



English Learner 500 Short Stories for Beginner-Intermediate

Mike Carlson

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I wrote these 500 short stories for English learners, primarily for beginner to intermediate levels. However, advanced learners can also enjoy the subtleties of many of the stories. The stories are for all English learners, regardless of what their first language is (even if it's English!). Only 150 words long, each story stems from news events, my own and others' personal experiences, and/or my imagination (limited as it is). Many stories contain references to New York City, where my wife and I are lucky enough to live.

The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level and Flesch Reading Ease Score follow each story title. These two measures can guide learners who wish to start with the easiest stories and work their way up to the hardest stories. Teachers and parents can use these measures to guide their students and children. Grade Levels range from 0.1 to 6.5 (kindergarten to sixth grade), and Reading Ease Scores range from 100 to 62.8 (easiest to hardest). The two measures correlate inversely, and generally, with each other. Sentences are short, averaging 7.2 words for all stories.

The stories are slices of everyday life, with fantasy thrown in here and there. Some story titles are: Hairy Ears; When 47 Equals 50; Where Did the Mustard Go?; A Dangerous Light Bulb; Superman at the Driving Range; Feel the Bananas; I Love New York City!; Till Death Do Us Part; I Hate My Name; Pink Doesn't Mean He's Gay; The Bi-Coastal Cat; The Cow with Two Tails; A Genie in a Bottle; A Big, Fat NYC Cookie; A Lucky Blind Person; The Dangerous Paper Clip; Smoker Seeks Nonsmoker; That "Old People" Smell; Mom the Matchmaker; and New, Improved EZ English.

Just so you'll have an idea of what the stories are like, here's the first story:

1. Eat, Sleep, and Think Burgers 2.1, 91.3

Burger Queen flew Billy and his Bronx coworkers to its training center. After returning, Billy told his cousin about his trip. "Boy, was it great! I made tons of money in overtime. We were in training 12 days straight. We worked almost 16 hours a day. We learned how to make ten new menu items. You'll see them on the menu next month. Everything was free! I had my own private room in the hotel. The food was fantastic. The hotel had six different restaurants. I ate all I could eat three times a day. I can't wait to go back there again." Jill asked, "Go back where? Where did you go?" He said, "They said we were in Texas." She asked, "They 'said'? Where in Texas? What city?" He said, "I don't know. I didn't even see a city. All I saw were the hotel and the training center."

Like many of the other stories, this one is based on fact. "Billy" loves his job. When he told me this story, he hadn't been outside of NYC since moving here from his native country. He didn't seem the least bit bothered

that he hadn't seen more of Texas. He thoroughly enjoyed the training, the hotel room, the food, and the money. When I asked the Brooklyn resident if he'd visited the Statue of Liberty yet, he smiled and said he was too busy. We all have our priorities and interests, which often change over the years. I think someday, after Billy owns his own "Burger Queen" or two, he might visit the Statue of Liberty—with his children or grandchildren.

These stories first appeared on my website. My website is www.eslyes.com, which contains 1,600 stories and dialogues that I wrote. Accompanying them are various Exercises and/or Audio. One reason I wrote these 150-word stories is so teachers could easily print the stories onto one page. Each story is only one paragraph, even if it contains quoted conversation.

I have a master's in Education and taught ESL to adults in Pasadena, CA for 20 years. I hope these stories will become one small part of the education and entertainment of English learners everywhere.

--Mike Carlson, April 2014

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