

# Beyond Citizenship:

True Stories for the Civics Class

By Margaret Silver



## Acknowledgments

Margaret B. Silver has distinguished herself in many ways great and small over the years. She is able to give advice, and does, on gardening, tailoring, and from personal experience passing the citizenship test. In addition to authoring this publication Margaret has discovered Discovery Learning, written a tome on Total Physical Response, and received awards and accolades from adoring fans too numerous to mention (both the fans and the accolades are numerous). When not in the garden she works at the English Language and Literacy Center of Missouri in St. Louis.

Linda Viray has lent her desk topping skills and ESL activity creation skills to this publication. She has been a teacher, editor, trainer, and tech support person at the Spring Institute since the late 1980s.

**This publication has been produced pursuant to grant number 90 RB 0005 from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The views expressed are those of the Spring Institute and may not reflect the view of ORR.**

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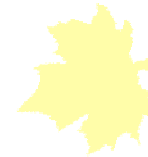
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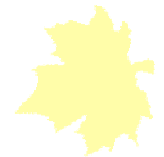
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### **Preface:**

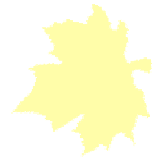
Much is being discussed in the refugee and immigrant community about the concept of integration. Many definitions of integration identify it as a two way street. How do communities make service accessible to refugees and immigrants? How do refugees and immigrants develop a sense of belonging? Everyone agrees that language is a major component of the integration process, but since formal language training is available on a very limited basis, how do we make the most of helping our students develop, not just language capacity, but confidence navigating community and social systems. Margaret Silver has developed a series of stories that extend the language classroom into the community. The stories relate real experience that us authentic language, while at the same time the language lesson introduces the real world. These stories are a way for classroom teachers to help students unlock some of the secrets of living in the US and engaging in community life. They also allow students to benefit from other students' challenges by using the approach of using students' situations as material in the classroom. This collection of stories may even inspire you to create ways you can use your students' stories to pave the road toward integration.

### **How to use this book:**

There is no right or wrong way to use this book. These stories are based on Margaret's personal experiences. The activities that follow each story are intended as a guide – to enhance the students' understanding and appreciation by going “into-through-and beyond” each reading. **Pre-reading** – Have the students look at the picture(s) on the first page of the story. Have them describe what they see. Based on the pictures, what do they think the story is about? Then have them answer the pre-reading questions. The intent is to connect the students to the story. **New Words** and **Understanding** – After reading the story, have the students take a few minutes to write down their thoughts, feelings, new vocabulary/new words that they have learned. **Let's Talk** and **More Pictures** (where applicable) – This section is intended for the students to discuss and share with the class or with a partner any experiences, memories, future plans, or reactions they might have relating to the story. Again, these activities are merely suggestions, a guide; you are only limited by your own imagination.

We have also included the reading level of each story using the Flesch-Kincaid's index tool, available in Microsoft Word. The Flesch-Kincaid index, a system devised by Rudolf Flesch, tells how easy something is to read. It does this by counting the number of syllables in every word and the number of words in every sentence. Then some math is done. The number which results is a grade-school level. For example, a sentence with a score of 8.0 means that someone in 8th grade could understand it. Normal writing is usually between a 7 and an 8. Rudolf Flesch was a proponent of the phonics approach to reading. His

controversial bestseller *Why Johnny Can't Read* (1955) critiques the American education system. (Source: [en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org))



# Story #1



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

What do you see?

Do you have these at home?



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## SELIM'S MANY, MANY PILLS

Selim's stomach hurt. He went to the doctor. The doctor gave him some pills. The pills helped the pain. Selim thought that if one pill each day helped his stomach, more pills would make the pain go away at once. So Selim went to a second doctor. The second doctor gave him more of the same pills. Then, Selim went to a third doctor for pills. One day, Selim came to class. He was in great pain. "Teacher," he said. "I am in great pain and for three days I cannot eat." The teacher asked Selim about his pain. Selim told her about the pain and the pills the doctors gave him.

The teacher spoke to Selim's sister, Alia. She asked Alia to go home, put all Selim's pills in a shopping bag and bring them back to school. Alia brought many, many bottles of pills back to the teacher. The names of the doctors were on the pill bottles. The teacher called one of the doctors and told him about Selim's pain and all the pill bottles. The doctor told Selim to go to the hospital at once. Soon, Selim was feeling better. Now, Selim goes to only one doctor.

**(201 WORDS. Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 3.0.)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: "Selim" was first noticed sitting in the waiting area. He was crying. The receptionist, a very caring person, called me. I talked with Selim and his sister with the help of an interpreter. Selim told me about the pills and how they had helped at first. He also told me that the only thing he had eaten for the last five days had been bananas and soda! The labels revealed the fact that Selim had gone to four clinics. His social worker agreed that Selim needed medical help and, later, medical counseling.

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### B. New Words

Use these words below to complete the sentences.

*pills    stomach    thought    pain    spoke    brought*

1. Alia \_\_\_\_\_ many, many bottles of pills back to the teacher.
2. Selim's doctor gave him \_\_\_\_\_ to help the pain.
3. He was in \_\_\_\_\_ and he could not eat for three days.



- 
- 
4. Selim's teacher \_\_\_\_\_ to his sister about him.
  5. He went to the doctor because his \_\_\_\_\_ hurt.
  6. He \_\_\_\_\_ taking more pills will help his stomach.

### **C. Understanding**

Look at the story again, and see if you can finish each sentence below.

1. Selim's stomach hurt so \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He thought that more pills would \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Selim was in great pain and could not \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The teacher asked Alia to \_\_\_\_\_.
5. One of Selim's doctors told him to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Now, Selim goes to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **D. Let's Talk**

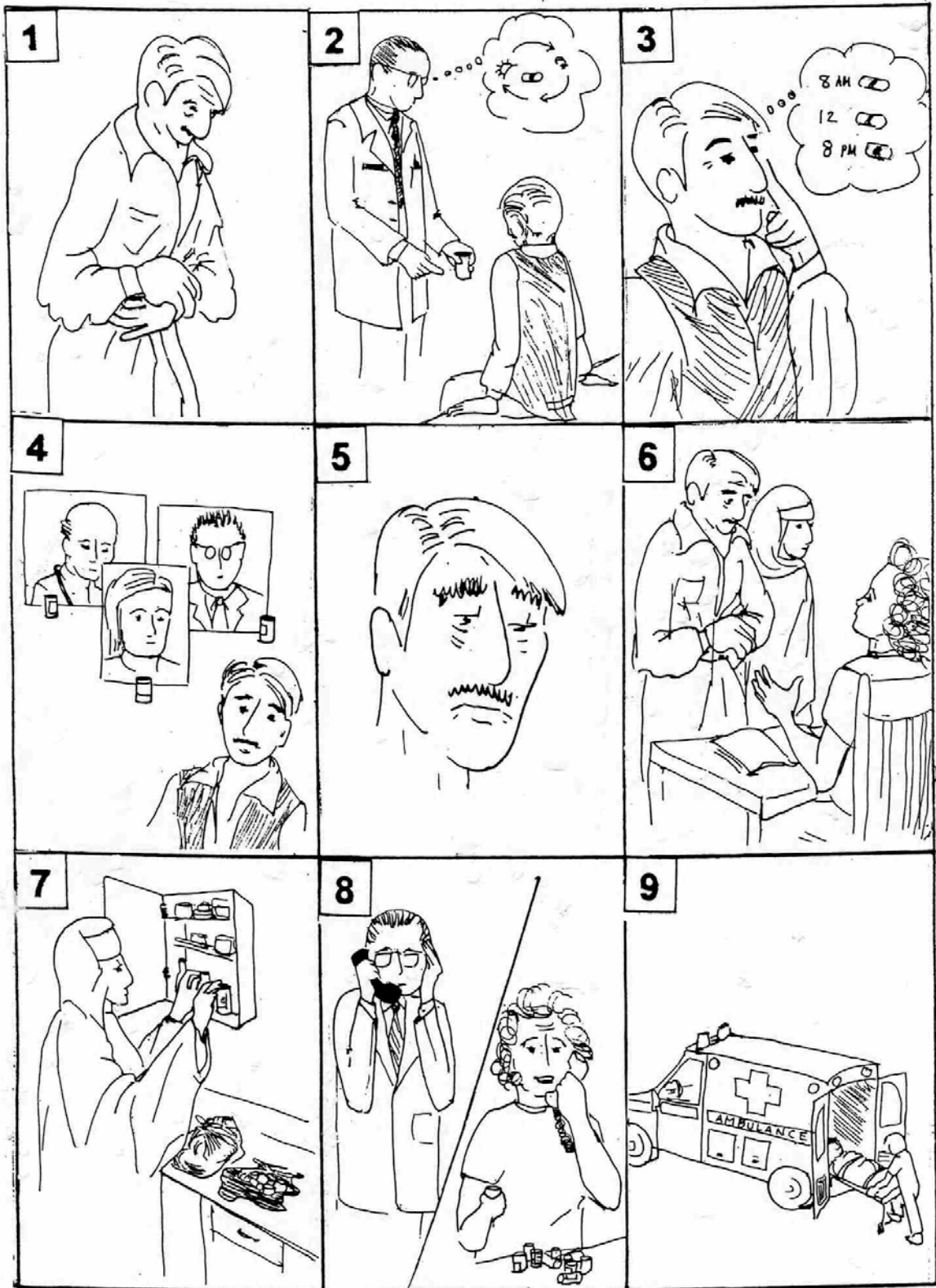
In the United States, there are prescription and non-prescription medicines. When taking these pills, you need to follow the directions on the labels.

In your country:

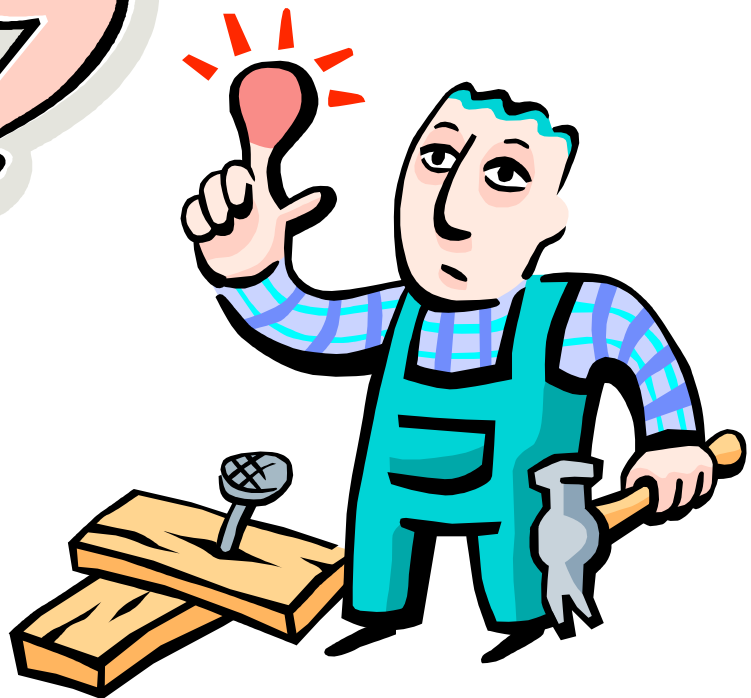
- Do you need to see a doctor before you take any pill?
- Do you continue taking your pills even after you feel better?
- Do you give some of your pills to your friends who are sick too?

### **E. More Pictures**

Photocopy the picture on the next page for each pair of students. Re-create the story by writing a sentence of each square. Share with the class.



## Story #2



### A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

What happened? How did he get hurt?

What is the man holding?

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## HADZIRA'S WORKPLACE ACCIDENT

In Bosnia, Hadzira had been a stay-at-home wife and mother. She brought few job skills with her when she came to live in the American Midwest. Hadzira also did not speak much English and she did not like going to class. However, she needed a job. A friend found her a job in a metal stamping factory with other people from her country who could explain the work to her. They taught Hadzira to hold a sheet of metal in a machine as it punched many smaller pieces from it. These smaller pieces would later be made into cans.

Hadzira liked earning money and she liked getting out of the house because being alone all day made her sad. But she did not like the noise the machine made. It frightened her. Every time the machine came down to stamp another piece from the metal she was holding, Hadzira shut her eyes. One day, she did not put the metal sheet fully into the machine nor was she watching what she was doing, and the machine hit her hand.

An ambulance took Hadzira to the emergency room of the hospital where a staff X-rayed her hand and told her that part of her hand was crushed. The doctor then stitched the cuts and put a splint on her hand to stop the broken bones from causing more damage. After the cuts on her hand healed, Hadzira needed to have physical therapy to help her get back full use of her fingers. So Hadzira went to a physical therapist who tried to help her flex her hand and to teach her how to exercise her fingers at home. She asked Hadzira many questions: "Does this hurt? Is this a constant pain or a shooting pain? Can you bend and straighten your fingers? What medication are you taking? and What insurance do you have?" Hadzira could not answer because she did not understand. Hadzira's therapy went very slowly.

**(325 words. 6.2 Flesch-Kincaid Grade Reading Grade Level.)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: One reader of Hadzira's story asked why there was no translator with her at the hospital. I can't answer. Maybe she was an immigrant and not a refugee. I have no answer. However, Hadzira had been my student, and I recognized her at a physical therapy session. The therapist told me (with the language samples above) how slowly the therapy was going.

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## B. New Words

Match the words in the first column to the best available answer in the second column.

_____ shut	1) bend
_____ punched	2) uncurl
_____ therapy	3) treatment
_____ pain	4) close
_____ straighten	5) pound
_____ flex	6) hit
_____ crushed	7) flattened

## C. Understanding

Find the best answer to complete each sentence.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Hadzira liked getting out of the house _____                | a. because being alone all day made her sad.   |
| 2. Every time the machine came down, she closed her eyes _____ | b. because she did not understand English.     |
| 3. She needed therapy _____                                    | c. because she needed full use of her fingers. |
| 4. Hadzira's therapy went very slowly _____                    | d. because she was afraid of it.               |

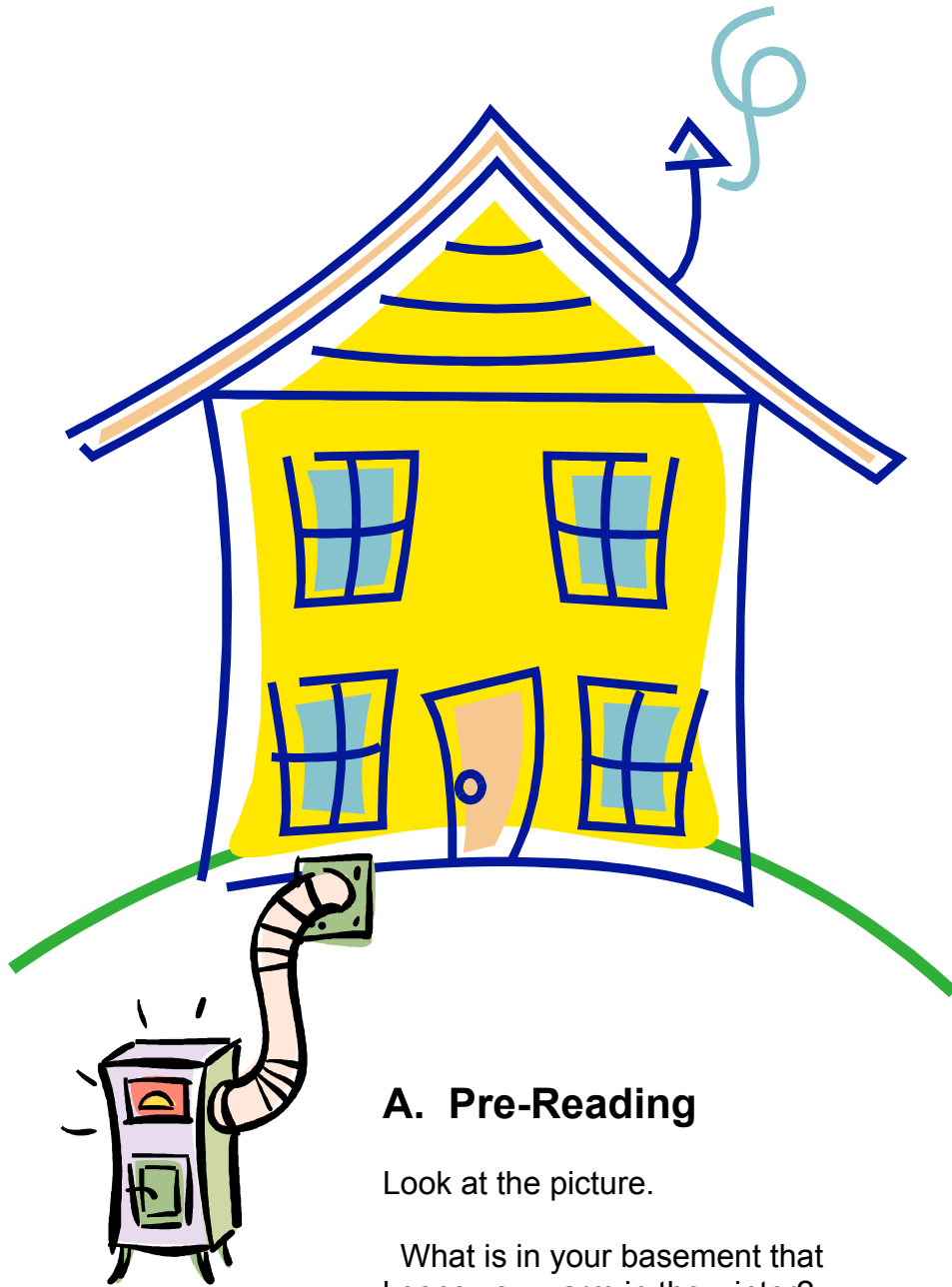
## D. Let's Talk

Discuss with your classmate these questions, and then tell the class.

Does your job provide you with insurance? What type of insurance? Do you have a doctor? What did you visit your doctor for?



# Story #3



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the picture.

What is in your basement that keeps you warm in the winter?

Who do you call if it doesn't work?

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## IRINA AND THE FURNACE

In the early years following their arrival and establishment in an ethnic neighborhood, Irina and Yuri socialized with other families from the old country, resulting in a pleasant buffer against the English-speaking world. This buffer also permitted Irina to continue speaking their traditional language only. Yuri learned English at work and their three sons learned English at school, but Irina's homemaking tasks demanded no more of her than the minimal use of English. Indeed, having received little education as a child, Irina remained functionally illiterate and her husband and children handled any written material or phone calls that came to their home. Unhappily, the passage of time brought changes to Irina's little ethnic idyll as warmer climates and convenient retirement communities enticed away many old friends southward, thinning their ranks. Irina's saddest loss came with her children's marriages and their departure to far-off cities to pursue their careers.

Life was becoming lonelier for Irina but she hoped Yuri's retirement would change that. Instead, Yuri, eager to build a new social life when he retired, took to meeting his friends at the local community center for coffee and games of checkers or cards. He did come home for lunch though. One afternoon, however, instead of Yuri at the door, there were two of his friends. Yuri had suffered a heart attack and, before the emergency crew could arrive, had died.

Friends and relatives from near and far attended Yuri's funeral and their presence and support comforted Irina. Her sons had arranged the funeral and their wives had helped organize the wake, but ultimately they had to leave. Now Irina was alone and solely responsible for the home, the bills and the mail that had been so generously taken care of previously by others. With the same stoicism and determination that had made her a good wife and mother, she set to work figuring out this bill and that one. Even though her American friends and neighbors offered their assistance, Irina's pride and embarrassment usually prevented her from accepting it. The problem of literacy and English, so long avoided, now became critical. So Irina joined a basic reading class where her progress was slow but



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constant. However, routine household maintenance chores, like checking the furnace before turning it on in the fall and checking the batteries in fire and carbon monoxide alarms twice a year, were not part of her literacy curriculum.

The first fall after Yuri's death, morning headaches began to bother Irina. Her standard antidote for minor ailments had always been to keep busy, so Irina made a point of working in the yard, walking to the store or class, or visiting friends. These outdoor excursions seemed to help. However, her co-students and the teacher in her class at the community center noticed that her face was unusually red and asked if anything was the matter. Irina said there was not.

Then one cold, rainy Sunday, the weather kept Irina indoors and by evening her headache was especially bad and she felt strangely confused. Recognizing she needed help, Irina forced herself out of her chair and staggered toward the phone to call 911 but collapsed just before reaching it. Her fall however, tipped over Yuri's old metal coat rack that had always stood in the hallway, and it slowly careened into a front window, shattering the glass.

With the cool, damp air flowing in, Irina revived enough to reach the overturned phone and dial the emergency number. As soon as the emergency medical personnel saw Irina's red face, they guessed the problem: carbon monoxide poisoning. They gathered her up onto a gurney and into the ambulance. They left the police to open all the other windows and turn off the malfunctioning furnace. In the emergency room, treatment for carbon monoxide poisoning was started immediately and three days later, the hospital's fortunate patient was released to confront once again the challenges of living in a complex and literate society.

**(659 words. Flesch-Kincaid Grade level of 11.6)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is a composite story. I have known many Asians trapped in lonely existences waiting helplessly for a neighbor or church friend to come and take care of the things they don't understand or never knew about. The story of an elderly immigrant and the carbon monoxide poisoning came from an environmental newspaper.

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## B. New Words

Match the words on the left with the descriptions on the right:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. socialized      | A. a substance that stops the action of a poison or other harmful substance  |
| 2. buffer          | B. an extremely poisonous gas with no color, taste, or smell, and occurring esp. in the exhaust from gasoline engines: |
| 3. stoicism        | C. to be with other people in a friendly way, for talking, dining,   |
| 4. antidote        | D. that softens or stops a blow, a cushion   |
| 5. carbon monoxide | E. seeming unaffected by pain, indifferent   |

## C. Understanding

True or False:

1. Irina's husband learned English at work and her sons learned in school.
2. She was happy when her children moved to far-off cities to pursue their careers.
3. Irina can change the batteries for the fire and carbon monoxide alarms.
4. She joined a reading class.
5. Irina's American friends helped her figure out the bills.
6. She was able to call 911 even after she collapsed.

## D. Let's Talk

Discuss with a classmate your answer to these questions, and then tell the class.

1. Have you ever called 911? What happened? Why did you call 911?
2. What information did you provide?

Role play with a partner: One person is calling in an emergency; the other is the 911 operator

# Story #4

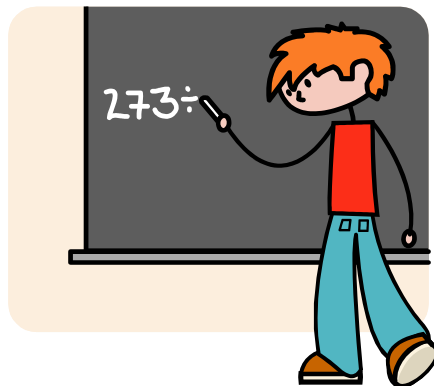


## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

How do you get to your English class?

How do your children get to school?



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## JOSEFINA AND THE YELLOW SCHOOL BUS

Josefina is a young widow. She has one child, Daria. Daria is 6 years old. They are from Mozambique, Africa. They came to their new city by plane. It was January. Josefina looked out of the plane's window. Snow covered the ground. Josefina had never seen snow before. She thought it was beautiful.

Friends helped Josefina to register Daria for school. They also helped Josefina register for ESL at the adult school. Friends also showed Josefina where to wait for the yellow school bus.

In the morning, Josefina and Daria went to the bus stop 15 minutes early. They waited a long time. No yellow school bus came. Daria was crying because she was so cold. Josefina carried her to her adult school. She told the teacher about the yellow school bus not coming. The teacher called the school. The school sent a taxi for Daria. After school, the teacher took Josefina and Daria to the bus stop. The teacher wanted to be sure Josefina was waiting at the right street corner.

In the morning, Josefina and Daria went to the bus stop 30 minutes early. Again, they waited. Again, the bus did not come. Again, Josefina carried Daria to her ESL class. The teacher called the school again. The school sent a taxi.

Later, the school called the teacher. They put Daria on a new bus route. The next morning, Josefina and Daria set out 30 minutes early. The bus came at the right time. Daria went to school by bus.

**(253 words. Reading Grade Level of 4.8)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This story comes from personal experience with one refugee parent. Only the names are changed.

### B. New Words

What is the meaning of the word that is underlined?

1. Josefina is a young widow.
  - a. a woman whose husband has died
  - b. a woman whose husband is on vacation

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- 
2. Friends helped her to register Daria for school.
    - a. to enroll
    - b. to manage
  3. They put Daria on a new route.
    - a. a taxi
    - b. a schedule

## C. Understanding

Answer these questions, using complete sentences:

1. Where are Josefina and Daria from?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are some of the things Josefina's friends helped them with?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What happened when the bus did not show up at the bus stop the first time? The second time?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## D. Let's Talk

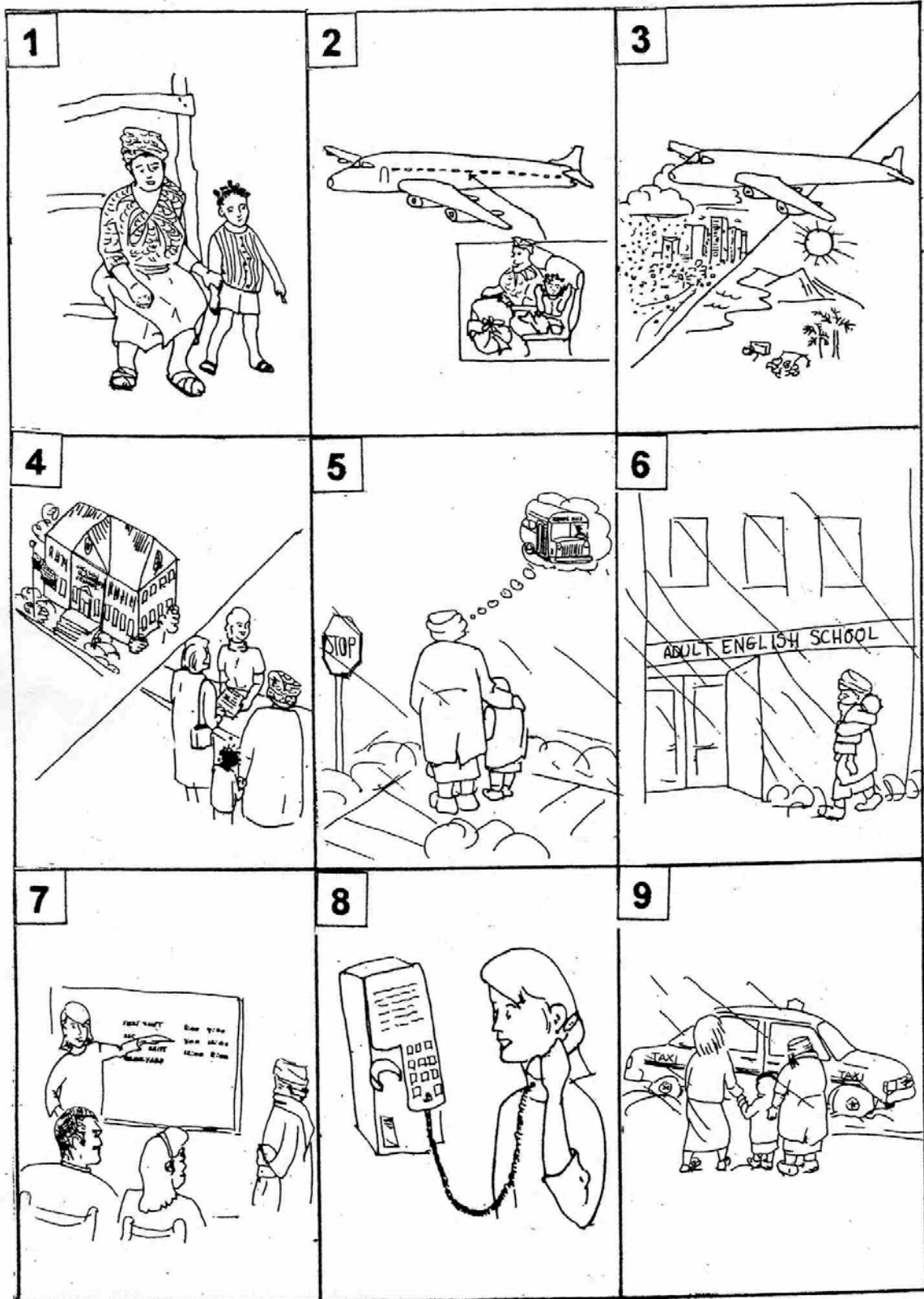
Ask your classmates how they get to school?

Write down the different ways people get around or travel round.

Least Expensive Way	Most Expensive Way

## E. More Pictures

Play picture bingo: Make a copy of the picture (next page) for each of the students. Read a sentence from the story and have students match what was said with each square in the picture.



# Story #5



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Which sports do you like to watch?

Which sports do you like to play?



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## ROYIDA BUYS SOME TENNIS SHOES

Royida came to the USA with her three children. In the USA, all Royida's children went to school. And Royida went to adult school. Royida could not read and write. In school, she learned the alphabet. She learned to write her name.

At home, Royida tried to read the letters from the children's school. But she did not understand them. Next, Royida studied her children's report cards. But she did not understand them either. She went to parent-teacher conferences. But she did not understand the teacher. She worried about her children. She did not know how to help them.

One day, her teacher at the adult school announced a special class. The special class would help parents read report cards. Every Saturday, Royida was the first parent in the class. She sat at the front of the class. She listened very carefully. She asked questions. She took the children's report cards to class with her.

Amuna was her oldest daughter. Royida read Amuna's report card. She saw an "F" next to Physical Education. Amuna failed Physical Education!

Then, Royida's teacher at adult school announced another special class. The special class would help parents at parent-teacher conferences. Again, Royida sat at the front of the class. She practiced at school and at home. Then, a letter about the next parent-teacher conference arrived. Royida got ready. She practiced her English. She rode the bus to school. She went in the school. She signed her name in the book at the front of the classroom. She waited her turn.

Her turn came. Royida said, "Hello. My name is Royida. I'm Amuna's mother. How is she doing?" The teacher smiled. The teacher showed her Amuna's Reading and Writing and Arithmetic. Amuna was doing well.

Now, Royida showed her Amuna's report card. She pointed to the "F" next to Physical Education. She said, "Why?" The teacher said, "Amuna must wear tennis shoes in Physical Education. She showed Royida a picture of a little girl in tennis shoes. Royida said, "Oh!" She bought Amuna some tennis shoes. Now, Amuna's report card has an "A" next to Physical Education.



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(352 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 4.6)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: In real life, this story was only resolved when Royida's teacher went with her to the parent-teacher conference and stood close beside her at the interview. However, Royida **did** do the talking and shoe buying!

## B. New Words

*announced    failed    signed    showed    bought    worried*

1. Amuna \_\_\_\_\_ Physical Education.
2. Amuna has an "A" next to Physical Education after Royida \_\_\_\_\_ some tennis shoes.
3. Amuna's teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Royida a picture of tennis shoes.
4. Royida's teacher \_\_\_\_\_ a couple of special classes.
5. When Royida arrived for the parent-teacher conference, she \_\_\_\_\_ her name in the book at the front of the room.
6. She was \_\_\_\_\_ about her children because she did not know how to help them.

## C. Understanding

Find the word in each sentence that is not correct. Cross it off, and write the correct word.

1. Royida has two children.
2. Amuna failed Arithmetic
3. Amuna's teacher announced a couple of special classes for parents.
4. Royida bought leather shoes for her daughter.
5. Amuna was doing well in Reading, Physical Education, and Arithmetic.
6. Royida can read and write.

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## D. Let's Talk

Schools in the United States are different from schools in other countries. Discuss with your classmates some of the differences, write them down and then talk about this in class.

In the United States

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In my native country

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## Field Trip:

Visit a school that is close to your adult ESL class. Partner with an elementary school teacher and the class.

Design a number of activities with your ESL students before visiting the school: Interview questions, practice reading folktales or other short stories or prepare some mini-presentations.

# Story #6



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

What professions do they have?

How many years do they have to study?

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## **ASIMA GOES BACK TO SCHOOL**

Asima and her husband, Fikret, had been doctors in their country. They quickly discovered that the rules licensing USA doctors prevented them from practicing here. They would have to be recredentialed by state and USA national medical organizations. Recredentialing is a long and expensive process. Unfortunately, Asima and Fikret, as refugees, knew they needed an income quickly. They had two young children and themselves to support. So they asked their sponsor to find them employment. Soon, Asima and Fikret were working in a factory making medical equipment. Disappointed and frustrated at these very limited opportunities, they decided to think again about being doctors. So they decided to investigate exactly what they needed to do to become recredentialed. They asked questions of friends. They looked in the Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook and they researched information on the Internet.

They quickly learned from their friends that no others from their country were practicing medicine in their community. So there was no one from whom they could ask advice. They did not give up, however. Instead, they continued their research at the local library with the Occupational Outlook Handbook. They learned about the many steps needed to become doctors again. The handbook told them about a physician's working conditions, employment opportunities, training, other qualifications, and advancement, earnings, job outlook plus sources of additional information. Not satisfied with this one source of information, though so large, they turned to the Internet. Each site there confirmed what they had learned already. One other issue that became apparent was that recredentialing would be very expensive not only of money but of time. After much thought and discussion, they decided that they would proceed but with just one spouse at a time. Either Asima or Fikret would study while the other earned the family income.

Asima and Fikret had learned that a foreign doctor who wants to practice medicine in the USA must first pass many tests. There are tests of English, and academic medical knowledge plus tests of practical clinical skills. After that, an

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applicant must then seek a “residency” in a USA teaching hospital. This final step helps the newly recredentialed doctor become familiar with the day-to-day practices of a modern USA hospital, or, for some graduates, in the specialty that they have chosen. A residency usually lasts approximately one year.

Asima had better English communication skills than her husband, so they decided she would start. This meant Fikret would be the sole family breadwinner, housekeeper and caregiver to their two young children for two years or more. They were scared but they believed that only if they pursued this goal could they escape their current economically marginal existence and ultimately give their children a better life.

First, Asima went to her local community college and registered for an intensive English course. She took several practice TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) tests as part of the course. When she felt ready, she sent in her application to take the English exam. While she waited for the results, she found a special school that prepared foreign graduates for various recredentiaing exams. The ECFMG (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates) training was computerized so that applicants could study each day for as long as they wanted. She borrowed the \$1,200 registration fee, and for three months, Asima studied and practiced all day, every day.

She passed a basic science exam in June and a clinical science exam in August. Next, she knew she would need to pass a Clinical Skills Assessment Exam (CSA). This is a two-day exam, held only in Philadelphia. In this critical CSA, Asima would have to demonstrate to the examiners how she would interview, diagnose and treat 10 pretend “patients”. Again, she had to borrow the money for the application fee, airfare and travel expenses. Asima was understandably very anxious at the thought of demonstrating two days of diagnosis and clinical note writing in her second language. In addition, and just as importantly, she needed to show that she had adapted to American cultural and ethical standards of doctor-patient relationships. All the while, she would be closely watched and assessed by English-speaking clinicians trained to identify flaws of medical knowledge, procedure or cultural conduct. Finally, it was over.

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She realized that she still needed to fine tune her doctor-patient standards, but once again, she had passed.

Now came the search for a hospital that would offer her a residency in family medicine. Asima was lucky because a hospital in the city where she lived offered her a residency. That meant that she could live at home. Gratefully she took the offer and was finally practicing medicine again. She was even earning a small salary after more than two years of intensive study and test taking. At the end of a successful year of residency, Asima was finally able to set up her own medical practice.

She was also glad to be able to take part once again in helping with the family's daily household activities, with being a wife and mother and with beginning to pay back the family's accumulated debts! Most important of all to Asima was the satisfaction she felt as the family began to recover the socio-economic markers of the life they had lost when they had to leave their country of birth.

**(884 words. Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 10.3)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: "Asima" went through these recredentialing gateposts with the help of Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funding and local professional staff that helped identify resources and how she could best help herself. The recredentialing took two years. "Asima" brought many valuable, personal gifts to her task: she was energetic, determined, had good English already, was a good student, a high-talker, optimistic, a natural "networker" and her husband and children were supportive throughout. She now has her own medical practice that includes native English speaking patients as well as an ethnic clientele. Her husband has set aside his own professional ambitions to run the business side of her practice.

## **B. New Words**

Match the words on the left with the words on the right:

accumulate	adjust
adapt	increase
critical	not satisfied
disappointed	to stop from happening
frustrated	to strive for something
prevent	unfulfilled
pursue	valuable

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## C. Understanding

Choose the correct answer:

1. At the beginning, Asima and Fikret were both disappointed because:
  - a. they had limited opportunities.
  - b. they did not receive help from friends.
2. Asima pursued her goal of being a doctor first because:
  - a. her husband was lazy.
  - b. she had better English skills.
3. For Asima's two-day exam, she had to demonstrate:
  - a. she knew the American medical standards
  - b. she could repay all her medical expenses.
4. Fikret became the sole family breadwinner:
  - a. he knew how to bake bread.
  - b. he was the only one working to earn a living.

## D. Let's Talk

What are your goals? Where do you see yourself in a year? In 5 years? In 10 years?

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5

Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What will you be doing?

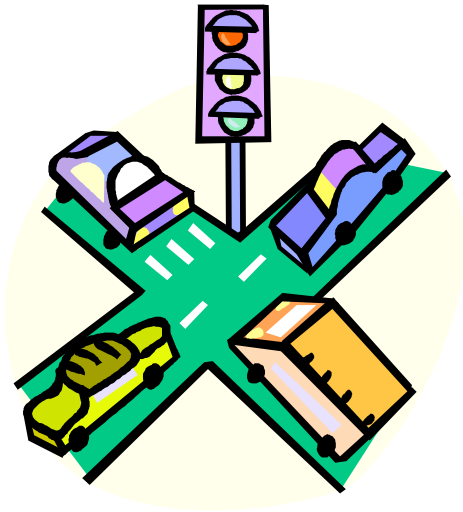
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# Story #7



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Who builds these roads, bridges and tunnels?

What are some famous USA bridges and roads?



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## ZOREN BUILDS AGAIN

Zoren was a civil engineer. For seven years, he had helped supervise and build roads, bridges, tunnels and many tall buildings throughout his country. He was determined to continue working in engineering after immigrating to the USA. With this in mind, Zoren carefully gathered all his college, school and work records and made copies of them before leaving his country of origin. He was careful to store them and carry them separately. He knew that once he left his country, it would be impossible to document his academic achievements because his college, with all its records, had been destroyed early in the civil war.

He had studied English in high school yet he was glad of the few short weeks he could study English again because very soon after arrival, his job counselor asked Zoren about his previous work experience. Zoren told him that he was a civil engineer, outlined his work experience and pulled out one of his packets of credentials. However, the job counselor was very busy and did not have time to look at old school records. He had many clients waiting for jobs. Zoren put his credentials away. The job counselor had heard the word 'engineering' however. So the next day, he sent Zoren for an interview at a factory that assembled small engines. At midnight that evening, Zoren started work on the factory's assembly line tightening bolts on small engines.

At the end of the month, Zoren looked at his paycheck. He would have very little money left after paying his rent plus utilities and buying some food. He felt discouraged. However, the one advantage his graveyard shift job provided was that it left his daytime hours free. Of course, he needed to sleep, but if he organized his time carefully, he could go on job interviews and get some sleep. After four weeks of sending out many copies of his resume to civil engineering companies in the Yellow Pages of the phone book and in the want ads of the local newspapers, he had just three job interviews and no job offers.

However, Zoren had learned several important lessons during the interviews. First, he needed to improve his English communication skills because employers do not want to waste time and money on an engineer who cannot communicate his

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ideas. Second, most engineers in the USA design projects using a special computer-assisted design program. Zoren had used computers before but he had never used a computerized design program. However, Zoren had learned two encouraging pieces of information. The nearby community college offered a computer-assisted design (CAD) training program. Even more important, Zoren had learned that he could work as an engineer in the USA without recredentialing. He would always need a senior engineer to sign off on all his plans and designs but Zoren was elated. He could once again envision roads, bridges, tunnels and tall buildings as part of his career future.

Zoren spent all his very small savings on the community college's AutoCAD class. He also went to his local library. They found him a volunteer who helped him practice his communication skills. Then, he updated his resume, took out his packet of credentials and applied for all the engineering jobs he found in the want ads. He didn't get back into engineering with his first interview but he succeeded with his third.

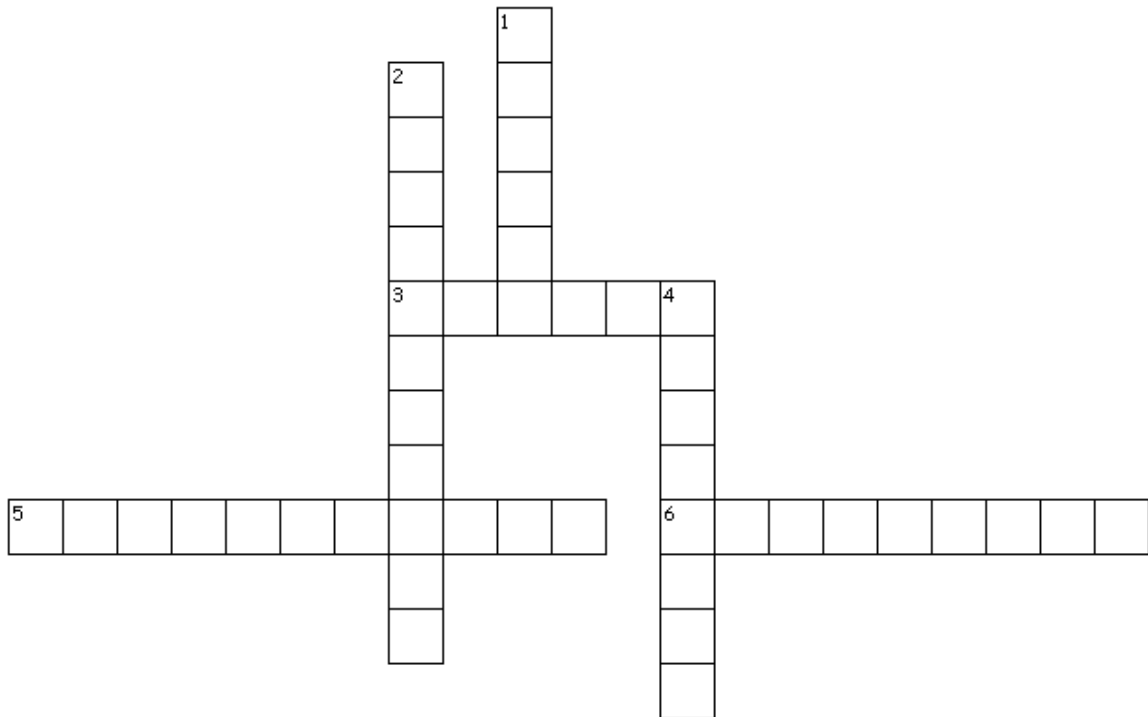
**(563 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 9.3)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I've changed Zoren's name, but the rest is exactly as it occurred. Although another "advanced level story", I've included it, because the transition from assembly line to engineering career occurred so differently from Asima's. Zoren was an independent self-starter and quietly persistent, but reticent. He never asked for help and he didn't network. The teacher of his English class told me about him. She found out about Computer Assisted Design and told him where he could get AutoCAD training. ORR funding paid for the AutoCAD program that Zoren practiced on every weekend. Zoren also coached (sometimes across language barriers) several other engineers who also wanted to get back into their professional field.

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## B. New Words

### Crossword Puzzle



<i>supervise</i>	<i>discouraged</i>	<i>communicate</i>	<i>elated</i>	<i>update</i>	<i>envision</i>
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#### Across

- 3. provide new information
- 5. less optimistic
- 6. oversee

#### Down

- 1. very happy
- 2. talk
- 4. picture something mentally

## C. Understanding

True or False:

- 1. Zoren forgot to bring all his school and work records when he moved to the USA.
- 2. Zoren cannot work as an engineer without USA credentials.
- 3. He worked graveyard shift while he slept during the day.

- 
4. He used the Yellow Pages and the want ads to look for jobs.
  5. Zoren wanted to continue to build roads, bridges, tunnels and buildings.

## **D. Let's Talk**

Read these want ads. Which job would you be interested in applying for? What qualifications do you need for these jobs?

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Enroll in free one-week training. Focus is on providing quality service to income tax customers. Day and evening classes available. No experience necessary. Seasonal job opportunities. Call 303-988-1125. Full-time and Part-time Will not pay relocation expenses

LONGMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT: POLICE RECRUIT: Starting salary is \$47,832 + benefits. Visit our website at [www.ci.longmont.co.us/police/gerecruit.htm](http://www.ci.longmont.co.us/police/gerecruit.htm) for detailed information and a complete application packet or call 303-651-8609. Application deadline 5:00 pm February 9, 2007. Bilingual English/Spanish skills are desirable and female and minority candidates are encouraged to apply. The City of Longmont is an Equal Opportunity Employer with a commitment to diversity.

PHOTOGRAPHER Photographer/Sales Rep to take new born photos at hospitals, perm, benes, No exp. nec. Pd traing, wkdy & wknd. 866-389-1741 ext 601. Full time.

Retail GOODWILL Join a growing retail team-apply at Goodwill today! We're hiring for all positions and offer benefits, full & part-time positions, employee discounts & opportunities to advance. Please apply at 14400 E. Bellevue Ave. in Aurora or fax resume to 303-766-8471. Visit [www.goodwill denver.org](http://www.goodwill denver.org) for more info.

HOUSEKEEPER For full maint. of resident in Niwot. Full or part time. Exp in cleaning, laundry & ironing. English speaker, legal alien status, or US Citizen. Non-smkg., excel. refs. req'd. Call 313-652-0253 or email.

Driver/CHAUFFEUR; Aurora based Limousine Company LOOKING FOR PROFESSIONAL INDIVIDUALS OVER 25 WITH KNOWLEDGE OF CITY. Apply 505 Nucla Way MUST BRING MVR.

# Story #8



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Do you live in a house or in an apartment?

Have you been to Small Claims Court?

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*These three housing stories all tell the same tale. I wrote them like this so that teachers could see how they can take any of these stories and, with the help of Microsoft's Word and the built-in Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade mechanism, they can shift the level of language complexity to meet their own students' needs.*

## **Luka**

*Beginning Level*

Luka lived in a beautiful apartment. The apartment was expensive. His father and brother, Emir, lived with him. They all paid part of the rent. Near the end of one year, Luka's father heard about a good job in Oregon. So, Luka's father went to live in Oregon. Mohamed received a letter from a college. The college offered Mohamed a scholarship. So, Mohamed went to live at the college.

Now Luka had no one to help pay the rent. He wrote to his landlord. He told the landlord that he would leave the apartment in one month. Luka cleaned the apartment carefully. He took photos of all the rooms. Then he moved in with a friend. Luka asked the landlord to check the apartment. The landlord found no problems. Luka gave the landlord the keys. He asked the landlord to send his security deposit back. The landlord said he could not do that. Luka said he needed the security deposit to rent another apartment. The landlord still said "No."

So, Luka took his lease and his photos and he went to Small Claims Court. He told the judge in Small Claims Court about the end of the lease and the photos and the landlord. The judge in Small Claims Court looked at his lease and his photos. The judge told the landlord to give Luka his security deposit. Now Luka has a new, small apartment.

**(235 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 3.9)**

Author's Note: I recall when I brought these stories to Denver earlier, someone questioned whether the story could possibly be true. This actually happened. The student was an Ethiopian who had become friendly with our evening desk clerk, a young American man about the same age. The desk clerk told Luka about the Small Claims Court and held his hand through the application process and Court appearance. And yes, they really did get the security deposit back. Teachers need to be aware, however, that each state has a different set of limits on how large a sum an applicant can seek relief from.

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## B. New Words

Find the opposite. Match the underlined words on the left with the ones on the right:

<u>clean</u> apartment	cheap
<u>end</u> of the lease	dirty
<u>expensive</u> apartment	poor
<u>good</u> job	start

## C. Understanding

Write your answers to these questions, using complete sentences:

1. Who moved to Oregon?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who went to college?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Who did not want to return the security deposit?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who took the landlord to Small Claims Court?

\_\_\_\_\_

## D. Let's Talk

Tell the class about your apartment/house:

Where do you live? \_\_\_\_\_

How many bedrooms? Bathrooms? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you live with your family? Who do you live with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How much rent/mortgage do you pay? \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Luka**

### *Intermediate Level*

Luka lived in a beautiful apartment with his father and his brother, Emir. Although the apartment was expensive, his father and brother shared the cost of the rent. At the end of one year, Luka's father heard about a good job in Oregon. So, he went to live in Oregon. A little later, Emir received a letter from a college offering him a scholarship. Therefore, Emir went to live at the college.

Now Luka had no one to help pay the rent. As it was near the end of the lease, he wrote to his landlord and told him that he would leave the apartment in one month. Before he left, Luka cleaned the apartment carefully and took photos of all the rooms. Then he moved in with a friend. Luka asked the landlord to check the apartment. The landlord looked all around the apartment but found no problems. Luka gave the landlord the keys and asked the landlord to return his security deposit. Luka said he needed the security deposit to rent another apartment. The landlord said "No."

However, Luka's English teacher had told him that people could go to Small Claims Court to recover small sums of money. He knew that he must take proof of his claim with him. So, he took his lease, a copy of his letter to the landlord and his photos when he went to court. He told the judge in Small Claims Court about the end of the lease and the photos and the landlord. The judge in Small Claims Court looked at his lease, the letter and his photos. The judge told the landlord to return Luka's security deposit. Now Luka has a new, smaller apartment.

**(285 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 5.7)**



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## B. New Words

Fill in the correct word for each sentence:

*Although    However    Now    So    Then    Therefore*

\_\_\_\_\_ the apartment was expensive, they all shared with the cost.  
Luka's father moved to Oregon. Emir received a college offer, \_\_\_\_\_ he went to live at college. \_\_\_\_\_ Luka had no one to help pay the rent. He told the landlord he would move. He cleaned the apartment, \_\_\_\_\_ he moved in with a friend. When Luka asked for the security deposit back, the landlord did not want to give it back to him. \_\_\_\_\_ Luka's teacher said he can go to Small Claims Court to get the money back. \_\_\_\_\_ Luka took all his paperwork and went to court.

## C. Understanding

Arrange these sentences in the right order:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Luka has a new, smaller apartment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The landlord did not return Luka's security deposit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Luka moved in with a friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Emir went to college.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Luka's father moved to Oregon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Luka went to Small Claims Court.

## D. Let's Talk

Imagine this: You have been living in your apartment for about a year now. You are having problems in your apartment. The bathroom sink is clogged up. One of the bedroom windows is broken and cold air is coming in. And you will be a week late in paying your rent.

On your own paper, write a note to the landlord or to your apartment manager about all the problems you have, and how you want them remedied.

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## **Luka**

### *Advanced Level*

When the landlord showed Luka the top-floor apartment, its floor-to-ceiling living room windows with their view of the whole midwestern city were overwhelming. The apartment was expensive, but there would be three of his family to help pay the rent. It would be the first time in nine years that his whole remaining family could live under one roof, so Luka signed the one-year lease of the beautiful high-rise apartment. Prior to moving in, however, he walked around the apartment taking photos of each room with a camera that automatically dated each picture so that he would know the condition the landlord would expect him to return it. Helping to share the expenses were Luka's father and younger brother, Emir. Luka's father had been a civil engineer in the old country but was currently working in an entry-level job while he waited for the USA evaluators to recredential his certificates and permit him to return to his professional field. Emir, the younger brother, was planning a medical career and had applied to a number of colleges. He was waiting now to see which college would offer the best scholarship package. To support himself in the meantime, he worked in a car assembly plant.

After nearly a year of waiting and within the space of one week, Luka's father received the documentation he needed to re-enter the field of civil engineering plus a job offer in Oregon, and Emir received the offer of a full-tuition scholarship at a good university. Luka was delighted for his father's and his brother's successes, but deeply saddened at the prospect of his family's breakup once more. He was even more saddened at the realization that he must leave his beautiful apartment. However, he realized that the lease was near its end and that he would have had to negotiate a new lease or leave anyway, so he promptly informed his landlord by registered letter that he would be leaving. Luka also realized that he would need to recover the security deposit from his present apartment in order to rent a new and cheaper place. Fortunately, he had a friend who had offered to let Luka stay for a few weeks while he searched for a new place.

Luka prepared for the move by cleaning the apartment very thoroughly, following which, he invited the landlord to come and check it to confirm that it was

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undamaged. The landlord found no problems but refused to return the security deposit. He said that he must use it to repair general “wear and tear”. Luka protested that the landlord had identified no wear and tear and could not charge him for wear and tear anyway. The landlord, however, was adamant. He would not return the security deposit.

Luka was deeply upset because without his security deposit he could not rent another apartment. Then he remembered a lesson where his English teacher had told him that people do not need a lawyer to recover small sums of money in Small Claims Court. So, he went back to the apartment and took photos, using the same date-printing camera of every room before sending the keys back to the landlord by registered mail. Next, he went to the Small Claims Court and filed a claim against the landlord to recover his security deposit. In court, he showed the judge the photos taken when he moved in and the photos taken again when he moved out, plus his lease and his letter informing the landlord that he would be leaving. The judge ordered the landlord to return the security deposit. Leaving court, Luka, his security deposit safely in his own pocket, lifted his face to the sun relieved to know that he could now rent an apartment for himself.

**(627 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 11.1)**

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## B. New Words

Which sentence has the same meaning as the underlined words:

1. The view of the whole midwestern city was overwhelming.
  - a. The view was awesome.
  - b. The view was not as clear as a picture.
2. Luka would have to negotiate a new lease because his old one is near its end.
  - a. He needed to agree on a new lease.
  - b. He needed to read his old lease.
3. He cleaned the apartment very thoroughly.
  - a. He cleaned the apartment completely from top to bottom.
  - b. He cleaned the apartment for 5 minutes.
4. The landlord was adamant and would not return the security deposit.
  - a. The landlord was not flexible.
  - b. The landlord was angry.
5. Luka was relieved to know that he could now rent a new apartment.
  - a. Luka was upset.
  - b. Luka was pleased.

## C. Understanding

Answer the questions with a complete sentence:

1. Why did Luka want to move to a different apartment?

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2. Why did the landlord not return the security deposit back to Luka?

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3. How did he prepare for the Small Claims Court in order to get his security deposit back?

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## D. Let's Talk

Read the story below, titled "Moving Date", and answer the question.

The Masters family is moving to a new house. They have a dog, a cat, and a pet mouse, but the animals don't get along in the car, so they can take only one at a time.

Then there are other problems. They can't leave the dog alone with the cat, because the dog chases the cat if no one is watching. And they can't leave the cat and the mouse together, because...well, you know what would happen if they did.

Question: How can the Masters family get all three of their pets to their new house?

Answer: They take the cat to the new house, leaving the dog and the mouse at the old house. They return to the old house and take the mouse to the new house. They take the cat back to the old house, leave it there, and take the dog to the new house. Then they return to the old house for the cat.

Source: [www.Puzzlemaker.com](http://www.Puzzlemaker.com)

## E. More Pictures

1. Verbs/action word: Look at each square, and come up with at least 2 verbs or action words; e.g., in the first square – stand, talk.

2.. Role-play a dialogue:

Make a copy for each pair of students (picture is on the next page). Ask what the people are doing, what they are talking about, what some of the words or expressions they are using. Ask several pairs to perform their dialogs in front of the class.



# Story #9



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Where do you buy your groceries?  
Where do you go grocery shopping?

Which vegetables do you cook,  
and which ones do you eat raw?

---

## MICHAEL AND THE VEGETABLE COOPERATIVE

Michael has five sons. Michael also has many grandchildren. And Michael has three brothers. His brothers have children. The brothers also have grandchildren. Michael and his brothers have more than 65 family members.

Every month, the families spend a lot of money on food. Michael's neighbor tells him about a food cooperative. In a food cooperative, a lot of people put their money together to buy food. The cooperative buys food directly from farmers. Food is fresher and cheaper because people buy directly from a farmer.

Michael calls his brothers, sons and grandsons to a family meeting. He tells them about the food cooperative. He tells them they can save a lot of money. Michael tells them that each month the family chooses one family member as the "shopper". Each family makes a list of what they want. Then they give the list to the family "shopper". Each family gives the "shopper" money for their order. Then the "shopper" goes to the cooperative with their order and the money. Later, he picks up their orders and takes it to each family.

Michael's brothers, sons and grandsons ask Michael many questions. They worry because they pay money before they see the food. The "shopper" has a lot of extra work. First, he takes the order to the cooperative. Later, he puts everyone's food in his car. Next, he takes the food to all the homes. Perhaps the food is not good. Perhaps he forgets part of the order. He must go back to the cooperative. Maybe the family is without food. Michael's brothers think cooperatives are very complicated. Michael asks his neighbor to talk about the cooperative. Michael's brothers don't want to talk with the neighbor. He doesn't speak their language. He doesn't understand their ways. Michael's brothers go home. Then his sons and grandsons go home. Poor Michael!

**(307 words. Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 4.9)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I sat in on the original "co-op" meeting with a group of unrelated Ethiopians. They weren't family members. Co-ops are great but there aren't enough words or translators to get over some cultural hurdles.



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## B. New Words

*cheaper   complicated   cooperative   fresher   neighbor   shopper*

1. Michael's \_\_\_\_\_ told him about the food \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The food is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ because the cooperative buys food directly from farmers.
3. One family member, the \_\_\_\_\_, has a lot of extra work to do.
4. Michael's family decided not to use the cooperative because they think it is very \_\_\_\_\_.

## C. Understanding

### Vegetable and Fruit Word Search

S	G	T	P	E	A	R	N	W	F
D	T	D	O	O	S	E	S	H	O
D	M	R	T	M	N	C	O	R	N
B	A	N	A	N	A	U	N	L	I
E	P	O	T	W	E	T	T	C	O
F	P	M	O	E	B	T	O	H	N
D	L	E	E	K	S	E	R	E	F
U	E	L	S	L	X	L	R	R	S
C	P	E	A	S	E	P	A	R	G
E	G	N	A	R	O	A	C	Y	Y

APPLE  
BANANA  
BEANS  
CARROT

CHERRY  
CORN  
GRAPES

LEMON  
LETTUCE  
ONION

ORANGE  
PEAR  
PEAS

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POTATOES

STRAWBERRY

TOMATOES

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## D. Let's Talk

1. Talk to your classmate about foods you like and don't like to eat.

I like \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

I don't like \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Do you eat pizza? Do you like vegetable salads? With a partner, write the ingredients you want for your pizza, or for your salad.

Build your own pizza. What do you like on your pizza?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What vegetables do you have in your salad?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Small, Medium or Large?

Question: Al, Beth, and Cynthia got sodas to drink in the movies. "We want a small, a medium, and a large, and I don't get the large," Beth told the kid at the counter. "I thought you said you were getting large," said the boy who wanted the medium-size drink.

Who wanted what size drink?

Answer: Al got medium, Beth got small, and Cynthia got large. You know that Beth didn't want large, so she could have gotten small or medium. But you know that someone else wanted medium, so Beth had to get the small drink.

You also know who got the medium-sized drink — it had to be Al, because he was the only boy in the group. That means the large drink was for Cynthia.

Source: Lowell House, *Brain Games*

# Story #10



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Do you have a mortgage? What is a mortgage?

Do you have a loan?

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## HARIS BOUGHT A BUILDING

The small, two-family apartment building was old and empty. No one had lived there for a long time. Haris drove by it every day on his way to work. It was one of many small apartments on that street. One day, he noticed that the building adjoining it was empty and for sale too. Haris called the realtor. He visited the building. He checked the inside of the building. He looked at the floors, walls and ceilings. He checked the electricity, the plumbing and the main stack. He inspected the roof and the gutters. Everything was old, but it was sound. He decided to buy the buildings. He used the small sum of money he had saved from his job.

Haris had been a merchant in his country. Farmers, bakers and butchers sold their products to him. Then Haris sold them to the people of his community. With his new buildings, Haris happily looked forward to being a merchant again.

In his new building, Haris knocked out the connecting wall between the buildings to increase storage space. He tossed the old plaster and brick into the trash cans out back. The trash collectors did not take the trash away. Haris began to get letters from the City Public Works Department. He threw the letters in the trash too. He didn't read them because he had not learned to read English. One day, there was a knock on the door. It was a city inspector with a policeman. He handed Haris an envelope with a red border. He also tried to talk to Haris but soon discovered that Haris didn't speak English very well.

Haris took the letter to a friend. The friend read the letter and explained to Haris that neighbors had complained about the small hill of building material in the backyard. Haris needed a permit to do remodeling. He also needed to hire someone to remove the old bricks and plaster. He had to go to Court and pay a fine too.

Haris didn't really understand. In his country, after you bought a property, you could do what you wanted with it. Still, he hired someone to take away the trash, paid the fine and bought the permit. He also bought some very big refrigerators and told all his friends about his business. He began buying and selling baked goods, fresh produce and meat.

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Soon, Haris began getting letters from the city again, but they didn't have red borders so he threw them out. One day, there was a knock on the door and there was another inspector with another policeman and another red-bordered envelope.

His friend read the letter and looked very serious. The whole street was zoned for multiple dwelling uses and not retail sales, he told Haris. Haris must stop selling food immediately.

Haris was scared. He had used up all his savings buying the buildings, the food and the refrigerators. His friends advised him to get a lawyer. The lawyer talked to the city council. The lawyer explained to Haris through an interpreter that the city would not change the zoning regulations. Haris had broken the city ordinances. Haris should have talked to the building department first. Now, the city told him he must pay another fine. After that, he could sell the buildings, or buy another permit, remodel the inside to turn the buildings back into apartments again, and then paint everything inside and out and try to rent the rooms as apartments.

**(580 words. Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 5.5)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Another composite story. We have one of the largest Bosnian communities in the country. Most believe in hard work and free enterprise. This makes many of them, of course, very successful entrepreneurs. Some however, run into trouble with their free-wheeling-get-the-job-done outlook. Many find it very hard to understand the concept "government" at federal, state, county **AND** city level and cannot at all believe the limitations that a city alderman can place on their creativity. Life can also be particularly difficult for those who have limited English communication skills and literacy.

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## B. New Words

Match the words in the first column to the best answer in the second column.

_____	adjoining	1) take away
_____	complain	2) allow
_____	remove	3) next
_____	permit	4) protest
_____	scared	5) law
_____	ordinance	6) afraid

## C. Understanding

What is the main idea? Circle the correct answer.

1. Haris may have to sell the buildings:
  - a. Because he broke city ordinances and he spent all his savings.
  - b. Because he hired an expensive lawyer.
2. Haris really didn't understand. In his country, after you bought a property:
  - a. You must get a permit from the government first.
  - b. You can use it as a store or as an apartment, for anything you want.

## D. Let's Talk

Haris used his small sum of money he had saved from his job to buy the buildings. Imagine this: You have \$10,000.00 in your savings. What will you do with it. Will you buy a new car, go on a vacation, travel back to your country, buy gifts for all your family and friends, or buy some real estate. Make a list of what you will buy or do. Then share with the class.

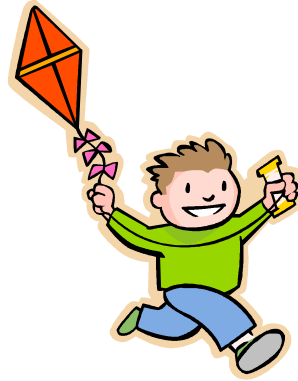
With \$10,000.00, I will:

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# Story #11

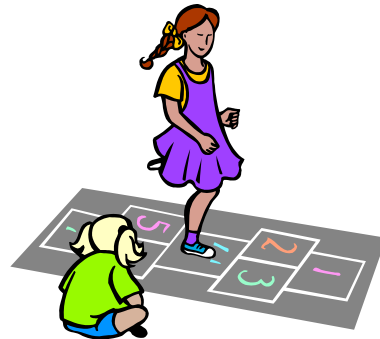


## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the picture.

Where are the children doing?  
Are they playing outside

Who is taking care of the children?





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## **ABDI AND FAWZIA IGNORE THE RULES**

Abdi and Fawzia plus their children, Michael, aged 9, Abdul aged 7, and baby, Zahra had lived in a small apartment with others from their country for more than two years. Both Abdi and Fawzia had jobs on the first shift at a business nearby. They found their jobs easy. However, they wanted to improve their incomes with better jobs. For that, they knew they needed to improve their English. So, every Monday through Thursday they attended the free English as a Second Language classes at the nearby resettlement agency.

Michael and Abdul were lively, active youngsters but their parents trusted them. Friends had told Abdi that they could not leave their children alone at home without the supervision of someone over the age of 13. But there were other parents from their country in the 4-family apartment, so Abdi and Fawzia felt sure the children were safe.

One evening, however, the police came to the English class looking for Abdi and Fawzia. There had been an explosion and fire at their apartment and the children were on their way to the hospital. Abdi and Fawzia hurried home. The neighbors on the sidewalk watched the fire department put out the fire. They quickly told Abdi and Fawzia what had happened.

The boys had decided to experiment with the oven. Michael turned it on, but it didn't ignite as it usually did, so he went to find some matches. However, he didn't turn off the gas while he was looking. When he finally found some matches after about five minutes, the gas ignited with a mighty explosion, blowing the boys across the room. It also blew out all the windows in the apartment. Then, with air coming in from the broken windows, the oxygen began to feed the fire that had started. Fortunately, no one was killed. The boys lost their eyebrows and were very shaken and bruised, but they were not badly injured. The baby, asleep in another room, was completely unharmed.

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The police, however, gave Abdi and Fawzia a summons for failing to provide proper supervision for their children and for neglect. The landlord billed them for replacement windows and their neighbors gave them their bills for repair or replacement of their smoke-damaged furniture. That was a scary and expensive learning experience.

(384 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 7.8 )

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Another true story. I was there the night the police came for Abdi and Fawzia.

## B. New Words

Fill in the blanks with the correct words from the list.

*experiment    ignited    injured    summons    supervision    trusted*

Abdi and Fawzia \_\_\_\_\_ their children, so they left them alone without adult \_\_\_\_\_. The two boys decided to \_\_\_\_\_ with the oven and it \_\_\_\_\_ with an explosion. The fire department came and the boys were taken to the hospital, but they were not badly \_\_\_\_\_. The police gave Abdi and Fawzia a \_\_\_\_\_. It was a scary and expensive learning experience for them.

---

## C. Understanding

Arrange these sentences by numbering them from 1 to 7 so that they are in the right order.

- \_\_\_\_\_ There was an explosion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The fire department put out the fire.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The police came to Adbi and Fawzia's English class to give them a summons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The children were playing with the oven.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The landlord billed them for the broken windows.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Their neighbors gave them bills for repairs of the damaged furniture.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Their boys, Michael and Abdul, were taken to the hospital

## D. Let's Talk

### Word and Letter Play: Boys and Girls

Question: What determined the order of girls' and boys' names in the lists below?

Girls: Heather, Ellen, Laura, Anne, Nancy

Boys: Andy, Ted, Mike, Dick, Vic

Answer :In the list of girls' names, the second letter of each name is the first letter of the next. In the list of boys' names, the second-to-last letter in each name is the last letter of the following name.

STRATEGY: Look for a pattern

Source: [www.Puzzlemaker.com](http://www.Puzzlemaker.com)



# Story #12

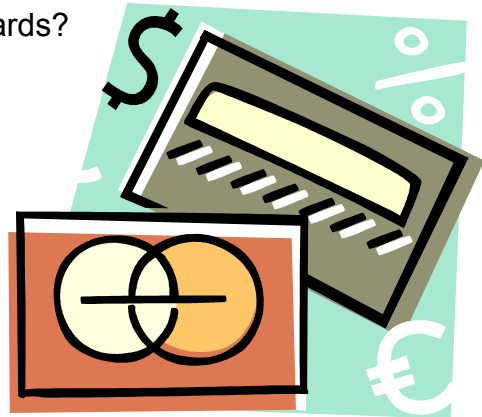


## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the picture.

How do you pay for your purchases? Do you pay cash? Check?

Do you have any credit cards? Debit cards?



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## **SAFET WANTS A CREDIT CARD**

Safet had a good, steady job with a construction company. Safet helped to build high-rise apartment buildings. In fact, his employer valued him so highly that Safet was in charge of his own, small work team. Safet was married with one small son. His English wasn't fluent, but he was very outgoing and happily talked to anyone about anything. Both his American and his ethnic peers liked him for his openness, hard work, ready smile and willingness to help others. One thing bothered him. He had applied many times with many companies for a credit card but was always turned down.

Friends told him about a special program at his former English as a Second Language program that offered help to students with community problems. Safet liked nothing better than visiting old friends so, one day, after work, he dropped in on the teacher of his former ESL class.

He told her all about his job and how he had learned to joke with his American peers and take a little ribbing about his accent. He told her about his car and all the work he did on it, and also about his apartment and the furniture that he had made himself. Of course, he also proudly showed her photos of his wife and new baby son. Finally, he told her about his credit card problem. He felt the stores might be discriminating against him. One of her first questions was to ask whether he had any unpaid bills. He assured her that he paid all his bills monthly and had absolutely no unpaid debts.

The teacher told him about building credit by buying a debit card. Some gas stations offer debit cards to customers who pay a deposit of \$50 or \$100 and then they can use the debit card like a credit card. When the deposit is used up, they pay the station some more money. Slowly, a customer can build up an informal credit history this way. In time, stores will usually become willing to advance credit.

Safet bought a debit card and at the end of a couple of months, asked if he could now have a credit card. The gas station refused him again. This time the teacher recommended that Safet buy a copy of his credit history from one of the

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credit monitoring companies. There, Safet saw that he had an outstanding bill from his local hospital for several thousand dollars. Safet had never paid the bill for his baby son's birth. Safet was amazed. In his country, Safet said, people did not have to pay for hospital care.

In the USA, your unpaid debt follows you wherever you go.

**(447 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 7.0 )**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This story is true so far as the story "Safet" presented to me. Whether, in fact, people can walk away from hospital bills in Bosnia, I don't know. After we helped Safet get a copy of his credit history and we saw the unpaid hospital bill, Safet stopped coming to see us!

This is, however, a good vehicle to start students out on fact-finding research about "credit" and "identity theft".

## **B. New Words**

What is the synonym? What is the synonym for each word?

1. Steady

- a) fixed
- b) broken
- c) colleague
- d) confident

4) Peers

- a) colleague
- b) fruit
- c) show favoritism
- d) easing

2. Fluent

- a) not good
- b) show favoritism
- c) easing
- d) effortless

5) Ribbing

- a) bones
- b) teasing
- c) fixed
- d) surprised

3) Bothered

- a) annoyed
- b) good
- c) upset
- d) fine

6) Discriminate

- a) show favoritism
- b) confident
- c) fixed
- d) surprised

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## C. Understanding

1. What advice did Safet's teacher give him?

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2. Why was Safet having a difficult time getting a credit card?

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## D. Let's Talk

1. Tell the class your answers to these questions:

- a. What's the average salary in your country?
- b. What are you saving your money for?
- c. Can money buy love? Why? Why not?
- d. Do you ever give money to charity? If so, how often and how much?
- e. What's the most expensive thing that you have ever bought?

2. Credit Woes: Something to think about.

**50 million** Americans don't have enough credit activity to qualify for the credit score most commonly used to get credit cards or loans.

Key factors affecting your credit score:

- ❖ Whether you pay your bills on time.
- ❖ How much you owe, especially compared with your credit limits
- ❖ Length of your credit history

*Source: The Wall Street Journal, February 2007*

# Story #13

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## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Have you had any encounters with the police in the USA?

What are some of the duties of a police officer?



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## **Iona and HANDS ON THE WHEEL**

Iona and her husband came to this country last year. They arrived in the USA without money or any English speaking skills. They had difficulty finding jobs to pay for their small apartment. They had no money to buy a car. Iona found a free English language program. She and her husband went to English classes two nights every week. They learned fast. They found better jobs. They saved enough money to buy a small, used car.

One evening, their teacher taught them what to do if the police stopped them when they were driving. The teacher taught them to pull over to the side of the road and stop. The teacher told them to stay in the car. She advised them to turn on the dome light. She told them to roll down the window so the police officer could talk to them. She said the driver should put his hands on the wheel so the police officer could see them.

The teacher also told them what not to do. She told them not to get out of the car. She told them not to offer money or gifts to the police officer. She said the officer would ask to see a driving license and the car insurance. She told them to take their wallet out of their pocket or purse slowly. She said to take their driving license and car insurance card out of the wallet. She told them to hand the cards to the officer. The teacher brought a toy steering wheel to class. Each class member practiced what he or she would do and say if stopped by a police officer. They used the toy steering wheel to show where they would keep their hands.

At the next class, Iona was very excited. She reported that a police officer stopped her and her husband on their way home the night before. Her husband turned on the dome light, put his hands on the wheel and rolled down the window. He showed the officer his driving license and the car insurance card. He was careful to move slowly. He answered the officer's questions. He did not get a ticket. Iona and her husband were very happy. They knew what to do in the USA if the police pulled them over.

**(384 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 4.0.)**

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AUTHOR'S NOTE: Another true story. This incident occurred directly following instruction from **LifePrints** Book 2, Chapter 2!

## B. New Words

Multiple choice: Find the meaning of the underlined words.

1. The teacher taught Iona to pull over if the police is behind them.
  - a. To stop the car on the side of the road.
  - b. To drive very slowly on the side of the road.
2. The teacher also taught Iona to put her hands on the steering wheel.
  - a. To put her hands on the tires.
  - b. To put her hands on the controls or helm.
3. Iona was excited to tell the class that she and her husband were stopped by the police last night.
  - a. She was eager to tell the class.
  - b. She was angry.

## C. Understanding

1. What documents did Iona's husband show the police when they were stopped?

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2. Did Iona's husband get a ticket? Why or why not?

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3. What should you NOT offer or give to the police?

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## D. Let's Talk

1. Do you know any of these words:

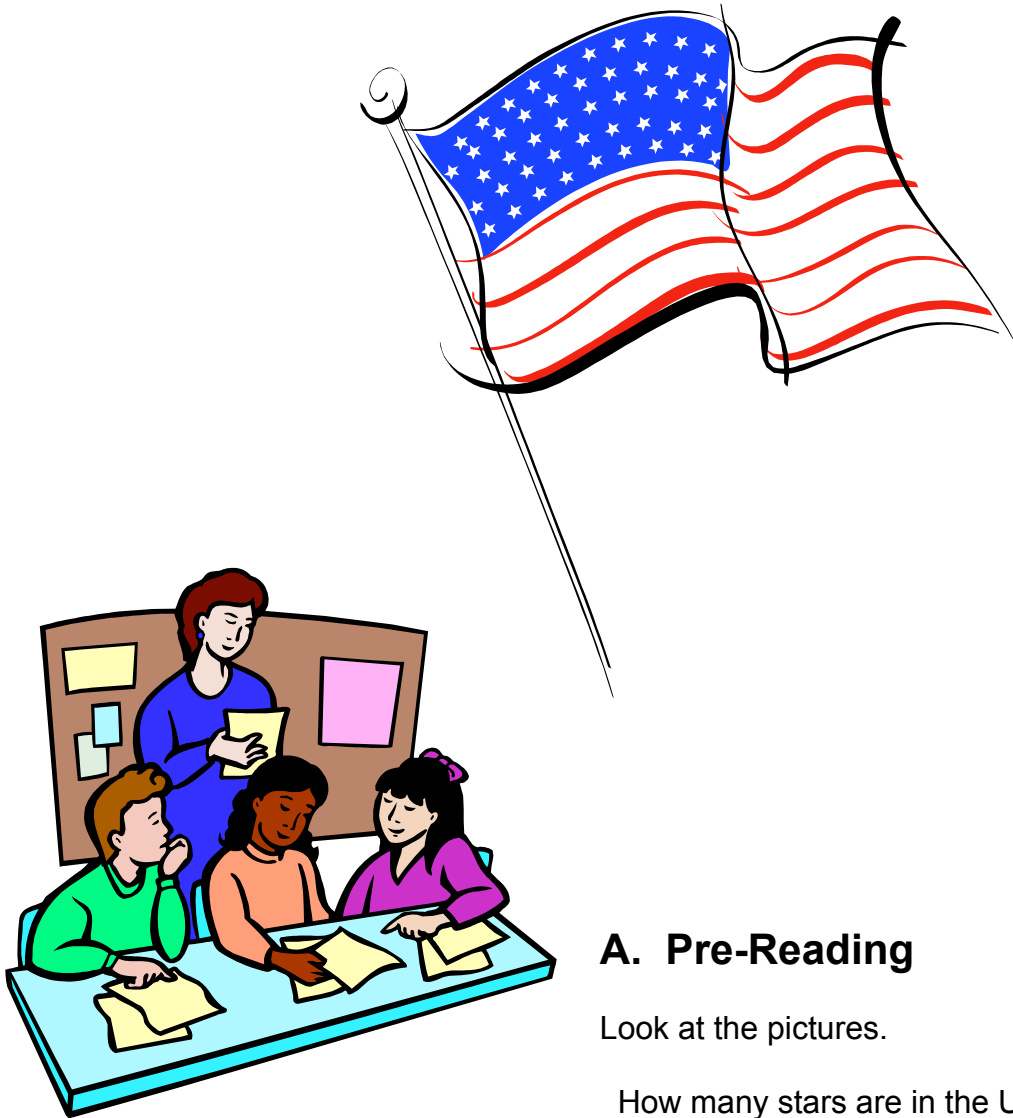
*rights attorney/lawyer charged warrant*

*bail handcuffs badge fingerprint*

2. Describe the police in your country. How are the police in your country different from American police? How are they similar?
3. Have you ever had any interactions with American police? What happened?
4. What rights does a person have after he has been arrested?
5. Does the law sometimes protect guilty people?
6. What could happen if the law did not protect the rights of people accused of crimes?
7. **Case Studies:** Think about your answers to the following questions. Talk to your classmates, or write a short journal entry describing your feelings.
  - a. A man's daughter was recently murdered. He and his family have always been against Capital Punishment, because they feel that it is "cruel and unusual punishment." They also feel that "two wrongs don't make a right," and killing is wrong by anyone. Now, the man's family does not know what to think. Their daughter is dead, and they are very angry at the killer. The lawyer who is prosecuting the case wants them to ask the judge for the Death Penalty. What should the man and his family do?
  - b. One day, a prisoner on Death Row (scheduled to be executed) calls on a church minister for counseling. The prisoner has been convicted of several brutal crimes, including murder. The minister decides that he should agree to help the prisoner, since he believes that everyone deserves a chance. His congregation (his church members) supports the death penalty and do not want him to help the prisoner. What should the minister do?

Source: [www.eslwonder.com](http://www.eslwonder.com)

# Story #14



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

How many stars are in the U.S. flag?

How many years do you need before you apply for American citizenship?

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## Van Fights Back

Van is from Vietnam. In Vietnam, Van was a soldier. He fought in the war on the side of the Americans. In 1974, Van knew that the end of the war was near. He also knew that he must leave Vietnam. If he stayed, the enemy would put him in prison. So, Van spoke to his friends. They helped him and his wife leave Vietnam and go to the U.S.A.

In the U.S.A., a resettlement agency soon helped him and his wife find assembly line jobs. Van and his wife did not have time to learn much English. So, they could not make friends with their American neighbors. Van and his wife lived quietly and carefully. They did not have a car or a video. They did not take vacations. Sometimes, they visited with other refugees from Vietnam.

Van and his wife did not change, but their neighborhood changed. Next door, people had noisy parties with loud music. Often, Van could see drugs bought and sold on the street. Sometimes, Van could hear gunfire. Many teenagers did not go to school. They “hung out” each day in the streets. Sometimes, the teenagers had gang fights. The streets were no longer safe. The landlord would not come to fix damage to the apartment. The police stopped coming to help.

In time, Van and his wife retired from their jobs. They wondered what to do with their time. They both received small pensions from their jobs. The government also sent them small checks each month. But then, Van heard that the government was going to stop sending money to people who were not citizens. What could they do?

One day, Van heard about free citizenship classes for elderly refugees. At once, Van joined the class. Every day, he went to class. Every day, he studied English and U.S. history and government. He learned many things. He learned that citizenship gave him responsibilities and privileges. The most important responsibility was to vote. As soon as Van had his citizenship, he went to the library and registered to vote.

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Van's polling place was inside his school building. At the next election, Van and his wife were the first voters through the door at 6 in the morning. His neighborhood was not safe at 6 in the morning, but Van carried a heavy walking stick in his hand. He had a smile on his face. He was going to vote. Van was a soldier again. This time, he was going to fight for his neighborhood.

**(420 words. Flesch-Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 3.8)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: "Van" and his wife (he wanted to maximize his voting power) was the first one through the door of our building (a polling center on election days) at 6 A.M. with his knobkerrie in hand. I had opened the building that day and I had never seen such a smile on the face of an otherwise elderly, sedate, proper Vietnamese!

## **B. New Words**

Match the words in the first column to the words on the right with the same meaning.

_____ enemy	1) a group fight
_____ hung out	2) not a friend
_____ citizen	3) stopped working
_____ vote	4) voter
_____ responsibility	5) spend time together
_____ gang fights	6) choose
_____ retired	7) job

---

## C. Understanding

True or False?

1. Van was a soldier in Pakistan.
2. Van and his wife liked the changes they saw in their community.
3. With American citizenship comes privileges and responsibilities.
4. Van was not happy about voting.

## D. Let's Talk

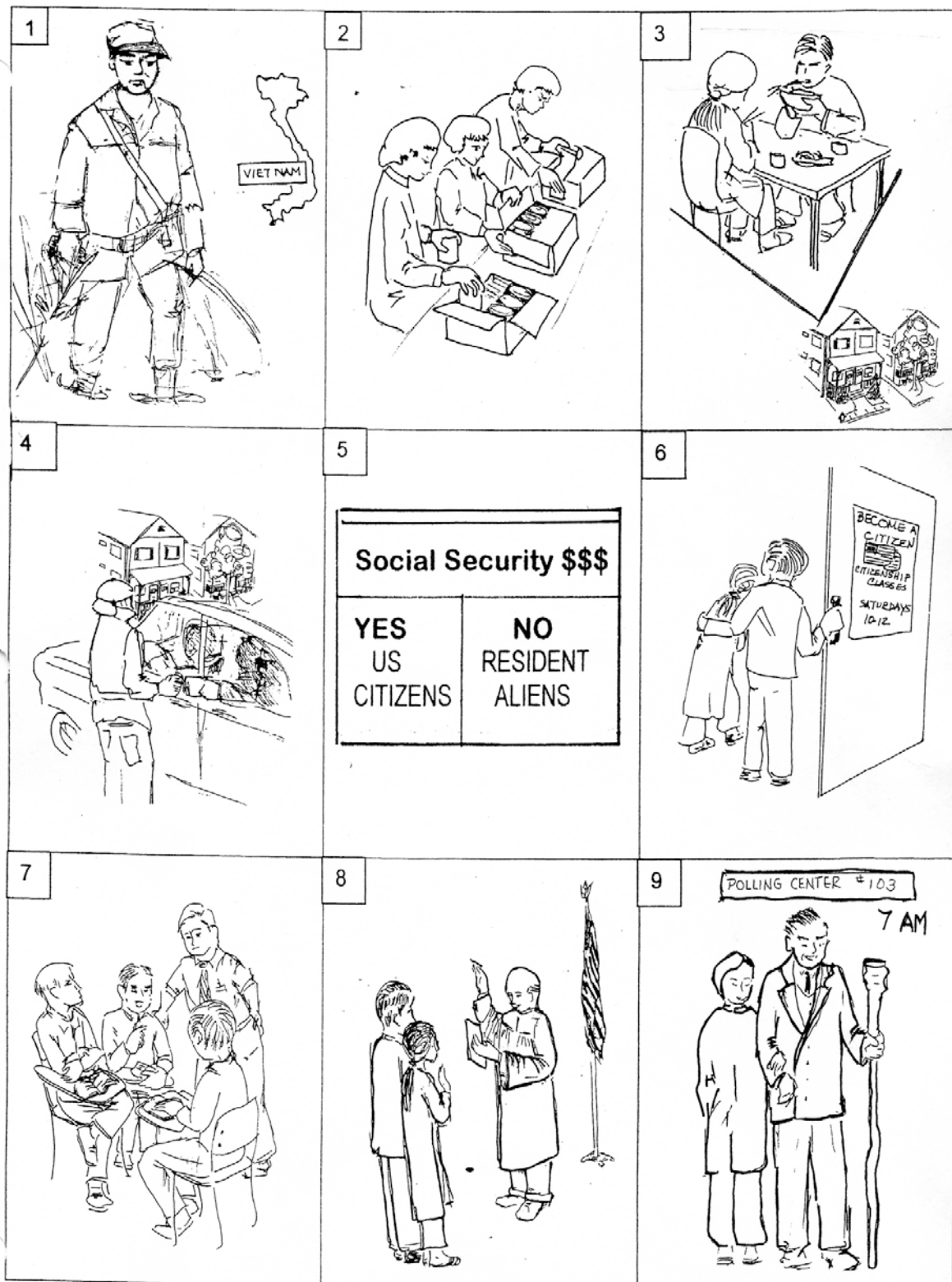
Here are some sample questions from the U.S. citizenship exam. Can you answer them all?

1. How many stars are there in our flag?
2. What is the 4th of July?
3. Who was the first President of the United States?
4. Who is the President of the United States today?
5. Who is the vice-president of the United States today?
6. What is the Constitution?
7. Can you name the two senators from your state?
8. What is the capital of your state?
9. Who is the current governor of your state?
10. Who helped the Pilgrims in America?

## E. More Pictures

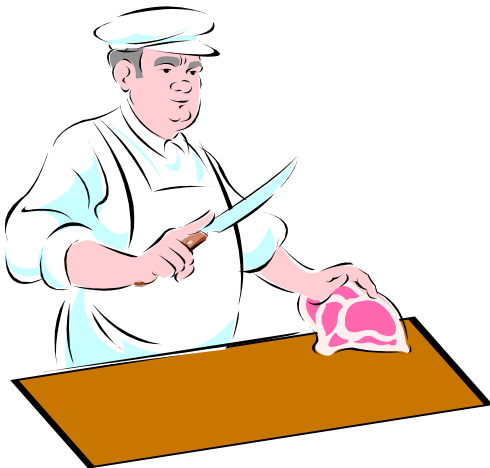
Give each student a copy of the picture (next page). Write the following words on the board: WHO, WHAT, HOW, WHERE, WHEN, WHY.

Have the students write a question for each square in the picture.





# Story #15



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

What job did you used to do in your country?

What is a vegetarian?

---

## ILIJA AND THE SMOKED MEAT

Ilija, his wife and their three young children arrived in this mid-west city seven years ago. He was one of the first to arrive from his country. Now, there are many people from his country here. Before he came to the U.S., Ilija was a butcher. He was a good butcher. He also smoked meat for his community.

His first job here was in a factory. The factory made furniture. Ilija earned good money making chairs and tables and beds. Soon he had enough money to buy a house. Ilija remembered the wonderful smoked meat from his old country. So, in the back of his house, he built a small smokehouse. On weekends in the fall, he and his friends hunted deer. When the hunt was successful, Ilija took the carcass to a meat processor. Then he took the meat home to his smokehouse. His friends from the Old Country said the smell reminded them of their homeland. His new neighbors said the smell made them ill.

Some of the neighbors called their Alderman. They complained about the smoke. Soon the story about Ilija and his smokehouse was in the newspaper. Everyone was angry. The new neighbors said that the smoke was bad. They also said that Ilija was butchering animals at his house. They said he put the animal remains in the storm sewer. Ilija and his friends invited the Alderman to visit his smokehouse. The Alderman saw that the smokehouse was very small. Ilija showed him the receipts from the meat processor. So, he knew Ilija did not butcher animals at his house. Then the Alderman wrote a bill (or law) for the city council to sign. The bill said no one could butcher an animal in the city. It also said that all smokehouses must be small. Ilija and his friends were happy because they did not butcher animals in the city and their smokehouse was very small. The neighbors were happy because the Alderman listened to them too.

**(332 words. Flesch Kincaid Grade Level of 5.1)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This story made it into the local newspaper. "Ilija" was fortunate that one of the Bosnian community leaders had already established a good relationship with the alderman because I think the situation might have ended differently otherwise. There are a lot of native-born U.S. voters where Ilija lived and not so many Bosnians.

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## B. New Words

Match the underlined words on the left with the words on the right column:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| _____ 1. Ilija likes <u>smoked meat</u> from his country.                   | a. People who live nearby.              |
| _____ 2. His <u>neighbors</u> complained about the smell of the smokehouse. | b. A member of the town's government.   |
| _____ 3. The <u>Alderman</u> wrote a bill for the City County to sign.      | c. The dead body of an animal.          |
| _____ 4. After a hunt, Ilija took the <u>carcass</u> to a meat processor.   | d. Meat that is cooked with wood smoke. |

## C. Understanding

1. What was Ilija's job in his native country?

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2. Why did Ilija's neighbors complain to the Alderman?

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3. What was the bill about?

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4. Why was Ilija happy after the Alderman visited his smokehouse?

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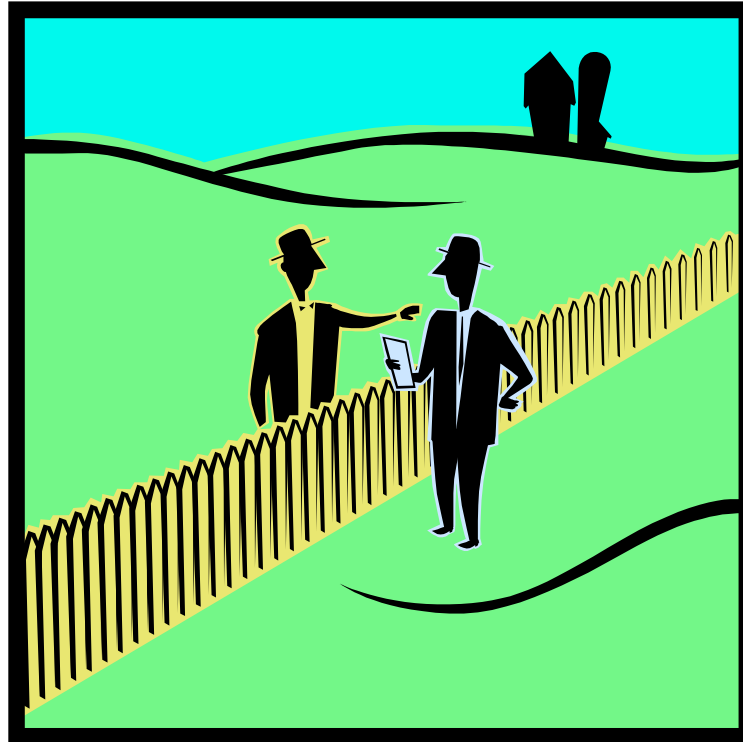
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## D. Let's Talk

Ask you classmates these questions and then share with the class:

1. Do you like fast food?
2. Is obesity a problem in your country?
3. What would you do if you were invited to dinner but you didn't like the food?  
Would you eat the food regardless?
4. What is the worst meal you have ever eaten and where was it?

# Story #16



## A. Pre-Reading

Look at the pictures.

Do you have friendly neighbors?

Do you know who your neighbors are? Are there many children in your neighborhood?

---

## MARIBEL BAKES A CHOCOLATE CAKE

Maribel was born and raised in Brazil. She married an American, Ted, a construction worker. Following their marriage and because they both wanted children, Ted sold the trailer where he had been living and bought a small house in a subdivision near his workplace. The subdivision rules required that all yards must be unfenced. This created a view that looked like one big common ground. However, it also made it difficult to know where his yard ended and their neighbors' yards began. Setting aside these slight misgivings, Ted and Maribel settled in happily.

They bought and installed a swing set in their backyard dreaming of a time when their children would play on it. A few days later, there was a knock at their front door. It was two of their neighbors from the subdivision. They had come to tell Ted and Maribel that subdivision rules prohibited residents from installing on their lawn a structure that could not be taken indoors overnight. Ted and Maribel were very disappointed. The swing set was too big and heavy to put up and take down every day. Saddened, they took it down one last time and sold it.

Determined to be neighborly, one Saturday morning Ted mowed the narrow grass strip between the driveways after noticing that his elderly next-door neighbor had the use of only one arm and clearly found it very difficult. Later that day, Maribel baked a cake for her elderly next-door neighbor and waited for her husband to come home so that they could take it over together. Before they could do that however, and just after Ted arrived, there was a knock at the door. It was their elderly next-door neighbor and he was angered beyond all reasoning. He ordered Ted not to cut his grass again. Ted tried to explain that he was just being neighborly.

Not mollified at all, the neighbor continued his tirade by railing against Ted's choice of parking space. Ted, he charged, was parking his car in the driveway too close to the street. In its present location, Ted's car blocked the neighbor's view of oncoming traffic. If an accident resulted, he would sue Ted for damages. Abruptly turning on his heel, he stormed back to his own home. Bewildered and upset, Maribel wrapped the cake in plastic and froze it for another happier occasion.

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The following Saturday morning, Ted was very careful to mow only his half of the grassy strip between the driveways. A half hour later, sitting in his kitchen with a cold drink, Ted heard a knock at the door. It was the police. A neighbor had called to complain that Ted was trespassing and disturbing the peace.

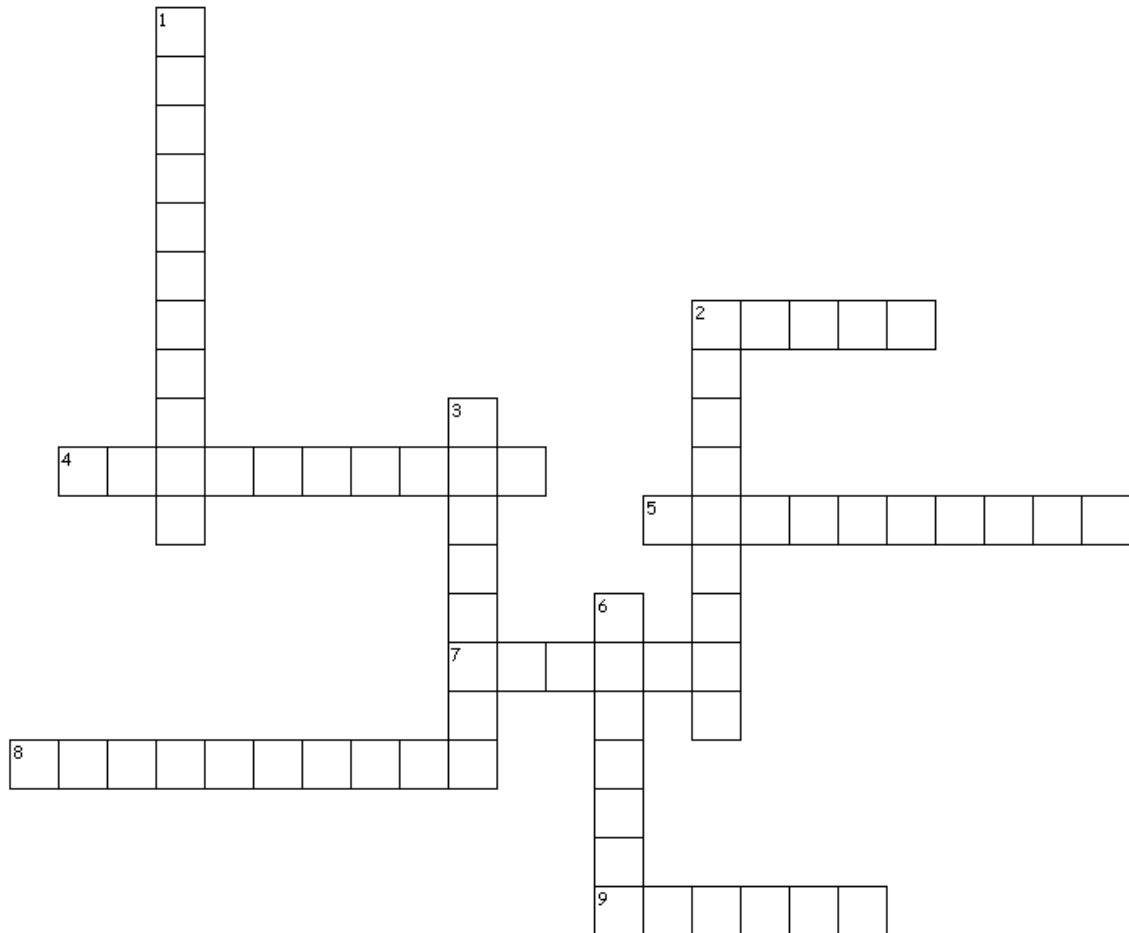
Overcoming his shock, Ted explained that the only peace he had disturbed had been with his lawn mower and the only trespass he had committed was to cut nine inches of the 18-inch wide grass strip between the driveways. Ted walked the police outside and pointed to the other neighbors cutting their lawns, suggesting they could confirm his story. And he brought a ruler to show that he had cut only nine of the 18-inch wide strip of grass. The police shrugged and got back in their car.

On Monday, Ted made four phone calls: One was to the chairman of his subdivision. The second was to his lawyer. The third was to the city council. The fourth was to his realtor.

**(573 words. Flesch Kincaid Reading Grade Level of 6.9)**

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Maribel was my student. This is the story as told to me over a period of several weeks as it occurred.

## B. New Words



*subdivision*   *misgivings*   *prohibited*   *mowed*   *tirade*   *mollified*   *resulted*  
*bewildered*   *damages*   *slight*

<p><b>Across</b></p> <p>2. trimmed</p> <p>4. banned</p> <p>5. fears</p> <p>7. outburst</p> <p>8. surprised</p> <p>9. small</p>	<p><b>Down</b></p> <p>1. section</p> <p>2. calm down</p> <p>3. came about</p> <p>6. injuries</p>
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## C. Understanding

What is the right order of this story.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Maribel and Ted bought a house near his workplace.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maribel baked a cake for the elderly next-door neighbor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ted called the chairman of his subdivision, his lawyer, his city council, and his realtor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ted mowed the narrow grass strip between the two driveways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The neighbor was angry at Maribel and Ted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The police came to warn them about complaints from their neighbor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The subdivision where they live has many rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ They sold the swing set they just bought.

## D. Let's Talk

Interview a neighbor or a co-worker who speaks English as a first language.

Neighbor's name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What job do you do?
2. What do you like most about your job? The least?
3. Are you a native of this state?
4. What do you do in your spare time?
5. What sports do you like?
6. How many people live in your home?
7. What kind of music do you like?
8. Are you going on vacation any time soon? What will you do?