



# Learn English Through Stories

F Series

F11

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# 1. The Lost Child

By Mulk Raj Anand

A child goes to a fair with his parents. He is happy and excited and wants the sweets and toys displayed there. But his parents don't buy them for him. Why then does he refuse when someone else offers them to him?

It was the festival of spring – Vasant Panchami. Wearing colourful clothes, the children, as well as their parents, were marching towards the fair. Some walked, some rode on horses, others sat on horse or bullock carts. One little boy ran between his father's legs. He looked gleeful and excited, like a dog with two tails.



“Come, child, come,” called his parents, as he lagged behind, fascinated by the toys in the shops that lined the way.

He hurried towards his parents, his feet obedient to their call, his eyes still remaining on the toys behind. As he came to where they had stopped to wait for him, he could not suppress the desire of his heart, even though he well knew the old, cold stare of refusal in their eyes.

“I want that toy,” he pleaded.

His father looked at him red-eyed, in his familiar tyrant's way.

His mother, melted by the free spirit of the day was tender and, giving him her finger to hold, and said, “Look, child, what is before you!”

It was a flowering mustard-field, pale like melting gold as it swept across miles and miles of even land.



A group of dragonflies were bustling about on their bright-coloured purple wings, intercepting the flight of a lone black bee or butterfly in search of

sweetness from the flowers. The child followed them in the air with his gaze, till one of them would still its wings and rest, and he would try to catch it. But it would go fluttering, flapping and up into the air, when he almost caught it in his hands. Then his mother gave a cautionary call, "Come, child, come, come on to the footpath."



A dragonfly

He ran towards his parents joyfully and walked side by side with them for a while. Then soon, he would be left behind, attracted by the little insects and worms along the footpath that were teeming out from their hiding places to enjoy the sunshine.

"Come, child, come!" his parents called from the shade of a grove where they had seated themselves on the edge of a well. He ran towards them.

A shower of young flowers fell upon the child as he entered the grove, and, forgetting his parents, he began to gather the petals in his hands. "Look!" He heard the cooing of doves and ran towards his parents, shouting, "The dove! The dove!" The petals dropped from his forgotten hands.

"Come, child, come!" they called to the child, who had now gone to the banyan tree and was running around it. Gathering him up, they took the narrow, winding footpath which led to the fair through the mustard fields.

As they neared the village, the child could see many other footpaths filled with people coming to the hustle and bustle of the fair. The scene was overstimulating. The boy was fascinated and somewhat overwhelmed by this.

A sweetshop seller hawked, "Gulab-jaman, rasagulla, burfi, jalebi," at the corner of the entrance, and a crowd pressed round his counter at the foot of an architecture of many coloured sweet decorated with leaves of silver and gold. The child stared open-eyed, and his mouth watered for the burfi that was his favourite sweet. "I want that burfi," he slowly murmured. But he half knew as he begged that his plea would not be heeded because his parents would say he was greedy. So without waiting for an answer, he moved on.

A flower-seller hawked, "A garland of gulmohar, a garland of gulmohar!" The child seemed irresistibly drawn. He went towards the basket where the flowers

lay heaped and half murmured, "I want that garland." But he well knew his parents would refuse to buy him those flowers because they would say that they were cheap. So, without waiting for an answer, he moved on.

A man stood holding a pole with yellow, red, green and purple balloons flying from it. The child was simply carried away by the rainbow glory of their silken colours and he was filled with an overwhelming desire to possess them all. But he well knew his parents would never buy him the balloons because they would say he was too old to play with such toys. So he walked on farther.

A snake-charmer stood playing a flute to a snake which coiled itself in a basket, its head raised in a graceful bend like the neck of a swan. It seemed the music went into its invisible ears like an invisible wave. The child went towards the snake-charmer. But, knowing his parents had forbidden him to hear such coarse music as the snake-charmer played, he proceeded farther.

There was a roundabout in full swing. Men, women and children, carried away in a whirling motion, shrieked and cried with dizzy laughter. The child watched them intently and then he made a bold request: "I want to go on the roundabout, please, Father, Mother."

There was no reply. He turned to look at his parents. They were not there, ahead of him. He turned to look on either side. They were not there. He looked behind. There was no sign of them.

A full, deep cry rose within his dry throat and with a sudden jerk of his body he ran from where he stood, crying in real fear, "Mother, Father."

Tears rolled down from his eyes, hot and fierce; his flushed face was convulsed with fear. Panic-stricken, he ran to one side first, then to the other, hither and thither in all directions, knowing not where to go. "Mother, Father," he wailed. His yellow turban came untied and his clothes became muddy.

Having run to and fro in a rage of running for a while, he stood defeated, his cries suppressed into sobs. At little distances on the green grass he could see, through his filmy eyes, men and women talking. He tried to look intently among the patches of bright yellow clothes, but there was no sign of his father and mother among these people, who seemed to laugh and talk just for the sake of laughing and talking.

He ran at a fast speed again, this time towards a shrine where people seemed to be crowding. Every little inch of space here was congested with men, but he ran through people's legs, his little sob lingering: "Mother, Father!" Near the entrance to the temple, however, the crowd became very thick: men jostled each other, heavy men with flashing, murderous eyes and hefty shoulders. The poor child struggled to find a way between their legs. Their brutal movement

of the crowd knocked the child to and fro. The child could have been trampled underfoot, had he not shrieked at the highest pitch of his voice, "Father, Mother!" A man in the surging crowd heard his cry and, stooping with great difficulty, lifted him up in his arms.

"How did you get here, child? Whose baby are you?" the man asked as he steered clear of the mass. The child wept more bitterly than ever now and only cried, "I want my mother! I want my father!"

The man tried to soothe him by taking him to the roundabout. "Will you have a ride on the horse?" he gently asked as he approached the ring. The child's throat tore into a thousand shrill sobs, and he only shouted, "I want my mother! I want my father!"



The man headed towards the place where the snake-charmer still played on the flute to the swaying cobra. "Listen to that nice music, child!" he pleaded. But the child shut his ears with his fingers and shouted his double-pitched strain: "I want my mother! I want my father!" The man took him near the balloons, thinking the bright colours of the balloons would distract the child's attention and quieten him. "Would you like a rainbow-coloured balloon?" he persuasively asked. The child turned his eyes from the flying balloons and just sobbed, "I want my mother! I want my father!"

The man, still trying to make the child happy, took the child to the gate where the flower seller sat. "Look! Can you smell those nice flowers, child? Would you like a garland to put round your neck?" The child turned his nose away from the basket and reiterated his sob, "I want my mother! I want my father!"

Thinking it would please the distressed child, the man took him to the counter of the sweetshop. "What sweets would you like, child?" he asked. The child turned his face from the sweet shop and only sobbed, "I want my mother! I want my father!"

## 2. The Nurse and the Jackal



Gidderwaha is a big village in Faridkot. There a young man called Hussan Chand. As his name suggests, he was a handsome boy. He went to Faridkot University and earned a degree in Mathematics. He had a teaching job in a private school, teaching mathematics three times a week. Other time, he was a salesman. He sold life insurance to all sort of people: farmers, labourers, teachers, etc.

You may want to know – what is a life insurance?

Life insurance is designed to reassure you that your dependants, such as your children or a partner, will be financially looked after in the event of your death.

One day, he had an accident. A car hit his motorcycle and broke his leg. He was admitted to the village hospital. He had to stay several days in the hospital. The nurse, Puneeta Kumari, was in charge to take care of him. She was highly skilled in her profession, and also she was a beautiful young woman. During her break, she came to Hussan Chand and had chat with him. She told him about her life, and he told her his. They not only became good friends, it was more than that. I can say with certainty that it was love at first sight.

Three months later, Hussan married Puneeta.

One day, Puneeta's massi came and asked, "Puneeta, are you happy with your marriage?"

Puneeta replied, "Woman gets what she is destined to."

The other day, Hussan's bhua came and asked, "Hussan, are you happy with your marriage?"

Hussan replied, "Man gets what he is destined to."

A year later, Puneeta gave birth a baby girl. The baby was healthy but sometimes cried a lot.

One day, as usual the baby was crying. Puneeta said the baby, "Come on baby that is enough! If you don't stop crying now, I'll put you outside the house and the jackal will come and take you away."

By chance, a hungry jackal was passing by the house when he heard the mother scolding a crying baby. The hungry jackal thought to himself, "As luck would have it! What a day - flesh of human baby! I wait by the window..."

The jackal sat there and waited and waited. Now it was late in the evening. He heard the mother saying, "Oh sweet baby! If a naughty jackal comes near you, I will beat him to death."

The jackal was shocked. He realised that human beings should never be trusted. They just know how to talk, but never do what they say. We need not take them serious. We animals should not believe their quotes: honesty is the best policy – honest is the best of all virtues – the greatest truth is honesty, and the greatest falsehood is dishonesty...

Sad and downhearted, the jackal went to the jungle.



### 3. Surjit Writes a Letter to His Friend

Dear Gurjit,

After a long time I received a letter from you. I was pleased to know that you have done well in your examination. I have also done well – I think - in all the papers and hope to get good marks.

You are very curious to know about the ambition of my life. As you know that I have been fascinated to the profession of medicine. It is a noble profession. A doctor is considered next to God. He is a source of great hope and strength to the patient. Hence, I want to become a doctor to serve the society. In fact, it had been the dream of my mother. In India, a large number of people die every year due to lack of proper medical treatment. Particularly in rural area, medical aid is rare. I would like to go to rural areas where the services of a doctor are most required.

I am very serious for the preparation of medical entrance examination - I am working hard to qualify for the entrance examination. I am interested to know what you want to do in life.

PS – If I fail my medical entrance examination, I can always join my father in the transport business. In the USA, a truck driver earns four times more money than a doctor in India.

Yours Sincerely,

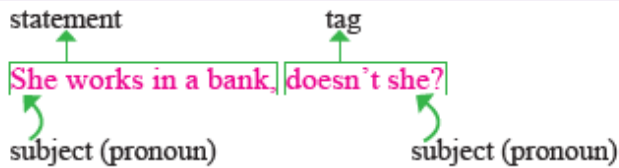
Surjit.

## 4. Grammar Page

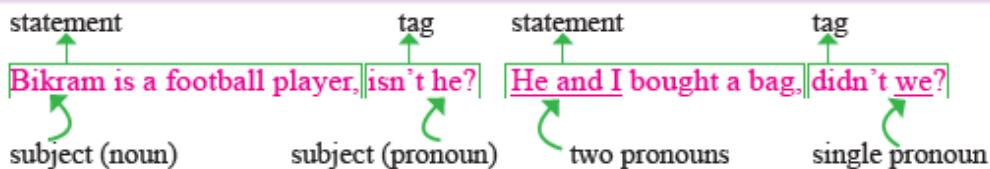


### GRAMMAR STUDY: Subjects of Tags

Use the subject pronouns of statements as the subjects of tags.



If there are nouns, indefinite pronouns or two pronouns in the subject, replace them with single pronouns.



Anita cooks food, doesn't she?  
Somebody broke it, didn't they?

The boys are clever, aren't they?  
Girls wear skirts, don't they?

Look at the following chart:

subjects of statements	subjects of tags	examples
I	I	I can do it, can't I? I enjoy dancing, don't I?
.....and I	we	You and I can do it, can't we? He and I can do it, can't we? Ravi and I can do it, can't we? They and I can do it, can't we?
You and.....	you	You and he will do it, won't you? You and Anu can do it, can't you? You and they can do it, can't you?
Singular males	he	Milan is a doctor, isn't he? His father is very tall, isn't he? His son likes ice-cream, doesn't he?
Singular females	she	Anu is a nurse, isn't she? Her mother has gone out, hasn't she? My daughter is intelligent, isn't she?
This/That..... Uncountable noun Singular thing/animal Something/Nothing/Everything	it	This is my pen, isn't it? Milk is white, isn't it? A cat is an animal, isn't it? Nothing was there, was it?
These/Those Plural nouns Somebody/Everybody/Nobody/ Someone /Everyone.....	they	These books are good, aren't they? Girls wear skirts, don't they? Somebody stole my purse, didn't they?
There	there	There is a pen on the table, isn't there?
One + verb	one	One can do it, can't one?