

Ten Conversation Lessons with Stories, Vocabulary Practice, Questions and Activities

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Suggestions for Using the Lessons

The Story

Depending on the main objective(s) of the course, the teacher may choose to read the story aloud asking the students not to look at it or ask the students to read the story to themselves silently and as quickly as possible.

Vocabulary Practice

The teacher may ask the students to answer the vocabulary questions as soon as they are through with the story. Students should use the text in order to guess the meaning of each vocabulary item.

Questions for Discussion

The questions posed under this section are meant to stimulate spontaneous speech and class discussion. The teacher may ask several students to answer the same question for different possible opinions.

Activities

Here the teacher may ask students to pair up and tell each other the story in their own words and he himself may act as a co-communicator or a counselor. He can also ask one student to tell the whole class the story in his/her own words. Then the teacher may act as a model and pronounce the words under this section and ask the students to repeat the words several times. Finally, the teacher may use each word in a full sentence and ask the students to repeat for possible contextual effects.

Miscellany

A variety of statements such as proverbs and quotes can be found under this section. The statements are deliberately chosen to be provocative to spark off spontaneous debate and discussion. Thus, the teacher may choose each of these statements as a topic for class discussion.

Lesson 1 - A Soldier's Lie

The Story

Once a soldier asked his commanding officer for a day's leave to attend his sister's wedding.

The officer asked him to wait outside the door for a few minutes while he considered the request.

The officer then called the soldier back in and said, "You are a liar. I've just phoned your sister and she told me she's already married."

"Well, sir, you're an even bigger liar," the soldier replied, "because I don't even have a sister."

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. 'Leave' here means
 - a. going out from a place
 - b. one part of a tree
 - c. permission to be absent from work
 - d. asking a person for some money
2. To 'attend' here means to ...
 - a. take care of
 - b. pay for
 - c. be present at
 - d. look at

Questions for Discussion

1. Why did the soldier tell the officer a lie?
2. Why did the officer tell the soldier a lie?
3. Can you remember telling such lies?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words:
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Command
 2. Officer
 3. Attend
 4. Soldier
 5. Already

A Related Proverb

One foot cannot stand on two boats.

Lesson 2 - In Pajamas

The Story

Staying at a hotel in Yarmouth, I couldn't sleep because the television in the residents' lounge was so loud. As I could see from the top of the stairs, the lounge was in total darkness, so I crept downstairs in my pajamas. I went to the TV and after some fumbling with the knobs I managed to switch it off.

As I turned to leave, I suddenly became aware of a semi-circle of people sitting in the dark who, up until that moment, had been enjoying a television program.

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. 'Lounge' is
- a. kind of taxi in the airport etc.
- b. small room for workers
- c. public sitting room in a hotel

- d. special case for television
2. To 'creep' means to
 - a. run quickly
 - b. jump off
 - c. shout out
 - d. move quietly
3. To '.....' means to move the hands awkwardly to do something or to find something.
 - a. fumble
 - b. manage
 - c. switch
 - d. reside
4. A 'knob' is a.....
 - a. hotel room
 - b. small TV
 - c. round handle
 - d. special table

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the main funny point in the story?
2. Why did the man go downstairs in pajamas?
3. 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. Lounge
 2. Resident
 3. Knob
 4. Fumble
 5. Aware
 6. Semi-circle

A Related Proverb

Opportunity knocks once, and the neighbors the rest of the time.

Lesson 3 - Beggar Replacement

The Story

The doorbell rang, and the housewife answered it. She found two beggars outside. "So, you're begging in twos now?!" she exclaimed.

"No, only for today," one of them replied. "I'm showing my replacement the ropes before going on holiday."

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. A 'beggar' is a person who.....
 - a. sells food and clothes

- b. has no money
 - c. asks for money
 - d. does the housework
2. To 'exclaim' means to.....
- a. say something kindly
 - b. say suddenly and loudly
 - c. walk quickly
 - d. look angrily
3. A is a person that you put in place of yourself or another.
- a. beggar
 - b. rope
 - c. housewife
 - d. replacement
4. 'Ropes' here means
- a. the rules and customs in a place or activity
 - b. pieces of strong thick cord
 - c. people you probably meet in a special place
 - d. houses which are expensive

Questions for Discussion

1. This joke is telling us something about beggars' life. What is it?
2. Do you know a joke or a true story about beggars?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Beggar
 2. Exclaim
 3. Reply
 4. Replacement
 5. Ropes

A Related Proverb

A man is known by the company he keeps.

Lesson 4 - 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

Cut your coat according to your cloth.

Lesson 5 - Wedding Gown

The Story

When my sister got married, she wore my mother's wedding dress. The day she tried it on, the gown fitted her exactly and mother started to cry. "You're not losing a daughter," I reminded her, putting my arm around her, "you're gaining a son." "Oh, forget about that!" she said with a sob, "I used to fit into that dress."

Vocabulary Practice

1. Mark the best choice.
2. A 'gown' is a

- a. building where people marry
 - b. dress worn at a special time
 - c. person who is married
 - d. meal served at wedding
3. To 'fit' means to
- a. find something out
 - b. live happily
 - c. see something sad
 - d. be the right size
4. A ... is a noisy and irregular breath from crying.
- a. gown
 - b. gain
 - c. sob
 - d. fit

Questions for Discussion

1. What is funny about this story?
2. Who do you think is telling the story?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Gown
 2. Marry
 3. Gain
 4. Wore

A Russian Proverb

One rotten egg spoils twenty fresh ones.

Lesson 6 - Rational Dispute

The Story

A young housewife told me: "My husband and I never argue, no matter how angry we may be. Instead we sit down and rationally discuss both sides of the dispute. Then I make a list of all the crockery I intend to smash."

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. 'Rationally' means

 - a. silently
 - b. angrily
 - c. not foolishly
 - d. very quickly

2. 'Dispute' means.....

 - a. fight
 - b. wife

- c. list
 - d. talk
3. 'Crockery' means
- a. paper money
 - b. ice-cream
 - c. cups, plates, etc.
 - d. washing machine
4. To 'smash' means to
- a. write something down
 - b. clean something in hot water
 - c. drop something and break it
 - d. put something back

Questions for Discussion

1. What do you think of the couple?
2. Why should the lady smash crockery?
3. Do you know a better way to settle a dispute?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Rationally
 2. Dispute
 3. Crockery
 4. Intend
 5. Smash

A Related Proverb

Empty vessels make the most noise.

Lesson 7 - 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
4. A fortnight is
5. 'Appoint' here means to

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

A narrow mind has a broad tongue

Lesson 8 - 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 husband'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. 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

An Italian Proverb

He who never fails never grows rich

The Story

After lunch my friend and I paid the bill and made our way to my car. I took out my remote-control gadget and pressed the button which automatically unlocks the doors.

Not having noticed what I did, my friend looked puzzled and asked, "What was that clicking sound?"

"It was just the doors unlocking," I answered.

He looked at me with astonishment and said, "The car recognizes you?!"

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. 'Bill' here means a
 - a. part of a bird's mouth
 - b. printed notice on a wall or fence
 - c. list of things bought and their price
 - d. piece of paper money
2. A 'gadget' is a
 - a. kind of car
 - b. small machine
 - c. long key
 - d. piece of cloth
3. 'Puzzled' means
 - a. very happy
 - b. in an angry manner
 - c. unable to understand
 - d. not suitable
4. To 'click' means to
 - a. try to understand something
 - b. make a short, sharp sound
 - c. drop something heavy
 - d. walk toward something
5. 'Astonishment' means
 - a. happiness
 - b. friendly smile
 - c. great surprise
 - d. indifference

Questions for Discussion

1. What is funny about this story?
2. How do you like this kind of technology?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Remote-control
 2. Gadget
 3. Automatically
 4. Puzzled
 5. Click
 6. Astonishment
 7. Recognize

A Saying

Happiness is not having what you want, but wanting what you have.

Lesson 10 - Poor Cat!

The Story

As a student I ate my meals at a seaside boarding-house. The landlady was a good cook and, as her husband was a fisherman, we always ate fish for dinner. Eventually I got tired of it, and took to slipping it under the sofa, where the family cat would find and devour it.

This worked very successfully until one day the landlady tiptoed up behind me and said, "Young man it's high time I told you that our cat was run over by a lorry three weeks ago."

Vocabulary Practice

Mark the best choice.

1. A 'boarding-house' is a
 - a. building which is near the sea
 - b. kind of very expensive hotel
 - c. house giving room(s) and food
 - d. kind of school with a pool
2. A 'landlady' is a woman who
 - a. is old and weak
 - b. keeps a boarding-house
 - c. has a lot of money
 - d. only looks after her family
3. 'Eventually' means
 - a. naturally
 - b. in the end
 - c. meanwhile
 - d. happily
4. To 'take to' here means to....
 - a. carry something to somewhere
 - b. ask someone to do something
 - c. begin to do something as a habit
 - d. go away to some place to hide
5. To 'devour' here means to
 - a. look at something angrily
 - b. play with something
 - c. throw something away
 - d. eat something hungrily
6. To 'tiptoe' means to
 - a. walk quietly on the toes
 - b. say something softly
 - c. hit something by foot
 - d. run towards something
7. To 'run over' means to.....
 - a. hit something while running
 - b. drive over something
 - c. take something away

- d. steal something from a place

Questions for Discussion

1. What point is funny in the story?
2. What would you do if you were the student?
3. What can probably be found under the sofa now?

Activities

1. Now you tell your friend(s) the story in your own words.
2. Pronounce the following words several times:
 1. Eventually
 2. Devour
 3. Sofa
 4. Tiptoe
 5. Lorry

A Saying

The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

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<http://iteslj.org/>

<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Sharifian-Conversation.html>