



Learn English Through Stories

E Series

E2

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1. Learning and Hobbies

Once there was a boy named Gopi. He was studying at the school in his village. He found it difficult to read and write. His grandfather noticed it and helped him by reading bedtime stories to him. Gradually, he started reading on his own. Now, he not only enjoyed reading but also has started writing his own stories. Let us read an essay written by Gopi.

Hobbies are the activities that we do in our spare time. Hobbies are unique to people. Some like gardening, a few like photography, and many have a book reading as their hobby. While other hobbies are swimming, collecting stamps, playing video games, and many more.

People have hobbies not only to pass their free time but also to do something useful. Hobbies help people learn new things, relax after a day of tiring work and energise their body and mind. The same is the case with me. I love writing, so it is my hobby.

Writing is a unique hobby because most people don't want to exhaust themselves in their spare time. Many feel that writing is tough, but I do not think so. I feel writing is like painting our voice. When I get free time, I pick a pen and a notebook and start painting my ideas in words. I write stories, poems and sometimes, about my feelings. My mind relaxes when I pour my thoughts into words. So, writing energises me.

When I write things, my imagination is at its best. I imagine a world with magic and magicians, where I can fly, and birds can talk. Writing helps me completely immerse myself in that world! Sometimes, I sit with small children and entertain them with these stories of mine. The happiness on their faces makes me write more and better.

Although writing is just a hobby for me, it is very beneficial. It opens my mind to think beyond the little things with a broader mind. It makes me more passionate about my life. It makes me learn new things and enjoy every moment of my life.

My hobby helped me in school too. When I started writing things, I was unable to describe them accurately. With time, my experiences helped me to think of new ideas and this made me a better writer.

Now, I look out for things, which I was not able to see before. Hence, I can describe things better in my stories. I feel no problem with writing English essays or stories as it is my hobby. To become a better writer, I spend time learning how to write in different forms like fiction and non-fiction.

It is important to always learn and improve our hobbies. Who knows? One day I could be a writer like *Bond or Narayan!*

“Practice does not make perfect, only perfect practice makes perfect.”

2. The Woman on Platform Number 8

By Ruskin Bond

It was my second year at boarding school, and I was sitting on platform no. 8 at Ambala station, waiting for the northern bound train. I think I was about twelve at the time. My parents considered me old enough to travel alone, and I had arrived by bus at Ambala early in the evening; now there was a wait till midnight before my train arrived. Most of the time I had been pacing up and down the platform, browsing through the bookstall, or feeding broken biscuits to stray dogs; trains came and went, the platform would be quiet for a while and then, when a train arrived, it would get very noisy and a crowd of people running towards the train. As the carriage doors opened, a tide of people would step down and walk hurriedly towards the gate where the ticket collector stood. Every time this happened I would get stuck in the crowd.

Now tired of this game and of wandering about the platform, I sat down on my suitcase and stared sadly across the railway tracks.

Trolleys rolled past me, and I was aware of the shouts of the various sellers—the men who sold bhujia, monkey nuts, and sweets; newspaper boys — but I had lost interest in all that was going on along the busy platform, and continued to stare across the railway tracks, feeling bored and a little lonely.

“Are you all alone, my son?” asked a soft voice close behind me. I looked up and saw a woman standing near me. She was leaning over, and I saw a pale face and dark kind eyes. She wore no jewels, and was dressed very simply in a white sari.

“Yes, I am going to school,” I said, and stood up respectfully. She seemed poor, but very polite and gentle.

“I have been watching you for some time,” she said. “Didn’t your parents come to see you off?”

“I don’t live here,” I said. “I had to change trains. Anyway, I can travel alone.”

“I am sure you can,” she said, and I liked her for saying that, and I also liked her for the simplicity of her dress, and for her deep, soft voice and the peacefulness of her face.

“Tell me, what is your name?” she asked.

“Arun,” I said.

“And how long do you have to wait for your train?”

“About an hour, I think. It comes at twelve o’clock.”

“Then come with me and have something to eat.”

I was going to refuse, out of shyness and doubt, but she took me by the hand, and then I felt it would be silly to pull my hand away. She told a coolie to look after my suitcase, and then she took me away down the platform. Her hand was gentle, and she held mine neither too firmly nor too lightly. I looked up at her again. She was not young. And she was not old. She must have been over thirty, but had she been fifty, I think she would have looked much the same.

She took me into the station dining room, ordered tea and samosas and jalebis, and at once I began to melt and take a new interest in this kind woman. The strange meeting had little effect on my hunger. I was a hungry school boy, and I ate as much as I could, but slowly with good manners. She was happy to see me eat. I think it was the food that strengthened the connexion between us and cemented our friendship.

I began to talk quite freely, and told her about my school, my friends, my likes and dislikes. She questioned me quietly from time to time, but preferred listening; she made me feel relaxed, and I had soon forgotten that we were strangers. But she did not ask me about my family or where I lived, and I did not ask her where she lived. I accepted her for what she had been to me—a quiet, kind and gentle woman who gave sweets to a lonely boy on a railway platform . . .

After about half an hour we left the dining room and began walking back along the platform. An engine was moving up and down beside platform no. 8, and as it approached, a boy leapt off the platform and ran across the rails, taking a short cut to the next platform. He was at a safe distance from the engine, but as he leapt across the rails, the woman clutched my arm. Her fingers dug into my flesh, and I winced with pain. I caught her fingers and looked up at her, and I saw a wave of pain and fear and sadness pass across her face. She watched the boy as he climbed the platform, and it was not until he had disappeared in

the crowd that she relaxed her hold on my arm. She smiled at me reassuringly and took my hand again, but her fingers shook against mine.

“He was all right,” I said, feeling that it was she who needed reassurance. She smiled gratefully at me and pressed my hand. We walked together in silence until we reached the place where I had left my suitcase. One of my schoolfellows, Satish, a boy of about my age, had turned up with his mother.

“Hello, Arun!” he called. “The train’s coming in late, as usual. Did you know we have a new headmaster this year?”

We shook hands, and then he turned to his mother and said: “This is Arun, Mother. He is one of my friends, and the best bowler in the class.”

“I am glad to know that,” said his mother, a large imposing woman who wore spectacles. She looked at the woman who held my hand and said: “And I suppose you’re Aron’s mother?”

I opened my mouth to make some explanation, but before I could say anything the woman replied:

“Yes, I am Aron’s mother.”

I was unable to speak a word. I looked quickly up at the woman, but she did not appear to be at all embarrassed, and was smiling at Satish’s mother.

Satish’s mother said: “It’s such a nuisance having to wait for the train right in the middle of the night. But one can’t let the child wait here alone. Anything can happen to a boy at a big station like this—there are so many suspicious characters hanging about. These days one has to be very careful of strangers.”

“Arun can travel alone though,” said the woman beside me, and somehow I felt grateful to her for saying that. I had already forgiven her for lying; and besides, I had taken an instinctive dislike to Satish’s mother.

“Well, be very careful, Arun,” said Satish’s mother looking sternly at me through her spectacles. “Be very careful when your mother is not with you. And never talk to strangers!”

I looked from Satish’s mother to the woman who had given me tea and sweets, and back at Satish’s mother.

“I like strangers,” I said.

Satish’s mother was definitely shocked a little, as obviously she was not used to being contradicted by small boys. “There you are, you see! If you don’t watch over them all the time, they’ll walk straight into trouble. Always listen to what your mother tells you,” she said, wagging a fat little finger at me. “And never, never talk to strangers.”

I glared resentfully at her, and moved closer to the woman who had befriended me. Satish was standing behind his mother, grinning at me, and delighting in my clash with his mother. Apparently, he was on my side.

The station bell clanged, and the people who had till now been sitting quietly on the platform began moving about.

“Here it comes,” shouted Satish, as the engine whistle shrieked and the front lights played over the rails.

The train moved slowly into the station, the engine hissing and sending out waves of steam. As it came to a stop, Satish jumped on the footboard of a lighted compartment and shouted, “Come on, Arun, this one’s empty!” and I picked up my suitcase and made a dash for the open door.

We placed ourselves at the open windows, and the two women stood outside on the platform, talking up to us. Satish’s mother did most of the talking.

“Now don’t jump on and off, as you did just now,” she said. “And don’t stick your heads out of the windows, and don’t eat any rubbish on the way.” She allowed me to share the benefit of her advice, as she probably didn’t think my ‘mother’ was a very capable person. She handed Satish a bag of fruit, a cricket bat and a big box of chocolates, and told him to share the food with me. Then she stood back from the window to watch how my ‘mother’ behaved.

I was hurting by the patronizing tone of Satish’s mother, who obviously thought that my family was very poor; and I did not intend to give the other woman away. I let her take my hand in hers, but I could think of nothing to say. I was conscious of Satish’s mother staring at us with hard, beady eyes, and I found myself hating her with a firm, unreasoning hate. The guard walked up the platform, blowing his whistle for the train to leave. I looked straight into

the eyes of the woman who held my hand, and she smiled in a gentle, understanding way. I leaned out of the window then, and put my lips to her cheek and kissed her.

The carriage jolted forward, and she drew her hand away.

“Goodbye, Mother!” said Satish, as the train began to move slowly out of the station. Satish and his mother waved to each other.

“Goodbye,” I said to the other woman, “goodbye—Mother . . .”

I didn’t wave or shout, but sat still in front of the window, gazing at the woman on the platform. Satish’s mother was talking to her, but she didn’t appear to be listening; she was looking at me, as the train took me away. She stood there on the busy platform, a pale sweet woman in white, and I watched her until she was lost in the crowd.

3. Grammar Page

Singular Nouns

Nouns can be **singular** or **plural**.

When you are talking about just one thing or person, use a **singular noun**.
For example:

a tent	a park	an idea
a taxi	a doctor	an oven
a house	a lady	an exercise

Plural Nouns

Use a **plural noun** when you are talking about two or more people, places or things.

Just add **s** to make most nouns plural.

singular	plural	singular	plural
a computer	computers	a mountain	mountains
a chair	chairs	a river	rivers
a train	trains	an envelope	envelopes
a player	players	an insect	insects
a teacher	teachers	an oven	ovens
a taxi	taxis	an uncle	uncles

Notes

- Words called **articles** or **determiners** are used to signal nouns.

a river	an armchair	three biscuits
a castle	an idea	five eggs

- The article **an** is used before nouns that begin with the vowels **a, e, i, o** and **u**.

an artist	an eye	an insect
an oven	an umbrella	

- The article **a** is used before nouns that begin with the other letters, called **consonants**. But some words don't follow these rules.
 - a uniform, a unit, a user*: **a**, not **an**, is used because the vowel **u** in these words is pronounced like the word **you**;
 - an hour, an heir, an honor*: **an**, not **a**, is used because the consonant **h** in these words is not pronounced.

Nouns that end in s, ss, ch, sh or x, are made plural by adding es.

singular	plural	singular	plural
bus	buses	sandwich	sandwiches
glass	glasses	witch	witches
dress	dresses	brush	brushes
branch	branches	flash	flashes
church	churches	box	boxes
beach	beaches	fox	foxes

Most nouns that end in y are made plural by changing the y to i and adding es.

singular	plural
baby	babies
family	families
story	stories
teddy	teddies
fairy	fairies
puppy	puppies
housefly	houseflies
library	libraries
city	cities
lily	lilies
party	parties
dictionary	dictionaries



Nouns that have a vowel before the y are made plural by simply adding s at the end.

singular	plural	singular	plural
key	keys	day	days
monkey	monkeys	tray	trays
donkey	donkeys	runway	runways
toy	toys	chimney	chimneys
boy	boys	trolley	trolleys
cowboy	cowboys	valley	valleys

