



Learn English Through Stories

E Series

E53

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1. Lucy and the Power of Friendship

Chapter 1: The New School Year

The first day of sixth grade arrived with a burst of excitement and a hint of anxiety for Lucy Thompson. As she stood in front of her mirror, adjusting her pink backpack and smoothing down her favorite blue t-shirt, she couldn't help but feel a flutter of nerves in her stomach. This year was supposed to be different. She had heard so many stories about how sixth grade was a time for new adventures, new friends, and, of course, new challenges. But deep down, she was afraid.

"Lucy! Breakfast is ready!" called her mom from the kitchen, pulling Lucy back into reality. With one last glance in the mirror, she dashed downstairs, where the smell of pancakes wafted through the air. Her little brother, Max, was already at the table, his face smeared with syrup.

"Hey, Lucy! Are you ready to be the coolest kid in school?" he asked with a cheeky grin, his eyes sparkling with mischief.

Lucy smiled at him, but her heart sank a little. What if she wasn't the coolest kid? What if no one wanted to be her friend? She pushed those thoughts aside and sat down at the table. Her mom placed a stack of pancakes in front of her, and as she prepared to dig in, she felt a wave of determination wash over her. Today was a fresh start.

After breakfast, Lucy and Max walked to school together, the crisp autumn air filled with the scent of fallen leaves. Lucy felt a bit more relaxed as they chatted about their summer adventures. Max was always able to make her laugh, and she loved the way he looked up to her.

When they arrived at Maplewood Middle School, Lucy's heart raced. The building loomed before her like a giant, and she could see kids chatting in groups, some laughing, others looking serious. She took a deep breath, reminding herself that she was brave.

"See you at lunch!" Max waved as he raced off to find his friends. Lucy waved back, but as she walked through the school doors, her confidence began to waver.

The first few classes went by in a blur. Lucy tried to focus on her teachers and the lessons, but her mind kept wandering. She couldn't shake the feeling of being an outsider, especially when she noticed a group of girls whispering and stealing glances at her.

At recess, Lucy decided to sit on a bench near the playground. She watched the other children play, feeling a mix of longing and loneliness. It was then that she noticed a girl named Mia, who was sitting alone on the swings, looking just as lost as she felt.

Taking a deep breath, Lucy stood up and walked over. "Hi, I'm Lucy. Do you want to swing with me?"

Mia looked up, her eyes wide with surprise. "Um, okay," she said hesitantly.

As they swung side by side, Lucy learned that Mia had just moved to town and was feeling just as nervous about fitting in. The two girls talked about their favorite books and shared stories about their pets. For the first time that day, Lucy felt a spark of happiness. Maybe, just maybe, this year wouldn't be so bad after all.

Chapter 2: Shadows in the Hallway

The days passed, and Lucy and Mia quickly became inseparable. They laughed together, studied together, and shared secrets that only best friends could understand. However, as the weeks went by, Lucy noticed something unsettling. A group of girls led by Jenna, a popular girl with a sharp tongue, started to take an interest in her and Mia.

At first, it seemed harmless. Jenna would smirk when Lucy answered questions in class or roll her eyes when Mia shared an idea. But then things escalated.

During lunch one day, Jenna approached their table, flanked by her friends.

"Nice backpack, Lucy," Jenna sneered, her voice dripping with sarcasm. "Did you pick it out yourself at the toddler section?"

The laughter that erupted from her friends felt like a sharp jab in Lucy's chest. She looked down at her backpack, suddenly feeling embarrassed. "Um, thanks," she mumbled, wishing she could disappear.

Mia frowned, her brow furrowing in concern. “That wasn’t nice, Jenna,” she said quietly.

Jenna turned her attention to Mia, her smile turning sinister. “Oh, look, the new girl is trying to stand up for her friend. How cute!”

Lucy felt a wave of humiliation wash over her. She wanted to defend herself and Mia, to tell Jenna to stop, but the words just wouldn’t come. Instead, she sat in silence, her heart pounding.

The hurtful comments continued for weeks, and Lucy found herself dreading school. The laughter and camaraderie she had once felt with Mia began to fade, replaced by the gnawing fear of encountering Jenna and her group. She felt trapped in a web of anxiety, and no matter how much she tried to ignore it, the weight of the harassment began to suffocate her spirit.

One afternoon, after school, Lucy sat on her bed, staring blankly at her homework. She could hear her mom in the kitchen, humming a tune while preparing dinner. But all Lucy could think about was how to escape the torment. The more she bottled up her feelings, the heavier they became.

“Lucy! Dinner’s ready!” her mom called, snapping her out of her thoughts. As she made her way downstairs, Lucy felt a lump forming in her throat. She knew she had to talk to someone about what was happening, but fear gripped her. What if her parents didn’t understand? What if they made it worse?

After dinner, Lucy decided to take a walk outside. The cool evening air filled her lungs, and she watched the stars twinkle overhead, feeling a flicker of hope.

Suddenly, her phone buzzed in her pocket. It was a message from Mia. Hey! Want to meet at the park? I need to talk!

Lucy’s heart raced. She quickly replied, Sure! I’ll be there in ten minutes.

As she walked to the park, she couldn’t shake the feeling that Mia felt the same way. Maybe they could help each other.

Chapter 3: Finding Strength Together

When Lucy arrived at the park, she spotted Mia sitting on a bench, her head in her hands. Lucy rushed over, concern flooding her heart. “Mia, what’s wrong?”

Mia looked up, tears glistening in her eyes. "I can't take it anymore, Lucy. Jenna and her friends keep saying mean things to me, and I feel so alone."

Lucy's heart sank. "Me too. I thought it was just me. I didn't know you were going through the same thing."

They sat in silence for a moment, the weight of their shared experience hanging in the air. Finally, Lucy spoke up. "We can't just let them bully us. We need to find a way to stand up for ourselves."

Mia nodded, wiping her tears. "But how? What if it just makes things worse?"

Lucy took a deep breath, feeling a surge of determination. "I think we should tell someone. Maybe a teacher or our parents. They can help us figure this out."

Mia hesitated, but the fear in her eyes began to fade. "You're right. I can't keep this inside anymore."

The girls decided to meet up the next day after school to talk to their favorite teacher, Mrs. Jenkins, a kind woman who always had a listening ear. They felt a little braver knowing they had each other's support.

The following day, after the final bell rang, Lucy and Mia walked to Mrs. Jenkins' classroom, their hearts pounding in unison. They knocked on the door, and Mrs. Jenkins greeted them with a warm smile.

"Hello, girls! What brings you here today?"

Mia and Lucy exchanged nervous glances before Lucy found her voice. "Mrs. Jenkins, we need to talk about something important."

With trembling hands, Lucy and Mia shared their experiences, detailing the hurtful comments and the fear that had settled in their hearts. Mrs. Jenkins listened attentively, her expression serious yet compassionate.

"I'm so proud of you two for speaking up," she said gently. "No one should ever have to feel this way. Let's work together to address this situation."

Mrs. Jenkins explained that they would set up a meeting with the school counselor, who could provide additional support and resources. She also assured them that they would not be alone in facing Jenna and her friends.

As the girls left the classroom, a feeling of relief washed over them. They had taken the first step towards reclaiming their voices.

Chapter 4: The Power of Support

Over the next few days, Lucy and Mia met with the school counselor, Mr. Thompson, who helped them develop coping strategies and ways to handle the bullying. They learned how to assert themselves, and Mr. Thompson emphasized the importance of reaching out for help whenever they felt overwhelmed.

With each session, Lucy felt a little more empowered. She no longer felt like a victim but rather a fighter. She practiced standing up for herself, and Mia joined her in the effort. They even started a small support group for other kids who were feeling the same way, spreading the message that it was okay to ask for help.

As they built their confidence, Lucy also noticed a change in Jenna. Perhaps it was because Jenna had sensed that Lucy and Mia were no longer easy targets. One day, while walking to class, Jenna attempted to make another snide remark, but Lucy stood tall and faced her.

"Jenna, I don't appreciate the way you speak to me. It's hurtful, and I'm not going to let it continue," Lucy said firmly.

Jenna was taken aback, her friends falling silent. Instead of retaliating, she simply shrugged and walked away, leaving Lucy feeling a surge of triumph.

That afternoon, Lucy and Mia celebrated their small victory with ice cream at their favorite café. "I can't believe you actually stood up to her!" Mia exclaimed, her eyes wide with admiration.

"It felt amazing," Lucy replied, grinning from ear to ear. "I think we're going to be okay."

Chapter 5: A New Beginning

As the weeks rolled into months, the atmosphere at Maplewood Middle School began to change. With the support of their teachers, the girls' anti-bullying campaign gained momentum, and more students began to speak up. The

school organized workshops on kindness and respect, fostering a sense of community among the students.

Lucy felt a renewed sense of belonging as she watched her classmates come together. The laughter and chatter that filled the hallways felt different now—lighter and more inclusive. She and Mia continued to grow closer, and their friendship became a beacon of hope for others.

One day, while walking to class, Lucy overheard a group of girls talking. They were discussing the recent workshops and how they had inspired them to be kinder to one another. It filled Lucy with warmth to know that their efforts were making a difference.

As the school year came to a close, Lucy reflected on how far she had come. She had learned to stand up for herself, to seek help when needed, and most importantly, to support others. Her journey had not only empowered her but also created a ripple effect of kindness throughout the school.

On the last day of school, Lucy and Mia stood together in the courtyard, surrounded by friends. They laughed and reminisced about their first day, the challenges they faced, and the victories they had achieved.

“Next year will be even better,” Mia said, her eyes sparkling with excitement.

Lucy nodded, feeling a sense of peace wash over her. “No matter what happens, we’ll face it together.”

As they hugged each other goodbye for the summer, Lucy felt a sense of hope and resilience blooming in her heart. She had learned that even in the darkest moments, there was always a way to find light. And with friends by her side, she knew she could conquer anything.

Chapter 6: The Journey Continues

Summer flew by in a whirlwind of adventures. Lucy and Mia spent their days exploring parks, reading books, and planning for the upcoming school year. Their friendship deepened, and they found solace in each other's company, knowing that they had both changed for the better.

However, as the new school year approached, Lucy felt a twinge of anxiety creep back in. She couldn't shake the memories of last year's bullying, and she wondered if Jenna would return with the same attitude. But this time, she was ready.

On the first day of seventh grade, Lucy walked into Maplewood Middle School with her head held high. She had a plan. With Mia by her side, she would continue to advocate for kindness and support, ensuring that no one felt alone or afraid.

As the bell rang, Lucy spotted Jenna across the hallway. The old feelings of fear bubbled up, but instead of shying away, she took a deep breath and approached her.

"Hey, Jenna," Lucy said, her voice steady. "I hope we can start fresh this year."

Jenna looked surprised, but for the first time, there was no malice in her eyes. "Yeah, maybe we can," she replied slowly.

Lucy smiled, feeling a sense of accomplishment. The power of empathy and understanding had taken root, and she knew that the journey of healing and growth was just beginning.

As the school year unfolded, Lucy and Mia continued to promote positivity and respect, creating a safe space for everyone. They learned that while challenges would always arise, together they could face anything.

In the end, Lucy discovered that her experience had shaped her into a stronger person, one who could stand up for herself and others. She understood the importance of speaking out, seeking support, and fostering kindness. With her friends and family by her side, Lucy Thompson was ready to embrace whatever adventures lay ahead.

2. Comprehension Questions and Answers

1. Question: What emotions does Lucy experience on the first day of sixth grade, and what causes these feelings?
2. Question: How does Lucy's brother, Max, help her feel better on the way to school?
3. Question: Who is Mia, and how does Lucy first connect with her?
4. Question: How does Jenna's behavior affect Lucy and Mia, and what is the initial impact on their friendship?
5. Question: What motivates Lucy to finally talk to someone about the bullying?
6. Question: How does Mrs. Jenkins respond when Lucy and Mia share their experiences with her?
7. Question: What strategies do Lucy and Mia learn from the school counselor, Mr. Thompson?
8. Question: Describe a key moment when Lucy stands up to Jenna, and what is the outcome?
9. Question: How does the school environment change as a result of Lucy and Mia's actions?
10. Question: What does Lucy learn by the end of the story, and how does this shape her approach to the new school year?

Answers

1. Answer: Lucy feels a mix of excitement and anxiety on the first day of sixth grade. The excitement comes from the anticipation of new adventures and friends, while the anxiety stems from her fear of not fitting in or being liked by her peers.
2. Answer: Max helps Lucy feel better by chatting with her about their summer adventures and making her laugh, which helps ease her nerves as they walk to school together.
3. Answer: Mia is a new girl at school who is feeling nervous and alone. Lucy connects with her by approaching her at recess, introducing herself, and inviting Mia to swing together, where they bond over shared interests like books and pets.
4. Answer: Jenna's bullying, including sarcastic comments and mockery, causes Lucy and Mia to feel humiliated and anxious, leading them to dread school. Initially, this strains their friendship as they both struggle with fear and isolation.
5. Answer: Lucy is motivated to talk about the bullying after a conversation with Mia at the park, where they realize they are both suffering. This shared experience and Mia's tears encourage Lucy to suggest seeking help together.
6. Answer: Mrs. Jenkins responds with compassion and support, praising the girls for speaking up. She promises to help by arranging a meeting with the school counselor and ensuring they won't face the situation alone.
7. Answer: Mr. Thompson teaches Lucy and Mia coping strategies and ways to assert themselves. He also emphasizes the importance of reaching out for help when they feel overwhelmed.
8. Answer: A key moment occurs when Lucy confronts Jenna in the hallway, firmly stating that she doesn't appreciate Jenna's hurtful comments. Jenna, surprised, doesn't retaliate and walks away, leaving Lucy feeling triumphant.
9. Answer: The school environment becomes more positive and inclusive due to Lucy and Mia's anti-bullying campaign. Workshops on kindness and respect are organized, and students begin to speak up, fostering a sense of community.
10. Answer: Lucy learns the importance of standing up for herself, seeking support, and fostering kindness. This shapes her approach to the new school

year by giving her confidence to advocate for positivity, approach Jenna with empathy, and create a safe space for others.

3. Grammar Page

Adverbs of Emphasis

We have seen that most adverbs describe verbs, but remember that some adverbs also describe adjectives or other adverbs. They are usually used to add emphasis.

Here are some examples. The emphasizing adverbs are printed in bold. The adjectives or adverbs they describe are printed in color.

Anna can run **really** fast.

That's a **very** good drawing.

My rice is **too** hot.

The film was **just** terrible.

Your excuses are **completely** unbelievable.

These old tools are **totally** useless.

She sings **quite** beautifully.

