

L.A. HILL

**Elementary
Anecdotes
in
American
English**

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L. A. HILL

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English Language Teaching Department

MANAGER: Marilyn Rosenthal, Ph.D.

EDITOR: Laurie Likoff, M.A.

EDUCATIONAL SPECIALIST: Connie Attanasio, M.A.

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Introduction

Elementary Anecdotes in American English is the first 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. *Elementary Anecdotes in American English* contains thirty humorous stories, each approximately 150 words in length. Every story is followed by reading comprehension questions and two vocabulary exercises.

The stories and exercises are written at Dr. L. A. Hill's 1000 word level. The complete American English word list is given in Appendix A, pages 62-66. 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 1000 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 *set*, *blank space*, *puzzle*, *bracket*, and *correct order*. 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 67.

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.

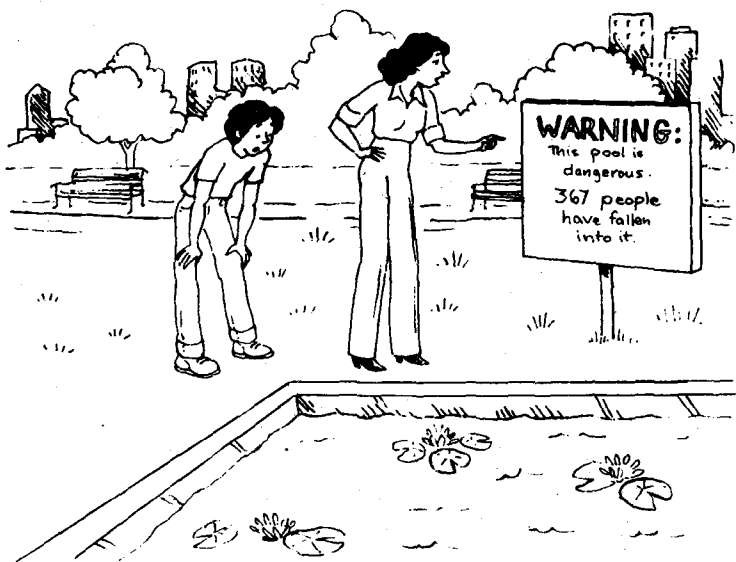
Completing the Exercises

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.



1 Jimmy lived in the country, and he loved playing in a very shallow river near his house; but then his father got a job in a big city, and he moved there with his family.

Their new house had a garden, but the garden was very small. Jimmy wasn't very happy.

"Is there a river near here?" he asked his mother on the first morning.

His mother answered, "No, there isn't, but there's a beautiful park near here, Jimmy, and there's a pool in it. We'll go there this afternoon." Then Jimmy was happy.

After lunch, Jimmy and his mother went to the park. Jimmy wanted to walk near the pool, but there was a sign in front of it. His mother read it to him: "WARNING: This pool is dangerous. 367 people have fallen into it." Jimmy looked into the pool carefully. Then he said, "I can't see them."

Outside the 1,000 words: sign, warning

A. Answer these questions:

1. Where did Jimmy play in the country?
2. Why wasn't he happy in the city?
3. What did he ask his mother?
4. What did she answer?
5. What did the sign in front of the pool say?
6. What did Jimmy say when his mother read the sign to him?

B. Write these sentences. Put one set of words in each blank space:

it was there was there were they were

1. _____ a park in Jimmy's city. _____ not far from his house.
2. _____ a pool in the park, but _____ dangerous, so _____ a sign in front of it.
3. _____ a lot of fish in the pool. _____ not very big, but _____ beautiful, so _____ always a lot of people there, looking at them.
4. _____ a very nice place for children.

C. Write this story using words instead of pictures.

When he lived in the  , Jimmy's  was near a  . He was always  there. When he moved to the city, there was a big  not far away, and there was a  there, because it was deep and dangerous. Jimmy's mother said to him, "Be very careful. Don't  into it. There aren't many  here, and perhaps nobody will see you and save you."



2 Mrs. Green was an old lady. She traveled often and she wasn't afraid of flying. One day she was going from Chicago to San Francisco in a big plane. There were a lot of empty seats on it.

Mrs. Green's seat^a was near a window. There was a young man on the other side of the aisle. He was near a window, too. Mrs. Green looked at the young man several times.

"He's always looking at the engine outside his window," she thought. She got up and walked around in the plane for a few minutes. Then she sat down and looked at the young man again.

"Yes," she thought, "he's looking at that engine all the time."

After half an hour Mrs. Green went over to him and said, "Take a walk around the plane, young man. I'm going to watch that engine for you for a few minutes."

Outside the 1,000 words: aisle

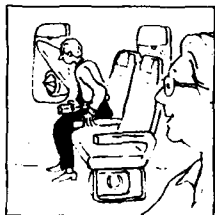
A. Answer these questions:

1. How did Mrs. Green go from Chicago to San Francisco?
2. Where did she sit?
3. Where was the young man sitting?
4. What was he doing?
5. What did Mrs. Green want him to do?
6. What did she offer to do for him when he wasn't in his seat?

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

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. frightened | 4. look at |
| 2. went on a trip | 5. more than two |
| 3. not far from | |

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



1. She sat down.
2. She sat in his seat, and he took a walk around the plane.
3. She saw a young man looking at the engine outside his window.
4. She went to her seat.
5. She went over to the young man.
6. The old lady climbed up the stairs into the plane.



3 It was a Saturday morning in May. When Mrs. Edwards opened her curtains and looked out, she smiled and said, "It's going to be a beautiful day." She woke her small son up at eight-thirty and said to him, "Get up, Teddy. We're going to go to the zoo today. Wash your hands and face, brush your teeth and eat your breakfast quickly. We're going to go to New York by train."

Teddy was six years old. He was very happy now, because he liked going to the zoo very much, and he also liked going by train. He said, "I dreamed about the zoo last night, Mommy."

His mother was in a hurry, but she stopped and smiled at her small son. "You did, Teddy?" she said. "And what did you do in the zoo in your dream?"

Teddy laughed and answered, "You know, Mommy! You were there in my dream too."

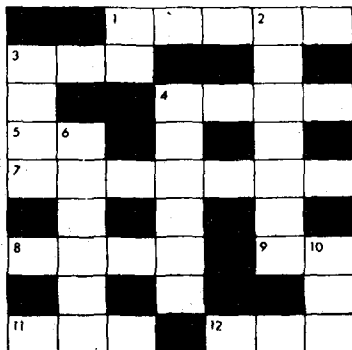
A. Answer these questions:

1. What did Mrs. Edwards say when she looked out of the window?
2. Why was Teddy happy?
3. What did Teddy dream about?
4. What did Mrs. Edwards ask Teddy?
5. What did Teddy answer?

B. Do this puzzle:

Across:

1. This means *Mother*.
3. Before friends leave, they usually _____, "Goodbye."
4. Mrs. Edwards was in a hurry, because the train left at ten o'clock and she didn't want to be _____.
5. "How far is _____ to the zoo?"
7. Teddy _____ about the zoo while he was asleep in bed.
8. When Mrs. Edwards woke Teddy, he said, "What _____ is it?" and she answered, "It's eight-thirty."
9. "Was Teddy a bright boy?" "Yes, I think _____."
11. What did Mrs. Edwards _____ Teddy? Her question was, "What did you do in your dream?"
12. When Teddy said, "I dreamed about the zoo," his mother said, "You _____?"



Down:

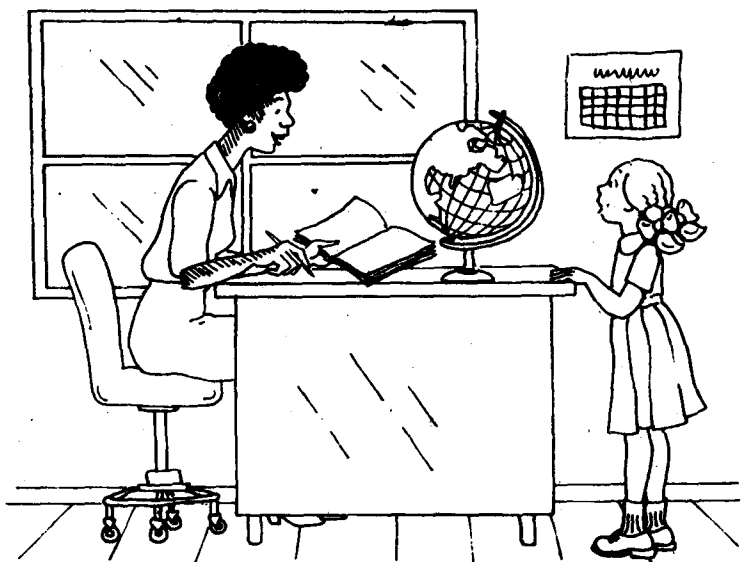
1. When people ask Mrs. Edwards about her son, she says "_____ son's name is Teddy."
2. Teddy's _____ name was Mrs. Edwards.
3. When Mrs. Edwards woke Teddy up, she _____, "It's going to be a beautiful day."
4. The train to New York _____ at ten o'clock every day.
6. Teddy likes traveling on _____.
10. How _____ is Teddy? He is six.

C. Write this story. Put one of these words in each blank space:

breakfast brush dream dreamed happy hurry mother
quickly train wash

John and Mary live with their _____ and father in the country, but they go to school in the city. They get up at seven o'clock, _____ their hands and faces, _____ their teeth, have _____ in the kitchen, and then go to school by _____. They are usually in a _____, because they are late, so they do everything very _____.

One night, Mary had a nice _____. She _____ about her school: it was near their house, so they got up at eight instead of seven and ate their breakfast slowly. Then they walked across the road to school. Mary was _____ until her mother woke her up at seven o'clock.



4 Polly went to school when she was six years old. She liked her first day very much. Her teacher, Miss Yates, was very nice, and the other children in her class were nice, too. But at the end of the second day, when the other children left the classroom, Polly stayed behind and waited.

Miss Yates had some work to do and did not see Polly at first, but then she looked up and saw her. "Why didn't you go with the others, Polly?" she asked kindly. "Did you want to ask me a question?"

"Yes, Miss Yates," Polly said.

"What is it?" Miss Yates asked.

"What did I do in school today?" Polly said.

Miss Yates laughed. "What did you do in school today?" she said. "Why did you ask me that, Polly?"

"Because I'm going to go home now," Polly answered, "and my mother's going to ask me."

A. Answer these questions:

1. Why did Polly like her school?
2. What did she do when the other children went home?
3. What did Miss Yates say when she saw her?
4. What question did Polly ask Miss Yates?
5. What did Miss Yates ask then?
6. What was Polly's answer?

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

1. Did Polly enjoy her first day at school?
 - a. Yes, she did.
 - b. No, she didn't.
2. Were her teacher and her class nice?
 - a. Her teacher was nice, but some of the children were not.
 - b. Her teacher was not nice, but some of the children were.
 - c. Her teacher and the children were nice.
3. Why didn't Polly leave the classroom with the other children?
 - a. Because she had some work.
 - b. Because Miss Yates had some work for her.
 - c. Because she wanted to ask Miss Yates a question.
4. Why did Polly say, "What did I do today?"
 - a. Because her mother always wanted to know.
 - b. Because her teacher always wanted to know.
 - c. Because she was angry with her teacher.

C. Put one word in each of the blank spaces in these sentences.

1. Mrs. Gray was nice. Mr. Lehman was _____ than Mrs. Gray, but Miss Yates was the _____ teacher in the school.
2. Mrs. Gray was kind to the children. Mr. Lehman was _____ than Mrs. Gray, and Miss Yates was the _____ of them all.
3. Polly is tall, but her mother is _____ than Polly, and her father is the _____ of all.
4. Polly's math lessons are hard. Her English lessons are _____ than her math lessons, and her history lessons are the _____ of all.
5. Polly can run fast, but her father can run _____ than she can, and her big brother can run the _____ of all.



5 Jean was traveling around New England by car. One day she stopped in a small village to look at a beautiful old church. There was a cemetery in front of it, and an old man was raking the grass around the graves.

Jean got out of her car, went into the cemetery and looked at some of the graves. Then she went over to the old man and said to him, "Good morning. Do people often die in this village?"

The old man stopped working for a few seconds, looked at Jean carefully and said, "No, they die once."

Jean laughed when she heard this, and then said to the old man, "I'm sorry. I didn't say that correctly. I'll ask it differently: 'Do a lot of people die in this village?'"

The old man stopped his work again. "Yes," he said. "All of them do." Then he began raking the grass again.

Outside the 1,000 words: cemetery, grave, rake

A. Answer these questions:

1. Why did Jean stop in the village?
2. What did she see in front of the church?
3. What did she say to the old man?
4. What did he answer?
5. What did Jean say then?
6. What did the old man answer?

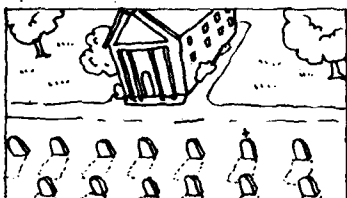
B. Which words in the story mean the opposite of:

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| 1. big | 4. live | 7. ugly |
| 2. carelessly | 5. new | 8. young |
| 3. in the same way | 6. seldom | |

C. Choose the correct sentence for each picture and write it down.



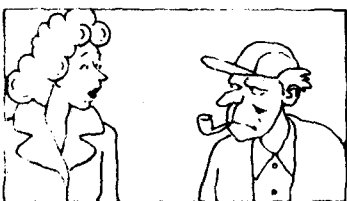
1. a. Jean is getting into her car.
- b. Jean is getting out of her car.
- c. Jean is getting her car out.



2. a. The cemetery is at the side of the church.
- b. The cemetery is behind the church.
- c. The cemetery is in front of the church.



3. a. Jean is crying.
- b. Jean is shouting.
- c. Jean is smiling.



4. a. The old man is laughing at Jean.
- b. The old man is looking at Jean.
- c. The old man is pointing at Jean.



6 When George was thirty-five, he bought a small plane and learned to fly it. He soon became very good and made his plane do all kinds of tricks.

George had a friend. His name was Mark. One day George offered to take Mark up in his plane. Mark thought, "I've traveled in a big plane several times, but I've never been in a small one, so I'll go."

They went up, and George flew around for half an hour and did all kinds of tricks in the air.

When they came down again, Mark was very glad to be back safely, and he said to his friend in a shaking voice, "Well, George, thank you very much for those two trips in your plane."

George was very surprised and said, "Two trips?"

"Yes, my first and my last," answered Mark.

A. Answer these questions:

1. What did George learn to do when he was thirty-five?
2. Who went up with him in his small plane?
3. What did George do while they were in the air?
4. What did Mark say when they were on the ground again?
5. What did George say then?
6. What did Mark answer?

Outside the 1,000 words: trick, voice