

L.A. HILL

**Advanced
Anecdotes
in
American
English**

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L. A. Hill

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Introduction

Advanced Anecdotes in American English is the third in a series of three readers for students of English as a Second or Foreign Language. This book is designed to give students practice in reading and understanding American English in context. *Advanced Anecdotes in American English* contains thirty humorous stories, each approximately 150 words in length. Every story is followed by reading comprehension questions and two exercises for reinforcement of vocabulary and structure.

The stories and exercises are written at Dr. L. A. Hill's 2075 word level. The complete American English word list is given in Appendix A, pages 62-70. Occasionally, one or more words that fall outside the author's list are introduced into a story. These words are listed after the story as *Outside the 2075 words*. The teacher can then explain these words in class or have the students look them up in a dictionary before reading the story.

Certain technical words are also introduced in the exercises as part of the language of directions. These words are *blank space*, *bracket*, *correct order*, *form*, *puzzle*, and *set*. Some of these words also fall outside of the author's list. In either case, the students should be informed of the meaning of these words within the context of the exercises in which they occur.

The grammatical structures used within this book have also been carefully controlled. The grammatical system is explained in Appendix B, page 71.

Suggestions for Using this Book

The stories and exercises in this book can be used as part of a whole class activity in listening and reading comprehension, and can also provide practice in the productive skills of speaking and writing. Students working independently will find the stories useful for reading comprehension and written reproduction.

In the Classroom

The teacher can use these stories to improve the students' aural comprehension and their understanding of written English.

The teacher should introduce the material by reading the story aloud, two or three times, while students listen with books closed. Students may then be asked to re-tell the passage in their own words, either orally or in writing, or they may be asked to reproduce the basic story by answering the *Comprehension Questions*.

Comprehension Questions may be answered after the reading, as an oral activity, or they may be presented prior to the reading as a preview of important points to listen for in the presentation. Students could then provide the answers orally, or in writing, when the selection has been read aloud.

If written answers are used, the teacher can provide immediate reinforcement by asking one student at a time to read his or her answer aloud to the class. The teacher can then ask the class for alternative answers, which often result in a lively discussion.

Cassette Recording

A tape cassette is available to accompany the book and may be used as a model of spoken American English. The cassette contains the complete text of the reading passages and includes the *Comprehension Questions* that accompany each reading.

At Home

For students working independently, it is suggested that they read the story to themselves, either aloud or silently, or listen to it on the cassette, at least twice before attempting to answer the *Comprehension Questions* and complete the exercises. Each student may wish to write down as much of the story as he can remember, using the original passage to check his work.

Completing the Exercises

Exercises vary from story to story but include the following general types:

1. Oral Comprehension Questions
2. Fill in the Blank Spaces
3. Synonym and Antonym Identification
4. Crossword Puzzle Completion
5. Correct Sentence Selection
6. Picture/Word Substitutions
7. Picture Identification
8. Sequencing of Events
9. Story Reconstruction
10. Reading Comprehension

Exercises may be completed orally or in writing, as part of a whole class activity or assigned as homework. In either case, exercises should be completed shortly after the story is presented in class. Answers may be checked in class or individually by the teacher.

For those exercises in which the students can either fill in the blank spaces or write out the complete story, the latter is recommended as a means of providing additional student practice in writing American English in context.

Advanced Anecdotes in American English



1 Jack Hawkins was the football coach at an American college, and he was always trying to find good players, but they weren't always smart enough to be accepted by the college.

One day the coach brought an excellent young player to the dean of the college and asked that the student be allowed to enter without an examination. "Well," the dean said after some persuasion, "I'd better ask him a few questions first."

Then he turned to the student and asked him some very easy questions, but the student didn't know any of the answers.

At last the dean said, "Well, what's five times seven?"

The student thought for a long time and then answered, "Thirty-six."

The dean threw up his hands and looked at the coach in despair, but the coach said earnestly, "Oh, please let him in, sir! He was only wrong by two."

A. Answer these questions:

1. Why did the football coach want the dean to let the student enter college without an examination?
2. What question did the dean ask the student?
3. What was the student's answer?
4. What did the dean do then?

Outside the 2,075 words: coach (n.)

5. What did the coach say to the dean?
6. Who was better at arithmetic, the student or the coach?

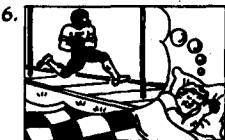
B. Which words in the story mean the same as:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. permitted | 4. very good |
| 2. lack of hope | 5. very seriously |
| 3. trying to get someone to agree | |

C. Write the sentence for each picture, choosing the correct word under each blank space.



1. The results of all the examinations were _____.
(confident)
(confidential)
2. The coach was _____ that the young player would be admitted to the college.
(confident)
(confidential)
3. The college was in the middle of a _____ park.
(wooded)
(wooden)



4. The coach lived in a _____ house near the college.
(wooded)
(wooden)
5. The football player was an _____ man: he told very funny stories to his friends.
(imaginary)
(imaginative)
6. The young player often dreamed of winning _____ football games.
(imaginary)
(imaginative)



2 John was ten years old, and he was a very lazy boy. He had to go to school of course, but he was bored there and tried to do as little work as possible. His father and mother were both doctors and they hoped that he would become one, too, when he grew up, but one day John said to his mother, "When I finish school, I want to become a garbage collector."

"A garbage collector?" his mother asked. She was very surprised. "That's not a very pleasant job. Why do you want to become a garbage collector?"

"Because then I'd only have to work one day a week," John answered.

"Only one day a week?" his mother said. "What do you mean?"

"Well," John answered, "I know that the ones who come to our house only work on Wednesday, because I only see them on that day."

A. Answer these questions:

1. What kind of boy was John?
2. What did his parents want him to be when he grew up?
3. What did John say he wanted to be?
4. Why did John want this job?
5. How did his mother feel about this?
6. Why did John think that garbage collectors only worked one day a week?

B. Which words in the story mean the opposite of:

1. despaired
2. impossible
3. interested
4. replied
5. start
6. unpleasant

C. Put two words in each blank space in the second sentence of each pair (both sentences have the same meaning):

Example: a. When John arrived home, he told his mother his decision.
b. Arriving at home, John told his mother his decision.

1. a. After John had watched the garbage collectors on his street, he decided he wanted to become one, too.
b. _____ the garbage collectors on his street, John decided he wanted to become one, too.
2. a. Before John decided to become a garbage collector, he did not know what he wanted to be.
b. _____ to become a garbage collector, John did not know what he wanted to be.
3. a. While John studied at school, he was bored all the time.
b. _____ at school, John was bored all the time.
4. a. John surprised his mother because he said that he wanted to become a garbage collector.
b. John surprised his mother _____ that he wanted to become a garbage collector.



3 Soon after Dave left college, one of his uncles, who was rich and had no children of his own, died and left Dave a lot of money, so he decided to set up his own real estate agency.

He found a nice office, bought some new furniture and moved in. He had only been there for a few hours when he heard someone coming towards the door of his office.

"It's my first customer!" he thought. He quickly picked up the telephone and pretended to be very busy answering an important call from someone in New York who wanted to buy a big and expensive house in the country.

The man knocked at the door while this was going on, came in and waited politely for the agent to finish his conversation. Then he said to him, "I'm from the telephone company, and I was sent here to connect your telephone."

A. Answer these questions:

1. How did Dave get money to set up his real estate agency?
2. What did he do to set it up?
3. What happened after he had been in his office for a few hours?

Outside the 2,075 words: customer, real estate

4. What did he think, and then do about this?
5. What did the man do?
6. And what did he say when Dave finished talking?

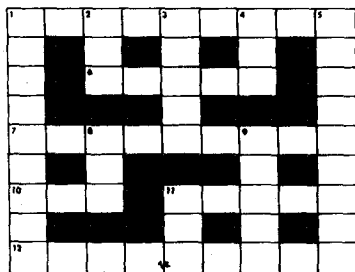
B. Complete this puzzle:

Across:

1. He's a very _____ worker: he never wastes time on the job.
6. Very big.
7. Possession.
10. The telephone man waited until the _____ of Dave's conversation before he spoke to him.
11. We often say this at the beginning of a telephone conversation.
12. Dave found a nice office _____ in town.

Down:

1. The man who came to Dave's office was one of the _____ of the telephone company.
2. When there is a _____ at sea, you can't see very far.
3. People _____ when their team



scores a goal.

4. Put into one's mouth, chew and swallow.
5. The man came to Dave's office to connect the _____.
8. Move your head to show that you mean *yes*.
9. Divide into two equal parts.
11. "_____ can you use the telephone when it hasn't been connected?" "You can't."

C. Write this story, using words instead of the pictures:

Before he could open his office, Dave had to buy a lot of things to furnish it. For the hall, he bought a nice _____, and for his own office,



with comfortable



, a pretty



for his desk light, and a red



Unfortunately, the telephone people had to make holes in some of the

walls with an electric



, after which another man had to

come to



and



the walls again.



4 Mr. Smith lived in the country, but he worked in an office in the big city, so five days a week he went to work by train every morning and came home the same way.

One morning he was reading his newspaper on the train when a man sitting behind him, who Mr. Smith had never met before, leaned forward, tapped him on the shoulder and spoke to him. The man said, "You're not leading a very interesting life, are you? You get on the same train at the same station at the same time every morning, and you always sit in the same seat and read the same newspaper."

Mr. Smith put his paper down, turned around, and said to the man angrily, "How do you know all that about me?"

"Because I'm always sitting in this seat behind you," the man answered.

A. Answer these questions:

1. How did Mr. Smith go to and from his office every day?
2. What happened to him on the train one morning?
3. What was he doing when this happened?
4. What did the man say to Mr. Smith?
5. What did Mr. Smith ask the man?
6. Why did the man know so much about him?

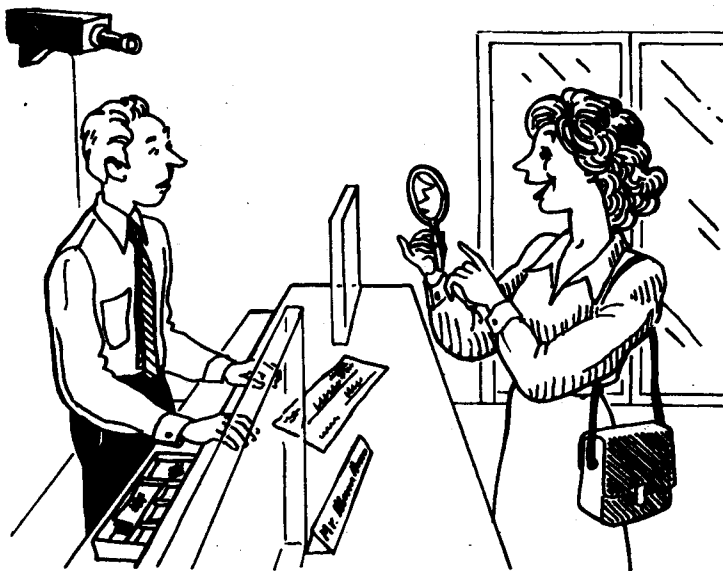
B. Which of these sentences are true? Write down the correct ones.

1. Mr. Smith did not go to his office on weekends.
2. Mr. Smith went to his office by train five days a week.
3. While he was reading his newspaper one day, he leaned forward and tapped a man on the shoulder.
4. While he was reading his newspaper one day, he was tapped on the shoulder by another man.
5. The man sitting behind him had never seen Mr. Smith before.
6. The man sitting behind Mr. Smith always saw him in the same seat.
7. The man thought Mr. Smith's life was dull.
8. The man thought Mr. Smith's life was very interesting.
9. The man's own life was much more interesting than Mr. Smith's.
10. The man's own life was just as uninteresting as Mr. Smith's.

C. Write the number of the correct sentence under each picture:



1. He always sat in the same seat every day.
2. He got on the train.
3. He hurried to the train station.
4. He read his newspaper thoroughly.
5. He turned around and spoke angrily to the man who had interrupted his reading.
6. Mr. Smith put his newspaper down.
7. Mr. Smith left his house at 7:00 A.M. every morning.
8. One day another passenger tapped him on the shoulder.



5 Lisa was an attractive young woman, and she always combed her hair neatly and wore pretty clothes. She worked in a small town and earned enough money to take a vacation in the mountains during the summer.

The first time that Lisa went there, she discovered that she hadn't brought enough money. At first she was worried, but then she remembered that she had brought her checkbook with her and went to the bank to cash a check. The bank teller had never seen Lisa before, but he knew that a lot of people were stealing checkbooks and using them, so he said to her, "Can you identify yourself, please?"

Lisa had never been asked to do this in her home town, so she looked puzzled for a moment; but then she took her mirror out of her handbag, looked at it, and then said happily, "Yes, it is me."

Outside the 2075 words: cash (v.), identify

A. Answer these questions:

1. Where did Lisa go for her vacation?
2. Why did she have to go to the bank during her vacation?
3. What did the bank teller ask her?
4. Why did he say this?
5. How did Lisa feel about this?
6. What did she do and then say?

B. Which of these answers are correct? Write down the questions and the correct answers.

1. Was Lisa an attractive woman?
 - a. Yes, she was.
 - b. No, she wasn't.
2. Could she afford to take a summer vacation?
 - a. Yes, she could.
 - b. No, she couldn't.
3. What worried her on her first vacation in the mountains?
 - a. She didn't have enough money.
 - b. She had forgotten her checkbook.
4. Why didn't the bank teller want to cash her check?
 - a. Because he had never seen her before.
 - b. Because he knew that she had stolen the checkbook.
5. What did the bank teller ask her to do?
 - a. To make sure that she was really Lisa.
 - b. To show him some proof that she was Lisa.
6. What did Lisa do to identify herself?
 - a. She looked in her mirror.
 - b. She showed the bank teller a photograph of herself.

C. Write this story, putting one word in each blank space. You will find all the correct words in the story on page 10.

George worked in a bank as a _____. One day an _____ young woman came into the bank and gave him a _____. She wanted him to _____ it for her, but George had never seen her before, so he said, "Can you _____ yourself?"

The woman was very _____ when she heard this. She was on _____ from her home town, and hadn't brought much money. But then she opened her _____, took out a photograph of herself, and showed it to George, smiling _____.

George looked at it for a _____ and then said, "Yes, that's you," and he gave her the money.