

LIFE in the USA

A Simplified Reader on American Culture

R. Jordania

BOOK

1

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SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSOCIATES, INC.
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Introduction

Life in the USA, Books 1 and 2, present a variety of situations in the lives of typical teenagers in the United States. They are written in the direct, natural language that young Americans actually use.

Each chapter begins with a brief vocabulary list of key words and expressions. Then a dialogue illustrates the interests and activities of most young people and their families. The reader learns about school, vacations, family life, friends, part-time jobs, national holidays and many other interesting topics. The *Culture Note* clarifies and explains any aspects of each situation which are peculiar to the United States.

Exercises at the end of every chapter give the reader an opportunity to practice the new words and expressions. A comprehensive vocabulary list at the end of each book serves as a useful reference and study aid.

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1

The Allowance

Vocabulary

Allowance: A certain amount of spending money children receive from their parents, usually every week.

Let's see: Let's think about it.

A fair allowance: Just the right amount for a child's spending money.

Fifteen dollars a week: Fifteen dollars every week.

To get fifteen dollars a week: To receive fifteen dollars every week.

Provided: On the condition that.

To keep one's room in good shape: To keep one's room clean and tidy.



Amy: Dad, can I have an increase in my allowance?
I'm going to be fourteen years old next week, and
I can't get along on the ten dollars you give me.

Mr. Chase: Let's see...What are you going to spend it on?

Amy: Books, records, movies...

Mr. Chase: What do you think is a fair allowance?

Amy: Peter gets fifteen dollars a week, and Joan gets
fourteen. But she's only twelve years old.

Mr. Chase: All right, I'll give you an allowance of fifteen
dollars every Saturday...provided you keep your
room in good shape and help your mother.

Culture Note

American parents often give their children a weekly allowance—a fixed sum of money they can spend as they wish.

Many parents think that a regular allowance is an excellent way to teach children the value of money. With an allowance, they learn to budget their expenses. If they don't, they will have no money to spend by the end of the week!

Exercises

A Answer the questions on the dialogue.

- 1 How old is Amy?
- 2 What does she ask her father for?
- 3 What is she going to spend her allowance on?
- 4 What is Peter's allowance?
- 5 Why is Joan's allowance only fourteen dollars a week?
- 6 How much will Mr. Chase give Amy?
- 7 On what condition?

B Complete the sentences according to the dialogue.

- 1 A fixed sum of money parents give regularly to their children is...
- 2 They can spend their allowance...
- 3 With an allowance, children learn to...
- 4 If children don't budget their expenses, they'll have no...
- 5 Joan gets only fourteen dollars a week because...
- 6 Amy's father will give her a fifteen-dollar allowance provided...
- 7 Amy will receive her allowance...

2

Babysitting for the Neighbors

Vocabulary

Babysitting: Taking care of children while their parents are away.

Can I be of help?: Can I help you?

Sure: Yes, of course.

To find out: To discover, to learn.

O. K.: All right.

A show: A movie, play, or other form of theatrical production.

To be back: To return.



Mrs. Henry: Good evening, Dorothy. Is your daughter home?

Mrs. Jenkins: Oh hello, Edith. No, she isn't. Can I be of help?

Mrs. Henry: I wanted to ask her to babysit for me Friday night. Is she free?

Mrs. Jenkins: I don't think she is, but I could ask Stevie.

Mrs. Henry: Would you please? The baby loves him too.

Mrs. Jenkins: Stevie, are you free Friday night to babysit for Mrs. Henry?

Stevie: Sure. Find out at what time, will you?

Mrs. Jenkins: It's O.K. with him, Edith. At what time do you want him at your house?

Mrs. Henry: Well, we're going out to dinner and then to a show. If he comes at about 6:30, we'll have the baby all ready for bed. We should be back before midnight.

Mrs. Jenkins: Fine then, he'll be there. Good night, Edith.

Mrs. Henry: Good night, and thanks.

Culture Note

Many American youngsters supplement their allowance—if they get one—by doing odd jobs for their neighbors. Babysitting is one of the most common of these jobs. Most couples do not have maids or relatives living with them, and they need to hire someone to watch the children if they want to go out.

The babysitter is expected to watch the children, feed them, amuse them, put them to bed at the proper time, and change diapers if necessary. Before leaving, the parents usually give the babysitter a telephone number where they can be reached in an emergency.

A babysitter charges between two and three dollars an hour or a flat fee of twenty to thirty dollars for a whole day.

Exercises

A Answer the questions on the dialogue.

- 1 Is Mrs. Jenkins' daughter home?
- 2 What did Mrs. Henry want?
- 3 Whom could Mrs. Jenkins ask to do it?
- 4 Can Stevie do it?
- 5 What time does Mrs. Henry want Stevie at her house?
- 6 Where are the Henrys going?
- 7 What time will they be back?

B Reply by using the short forms of the verb, as in the example.

Example:

Is your daughter home?

No, she isn't.

- 1 Is she free to babysit Friday night?
- 2 Is Stevie home?
- 3 Is he free to babysit Friday night?
- 4 Are the Henrys going out that evening?
- 5 Are they going to visit some friends?
- 6 Are they going to be back before midnight?
- 7 Is Stevie going to put the baby to bed?

3

Mowing Lawns

Vocabulary

To mow the lawn: To cut the grass on a lawn.

Pretty high: Rather high, quite high.

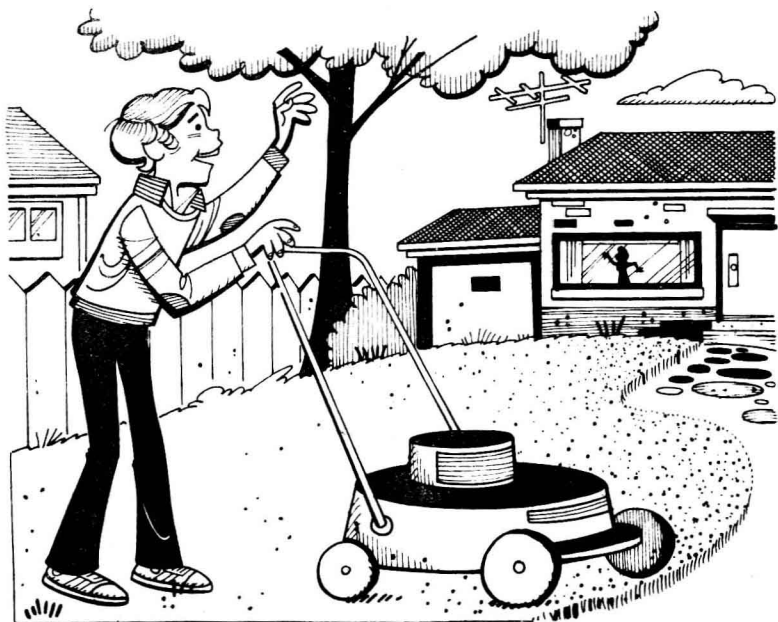
A lawnmower: A machine used to cut grass.

To break down: To stop functioning.

To fix a machine: To repair it.

To get around to doing something: To find the time to do it.

To charge a sum of money: To ask for a sum of money for
services provided.



Stevie: Good morning, Mrs. White.

Mrs. White: Good morning, Stevie. What did you want?

Stevie: Well, Mrs. White... your grass is pretty high. I wonder if you would like me to mow your lawn?

Mrs. White: That's a good idea, Stevie, but my lawnmower broke down, and I didn't get around to having it fixed.

Stevie: Yes, I know, Mrs. White. But I thought I could use our own lawnmower, if you want me to.

Mrs. White: Are you sure it's all right with your parents?

Stevie: Yes ma'am, I asked them.

Mrs. White: And how much would you charge me?

Stevie: My mom thought I could ask for five dollars.
Your lawn is pretty big.

Mrs. White: All right, Stevie. When can you do it?

Culture Note

Another way for young Americans to earn some pocket money is by mowing lawns in the summer and removing snow from sidewalks and driveways in the winter.

Many persons mow their own lawns, but often people prefer to give the job to a neighbor's child. In winter, snow removal from streets and highways is the government's responsibility. Sidewalks and driveways, however, must be cleared by homeowners or tenants. Since shoveling snow is very tiring, many people prefer to hire teenagers for this job rather than do it themselves.

Exercises

A Change the sentences, using the expression *I wonder*.

Example:

You would like me to mow your lawn.

I wonder if you would like me to mow your lawn.

- 1 The grass is pretty high.
- 2 The lawnmower broke down.
- 3 Mrs. White wants her lawn mowed.
- 4 It's a good idea.
- 5 Is it all right with your parents?
- 6 How much would you charge me?
- 7 How big is your lawn?

B Complete the sentences using the expressions given below. Each expression can be used only once.

- (a) five dollars
- (b) pretty big
- (c) mowing lawns
- (d) the government
- (e) the homeowner or tenant
- (f) her lawnmower fixed
- (g) a neighbor's child

- 1 Many American young people earn money by ...
- 2 Often, people give the job of mowing the lawn to...
- 3 Clearing the snow from streets and highways is the responsibility of ...
- 4 Clearing the snow from sidewalks and driveways is the responsibility of ...
- 5 Mrs. White didn't get around to having ...
- 6 Stevie's mom thought he could ask for ...
- 7 Mrs. White's grass is pretty high, and her lawn is ...

4

A Part-time Job

Vocabulary

A part-time job: Work done for less than eight hours a day or forty hours a week.

To handle: To take care of something in a satisfactory manner.

Homework: An assignment students do at home for school.

I'm doing all right: I'm doing satisfactory work.

"A": The top grade in American schools. "B" is the second best grade.

The minimum wage: The lowest wage allowed by law.

To begin with: At first.