



# Learn English Through Stories

E Series

E14

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## 1. Again, There was Famine in the Land.



In a small village, once there lived two brothers – Santa and Banta. One year, it did not rain at all. There was no food. The whole village was dying of hunger.

Santa decided to go to the forest in search of food. While he was walking, he saw an almond nut. He picked a stone and tried to crack it. When he hit it with the stone, the nut went shooting off and fell down a great hole. Santa looked into the hole and it was a big opening with steps. There were more than a few hundred steps. Finally, he reached the bottom.

But it was empty - or almost. He wandered, calling out to ask if anyone was there. Eventually, he came to an old woman sitting in a garden.

“Hello, good woman,” he said. “I come from the land above where there is nothing to eat. Have you anything down here to fill an empty stomach?”

“Certainly, my boy,” said the old woman. “Just go into the garden around the back of the house, and there are so many pumpkins. Listen carefully to what the pumpkins say and ignore those that call out: 'Dig me up!' When you hear one that says: 'Don't dig me up!' do dig it up, and bring it back to me.”



Santa was a well-mannered boy, and he listened carefully and did exactly as he was told. He went into the garden where the pumpkins were indeed very talkative. Most of them begged him to dig them up, and only one called out in a whiny voice: “Don't pick me up! I don't want to be picked up! I don't want it. Don't pick me up!” And that was the one he picked up and brought back to the old lady who said:

“Now peel the pumpkin, throw away the inside, boil the skin in the pot and then give it to me.”

The boy thought that this was a very strange upside down sort of request but he did as he was told. He gave the boiled pumpkin skin to the woman and she commanded: “Now I shall eat my meal but do not look at me as I eat.”

“Yes Ma'am,” said the boy, and he covered his eyes with his hand while she ate. When she had finished her meal she said: “Go back into the garden and choose a drum, but be sure not to take the one that says 'ding dong'. Instead make sure you choose a drum that says 'dong ding.’”

Again the boy did exactly as he was told and returned with a drum that said, “Dong ding”.

The old lady said: “Take this drum home. Any time you feel hungry, just beat it.”

The boy thanked the old lady and hurried back to his village. He placed the gift in the middle of his hut with his hungry family gathered all around. Next he beat the drum and all sorts of wonderful food appeared.

Santa was keen to share his good fortune with the whole village. He called everyone to the meeting place and beat the drum once more. Enough food for a feast appeared by magic. The hungry people ate and sang the praises of Santa. Everyone rejoiced except for one - and that was Banta who was jealous of his brother's instant popularity.

“If I had a drum like that I could be rich,” he thought, and every day he pestered his brother to tell him how he found it. Eventually Santa was tired by his persistent brother and he told him the story of the old lady who lived below the ground. He showed him the hole that he had gone into, and Banta ran down the steps. Just as his brother had done before him, he wandered around calling out: “Is anyone here?” until he came upon an old woman sitting in a garden. Most unlike his brother, he spoke rudely to her saying:

“What are you waiting for? I haven't got all day. Get me some food!”

The old lady took no offence. She said: “Just go into the garden behind the house, and there are so many pumpkins. Listen carefully to what the pumpkins say. Don't pick the ones that say: 'Pick me up; but do pick the ones that say: 'Don't pick me up!’”

And Banta, who was a very suspicious sort of person, replied: “Don't take me for a fool. I see right through your tricks you old witch. If a pumpkin warns me not to pick it up, and I just root it up regardless, something nasty is going to happen to me.” And since that was his line of thought, he went to the pumpkins and seized one of the pumpkins that were crying out to be taken, and he ignored the one that said: “Don't take me!” He brought it back to the old lady, and just as with his brother, she told him to boil the skin of the pumpkin and throw away the centre.

“What stupidity!” declared Banta and he did the opposite of what he was told. When he boiled the centre it turned into a stone but he gave it to the old lady to eat anyway.

“Please don't look at me while I eat,” said the old lady. But the arrogant Banta replied: “I would not want to miss seeing you eat that stone,” and he sat and watched while she ate her strange meal. When she had swallowed the stone, the old lady said: “Now go back to the garden and fetch a drum, and be sure to choose the one that says 'Dong ding' not 'Ding dong.’”

“Dong ding! What kind of drum goes dong ding?” exclaimed Banta, and he went to the garden and chose one that went 'Ding dong'. When he showed it to the old lady she told him to take it to his village and beat it whenever he felt hungry.

“Now you're talking!” said Banta, and this time he did as he was told. He ran back to his village and called everyone to the meeting place. As his brother had done before, he beat the drum but this time no feast appeared - no food, not even a few crumbs. Instead, wild animals came out of the woods, the likes of which the villagers had never seen before. For the magic drum had only just called them into the world. There came lions, crocodiles, rhino, all colours of snakes, and scary dangerous fierce looking animals - and all the villagers ran away as fast as they could, cursing Banta for his tricks. As for Banta, he climbed a tall tree to escape the beasts, and from there he looked down at the empty village and the magical drum, and he called the old woman every bad name under the sun.

And that was how Banta was tricked by his own bad temper into bringing snakes and wild animals into the world.

## 2. Man Gets What He is Destined to

Once in a small village lived a merchant. One day, His wife gave birth to identical triplets – three boys. They named them: Partap Singh the 1<sup>st</sup>, Partap Singh the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Partap Singh the 3<sup>rd</sup>. When the boys were twenty, their father became the village head. After becoming the village head, the father realised the importance of education. One day, he sent his son, Partap Singh the 1<sup>st</sup>, to the town to get a book.

The son went to the town and had a good day. He ate some samosas and jalebis in a sweet shop and then went to a bookshop. He bought a thick book for ten rupees and came back home. When the father saw the book, he got furious. On every page, the book had one sentence, and it was the same sentence – **Man gets what he is destined to**. The father threw his son out of the house.

The son went to a city and began a new life. The city was ruled by a great king – King Hussna. The king had a large army with many soldiers. His daughter, Chandarvati, loved one of the soldiers. She asked her maids to arrange a meeting with him. The maids secretly invited the soldier to the palace in the evening. They asked him to climb the palace wall with the help of a rope that would hanging there.

That evening, the soldier was as busy as a bee. He was arranging things for his sister's wedding. So he did not turn up. As luck would have it, Partap was walking near the palace. He noticed the suspended rope, climbed the wall and found himself on the princess' balcony.



The princess, mistaking him for the soldier, said to him, “Oh handsome soldier, I have fallen in love with you,”

To this Partap replied, “Man gets what he is destined to.”

The princess realised this man was not the one she was expecting, and she ordered him to get out. Partap left the palace and went to sleep at a temple. But a minister of the king had come to hold a secret meeting there and told Partap to sleep at his house.

When Partap reached the minister’s house, his daughter Sundravati mistook him for her prospective husband and made arrangements to marry him. Before tying the knot, Sundravati asked Partap to say something, and he said, “**Man gets what he is destined to.**” Hearing this he asked him to leave at once.

Partap was back on the street. His eyes fell on a wedding procession. An elephant had gone berserk and was charging at everyone. The bridegroom and his party fled the scene to escape the crazy elephant.



Partap saw that the frightened bride had been left by herself. He came forward and drove away the elephant. She told Partap that her name is Phoolavati, and she is a daughter of a merchant.

After a while, the bride’s father, along with wedding guests, came back the venue. The daughter told her father, “This brave man saved me from the mad elephant. If I marry, I will only marry him.”

Hearing the ruckus, the princess and the king came to the wedding venue to see what had happened, and so did the minister’s daughter. The king asked Partap to tell him everything without fear. Partap as usual repeated the same sentence - **Man gets what he is destined to.**

The sentence rang a bell in the princess' head. The minister's daughter also remembered the meeting with Partap.

The merchant, the minister and the king had a short meeting. They decided that all three daughters – Chandarvati, Sundravati and Phoolavati – would marry Partap.

They called Partap and told him their decision. Partap said, "I can only marry one of them because polygamy is not permitted in my country."

The king said, "Live in my country, and I will give 3000 acres of land. Please marry all of them."

Partap said, "I've got a solution. I have two brothers, and they look exactly like me. We are triplets. Please call them here, and then we can sort it out."

The next day, his brothers arrived. Partap Singh the 1<sup>st</sup> married Phoolavati, Partap Singh the 2<sup>nd</sup> married Sundravati and Partap Singh the 3<sup>rd</sup> married Chandarvati."

**Everyone agreed that even God cannot undo what is destined for man.**

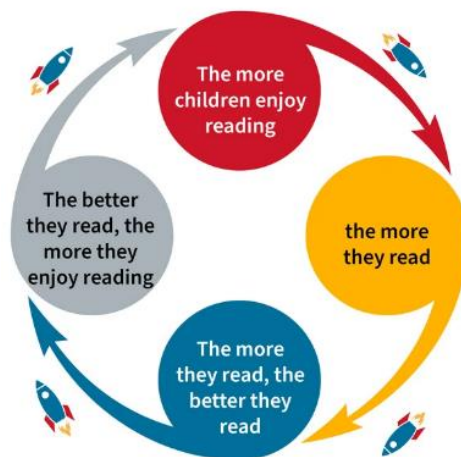


### 3. Pleasures of Reading



One of the most enriching hobbies is reading. Reading books provides us with such pleasure that we do not get from any other activity. It enhances our knowledge and sharpens our intellect. As they say: reading makes a person complete, and writing makes an exact person. A good reader develops a good personality and elevates their character. Books contain the seeds of wisdom. They give us sound moral advice and teach us to love virtue.

Once you know how to read, you can start enjoying reading. There is a virtuous reading cycle.



The more you read, the better you read; the better you read, the more you enjoy etc. There was a time when people without sight could not access reading. With the advent of Braille, they can read and take pleasure in reading. Due to advancing technology, a vast number of audio books are available that people can listen to and enjoy.

Books are our best friends. They give us company in times of happiness and joy; and in times of pain and distress. Books help us to get rid of boredom and loneliness. When we feel sad and depressed, they console and soothe our troubled minds. They may provide us with advice and guidance for our problems.

Reading is one of the most crucial mediums to obtain knowledge and information. Good magazines, newspapers, books and print media supply us with valuable and up-to-date information. Possessing knowledge gives a boost to one's self-esteem. We derive immense satisfaction when we feel we are well-informed and capable of moving in educated circles.

However, reading for pleasure is quite different from reading under compulsion. When we read under compulsion, we are less likely to draw any pleasure from it. Reading for pleasure is very different from academic or professional reading. When we read for pleasure, we feel more relaxed and in command.

Reading offers pleasure to persons of all tastes, temperaments and age-groups. Therefore we must cultivate a taste for reading.

## 4. Grammar Page

Use **more** and **most** to compare most other two-syllable adjectives. You will also use **more** and **most** with all adjectives that have *more* than two syllables.

adjective	comparative	superlative
famous	more famous	most famous
precious	more precious	most precious
handsome	more handsome	most handsome
exciting	more exciting	most exciting
beautiful	more beautiful	most beautiful
expensive	more expensive	most expensive
comfortable	more comfortable	most comfortable
delicious	more delicious	most delicious
interesting	more interesting	most interesting
difficult	more difficult	most difficult

### Irregular Comparative and Superlative Forms

A few adjectives don't form their comparative and superlative forms in any of the usual ways. The comparative and superlative forms of these adjectives are different words, called irregular forms.

adjective	comparative	superlative
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
little	less	least
many	more	most
far	farther <i>or</i> further	farthest <i>or</i> furthest

For example:

My painting is good, Melanie's painting is better, but Andrew's painting is the best.

## Adjective Phrases

Phrases can be used like single adjectives to describe nouns and pronouns. Phrases that are used in this way are called **adjective phrases**.

Most adjective phrases come **after the word** they describe. Look at these examples. The adjective phrases are in bold and the nouns they describe are in color.

Who is the **girl** with long hair?

My friend lives in the **house** across the street.

**Mrs. Morris** is tall and slim.

This is the **road** to Toledo.

The **lady** in the bookshop is a friend of mine.

Some adjective phrases come **before the word** they describe. The words in these phrases are often joined with hyphens.

a long-legged bird

an eight-year-old child

a well-dressed lady

a ten-cent coin

a fun-loving teenager

a twenty-story building

user-friendly equipment

a large-sized shirt