a move, and break a vow. Collocations must be learned as combinations, not translated word by word.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 0:28

A vow is stronger than a promise

A vow is a solemn promise, especially in marriage or a formal commitment. Break a vow means fail to honour it.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 0:54

Belong to: possession and relationships

Belong to normally expresses ownership or membership. Applied to a person, it can sound romantic, possessive or controlling depending on context.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 0:58

Heartache as a compound noun

Heartache means deep emotional pain, especially after romantic loss. It is usually uncountable: a lot of heartache, not many heartaches.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 1:40

Long for: strong desire

Long for means want someone or something deeply, often when it is absent or distant. It is more emotional and literary than ordinary want.

VOCABULARY / VIDEO 2:30

Claim: a right asserted over something

A claim can be a statement said to be true or an asserted right to something. In a relationship context, claiming a person can sound strongly possessive.

Grammar / 10 cards

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:10

Every + singular noun

Every normally modifies a singular countable noun: every breath, every move, every step. The following verb is singular when that phrase is the subject.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:20

Parallel relative clauses

The repeated noun phrases contain compact defining clauses: the breath you take, the move you make. The object relative pronoun that is omitted.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:30

I'll be watching: future continuous

Will be + -ing presents an activity continuing around a future time. In context, the repeated watching sounds persistent rather than simply predictive.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:36

Every single intensifies every

Single adds emphasis: every single day means every day without exception. It is emphatic but common in conversation.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 0:50

Can't you see? A negative question

Negative questions can express surprise, criticism or an expectation of agreement. Their force depends strongly on tone and context.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:10

Repeated every creates totality

Listing every step and every move presents observation as complete and continuous. The grammar helps create the song's unsettling sense of surveillance.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:34

Since + present perfect

Since introduces the starting point of a situation continuing to now. English commonly uses the present perfect after the separation: since you left, I have felt lost.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 1:38

The one I cannot replace

After the one, a defining relative clause identifies the person. The object pronoun can be omitted: the one (that) I cannot replace.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 2:10

The negative question returns with greater pressure

On its return, the negative question still expects agreement rather than neutral information. Repetition makes the implied pressure more noticeable.

GRAMMAR / VIDEO 3:06

The complete catalogue amplifies every

The late accumulation of breath, move, bond, step and claim makes every sound exhaustive. This is grammatical totality used as a rhetorical escalation.

Idioms / 1 cards

IDIOM / VIDEO 1:36

Without a trace

Without a trace means leaving no sign or evidence. It is common in disappearance narratives: the files vanished without a trace.

Culture / 2 cards

CULTURE / VIDEO 1:20

Romantic surface, surveillance narrative

The polished melody is often heard as romantic, but the language describes watching, ownership and control. This contrast is central to the song's cultural interpretation.

CULTURE / VIDEO 3:42

No narrative release at the end

The song closes by repeating observation rather than resolving it. That circular structure supports the interpretation of fixation and control.

Pronunciation / 2 cards

PHONETICS / VIDEO 2:46

Watching you: linking across words

In connected speech, the final consonant of watching flows into the following vowel-like glide in you. Practise slowly before matching the sung rhythm.

PHONETICS / VIDEO 3:26

Final watching refrain: reduced but recognisable

In the outro, repeated words become more compressed. Track the stressed core of watching and the pronoun rather than expecting every consonant to remain equally clear.

Keep learning

[Return to the synced learning experience.](#)