



# **Learn English Through Stories**

**D Series**

**D8**

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<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

## **Contents**

- 1. The Magic Violin.**
- 2. Paradise House.**
- 3. Grammar Page – Plural Nouns**

# 1. The Magic Violin



In Sicily, there once lived a boy who was always happy although he was very poor. His parents died when he was young so he set out by himself to seek his fortune. He laughed merrily at everything and all through his troubles he was cheerful and happy. He went about the country looking for work and at last one day he came to a farmhouse. He knocked at the door and the farmer came out.

“What do you want?” the farmer asked angrily. He was a mean person and a miser and thought that the boy must be a beggar.

“I want work,” said the boy smiling, “and any kind of work.”

“I see,” said the miser less angrily and he saw a way of getting something for nothing. “Well, you can come and look after my goats.”

So the boy went to live in the farmhouse, and every day he took the goats to the hills to graze.

At the end of three years, the boy wanted a change of work because he felt lonely in the hills. When he came home at night, he never saw anyone to talk to but the old farmer. One evening, he told his master that he wanted to leave him. He asked for his wages that he had earned during the three years on the farm.

“Wages!” cried the farmer angrily. “What wages! I never said anything about the wages when I gave you work.”

“That is so, answered the boy, “but no one ever works for nothing. I did not settle the wages then because I thought you are a just man.”

“And I am a just man,” roared the farmer. “No one has ever told me that I was not that before. You shall see! I will pay your wages even though I do not owe you any.”

Then he gave the boy three copper coins for three years' work. The boy looked at them and laughed. He put the coins in his pocket, took his shabby hat and went off whistling.

That night he slept under a haystack and in the morning when he woke up, he saw an old beggar in front of him. The boy smiled and said:

"Good morning, my friend, you are out of bed early."

"I am," replied the beggar. "I was so hungry that I could not have slept even if I had a bed of feathers to lie on. Can you spare me a copper coin or two? I am so hungry."

The boy put his hand into his pocket and took out the three copper coins that were his wages for three years.

"Take these," he said cheerfully. "It took me a long time to earn them, but I can go back to the goats again and earn some more."

As the beggar took the three copper coins, his rags fell from his body, and in their place appeared a black velvet cloak with silver work on it.

"You are a good lad, I see," said the old man. "I am not a beggar. I am an angel. I can grant you two wishes. What do you want? I can grant gifts to those who deserve them."

The boy thought for a moment and said, "I would like to have a violin which plays music to make all men dance, and a gun that will always hit the thing at which I aim."

The old man smiled and at once from beneath his cloak, he brought out a violin and a gun. He gave them to the boy.

"May they bring you the happiness that you deserve!" he said and disappeared.

The boy made his way back towards the farm where he had worked for three long years for three copper coins, and just as he went near the gate, a bird flew up from a field. At once the boy aimed at it with his magic gun and, of course, hit the bird. As the bird fell, the farmer came out of the house and went to pick it up.

"That is mine," he shouted.

"Certainly," answered the boy. "But you may only have it by dancing for it."

“I will have none of your rudeness, you rascal,” shouted the farmer. But before he could reach the bird, the boy began to play on his violin and the farmer had to dance. He danced and the boy would not stop playing.

“Stop!” shouted the tired farmer. “Stop, oh please stop! I will give you a thousand pieces of silver if you only stop!”

“Let us go and fetch them first,” said the boy.

So, still dancing, the farmer went into his house and took the silver coins from beneath a board in the floor where he had hidden them, and the boy played on and on. It was only when the farmer held out a thousand pieces of silver to the boy that he stopped playing the violin.

Then he went on his way, but the farmer ran before him into the village and told the police that the boy was a thief.

The magistrate sent out the policemen and they soon caught the boy with the thousand pieces of silver that the farmer said he had stolen.

In those days, in Sicily, the punishment for stealing was death. It seemed impossible for such a poor boy to have such a large sum of money, so he was sentenced to be hanged at once.

The boy asked the magistrate to let him play the violin before he was hanged. The kind magistrate allowed him to do so.

The farmer cried out in alarm when he saw the hangman give the violin back to the boy and shouted to the magistrate:

“He must not play! He must not play! Oh! Do not let him play!” But the magistrate only smiled and said:

“It can do no harm. Let the poor lad play the violin for a few minutes; he is too young to die.” So the boy began to play the violin. At once the magistrate and the hangman and the farmer and all the people who were gathered in the marketplace to see the poor boy being hanged, began to dance. They danced and danced and while the boy played, they could not stop dancing.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” the magistrate cried. “I cannot go on, I cannot!” But he had to dance because he could not stop.

“Make him stop!” cried the tired farmer. “Make him stop! He can have my thousand pieces of silver if he stops.”

“I shall die. I shall die!” cried the hangman. “I can dance no more, make him stop!”

But the boy played on, and the magistrate and the hangman and the farmer looked like dead people dancing for they had no strength left in them but they could not stop.

At last, the magistrate cried, “Stop, boy, stop! You shall go free. The farmer gives you a thousand pieces of silver and I give you your freedom.”

“Very well,” said the boy, “tell the hangman to fetch my gun and silver pieces and I will stop.”

So the hangman danced away to the courthouse where the silver and the gun were kept. He returned with the boy’s things in his hands. The boy said:

“Tie the gun to my belt and put the money in my pockets because I trust no one any more. I shall not stop playing until I have that which is my own and I am too far away from you to catch me again.”

When the gun was tied to his belt and the money was in his pockets, he began to walk away but he still played the violin because he would not trust them.

The farmer and the magistrate and the hangman kept on dancing in the marketplace until the sound of the violin had died in the distance. Then they fell on the ground because they were all very tired. But the boy went on to find his fortune with his violin under his arm, his gun on his back and the thousand pieces of silver in his pockets...

## 2. Paradise House

Jamna and Kurmu Mehra lived in Chandigarh. Jamna worked in a school as a cook. She enjoyed this work. She loved cooking, especially, because, many children from poor families were getting a decent meal, at least once a day. It was not only a job she did, she also worked in a sewing factory, four hours a day, including Sunday. So she was very busy. Even though she was twenty-eight years old, her husband and she had no children.

Her husband was a bricklayer. He also worked long hours. Her husband sometimes thought to himself, "I have been building other people's houses for so many years, but I don't own a house of my own."

They owned a small plot in their village. Jamna always said, "One day, we will build a house like a dream." She was good at saving. On Sunday, sometimes, she worked 10 hours at the factory. She brought leftover food from the school kitchen. So she was not spending much on food.

Her husband used to smoke and drink, but now he gave up everything. He said, "I will drink in a house if only I own that house."

As luck would have it, one day, Jamna received a letter.

Babu & Sons Solicitors,  
432 Paradise Complex,  
Sector 22,  
Chandigarh.  
May 10, 20...

Dear Mrs Jamna Mehra,

I regret to inform you that the late Mamta Mukherjee has passed away. In her last will and testimony, she stated a wish to give her main residence to you, namely Summer House, near Shimla in HP. Please, contact me at the above address at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Ramesh Babu.

Jamna made a cup of tea and sat down. She re-read the letter. Summer House was a beautiful, big house in the countryside where she used to stay when she was a little girl. Her aunt, who had been like a second mother to Jamna, had worked for Miss Mukherjee as a housekeeper and had lived in the house for many years. Miss Mukherjee had let Jamna stay with her aunt in the big house every summer as she knew she was a sickly village child who was often ill and would get healthier in the fresh country air.

Jamna had long, wonderful summers in the countryside and she used to look forward to returning there all year. It was like paradise to her. She made friends with the children in the village and they spent the warm summer days playing in the woods near the house, swimming in the river and having picnics. While she was staying in the house she had not seen Miss Mukherjee very often, just at the beginning of the holiday when she arrived from Village and before returning to Village. Her aunt would lead her to Mrs Mukherjee's sitting room and she would thank her for allowing her to stay. She had not seen the house where she had had such a happy time for more than twenty years. It was just unbelievable and wonderful that now it was hers!



“Is this the house Jamna?” Kurmu was standing in front of some tall metal gates looking at the front of Summer House. The old house still looked beautiful but needed re-painting and improvement. “It’s very big. I count twelve windows just on this front part.” “Yes. I know. I told you it was big.” “And look at this garden, the lawns and the fountain!”





Jamna looked at the red, white and yellow rose gardens. Mrs Mukherjee had always had roses near the front of the house. They went inside the house. There was a spacious kitchen and scullery, a huge dining room, sitting room, study, conservatory, drawing room, eight bedrooms as well as rooms for dressing. From the bedrooms, there were views of the surrounding countryside. "We'll have to paint it, Jamna, before we try to sell it. It must be worth a lot of money though." Jamna did not answer Kurmu at first. "Jamna..?"

"Yes, I know but you and I enjoy working and at least now we can make our dream come true and make our own small paradise on earth." Kurmu looked around. The sun was shining on the lovely garden and around the house were woods, hills and even a lake. It was like a paradise. He understood why Jamna loved it so much. He put his arm around her shoulders. "Perhaps we could Jamna. Perhaps we could."

"Jamna, I have to change my profession: from a bricklayer to a painter."

"Oh, my dear husband, at least, you will be painting your own house. And you would be able to have an odd drink now and then..."

"Oh, my dear wife, it is too big a house, for one person to paint all of it, I think we need helpers – you know what I mean – children!"

"Oh, my dear husband – do you mean – our own children?"

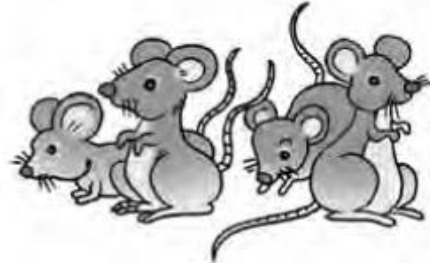
\*\*\* They had three children and all lived very happily. \*\*\*

### 3. Grammar Page

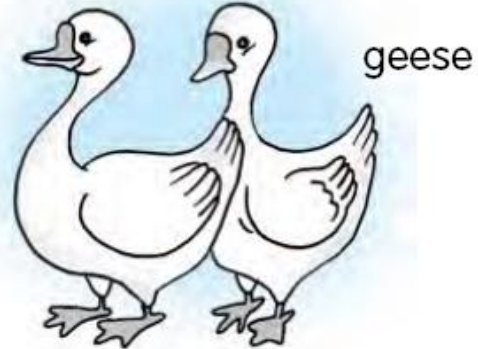
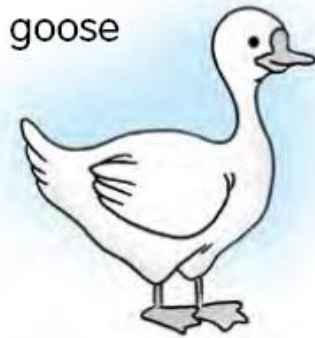
Some plural nouns don't follow the **-s** rule. They don't end in **-s**, **-es**, **-ies** or **-ves**. Instead, the word changes form.



mouse



mice



#### Word File

##### Singular

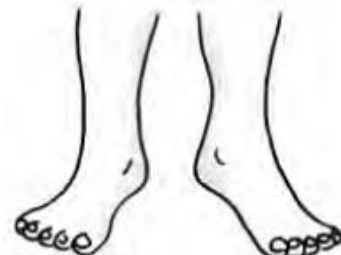
child  
man  
ox  
tooth  
woman

##### Plural

children  
men  
oxen  
teeth  
women



foot



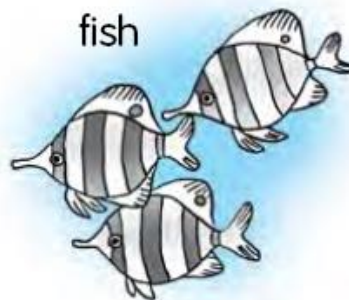
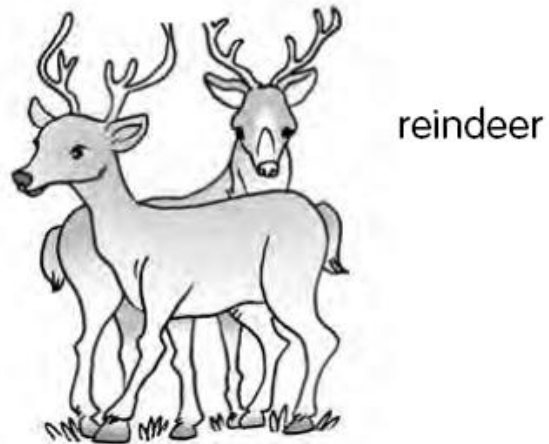
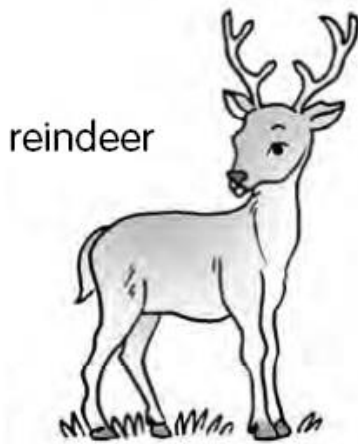
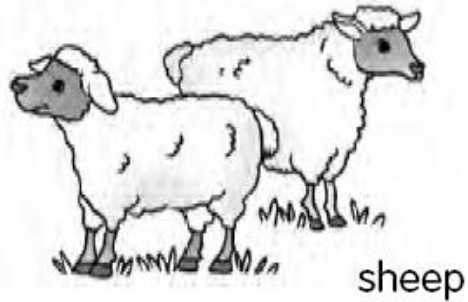
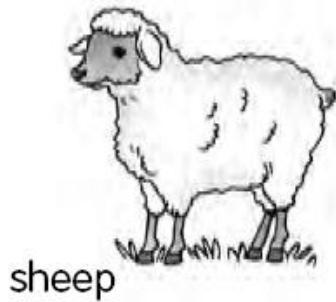
feet



The plural of the **mouse** that you use with your computer is either **mice** or **mouses**.



Some plural nouns are the same as the singular noun.



Word File

Singular	Plural
bison	bison
deer	deer



You can use **fishes** as the plural of **fish** when you are talking about different kinds of fish: all the **fishes** of the Pacific Ocean.



Some nouns are always plural.

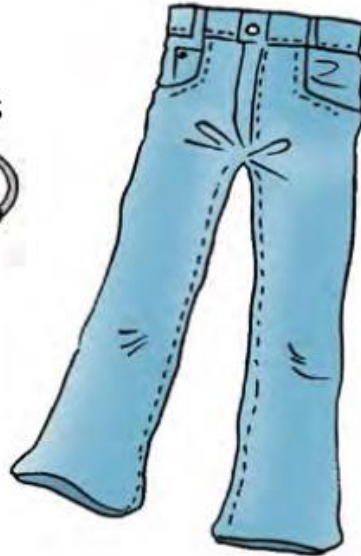
binoculars



goggles



pliers



jeans

### Word File

pants	scissors
pajamas	sneakers
shorts	slippers
trousers	stockings
sandals	



Another word for **spectacles** is **glasses**.



spectacles



You can make these plural nouns singular by using **a pair of**:



a pair of shoes

- a pair of binoculars
- a pair of spectacles
- a pair of goggles
- a pair of jeans
- a pair of shorts
- a pair of pliers