

English Vocabulary: 'keep' vs 'maintain'

The verbs **keep** and **maintain** are often synonymous, however **keep** is more informal and much more common in everyday conversations.

a) to keep (usually transitive) (keep / kept / kept) (informal)

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|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. store in a place | I keep my car in the garage.
I keep cash in my wallet. |
| 2. make somebody wait | My wife always keeps me waiting when we go out. |
| 3. stay with | Please keep the change.
We have decided to keep our car. |
| 4. continue | I think that you should keep studying English.
I always keep myself updated.
I try to keep my plants alive.
Keep calm and carry on!
You must keep him awake until his operation. |
| 5. prevent | Please keep your dog from coming into the house. |
| 6. detain | My parents kept me in my bedroom all weekend!
John keeps his dog in the kitchen when he has visitors.
What kept you in London for so long? |
| 7. retain | Can you keep a secret? |
| 8. fulfill | I always keep a promise. I never break a promise. |
| 9. withhold information | She kept the news from me for a week.
Please keep your opinion to yourself. |
| 10. register | We keep records of all transactions. |
| 11. have | We keep a beach house in Miami. |
| 12. stay | It's important to keep healthy.
I always keep myself in good shape. |



Limits

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|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. keep above | I can't keep my head above the water! Help me! |
| 2. keep below | I try to keep my credit card spends below \$1000. |
| 3. keep under | You must keep the black box under the water. |
| 4. keep behind | Please keep behind the line. |
| 5. keep to the left/right | Please keep your car to the left. We're in England now! |

Phrasal verbs

1. keep at (+ noun)	continue	You should keep at English.
2. keep on (+ verb)	continue	You should keep on studying English.
3. keep back	contain	I can't keep the tears back. The police can't keep the crowd back.
4. keep down	control	You can't keep down the rebels for long. I feel sick. I can't keep my food down.
5. keep off	avoid	Please keep off the grass. Please keep the cat off the table.
6. keep out of	don't enter don't put in	Please keep out of the kitchen. Please keep the honey out of the fridge.
7. keep to	follow/respect	Please keep to your lane on the highway. You must keep to the rules of the game.
8. keep up with	go at same speed	I can't keep up with John – he runs so fast. I can't keep up with Bob – he studies all the time.
9. keep away	stay far	Keep away from the edge of the cliff.



Other vocabulary/expressions

keep your distance	stay far	Please keep your distance from the car in front.
for keeps	worth a lot	Your boyfriend is wonderful – he is for keeps!
keeper	guard	Bob is an excellent zoo keeper.
keep-fit	exercise place	Let's go to keep-fit tomorrow.
in keeping with	in a similar way	Let's decorate the kitchen in keeping with the 1950s.
goalkeeper	defender of goal	England's goalkeeper is fantastic!
zookeeper	worker at zoo	When I grow up I want to be a zookeeper.
keep your hair on	stay calm	Keep your hair on! Don't go crazy!
keepsake *	souvenir	This locket is a keepsake. It was my mother's.

* *Keepsake* is a synonym of *souvenir*. However, the difference is that *keepsake* is an object given by a person and it is kept in memory of that person, for sentimental or nostalgic reasons, while *souvenir* is an item of sentimental value which is kept to remember an event or location.

COLLOCATIONS WITH KEEP

- **Keep** in touch
- **Keep** track of
- **Keep** tabs on
- **Keep** in mind
- **Keep** sth to yourself
- **Keep** someone
- **Keep** someone's place
- **Keep** someone posted
- **Keep** it up
- **Keep** it down
- **Keep** up
- **Keep** your job
- **Keep** safe
- **Keep** someone company
- **Keep** sth on the down low
- **Keep** a secret
- **Keep** a promise
- **Keep** a diary
- **Keep** a journal
- **Keep** the change
- **Keep** score
- **Keep** your balance
- **Keep** someone in check
- **Keep** an appointment
- **Keep** away
- **Keep** pace
- **Keep** calm
- **Keep** the quite
- **Keep** records
- **Keep** animals

Source: www.englishstudyonline.org

b) to maintain (regular verb) (formal)

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|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. provide for | It is not easy to maintain a large family. |
| 2. take care of | My job is to maintain all the equipment in the factory.
My house is very well maintained. |
| 3. assert | I maintain that my decision was correct. |
| 4. not lose | It's important to maintain your principles. |
| 5. not change | I maintain my opinion. |
| 6. do maintenance | It's expensive to maintain many properties. |

Hint:

When you want to say "*manter*" in Portuguese, use the verb "keep" in English, and you will be correct 99% of the time! "*Maintain*" is usually used only for formal situations.