

Intermediate level

SHORT STORIES

vocabulary and speaking activities

The stories may be read by the teacher aloud (the students either follow the text or are asked not to look at it) or the students read the story to themselves silently.

Each story contains some vocabulary the students are not likely to be familiar with, they are supposed to use the text in order to guess the meaning of each vocabulary item.

The questions under Questions for Discussion section are meant to stimulate class discussion.

In the Activities section the teacher may ask the students to pair up and tell each other the story in their own words.

Each unit contains a related proverb and some tasks so that the students learn some idiomatic language as well.

STORY 1 - Wedding Gifts

The Story

Jack and his bride were opening their wedding gifts. After unwrapping each package, Lisa would exclaim enthusiastically, "We really need these towels" or "We'll enjoy eating off these pretty plates." Then she opened one very large box. It contained a vacuum cleaner. "Jack," Lisa said, "look what you've got."

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice

1. To 'unwrap' means to
- a. fasten
- b. break
- c. open
- d. write
2. 'Package' means
- a. plate
- b. parcel
- c. room
- d. book
3. 'Enthusiastic' means
- a. quite angry
- b. indifferent
- c. with great interest
- d. showing disliking
4. Another word for 'vacuum cleaner' is
- a. electric fan
- b. cleaning machine
- c. Hoover
- d. electric machine

Questions for Discussion

1. What is funny about this story?
2. Who do you think should use the vacuum cleaner? Why?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Unwrap
 2. Package
 3. Enthusiastically
 4. Towel
 5. Vacuum

A Related Proverb (try to find a Czech equivalent, translate or explain it)

"Cut your coat according to your cloth. "

STORY 2 - The Best Accountant

The Story

An accountant answered an advertisement for a job with a large firm. At the end of the interview the chairman said, "One last question-- what is three times seven?" The accountant thought for a minute and replied, "Twenty-two".

Outside he took his calculator and realized that he should have said twenty-one. He concluded that he had lost the job. A fortnight later, however, he was offered the post. After a few weeks, he asked the chairman why he had been when he had given the wrong answer.

"You were the closest," the chairman replied.

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. An 'accountant' is a
 - a. person who wants a job
 - b. machine which adds, deletes, etc.
 - c. person who keeps money records
 - d. company manager
2. 'Firm' here means
 - a. strong person
 - b. business company
 - c. shop manager
 - d. important decision
3. A 'chairman' is a person who
 - a. sells or buys chairs
 - b. controls a meeting
 - c. answers phone calls
 - d. says the latest news
4. A fortnight is
 - a. one month
 - b. one year
 - c. twenty days
 - d. two weeks
5. 'Appoint' here means to
 - a. interview someone
 - b. choose a person for a job
 - c. call a person to come
 - d. let a person visit a place

Questions for Discussion

1. What did the chairman mean by the last sentence?
2. How true can such a story be?
3. Why do you think should an accountant make such a mistake?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Accountant
 2. Advertisement
 3. Interview
 4. Chairman
 5. Calculator
 6. Fortnight
 7. Appoint
 8. Close

A Related Proverb (try to find a Czech equivalent, translate or explain it)

"A narrow mind has a broad tongue."

STORY 3 - Delicious Pie

The Story

We were two Australian student nurses training at an English hospital. During visiting hours, we would take a break in the ward kitchen and often a kindly visitor would slip us a cake or some chocolate.

One night a woman brought a pork pie to the kitchen and asked me, "Would you 'eat this up, love?"

My friend and I ate every crumb and were delighted--until the woman returned and asked, "Is my 'usband's pie 'ot yet, dear?"

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. 'Ward' here means
 - a. a kind of cooker
 - b. head nurse
 - c. a part in a hospital
 - d. temperature
2. To 'Slip' here means to
 - a. divide sth
 - b. give secretly
 - c. move slowly
 - d. d get worse
3. 'Pork' means meat from
 - a. cow
 - b. sheep
 - c. hen
 - d. pig
4. 'Crumb' means a
 - a. kind of fresh fruit
 - b. very big piece of pie
 - c. very small bit of bread, cake, etc.
 - d. person who works in a hospital
5. 'Delighted' means
 - a. very angry
 - b. quite tired
 - c. pretty dark
 - d. very pleased

Questions for Discussion

1. The woman in the story cannot pronounce a sound. What is it? What can be the reason?
2. What do you think will happen next?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. ward
 2. crumb
 3. delighted
 4. until
 5. slip

A Related Proverb (try to find a Czech equivalent, translate or explain it)

"He who never fails never grows rich."

