



Learn English Through Stories

G Series

G59

Adapted and modified by

Kulwant Singh Sandhu

<https://learn-by-reading.co.uk>

Contents

- 1. A Question for the Teacher**
- 2. Banta's Journey to Becoming a Teacher**
- 3. A Good Teacher**
- 4. Grammar Page**

1. A Question for the Teacher

It was the last day before the holidays, and Reeta could hardly sit still. Excitement buzzed through her like a live wire. She was counting the minutes until she could leave for Shimla, where her bhua—her lively, warm-hearted aunt—waited to spoil her with stories and homemade treats. The classroom clock ticked toward three o'clock, each second stretching longer than the last.

When the bell finally rang, the teacher called out, "Enjoy your holidays, everyone!" Chairs scraped against the floor as students bolted for the door. Reeta stood, slinging her worn backpack over one shoulder and clutching her sweater in her hand. But she didn't rush out like the others. She had a question—an important one—about an assignment that had been nagging at her all week. Determined, she lingered near the teacher's desk.

A small crowd of classmates had the same idea, forming a ragged line. Reeta joined them, shifting her weight from foot to foot, her mind half on her question and half on the snowy hills of Shimla. One by one, the teacher addressed each student—patiently untangling their doubts about fractions, essays, and deadlines. Reeta admired that about her teacher: the way she never seemed rushed, even on a day like this.

At last, it was her turn. The teacher looked up with a tired but kind smile. "How can I help you, Reeta?"

Reeta took a quick breath. "Ma'am, about the maths assignment—do we need to solve all the problems in section B, or just the odd-numbered ones?" Her voice was steady, but her fingers fidgeted with the edge of her sweater.

The teacher's eyes twinkled as if she'd expected something trickier from her star pupil. "Just the odd-numbered ones this time. I don't want to keep you from your holidays too long." She paused, then added, "You're going to Shimla, right? Make sure to enjoy yourself."

Reeta beamed, relief washing over her. "Thank you, ma'am!" she said brightly. The teacher nodded, her smile widening. "No problem at all. Safe travels."

With that, Reeta turned and hurried out, her steps light. She was free—free to finish her work and dive into the adventure ahead. Reeta was sharp as a tack, especially when it came to maths, where numbers danced in her head like puzzle pieces clicking into place. She'd always worked hard, not because she had to, but because she loved the thrill of getting things right.

That evening, she sat at her desk, the glow of her lamp spilling over her notebook. She breezed through the assignment, double-checking each solution with a satisfied nod. By the time she packed her bags for Shimla, her mind was clear, ready for snowy hills, her bhua's laughter, and a holiday she'd never forget.

2. Banta's Journey to Becoming a Teacher

Banta grew up in a small village in India, where he lived until he was sixteen. His early education was modest—only four years of schooling—but it left him with little more than a basic grasp of his native language and no knowledge of English. Life shifted dramatically when his uncle, a kind but pragmatic man, decided to bring Banta with his family to the United States. For Banta, it was a leap into the unknown, a world far removed from the dusty streets and familiar rhythms of his village.

In America, language was his first hurdle. Unable to read or write in English, Banta found himself adrift in a sea of unfamiliar words. Still, he was determined to carve out a place for himself. After years of struggling to adapt—working odd jobs alongside his uncle and piecing together what he could of this new life—he enrolled in a community college. His limited education meant starting at the bottom: an elementary class. It wasn't glamorous, but Banta didn't mind. He saw it as a foothold, a chance to climb.

Asthma shadowed him through it all. The condition had plagued him since childhood, and he never left home without his inhaler tucked into his pocket. It was both a lifeline and a reminder of his fragility, a quiet companion to his ambition.

His first day at college was chaos. Banta had spent the morning racing through unfamiliar hallways, heart pounding, sweat beading on his forehead as he searched for his classroom. He slipped through the door a minute late, chest tight from exertion, and sank into the nearest seat. The professor was already calling roll. "Banta?" came the voice, sharp and expectant. He raised a shaky hand, breathless, and fumbled for his inhaler. A quick puff steadied him, the cool rush of air easing his lungs. Notebook and pen in hand, he settled in as the lecture began. He scribbled diligently, his handwriting uneven but determined. Taking notes became his ritual—a lifeline to understanding, a way to wrestle order from the flood of new ideas. After class, he'd pore over those pages, committing them to memory. For Banta, every lesson was a step toward something bigger.

He was a good student, not because it came easily, but because he refused to let it slip away. Anxiety gnawed at him—would his grades be enough to advance?—but it only fuelled his resolve. He wanted to rise, to prove to himself and his uncle that this journey wasn't in vain.

His uncle, a businessman with a sharp eye for numbers, saw something in Banta that others missed. “You’ve got a head for maths,” he’d say, clapping Banta on the shoulder. It wasn’t just encouragement—it was a spark. Banta latched onto it. Numbers made sense to him in a way words didn’t; they were steady, predictable, a language he could master.

Eight years slipped by, each one a quiet triumph. Banta moved from elementary classes to higher levels, his confidence growing alongside his skills. He graduated with a degree in mathematics, a testament to years of late nights and relentless effort. And then, in a turn he’d once barely dared to imagine, he became a teacher.

Standing at the front of a classroom, chalk in hand, Banta found his place. He taught with the same intensity he’d once applied to learning—patient with his students, meticulous with his lessons. His inhaler still sat in his pocket, a silent ally, but now it was less a crutch and more a badge of survival. Banta had come a long way from that breathless boy in a strange land. He’d built a life, one note, one equation, one determined step at a time.

3. A Good Teacher

A good teacher is more than just an instructor; they are a guiding light, a source of inspiration, and a cornerstone of personal and intellectual growth. In classrooms across the world, teachers shape the minds of students, imparting not only knowledge but also values, curiosity, and resilience. What distinguishes a good teacher, however, is not merely their mastery of a subject, but their ability to connect, motivate, and adapt to the needs of their students.

First and foremost, a good teacher possesses a deep passion for both their subject and the act of teaching itself. This enthusiasm is contagious, sparking interest in students who might otherwise find a topic dull or intimidating. For instance, a history teacher who brings stories of the past to life with vivid storytelling can transform dates and events into a captivating narrative. This passion fuels their dedication, ensuring they go beyond the textbook to make learning meaningful and engaging.

Equally important is the ability to communicate effectively. A good teacher explains complex ideas in ways that are clear and accessible, tailoring their approach to suit different learning styles. They recognize that not every student grasps concepts at the same pace or in the same manner. Whether through analogies, visuals, or hands-on activities, they bridge the gap between confusion and understanding. Patience plays a key role here; a good teacher never dismisses a question as trivial but uses it as an opportunity to deepen comprehension.

Beyond academic skills, a good teacher fosters a supportive environment. They listen to their students, showing empathy and understanding, which builds trust. This connection allows students to feel safe asking questions, making mistakes, and expressing themselves. A teacher who celebrates effort as much as achievement encourages a growth mind-set, teaching students that failure is a stepping stone to success rather than an endpoint. Such an approach cultivates confidence and resilience, qualities that extend far beyond the classroom.

Moreover, a good teacher is adaptable. They understand that each student is unique, with their own strengths, challenges, and circumstances. In an ever-changing world, they also stay open to new methods and technologies, ensuring their teaching remains relevant. Whether adjusting a lesson plan for a

struggling student or incorporating current events into a discussion, their flexibility keeps education dynamic and impactful.

Finally, a good teacher leaves a lasting legacy. Their influence is not confined to test scores or grades but is reflected in the lives they shape. They inspire students to pursue their passions, think critically, and approach challenges with courage. Many of us can recall a teacher who believed in us when we doubted ourselves, whose encouragement altered the trajectory of our lives. This ripple effect underscores the profound power of a good teacher.

In conclusion, a good teacher is a blend of expertise, empathy, and adaptability. They ignite curiosity, build confidence, and prepare students not just for exams, but for life. While their role may often go unrecognized, their impact is immeasurable, making them the unsung heroes of society. A good teacher does not merely teach—they transform

4. Grammar Page

Unit 59

prefer and would rather

A prefer to ... and prefer -ing

When you say what you prefer in general, you can use **prefer to ...** or **prefer -ing**:

- ☐ I don't like cities. I **prefer to live** in the country. or I **prefer living** in the country.

You can say:

prefer something	to something else
prefer doing something	to doing something else rather than (doing) something else
prefer to do something	rather than (do) something else

- ☐ I **prefer** this coat **to** the other one.
- ☐ I **prefer driving to travelling** by train. or
- ☐ I **prefer driving rather than travelling** by train.
- ☐ I **prefer to drive rather than travel** by train.
- ☐ Sarah **prefers to live** in the country **rather than** in a city.

B would prefer (I'd prefer ...)

We use **would prefer** to say what somebody wants in a specific situation (not in general):

- ☐ 'Would you prefer tea or coffee?' 'Coffee, please.'

We say 'would prefer **to do** something' (*not usually* would prefer doing):

- 'Shall we go by train?' 'I'd prefer to drive.' (= I would prefer ...)
- I'd prefer to stay at home tonight rather than go to the cinema.

 would rather (I'd rather ...)

I'd rather = I **would** rather. **I'd rather do something** = I'd **prefer to do it**.

We say **I'd rather** do (*not* to do). Compare:

- ☐ 'Shall we go by train?' { 'I'd rather drive.' (not to drive)
'I'd prefer to drive.'
- ☐ Which **would** you **rather** do, go to the cinema or go shopping?
Which **would** you **prefer** to do,

The negative is 'I'd rather not ...':

- ☐ I'm tired. I'd rather not go out this evening, if you don't mind.
- ☐ 'Do you want to go out this evening?' 'I'd rather not.'

We say 'I'd rather do one thing than do another':

- ☐ I'd rather stay at home tonight **than** go to the cinema.

D I'd rather somebody **did** something

We say 'I'd rather you **did** something' (not I'd rather you do):

- ☐ 'Who's going to drive, you or me?' 'I'd rather you **drove**.' (= I would prefer this)
- ☐ 'Jack says he'll repair your bike tomorrow, OK?' 'I'd rather he **did** it today.'
- ☐ Are you going to tell Anna what happened, or **would** you rather I **told** her?

We use the *past* (**drove, did** etc.) here, but the meaning is present *not* past. Compare:

- ☐ I'd rather **make** dinner now.
I'd rather **you made** dinner now. (*not* I'd rather you make)

I'd rather **you didn't** (do something) = I'd prefer you not to do it:

- ☐ I'd rather you didn't tell anyone what I said.
- ☐ 'Shall I tell Anna what happened?' 'I'd rather you didn't.'
- ☐ 'Are you going to tell Anna what happened?' 'No. I'd rather she didn't know.'