



Learn English Through Stories

D Series

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Contents

- 1. A History Lesson On Teachers' Day**
- 2. Grammar Page.**

1. A History Lesson on Teachers' Day

The date was September 5th 2003, or Teacher's Day. In Bangalore, on that day, I have a great time with my students. If, for some reason, I am out of Bangalore, I miss all the celebrations. On Teacher's Day, my students take me out and we all have lunch together and also watch a movie. They pool in their money and refuse to let me pay for anything. It shows me how close they are to me and that they remember me. It is an act of love and affection for their teacher. Each of them will go their different ways after they complete the course, but love, affection and concern for each other will always bind us together.

Last year, on Teacher's day, I was out of station on some work and feeling depressed. A friend of mine realized that and said, 'Let us go watch a film, you will feel better.'

We went to the theatre. There was a big queue. I was surprised because there were only students from schools and colleges in the queue. As my friend was getting the tickets, I remembered my students and started chatting with the youngsters.

'How come you people are here? Is there no celebration in your college or school?' They were a group of girls. One of them replied.

'Why should there be a celebration in the school?' 'Is it not Teacher's Day?'

'So what? We knew there was a holiday, we did not even ask for what. Today being Saturday, we are very happy that we are getting two days of holidays.'

'Why? Does your school not celebrate Teacher's Day? Do you know why September 5th is known as Teacher's Day?'

Another girl replied. 'Our school may be celebrating Teacher's Day but we don't want to go. We see the same teachers every day. Why see them even on a holiday?'

That provoked the teacher in me. I asked, 'Tell me, what do we celebrate on November 14th, October 2nd, August 15th and January 26th?'

'We know they are holidays but not sure for what.'

One of them shyly said, 'I know October 2nd is Gandhi's birthday.' At least they knew one answer!

'How come you know only that day?'

‘Because it is my birthday. My grandfather was a freedom fighter. He named me Mohini and he told me Gandhiji’s name was Mohandas.’

‘So Mohini, do you like your name?’

‘No, I don’t like it. It is very old-fashioned. It sounds like it belongs to someone living a century ago. I have changed my name to Monica.’

Some other girl told me, ‘I get confused with August 15th and January 26th. One of them is Independence Day and the other one is something connected with independence.’

I refused to give up. ‘Tell me, when did we get independence?’

That started off a discussion in the group. I could make out a number of opinions were being debated. One said 1950, some other said 1942 and the third group said 1947. In fact the 1942-group was very sure they were right as they had watched the movie *1942 A Love Story*.

‘Do you know who was India’s President then?’

‘We know it is Abdul Kalam.’

‘No, I am asking you before him.’ They were blank.

‘Have you heard of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan?’

‘We know about Radhakrishna. Their statues in marble are very beautiful. I have seen them in Hare Rama Hare Krishna temple. I went with my parents,’ one of them replied.

I told them, ‘Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan was a famous philosopher and a great teacher. He taught in Calcutta, Mysore and Banaras. When he left Mysore, it seems students pulled the carriage to the station themselves and not horses. For his lectures, students from other colleges would come and listen, irrespective of the subjects they were studying. He was acknowledged as the best teacher wherever he taught. Later he became the President of India. Hence his birthday was declared as Teacher’s Day. There are many stories about him. Please read any book or see on the internet.’

The group looked ashamed now. I felt bad and realized it was not their fault alone. We give holidays to children but do not tell them the reason behind the holiday. Every year we prepare the same boring speech and deliver it to a handful of children. Most of us take the day off and do not make any effort so that children look forward to the day. We could make them plant trees and teach them about the environment; or we could take them out for a picnic and get close to them outside the classroom. It is our duty to make sure that days like Teacher’s Day are utilized properly. We have to work hard

for that, which we don't do. Children should be led by example and teachers are the best examples. What we preach, we should practise.

A History Lesson on Teachers' Day: Version 2

It was September 5, 2003—Teachers' Day. In Bangalore, that day always brought joy. My students and I would celebrate together, their enthusiasm lighting up the occasion. If I happened to be out of town, I'd miss the festivities, and a quiet ache would settle in. Normally, they'd insist on taking me out—lunch at a bustling eatery, followed by a movie. They'd pool their pocket money, brushing off my offers to pay with grins and stubborn refusals. It wasn't just a treat; it was a testament to our bond, a gesture of love and gratitude that lingered long after they'd graduated and scattered to their own paths. That connection—woven with affection and mutual care—held us together, no matter the distance.

But last year was different. I was away from Bangalore, tied up with work, and a heavy gloom clung to me. A friend noticed my mood and suggested, "Let's catch a film—it'll lift your spirits." We headed to the theater, where a long queue snaked around the entrance. I was startled to see it packed with students—school kids and college-goers, chattering excitedly. While my friend fetched the tickets, I couldn't resist the pull of the teacher in me. I struck up a conversation with a group of girls nearby.

"How come you're all here?" I asked. "No Teachers' Day celebrations at your school or college?"

One of them shrugged. "Why would there be? We knew it was a holiday—didn't bother asking why. It's Saturday anyway, so two days off. Perfect!"

I blinked, surprised. "But isn't it Teachers' Day?"

"So what?" another chimed in. "Our school might be doing something, but we'd rather not go. We see our teachers every day—why bother on a holiday?"

Her words stung, stirring the educator in me. I pressed on. "Okay, tell me—what do we celebrate on November 14, October 2, August 15, and January 26?"

They exchanged glances, hesitant. "We know they're holidays," one said, "but... not sure what for."

A shy voice piped up. "I know October 2—it's Gandhi's birthday."

I smiled. "Good! How do you know that one?"

She blushed. "It's my birthday too. My grandfather was a freedom fighter. He named me Mohini after Gandhiji—Mohandas, you know. He was proud of

that.”

“Do you like your name, Mohini?”

She wrinkled her nose. “Not really. It’s old-fashioned—like it belongs to someone from a hundred years ago. I’ve changed it to Monica.”

Another girl jumped in. “I mix up August 15 and January 26. One’s Independence Day, and the other’s... something about independence?”

I wasn’t ready to let it go. “When did India get independence?”

That sparked a mini-debate among them. “1950,” one guessed. “No, 1942,” another insisted—convinced, I later learned, by the movie 1942: A Love Story. A third group settled on 1947, though they weren’t entirely sure. I listened, amused yet dismayed.

“And who was India’s President back then?” I asked.

“We know it’s Abdul Kalam now,” one replied confidently.

“No, I mean before him.”

Blank stares. I tried a different tack. “Have you heard of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan?”

A girl perked up. “Radhakrishna? Like the statues? I saw those at the Hare Rama Hare Krishna temple with my parents—they’re so pretty, carved in marble.”

I chuckled softly, then grew serious. “Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a philosopher and an extraordinary teacher. He taught in Calcutta, Mysore, and Banaras, and wherever he went, he left a mark. When he left Mysore, students pulled his carriage to the station themselves—no horses, just their devotion. His lectures drew crowds, even from other colleges, no matter the subject. He was revered as the greatest teacher of his time. Later, he became India’s President, and his birthday—September 5—was declared Teachers’ Day in his honour. There are countless stories about him. Look him up sometime—books, the internet, anywhere.”

Their faces shifted, a flicker of shame crossing their eyes. But as I watched them, I felt a pang of guilt too. It wasn’t just their fault. We—teachers, schools, society—hand out holidays like candy without unwrapping their meaning. Every year, we dust off the same tired speeches, drone on to a handful of bored kids, and call it a day. Most of us skip the effort altogether, taking the holiday for ourselves. Why don’t we make it memorable? We could plant trees and talk about the earth, or take them on picnics to build bonds beyond the classroom walls. It’s our responsibility to turn days like Teachers’

Day into something they'd anticipate, something that sticks.

The girls nodded faintly as my friend returned with the tickets. I softened my tone. "Teachers should lead by example. What we preach, we must practise. If we don't, how can we expect you to care?"

They didn't reply, but their silence felt heavier than before. As we parted ways, I couldn't shake the thought: it's up to us to make these days matter. Not with lectures or guilt, but with action—showing them, not just telling them, why a teacher's legacy is worth celebrating.

2. Grammar page

There are other ways of talking about future actions and happenings.

You can use **going to**.



I think I'm **going to be** sick.

We **are going to bake** a cake this afternoon.

I'm sure Mom and Dad **are going to be** proud of me.

When **are you going to clean** your room?

They **are going to wash** the car for Dad.

It **is going to get** dark very soon.

You can also use the **simple present tense** to talk about things that have been arranged for the future.

The new supermarket **opens** tomorrow.

James **moves** to the second grade next year.

The new school year **starts** on Monday.

Next month I **go** to summer camp.

We **have** a history test next week.

The bus **leaves** in ten minutes.

