

L.A. HILL

**Intermediate
Anecdotes
in
American
English**

Intermediate Anecdotes in American English

L. A. Hill

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Introduction

Intermediate Anecdotes in American English is the second 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. *Intermediate 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 1500 word level. The complete American English word list is given in Appendix A, pages 62-68. 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 1500 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 69.

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.

Intermediate Anecdotes in American English



1 Jim walked into a store which had a sign outside: "Second-hand clothes bought and sold." He was carrying an old pair of pants and asked the owner of the store, "How much will you give me for these?" The man looked at them and then said rudely, "Two dollars."

"What!" said Jim. "I had guessed they were worth at least five."

"No," said the man, "they aren't worth a penny more than two dollars."

"Are you sure?" asked Jim.

"Very sure," said the man.

"Well," said Jim, taking two dollars out of his pocket, "here's your money. These pants were hanging outside your store with a price tag that said \$6.50, but I thought that was too much money, so I wanted to make sure how much they were really worth."

Then he walked out of the store with the pair of pants and disappeared before the surprised store owner could think of anything to say.

Outside the 1,500 words: second-hand, price tag

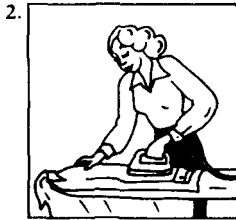
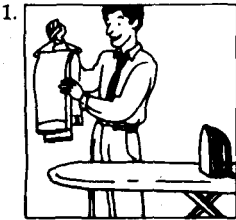
A. Answer these questions:

1. What was bought and sold in the store that Jim went into?
2. What did Jim take into the store with him?
3. How much did the owner of the store offer Jim for them?
4. Where did Jim find the pants?
5. How much was the owner asking for them?
6. How much did Jim pay for them?

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

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1. appeared | 3. new | 5. politely |
| 2. little | 4. not certain | 6. bought |

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



1. a. Jim has ironed his pants.
b. Jim is having his pants ironed.
2. a. Jim has ironed his shirt too.
b. Jim is having his shirt ironed too.
3. a. This man has cleaned his shoes.
b. This man is having his shoes cleaned.



4. a. This man has cleaned his shoes.
b. This man is having his shoes cleaned.
5. a. This woman has washed her hair.
b. This woman is having her hair washed.
6. a. This woman has washed her hair.
b. This woman is having her hair washed.



2 Mrs. Green was the manager of a large company, and she frequently had to have meetings with other business people in a room in her building. She did not smoke at all, but many of the other people at the meetings did, so she often found the air during the meetings terrible. One day, after an hour, her throat and eyes were sore and she was coughing a lot, so she called a big air-conditioning company and asked them to work out how much it would cost to keep the air of the meeting room in her building really clean.

After a few days the air-conditioning company sent in two estimates for Mrs. Green to choose from. One estimate was for \$5,000 to put in new air-conditioning, and the other was for \$5.00 for a sign which said, NO SMOKING.

Outside the 1,500 words: air-conditioning, estimate

A. Answer these questions:

1. Why did Mrs. Green have to have meetings with business people?
2. Why did she often find the air in the meetings terrible?
3. What did it do to her?
4. What did she do about it?
5. What did the air-conditioning company do?
6. What did Mrs. Green have to choose between?

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

1. big
2. often
3. painful
4. phoned
5. very bad

C. Finish the second sentence in each pair (both sentences have the same meaning):

Example: a. Mrs. Green found the air in the meetings terrible.

b. Mrs. Green found that the air in the meetings was terrible.

1. a. She saw the air full of smoke.
b. She saw that _____.
2. a. She noticed the smoke rising.
b. She noticed that _____.
3. a. She felt her throat burning.
b. She felt that _____.
4. a. She confessed to being puzzled.
b. She confessed that _____.
5. a. She expected the air-conditioning company to find the answer difficult.
b. She expected that _____.
6. a. But the air-conditioning company found the answer easy.
b. But the air-conditioning company found that _____.



3 A lot of boys and girls in Western countries are wearing the same kinds of clothes, and many of them have long hair, so it is often difficult to tell whether they are boys or girls.

One day, an old gentleman went for a walk in a park in Washington, and when he was tired he sat down on a bench. A young person was standing on the other side of the pond.

"My goodness!" the old man said to the person who was sitting next to him on the bench. "Do you see that person with the loose pants and long hair? Is it a boy or a girl?"

"A girl," said his neighbor. "She's my daughter."

"Oh!" the old gentleman said quickly. "Please forgive me, I didn't know that you were her mother."

"I'm not," said the other person, "I'm her father."

A. Answer these questions:

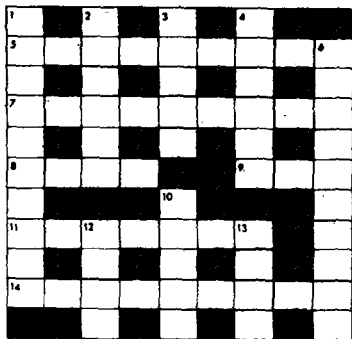
1. What did the old gentleman see on the other side of the pond?
2. Why didn't the old gentleman know if it was a boy or a girl?
3. Who did he ask?

4. What did this person answer?
5. What did the old gentleman say then?
6. And what did the person answer?



B. Do this puzzle:

Across:

5. Boys and girls often wear the same kinds of clothes in Western _____.
7. The old gentleman spoke to _____ sitting on a bench in the park. (two words)
8. A big town.
9. Neither boys _____ girls have short hair.
11. When one is not well, we can say he has an _____.
14. This story is about an old _____.



Down:

1. This cat is _____ a tree. 
2. Least polite.
3. Actors and actresses act on this.
4. The little girl tied her hair with a _____. 
6. The old gentleman thought it was very _____ that his neighbor on the bench was a man.
10. Church _____ ring every Sunday.
12. The girl in this story had _____ hair.
13. Boys and girls both looked the _____ to the old gentleman.

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

Mr. Jones went for a walk in a  with his granddaughter

one day. He wore a dark



with a white



and a nice



His granddaughter was a pretty girl. She had

long



, and wore a pair of very loose blue



and a pink



on one

She wore no jewelery except for a small





4 A young boy was playing with a ball in the street. He kicked it too hard, and it broke the window of a house and fell inside. A lady came to the window with the ball and shouted at the young boy, so he ran away, but he still wanted his ball back. A few minutes later he returned and knocked at the door of the house, and when the lady answered it, he said, "My father's going to come and fix your window very soon."

After a few more minutes a man came to the door with tools in his hand, so the lady let the boy take his ball away.

When the man finished fixing the window, he said to the lady, "That will cost you exactly ten dollars."

"But aren't you the father of that young boy?" the woman asked, looking surprised. "No," he answered, equally surprised. "Aren't you his mother?"

A. Answer these questions:

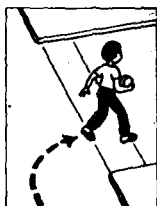
1. How did the young boy lose his ball?
2. Why did he run away?
3. And why did he come back?
4. Why did the lady let him take his ball away?

5. Who did the lady think the man was who came to fix the window?
6. Who did he think the lady was?

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

1. The young boy broke the window of his own house.
2. The young boy broke the window of someone else's house.
3. The ball went through the window.
4. The ball hit the window and fell into the lady's garden.
5. The young boy ran away because he wanted his ball back.
6. The young boy ran away because he was afraid of the lady.
7. The young boy went to find his father.
8. The young boy went to find a man who fixed windows.
9. The man who fixed the lady's window was not the boy's father.
10. The man who fixed the lady's window was the boy's father.
11. The man thought that the lady was the boy's mother.
12. The man knew that the lady wasn't the boy's mother.

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



1. A young boy took his ball out into the street.
2. He kicked the ball.
3. He found a man who fixed windows.
4. He went into another street.
5. It went through the window of a lady's house.
6. The boy ran away.
7. The man came and fixed the lady's window.
8. Then the boy went to the lady's house and got his ball back from her.



5 Mr. and Mrs. Scott moved to a small town, and they made arrangements at the local bank to open an account in both their names. But Mr. Scott was a businessman and always worked during the times that the bank was open, so his wife was the one who usually went there when they needed money.

Then one day Mr. Scott had a vacation, so he went to the bank, but the bank teller didn't know him, and wasn't willing to give him any money until she was sure that he was really Mr. Scott. She said politely, "I know Mrs. Scott, but I don't know you yet. Could you please show me something to prove that you are Mr. Scott?"

Mr. Scott looked in his wallet and found some photographs of his wife. He showed them to the teller, and she was satisfied and gave him his money.

Outside the 1,500 words: teller

A. Answer these questions:

1. What kind of account did Mr. and Mrs. Scott open at the bank?
2. Who usually went to the bank to get money?
3. Who went there one day?
4. What did the teller say to Mr. Scott?
5. What did Mr. Scott show the teller to prove who he was?
6. What did the teller do then?

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

1. Who could take money out of the Scotts' account at the local bank?
 - a. Only Mr. Scott.
 - b. Only Mrs. Scott.
 - c. Both Mr. and Mrs. Scott.
2. Who was the bank teller used to seeing?
 - a. Only Mr. Scott.
 - b. Only Mrs. Scott.
 - c. Both Mr. and Mrs. Scott.
3. What did the bank teller want from Mr. Scott?
 - a. Proof that he had a wife.
 - b. Proof that he was Mr. Scott.
 - c. Proof that he had an account at the bank.
4. Why did the bank teller give Mr. Scott his money?
 - a. Because she recognized the photograph of his wife.
 - b. Because she recognized him from his photograph.
 - c. Because she recognized him when he came in.

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

Mr. Grey was the manager of a company which made furniture. He was a smart _____, so the owners of the company were very _____ with his work. At first the company was small and sold its furniture only in _____ stores, but then it became more well-known, and Mr. Grey made _____ to sell more widely. He _____ traveled once a month, and found many stores which were _____ to open an _____ with his company. Mr. Grey was never rude: even when people were rude to him, he answered _____, and this often made them change too. He got along very well with people who had children, because he always carried _____ of his family in his _____ to show them.