



Learn English Through
Stories

C Series

C19

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1. Father Frost

Once, there lived a man whose wife died, leaving him to care for their young daughter, Irina. As time passed, he worried that she was lonely, so he married a new wife with a daughter of her own.

“Now we shall be a family once more,” he said.

But Irina’s father soon realized that he’d made a terrible mistake. The stepmother was bad-tempered and hated Irina. She made her work hard, chopping wood, feeding the pigs, and scrubbing the floor, while her own daughter, Nonna, lay in bed all day, eating cake. If Irina or her father dared to complain, she threw pots and pans at them both.

One winter’s morning, the stepmother announced it was time for Irina to marry. “Everything is arranged,” she told Irina’s father. “Fetch the sleigh, take the girl into the forest, and leave her by the tall pine.”

“But she’ll freeze in the cold!” cried Irina’s father.

“She’ll not wait long for her bridegroom,” the stepmother promised.

Irina and her father were too afraid to protest.

Irina gathered her belongings silently. The only food she was allowed to take were peelings from the pigsty.

The stepmother watched them ride away and laughed at her cruel trick.

“Good-bye and good riddance!” she cried.

Irina and her father rode deep into the forest. When they came to the tall pine, he couldn’t bear to leave her.

“Don’t be sad, father,” said Irina bravely, “hurry home or you’ll be in trouble.”

When he’d gone, Irina sat on a tree stump, shuddering with cold, and pulled the bundle of peelings from her pocket. Suddenly, she heard footsteps in the snow. Along came a glittering figure with a white beard, sparkling the trees with frost and showering them with icicles.

Father Frost stopped and gazed at Irina.

“Are you warm, little maid?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, I’m warm,” said Irina politely, although her teeth chattered.

Father Frost stepped closer, making ice form at her feet.

“Are you still warm, little red cheeks?” he asked.

“Yes, sir, still warm,” said Irina, although her toes were numb.

Father Frost stepped closer, making snow-flakes fall.

“Are you still warm, little blue lips?” he asked.

Irina struggled to speak, for each breath stabbed like needles in her chest.

“Yes, sir, warm enough,” she whispered.

Then Father Frost saw Irina’s brave smile and took pity on her. He wrapped her in a scarlet cloak and warm blankets.

That night, Irina’s father couldn’t sleep. At dawn, he rode into the forest, fearing his daughter was dead. But to his joy, he found Irina alive, warmly dressed with a chest full of presents at her feet.

The stepmother was furious when they returned. “Nonna must go to the forest,” she said. “She deserves richer clothes and presents than Irina!”

So, the next morning, Irina’s father took Nonna into the forest.

Nonna waited expectantly at the tall pine, eating cake. Before long, Father Frost appeared. He stopped and stared at Nonna.

“Are you warm, little maid?” he asked.

“Of course not!” snapped Nonna. “Give me a cloak—a fur one would suit me.”

Father Frost frowned and stepped closer.

“Are you warm, little red cheeks?”

“No!” shouted Nonna. “I need a fur hat and boots too.”

Father Frost stepped closer, shaking his head.

“Are you warm, little blue lips?”

“NO!” shrieked Nonna.

“Are you deaf old man? Just give me the chest full of presents and make it big!”

Then Father Frost saw Nonna’s greedy eyes. He raised his staff.

The next morning, the stepmother herself went into the forest. She found Nonna, pale as ice, wrapped in a cloak of frost, with nothing but a box of pine needles at her feet. She hugged her shivering daughter tight, but Nonna was so chilled that they both froze to death on the spot.

2. The Magic Porridge Pot

One winter's day, Hans was walking to school, when he met an old woman asking for food. Hans came from a poor family and only had a crust of bread for his lunch, but he happily shared it with the old woman, for he knew how it felt to be hungry himself.

On the way home, he met the old woman again. She handed him a little cooking pot. "This is to thank you for your kindness," she said. "Tap it and say, 'Cook, little pot, cook!' and it will give you as much porridge as you wish. If you want it to stop, tap it once more and say, 'Stop, little pot, stop!'" Hans thanked her and carried the pot home.

When his mother and little brother, Fritz, saw the battered old pot, they thought Hans had picked up some trash along the path. But then he tapped it and said, "Cook, little pot, cook!" Suddenly, the kitchen was filled with a delicious sweet smell and, to their amazement, the pot bubbled with thick, creamy porridge.

"Stop, little pot, stop!" said Hans, with another tap, and they all dug in.

From that day Hans and his family never had to go hungry again. They had porridge whenever they wished. Sometimes they stirred in a spoonful of jam or a handful of berries. Sometimes they invited their neighbours in to share a warm meal.

Then, one morning, while Hans was at school, Fritz decided that he wanted more. His mother was outside, fetching firewood, so Fritz tapped the pot and said, "Cook, little pot, cook!" Sure enough, the little pot began to fill with porridge. Fritz spooned some into his bowl and began to eat. But the pot kept cooking. He didn't notice the porridge dribbling over the top of the pot until he had licked his bowl clean. "Stop cooking pot!" he said, but the pot didn't stop. Porridge spilled over the stove and onto the kitchen floor. Fritz began to cry, and his mother came rushing in from the garden.

"What's happened?" she cried. "Stop, porridge pot, stop!" But the pot kept cooking. Porridge flooded the kitchen and flowed out through the back door. It bubbled down the path and into the street. All the cats in the village ran up to eat their fill, and the dogs ran after them.

"What's happened?" cried the villagers as warm porridge oozed into their houses and shops. "Somebody stop this!" But nobody could. The children slipped and skidded and sledged in porridge, they even tried to make porridge snowmen, but soon it was too deep to play in. It filled the rooms of the houses,

so everyone had to climb out of the windows onto their rooftops. "Eat as much as you can!" cried the mayor, but it was no use, the porridge kept coming. It streamed down the road like a white lumpy river until it reached the schoolhouse.

When Hans smelled the sweet porridge, he ran out of school. At once, he knew what had happened. But how could he get home to put things right? A wintry gust of wind gave him an idea. The children had been making kites at school that day, so he fetched his kite and threw it into the sky. As it flew up, he grabbed on to its tail and soared high above the porridge river and over the village. When Hans reached his house, he let go and landed softly in his porridge garden. Just as he did so, the little cooking pot bobbed by. Hans tapped it. "Stop, little pot, stop!" he said, and it stopped cooking at once. Hans sighed with relief.

But it took many days for people to eat their way back into their houses, and nobody in that village, except Hans and his family, ever ate porridge again.

3. Mini Stories 4

(A) A Perfect Wedding

Pam was getting married. She was very excited. She was also nervous. Everything had to be perfect. She was scared that things would go wrong at the last minute. Her maid of honour was her sister, who made sure everything was ready. She checked all the guests. She made sure the cake and food were ready. She prepared the flower girl and the ring bearer.



Ring Bearer

Everything was perfect. The wedding colours were purple and silver. There were purple and silver flowers on all the tables. The wedding ceremony was outdoors. It was by a beautiful lake. All the chairs had silver ribbons tied to them. It was a beautiful day.

Guess who the bridegroom was?

Correct, it was Banta from the village: Raj Gumal.



From Santa Singh

(B) Cutting Hair

After passing her plus two exams, Banto joined IELTS classes and achieved level six for Reading, writing, listening and speaking. Then she went to Canada to study hospitality.

Banto's hair was getting long. She was starting college soon. Banto wanted to cut her hair before college started. She was also going to donate her hair. She had to cut 8 inches to donate it. She decided to cut it even though it would be really very short. She never had her hair short. It was always long. She decided it was time for a change.

After she cut her hair, she felt good. She loved her new look. She felt fresh. It would also be easier to wash and comb her hair. She also felt good about donating her hair.

For many weeks, she did not do video call to her mum in India. She only did phone calls.

(C) A Local Talent Show

There was a local talent show. The first place winner would get five hundred dollars. The second place winner would get three hundred. The third place winner would get one hundred dollars. It was free to participate. Tickets were sold for five dollars per person. Everyone was excited to perform and also watch.

There were all kinds of acts including the typical singing and dancing acts, exciting magic acts, and extreme cycling. The whole town was excited. Tickets were sold out. The money raised from the tickets would go to a local charity. The charity was for the homeless.

Banta participated in the show. His item was Punjabi Bhangra. He did not achieve the first place but came third. One hundred dollars for the charity was good. He was super happy. All his friends congratulated him. He took them to a restaurant and cost him \$310.

(D) Birbal the Wise

One day, a rich merchant came to Birbal. He said to Birbal, "I have seven servants in my house. One of them has stolen my bag of precious pearls. Please find out the thief."

So Birbal went to the rich man's house. He called all the seven servants in a room. He gave a stick to each one of them. Then he said, "These are magic sticks. Just now all these sticks are equal in length. Keep them with you and return tomorrow. If there is a thief in the house, his stick will grow an inch longer by tomorrow."

The servant who had stolen the bag of pearls was scared. He thought, "If I cut a piece of one inch from my stick, I won't be caught." So he cut the stick and made it shorter by one inch. The next day Birbal collected the sticks from the servants. He found that one servant's stick was short by an inch. Birbal pointed his finger at him and said, "Here is the thief." The servant confessed to his crime. He returned the bag of pearls. He was sent to jail.

4. Present Progressive Tense

When do you use the **present progressive tense**? To talk about actions in the present, or things that are still going on or happening now.

I'm writing a letter, and my mum is knitting a sweater for my brother Banta.

1. I'm **playing** chess with my friend.
2. She's **riding** a horse.
3. He's **taking** a walk in the park.
4. The man's **counting** the money.
5. They **are practicing** tai chi.
6. We're **rushing** to the airport to meet Mr. Smith.
7. They **are still sleeping**.
8. They **are swimming** in the sea.
9. What **are** they **doing**?
10. What's **happening**?
11. Why **aren't** you **doing** your homework?
12. **Aren't** I **sitting** up straight?

5. Picture Dictionary Page

confuse

confuses confusing confused
verb

1 to make someone puzzled because of some difficulty in understanding.

The instructions confused me.

2 to find it difficult to tell one thing from another.

I always confuse the twins.

congratulate

congratulates congratulating congratulated
verb

to say to someone that they have done well.



Congratulating the winner.
congratulations *noun*

conifer

conifers *noun*
a tree that has needles instead of leaves. Conifers stay green all year round and have cones instead of flowers.



Scotch pine

connect

connects connecting connected
verb

to link up two things.



Connecting the digital camera to the computer.

connection *noun*

conscience

consciences *noun*

a feeling inside you that tells you what is right and wrong.

A guilty conscience.

■ say kon-shuns

conscious

adjective

awake and aware of what is happening.

The man was still conscious after the accident.

■ say kon-shus

■ opposite unconscious

conservation

noun

the protection and careful use of something.

Conservation groups try to protect animals, plants, and the environment.

consider

considers considering considered
verb

to think about something carefully.

She considered going out, but decided not to.

considerate

adjective

thoughtful toward other people.



He is very considerate.

consonant

consonants *noun*

any letter of the alphabet that is not a vowel (see alphabet on page 16).

constant

adjective

going on without stopping.

A constant problem.

constantly *adverb*

constellation

constellations *noun*

a group of stars.



The Big Dipper

construct

constructs constructing constructed
verb

to build.



Constructing a model.
construction *noun*

contact

contacts contacting contacted
verb

to communicate with someone.
You can contact me by phone while I'm away.

contact *noun*

contain

contains containing contained
verb

to have something inside.



The box contains tools.
container *noun*

content

contents *noun*

an object inside something, such as a box, bag, or book.

■ say kon-tent



lunch box
contents

content

adjective

happy and satisfied.

■ say kon-tent

contented *adjective*

contest

contests *noun*

a match or competition between people.

A juggling contest.

continent

continents *noun*

one of seven very large areas of land that usually includes several countries.



the continent of Africa

continual

adjective

happening often, or without stopping.

Continual noise.

continually *adverb*

continue

continues continuing continued
verb

to carry on.

The match continued after the rain had stopped.

continuous *adjective*

contract

contracts contracting contracted
verb

to shrink or make smaller.
Your eye pupils contract when light is shone on them.

contradict

contradicts contradicting
contradicted *verb*

to say the opposite of what someone else has said.
The politicians contradicted each other.
contradiction *noun*

contribute

contributes contributing
contributed *verb*

to give a part of something.
We all contributed to the meal.
contribution *noun*

control

controls controlling controlled
verb

to have the power to make something or someone do what you want.



These toy planes are controlled from the ground.

convenient

adjective
useful, or easy for you.
A convenient time.

■ say kuhn-vee-n-nyent
■ opposite inconvenient

conversation

conversations *noun*
talk between two or more people.

A friendly conversation.



convince

convinces convincing convinced
verb

to persuade someone to believe something.
■ say kuhn-vins

cook

cooks cooking cooked *verb*
to prepare and heat food so that it can be eaten.
cooking *noun*



cook

cooks *noun*
someone who prepares food.

cool

adjective
slightly cold.



This box keeps drinks cool.
■ opposite warm

cooperate

cooperates cooperating
cooperated *verb*

to work with someone in a helpful way.
We cooperated on a project.
cooperation *noun*

copper

noun
a red-brown colored metal that turns green when it comes into contact with moist air.



copy

copies copying copied *verb*
to do the same thing as someone else.

Copy me! I'll show you how to do it.
copy *noun*

coral

corals *noun*
a hard substance that is made of the skeletons of small sea animals. Coral is found in warm seas.



core

cores *noun*
the middle part of something.
An apple core.

cork

noun
the soft, springy bark of the cork oak tree, which is used to make mats, tiles, and seals for bottles.



cork oak bark



wine cork

corn

noun
a tall plant that grows seeds on large ears. Corn is used as food for people and animals.

corner

corners *noun*
the place where two lines or surfaces meet at an angle.
A street corner.

correct

adjective
right, with no mistakes.
■ opposite incorrect
correction *noun*

corridor

corridors *noun*
a long indoor passage with doors leading off it into rooms.



cosmetics

noun
the things that people use to change the way their skin or hair looks.



lipstick



eye pencil

cost

costs costing *cost verb*
to have a price.
A computer costs hundreds of dollars.
cost *noun*

company

noun

1 a group of people who work together to make or sell something.

A computer company.

2 people or animals with whom you spend time.

My cat is good company.

compare

compares comparing compared verb

to look at several things to see how they are the same and how they are different.

My teacher compares me with my sister all the time.

comparison noun

compass

compasses *noun*

1 an instrument that shows the direction you are facing.

The magnetic compass needle always points north.



magnetic needle

2 a tool with one fixed leg and one movable leg that is used for drawing circles.



competition

competitions *noun*

an event where one person or a team of people try to do better than their opponents.

Our team came second in the swimming competition.

compete verb

complain

complains complaining complained verb

to say that you are not happy about something.

The passengers complained about the late train.

complete

completes completing completed verb

to finish something.



Completing the jigsaw puzzle.
complete adjective

complicated

adjective

hard to understand, or difficult.



a complicated knot
■ opposite simple

composer

composers *noun*

a person who writes music.
compose verb

compromise

compromises compromising compromised verb

to end an argument by both sides deciding to give up part of what they want.

They both wanted to ride the bike, but had to compromise by taking turns.

■ say kom-pro-mize
compromise noun

compulsory

adjective

that which must be done.

Math is a compulsory subject at school.

computer

computers *noun*

an electronic machine that arranges and stores information digitally, using a set of instructions called a program. Used for communication.



laptop computer

concentrate

concentrates concentrating concentrated verb

to think carefully about something.



Concentrating on a puzzle.
■ say kon-sen-trate
concentration noun

concert

concerts *noun*

an event where people sing or play music for an audience to listen to.

conclusion

conclusions *noun*

1 the end of something.

The story's conclusion was a happy one.

2 a decision that is based on all the things you know.

She came to the conclusion that it was a sensible idea.

conclude verb

concrete

noun

a mixture of sand, cement, stones, and water, which is used for building.



concrete paving stones

condition

noun

1 the state that something is in.



Grooming helps to keep a horse in good condition.

2 a rule.

He went out on the condition that he was back before dark.

confident

adjective

believing you can do something, or being sure something will happen.

I'm confident I'll win.

confidence noun

confiscate

confiscates confiscating confiscated verb

to punish by taking something away from someone.

I had my football confiscated.