



Learn English Through Stories

C Series

C23

Adopted and modified by

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1. The Gift of the Magi

The year is 1905. We are on the streets of New York, with its tall buildings, expensive stores, and important people. But what do we know about the little people? Who lives behind that door? Who works in that small, dark office?

Let's open a door and watch two young people on a cold day in December. The apartment is small. It has only two rooms. There are no pictures or photos. We can't see any special things on the table. But it is a happy home.

Mr. and Mrs. James (Jim) Dillingham Young live here. It is their first home—at \$8 a week. Jim works six days a week for \$20. Every evening he walks slowly home. His days are long and his feet are heavy. But then he opens the door of the apartment.

There is Mrs. Young—his Della! She is the light in his dark days. She has food on the table for him, and she looks at him with her beautiful brown eyes. Jim always smiles. He is a happy man in his apartment with Della, and she is happy, too.

This afternoon we can see Della in the apartment. Jim is at work. Della puts her money on the table. She has \$1.87, and tomorrow is Christmas.

“How can I buy a special Christmas gift for Jim with \$1.87? What am I going to do?” she thinks. Della walks across her kitchen. “What can I buy for Jim?”

Della looks at the window. She can see her unhappy face in it. She looks at her long, beautiful hair. Jim always says, “I like to see your hair every morning in the sun. At work, I think about your hair.”

Mr. and Mrs. James D. Young have two special things: Della's hair and Jim's gold watch. The watch was a gift from Jim's father, and Jim always has it with him.

Sometimes Della says, “Excuse me, Mr. Young. What time is it?” Then Jim smiles, and he takes the gold watch from his coat. He opens the watch and looks at it with love. Then he tells Della the time.

But now Della is thinking about her beautiful hair. Quickly she puts on her thin, black coat and old hat. She goes into the street. She runs to Mrs. Sofronie's store on First Street. The old woman buys hair.

“Can you buy my hair?” Della asks.

Mrs. Sofronie smiles. "I can give you \$20 for it."

"OK, but please, take it quickly," Della says.



Della sits down and Mrs. Sofronie starts to work

Della sits down and Mrs. Sofronie starts to work. Della doesn't look at her hair on the floor. At three o'clock she takes the \$20 from Mrs. Sofronie and puts on her hat. She runs quickly to Fourth Street and looks in every store. She finds her gift for Jim: a beautiful gold chain for his watch, for \$21.

Della runs home and finishes the Christmas food. She is happy because she has the chain for Jim's watch. Then she sees her hair in the window.

"Is Jim going to love me with short hair?" Della thinks. "But I did it for him. I wanted a gift for him."

At seven o'clock, Della hears Jim at the door. He is never late. Della has her gift for him in her hand. The door opens and Jim walks into the kitchen. He looks thin, and he is cold in his old coat and shoes. Then he sees Della's hair. He isn't angry, but he is quiet.

"Jim, talk to me. I'm going to have long hair again one day. But this evening I have a special gift for you. Let's be happy. It's Christmas tomorrow," Della says.

"But..." Jim says. "Where is your beautiful hair?"

"At Mrs. Sofronie's store. She has my hair now, and I have a gift for you. And, I love you," Della says.

Jim doesn't answer. He looks at Della. Then he says, "Della, I loved you with long hair and I love you with short hair. And, I have a special gift for you too."

Della opens the gift quickly, and she finds two expensive combs for her long, brown hair. Della knows these combs because she sees them every day in a store window on Fifth Street. She loves them, but now she has no hair for them!

"Jim, they're beautiful, and in six months I can put them in my hair," says Della. "But, wait! I have a gift for you."

Jim opens his gift slowly, and he looks at it.

"Jim, do you like it? I looked in every store. Give me your watch.

Let's put it on your watch," says Della.

But Jim doesn't give Della his watch. He sits down and smiles. "Della, let's put our gifts away for a year," he says. "I don't have my watch. I went to that store near my office. They buy watches there. You can see my watch in their window now, and you have the combs."

What do we have here? The story of two people. They don't have a lot of money, but they have a lot of love. And now they are going to have a happy Christmas because they understand about special gifts.



And now they understand about special gifts.

2. The Art Game

“Jeff, my friend,” Andy Tucker says one day, “we aren’t making any money. Let's try a new game.”

“Well, Andy.” Jeff says, “Tell me your plan. But remember this. I don’t want to take money from people.”

“We aren’t going to *take* money from them. They’re going to *buy* things from us,” Andy says.

“But that’s our old game. What’s new?” Jeff asks.

“We’re playing a child’s game here. People buy our things for one dollar. Let’s move to Pittsburgh. We can find some millionaires and make a lot of money,” Andy says.

“Why do you want to go to Pittsburgh?” Jeff asks.

“The millionaires in Pittsburgh worked for their money. It’s new to them. Now they want to buy beautiful, expensive things,” Andy says.

“But what are they going to buy from us?” Jeff asks. “Wait and see,” Andy says.

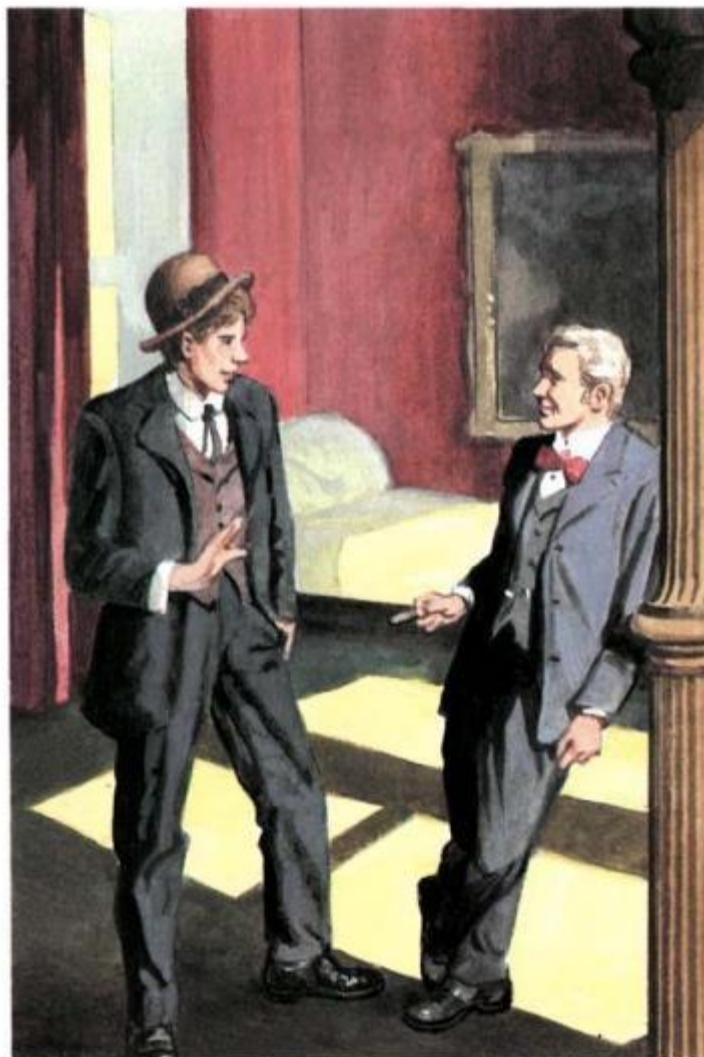
After three days in the bars and restaurants of Pittsburgh, Jeff and Andy meet at their hotel on Thursday evening.

“Let’s have a drink. Jeff,” Andy says. “I know a Pittsburgh millionaire.”

“Where did you meet him?” Jeff asks.

“At a little coffee bar on Twelfth Street. Pittsburgh millionaires don’t like expensive restaurants and bars. We talked, and he liked me. His name is Scudder. I went to his house, too. He has \$12, 000... in the bank, but he’s a new millionaire. Now he wants to know about good books, the theater, and beautiful art. He wants to be a gentleman,” Andy says.

“How is he going to do that?” Jeff asks.



"Let's have a drink, Jeff," Andy says. "I know a Pittsburgh millionaire."

"He has teachers, and lie buys expensive books and pictures," Andy says.

"OK, but what is he going to buy from us?" Jeff asks.

"He has a lot of pictures in his house. He has a famous little gold horse, too. It's from Egypt and it's very old. I asked him about it. He said, 'There are two of these gold horses. I want the other horse, but I can't find it.'"

"We don't know about art. Where can we find a gold horse for Scudder?" Jeff asks.

"Wait and see, my friend," Andy says.

On Friday, Andy comes back to the hotel in the afternoon. He has a bag in his hand.

"Look, Jeff, I was in a little store near here. Look at this," Andy says.

He opens the bag.

"Andy!" Jeff says. "Is this a gold horse from Egypt?"

"It is. It was under some old things in the back of the store. I said to the old man, 'Can I have that horse for \$2?' He said, 'That's a beautiful little thing. Give me \$35 and it's yours.'"

"What did you give him?" Jeff asks.

"He was happy with \$25, and Scudder is going to be *very* happy. He's going to buy my little horse from you."

"Why from me?" Jeff asks.

"You're going to call him. You are a famous art teacher. You want to buy *his* horse," Andy says.

After Jeff's telephone call, Mr. Scudder arrives at the hotel. He wants to see the art teacher's gold horse.

"It's beautiful!" Mr. Scudder says. "It's the other horse from Egypt." "Yes, yes, I know about your horse. Now I want to buy it. I want to put the two horses in a special place at my art school. I can give you \$2,000 for your horse," the "art teacher" says.



"It's beautiful!" Mr. Scudder says.

"Never! You can't buy my horse. I'm going to buy yours. Here's \$2,500," Mr. Scudder says.

"OK. With \$2,500 I can buy two or three pictures for my school," the art teacher says.

"Now I'm going to have two horses in my bedroom," Mr. Scudder says.

Jeff runs to Andy's room. Andy is looking at his watch. "Did Scudder buy the horse?" he asks.

"Yes. He loved it. The money is in my bag," Jeff says.

“Good, good. Let’s go. There’s a train to Cincinnati at 10:45,” Andy says.

“Why? Let’s stay in Pittsburgh for the weekend. Mr. Scudder is happy and we’re happy. He has two horses and we have \$2,500. No problems,” Jeff says.

“You’re right and wrong. We have \$2,500, but Scudder has only one horse,” Andy says.

“Andy, did you take that horse from his house?” Jeff asks.

“Yes. It wasn’t difficult ”Andy says.

“But why did you tell me that story about the old man and the store near here?” Jeff asks.

“Oh, because you never want to take money from people. Mr. Scudder had a horse for his money,” Andy says. “But ...”

“Jeff, stop. No questions. Let’s go! The train is waiting,” Andy says.

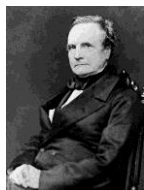
3. The Simple Past Tense

Use the **simple past** tense to talk about things that happened in the past. The simple past tense is also used to talk about things that happened in stories.



Dinosaurs **lived** millions of years ago

1. Banta bought a new camera last week. It is already broken.
2. Geeta learned to play the guitar very quickly.
3. We drove to the safari park last weekend. The children loved it.
4. The giant panda gave birth to a cub last night.
5. Yesterday Dad took me to the cinema.
6. The plane landed a few minutes ago.
7. The children visited a farm during the holidays.
8. Who invented the computer? It was Charles Babbage.



Charles Babbage

9. Jack and Jill went up the hill. They went to find a bird and kill.
10. Little Red Riding Hood decided to visit her grandmother.
11. The Three Bears found Goldilocks asleep in their house.
12. Banta went to see his girlfriend — Banto.

4. More Grammar

1. Two questions but one answer:

1. (a) Who loves Banto? (b) Who does Banta Love?

Answer: Banta loves Banto.

2. (a) Who bought a jacket? (b) What did Banta buy?

Answer: Bata bought a jacket.

3. Who has broken her leg? (b) What has Rita broken?

Answer: Rita has broken her leg.

4. Whose child broke our window? (b) Whose window did her child break?

Answer: Her child broke our window.

2. Not or No:

1. I have **no** idea where my wife is.
2. I speak Spanish, but **not** very well.
3. We play kabaddi, but **not** on Mondays.
4. There are **no** messages for you.

5. Picture Dictionary Page

cross

crosses *noun*
an object or sign made by two lines crossing each other.



cross

adjective
angry.



I get cross when people litter.
crossly *adverb*

crossword

crosswords *noun*
a word puzzle with clues. You write down the answers by putting each letter of the answer into a separate square.



crouch

crouches *crouching* *crouched* *verb*

to bend down low, with your legs curled underneath you.



crowd

crowds *noun*
a large number of people gathered close together.

crown

crowns *noun*
a circle of precious metals and jewels. Kings and queens wear crowns on their heads on special occasions.



cruel

adjective
unkind and hurtful.

crumb

crumbs *noun*
a very small piece of food, such as bread, cake, or crackers.

crunch

crunches *crunching* *crunched* *verb*

to crush or chew something noisily.
She crunched a juicy apple.

crush

crushes *crushing* *crushed* *verb*
to damage something by squeezing it very hard.



Crushing a can.

crust

crusts *noun*
1 a hard covering.



pie crust

2 the thick, hard outer covering of Earth.

crutch

crutches *noun*
a support for someone who has difficulty walking.



cry

cries *crying* *cried* *verb*
to have tears falling from your eyes because you are upset or sad.



cube

cubes *noun*
a solid shape with six square sides.



cucumber

cucumbers *noun*
a green vegetable with a crisp, white flesh that grows on vines. Cucumbers are a popular vegetable to use in salads.



cuddle

cuddles *cuddling* *cuddled* *verb*
to hug someone in a loving way.



A mother cuddling her daughter.

crystal

crystals *noun*
a piece of clear quartz with flat sides that has been formed naturally.



■ say *kris-tuhl*

culprit

culprits *noun*
a person who has done something wrong.
The culprit had the stolen money in his pocket.

cunning

adjective
able to trick people.

cub

cubs *noun*
a young mammal, such as a fox, lion, or bear.



fox cub