

# **Lessons in Kindness: ACCESSing English through Students' Stories**

**By English Access Microscholarship Students  
in Russia,  
with Myrtis Mixon**

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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### **The English Access Microscholarship Program**

The English Access Microscholarship Program is a new U.S. Department of State initiative for secondary school students. The program provides an American-style classroom experience using U.S. books and materials. Currently, there are ten Access sites in Russia: Ufa, Samara, Kazan, Elista, Khasavyurt, Novocherkassk, Nalchik, Stavropol, Sochi, and Rostov-on-Don. For more information, please see:

<http://moscow.usembassy.gov/elo.html>

Intensive English summer school sessions include opportunities for cultural studies, internet and computer studies, and hands-on student-centered activities in a mainly English immersion environment.



## FOREWORD

The reading and writing of stories educates, enriches, and entertains everyone. The stories in this book, written by teenagers, will be particularly interesting for other teenagers, though they contain important messages for audiences of all ages. These stories promote tolerance and respect for others who are seen as different in some way: in language, history, culture, nationality, physical attributes, and any other way that human beings are different. We hope that these stories will foster understanding and peace.

These stories provide an enjoyable opportunity to increase vocabulary, reading comprehension, listening and speaking, and ultimately, writing. The stories and exercises together are a whole-language anthology designed to improve communication skills. This book provides exercises that employ the cooperative/collaborative learning philosophy and address multiple learning styles.

Using stories is a magical way to teach. They are effective at any age and they can be used to learn serious and important things like tolerance. Here's a summary of how stories aid language-learning:

- provide motivation for reading
- heighten listening skills
- develop speaking skills
- use cooperative learning strategies
- foster creative language growth
- provide content-based material
- serve as model for further writing

All learners, from babies to grandparents, learn better with stories; they are energizers. When someone says, "Let me read you a story," listeners perk up their ears and smile. Even hard

truths can be taught easily through stories. Integrating stories as an adjunct to the teacher's repertoire in the classroom setting is not only simple, but makes perfect sense. We hope you use these stories to open new worlds of content and of learning possibilities. We also hope they serve as a springboard to motivating your own students to write stories.

## **NOTES FOR TEACHERS**

Using stories is fun, but the process should not be considered trivial or frivolous. Indeed, strong pedagogical theory supports using stories in classrooms. A good story can be enjoyed without warm-up or follow-on activities; it can provide both new language to the reader as well as content for further consideration and reflection. However, the proper combination of exercises for use before and after the story is read can help guide the student's learning and help the student get the most out of the interaction with the story.

The exercises presented after each story are in no way meant to be comprehensive. Teachers should choose the exercises and questions they feel best address the class's learning goals. The exercises should also serve as a model for creating further exercises.

## Story Presentation

The stories do not have to be read in sequence. Your first choice could be the story you think that has the highest interest for your group. Each story can be presented in several ways. Here is one way.

1. Before reading, if the story has an illustration (please see the DVD), the teacher can ask students to look at it. They can also read the title. Students guess what the story will be about. Teachers can also have the students turn to the Vocabulary exercise, at the end of the story, and work with a partner to determine which words are known and which are unknown. They can explain the known words to each other. The teacher should point out that these words will be presented in **bold** in the text of the story so that students can guess the meaning of the word from context while they are reading. The actual exercise should not be done at this point. If necessary, the teacher gives a partial explanation of the words or example sentence at this point, but not a full explanation.

It is important for the teacher to have read the story in advance. The teacher can then prompt the students with a few key questions about a dilemma or issue that is covered in the story. These questions often take the form of “What would you do if?”

2. First reading. The teacher can read aloud to the class, with the students following in their books. Alternatively, students can keep their books closed and listen to the teacher read the story. This is a good exercise in listening. Still another approach is to have students read silently.

3. Second Reading. It's always good to hear a story twice. Regardless of the approach used in step 2, a second reading should follow. Students could take turns reading. Or, the teacher could use the reading technique called “echo reading” (or choral reading) for all or part of the second reading. Echo reading is the technique whereby the teacher reads a sentence, and the class

immediately repeats it. This technique speeds comprehension. In short, a variety of approaches to reading should be used in steps 2 and 3.

4. The teacher gives students time to ask questions about any difficulties with the story.

## **Storytelling and Retelling**

It is beneficial to teach students how to retell the stories with the appropriate tone, rhythm and pace to convey meaning. When they retell the story, they should not try to memorize the stories word for word. In fact, allowing the student to improvise in English encourages the creative and authentic use of English inside and outside of the classroom.

## **Types of Exercises**

The exercises at the end of each story promote comprehension, vocabulary, verbal and written skills, and critical thinking skills. It is not necessary to use all of the exercises.

The order of the exercises is:

- I. Understanding the Story
- II. Vocabulary
- III. Now you Talk
- IV. Now you Write
- V. Role Play

The only divergence from this order is in position V. If another type of exercise is added, like grammar or sentence completion, it is placed in position V, and Role Play is then placed in position VI. The Role Play exercise is best last, because it is an opportunity for the students to both consolidate the new vocabulary and grammar they have learned and to experiment expressing themselves with new content and ideas from the story.

## **About the Exercises**

Pair work (2 students) or small group work (3 to 5 students) is suitable for all of the exercises, regardless of whether it is suggested in the exercises. Pair work and group work provide the students with a natural way to practice listening and speaking.

It is best if the teacher circulates during the exercises in order to help struggling pairs or groups by guiding them with further questions or models. It also gives the teacher the opportunity to pick up common errors, both in terms of the story's content and the use of language.

The teacher should not interfere with the flow by correcting students in the middle of an exercise as this pulls them off the task at hand and makes the student more self-conscious about their speech, which greatly reduces fluency. It is better for the class to collectively correct the common errors after finishing the exercise.

### **I. Understanding the Story**

This type includes discussing the main idea, multiple choice about the main idea, and answering questions about the story. The teacher may add other questions. After this exercise, it is helpful to have a few pairs or groups report their conclusions to the class. Others could disagree or ask questions. Don't ask all the groups to report, because that becomes too repetitive. Be sure to call on the students who may be too shy to volunteer. This exercise allows the teacher to find out the depth of the students' understanding of the stories.

## II. Vocabulary

Included are a variety of vocabulary exercises: matching, completing the sentence, explaining words to a partner, writing new sentences, explaining words in context. The exercises require the students to apply their understanding of the words, rather than just provide a definition. In the following examples students must answer the questions that contain a new word in bold.

Share **nicknames** used in your family or among your friends.

When do you feel like a **statue**?

When do you need **shelter**?

Research has proven that this type of vocabulary exercise helps students apply the word in an authentic, natural way. The more often the student “retrieves” the word, the more likely the word will be remembered.

## III. Now you Talk

These exercises are uniform, asking the students to discuss, in pairs or in small groups, questions about the story. The teacher may add other questions that might arise. After the discussion, the teacher may ask for some groups to report. As always, it is important to limit this reporting while being sure to call on more quiet students.

## IV. Now you Write

The suggestions in this section include writing a summary, letters, emails, dialogs, opinions on the stories, descriptions of characters, and expanded reports on the discussion from the "Now you Talk" section. It also includes rewriting the ending. Again, the teacher may add topics for the writing section and also

give suggestions about the appropriate length for the writing. This exercise is suitable for a homework assignment. Upon returning to class, or after the students write in class, the teacher could call on volunteers who would like to read their writing. Students should not be required to read their writing aloud to the class. Another idea is to have a place in the class or in the hallway where students can display their writing. This increases the audience for whom they are writing, and thus their motivation to write. It also allows other students to continue learning and practicing the new language.

## **V. Role Play**

In this section are three to six situations, either re-enactments of a scene or of problems posed in the story, or an imaginative scene that could have happened in the story. Give the students time to prepare their dialogs. The teacher needs to determine whether that particular class needs to write down the dialogs or do the dialog extemporaneously. In either case the teacher needs to give the students time to prepare. If the number of students in the class is larger than the number of roles provided by the three to six situations listed, more than one pair may be assigned the same situation. The role plays will be different when done by different pairs. Students usually enjoy this exercise. If students in your class have never done a role play, it would be helpful if the teacher and a brave student, or two students, model one of the situations. With young teenagers, it takes several classes for students to get used to the idea of role play. Once they do, it becomes one of the most powerful tools in the teacher's repertoire for learning and practicing new language skills.

## **Alternative exercises**

This group of exercises, which appears from time to time in position IV, includes:

- Grammar Practice: students rewrite sentences using different verb tenses or nouns and pronouns
- Oral Grammar Practice: students retell sentences using different verb tenses or nouns and pronouns
- Combining Sentences: students combine two or three sentences to make one sentence
- Adjectives: students change adjectives into the comparative form
- Sentence Completion: students complete a sentence with an appropriate ending
- Chronology: students put events in the correct order
- Practicing Writing Questions: students write questions based on a sentence

Please be confident that you as the teacher will know when to use as many or as few of these exercises as seems appropriate with different classes. You want to use the material to create as much interaction among your students as possible. Also, feel free to create new activities that will deepen your students' learning.

## **Ideas for Using the Video**

Some of the stories in this book were dramatized by the students and filmed. The accompanying DVD contains these filmed stories. Some are dramatic presentations, with or without a narrator, and some are a series of pictures with a narrator's voice.

The idea of the DVD is to give your students some ideas about how to elaborate on the “Role Play” activities already mentioned above and that are found after each story in the exercises section.



Dramatizing a story is a good way to practice already known phrases and structures and to explore new uses of language. We strongly recommend that students try dramatizing other stories they read as well as stories they have written themselves.

Here are a few ideas on how to use the accompanying DVD

## **Questions and Answers**

Enjoy watching the dramatized story after reading the story and doing the exercises. Compare the dramatized version to the written version. Answer:

1. How were they different? Why do you think the changes were made?
2. Was the dramatized version as you had imagined? If not, what was different?
3. How would you have done all or part of it differently?

Option: First try watching with only the sound (cover the TV screen with a cloth, for example). Try to visualize the story as you hear it. Watch and then answer the questions above.

## **Model**

Before watching the video, students dramatize the story themselves. After acting it out in groups or in front of the class, the students then watch the video and discuss differences.

## **No sound**

Watch the video without sound. Using the pause button as frequently as needed, have students identify characters and explain what is happening in the scene.

Option: Allow students to work in groups to reproduce a script that will fit with the action on the screen. Groups can then test their reproduction by trying to *dub* the film with their own script. Afterward, watch the video to check the accuracy of the dubbed version.

## **Freeze Frame**

Freeze the scene ahead of time by pushing pause. Allow students to identify the characters and explain their guesses. Have them also try to guess what part of the story is being shown. Push play and check your answers.

Option: While watching the story from the beginning, you can pause the story in order to point out specific details – gestures, facial expressions, clothing, decorations in the background, position of characters in a scene, etc. A teacher can then ask “Why?” questions to motivate discussion.

## **Follow-on Writing**

Have your students write a letter or email to the students who dramatized the story. In the first paragraph, they explain what they liked about the dramatized version. In the next one or two paragraphs, they can explain how they think this could be converted into a major film (recommend famous actors for certain parts, for example). In the last paragraph, they summarize their thoughts. Students with artistic talent can even try making a poster to go with the film idea.

# *Students' Stories*



## Our Teacher's Story

*Karina Melkumyants, 12,  
Kazan*



It was our first day at school after summer holidays. All the students were **dressed up** and looked pretty. After the line-up we went to the classroom where our teacher, Irina Petrovna, introduced the new boy to us. But the **reaction** was bad; our boys and girls started laughing at him, because he was not like us.

His name was Lasha and he was born in Kazakhstan. He had five sisters and had a dark skin color. One boy said, “Lasha is dirty; look at his skin.”

It was very rude, but my classmates didn't want to think about that. They thought it was fun being rude to someone different. Then our teacher told us that we must be more polite to Lasha. Nobody listened to her, but they listened when the teacher **shared** her story:

“I was a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student when a new girl, Aygul, from Kazakhstan came to my class. Nobody wanted to be friends with her. But I spent time with her and we became best friends. I learned about the Kazakh **culture**. One summer, I went with Aygul to Kazakhstan to see Aygul's **relatives**. Aygul was a smart girl and got a gold medal for her excellent studying. Most people are great and we need to give them a chance to show it.”

After this story we asked Lasha to forgive us. Soon we understood that Lasha is wonderful and now everyone wants to be friends with him.

P.S. I'm telling you my secret: without Lasha's help I wouldn't know mathematics well.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea of the story?

1. One must give everyone respect.
2. Aygul was a nice girl.
3. People from Kazakhstan are all nice.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Apply the words by answering the questions.

1. **dressed up:** When or why do you get dressed up?
2. **reaction:** Why did the students react in such a way?
3. **shared:** Why is it important to share (things or stories)?
4. **culture:** Describe something about the culture of your area.
5. **relatives:** Who are your relatives? And what is their relation to you?

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe a time when you were rude or someone was rude to you.
2. Why are people from different nationalities intolerant of each other?
3. Which people would you have a hard time getting to be friends with?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Describe a time when you saw someone being rude because of a difference.
2. Summarize Irina Petrovna's story.
3. Write a letter from Lasha to his cousin in Kazakhstan.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the present tense verb to past, then turn the past tense sentence into a question.

Example:

It is the first day of school.

Past: It was the first day of school.

Question: Was it the first day of school?

1. The boy is rude.
2. They think it is fun to tease Lasha.
3. They don't want to be friends with her.
4. The teacher tells a story.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. Two girls: They criticize Lasha.
2. Teacher and Lasha: After class, they talk about Lasha's first day in school.
3. Lasha and his father: At home, they create a strategy to solve his problem.
4. Lasha and two boys: They talk about sports.
5. Teacher and her friend Aygul: They remember when they first met.

## My Dagestan

*Magomedova Zaira, 15,  
Khasavyurt*



I live in a small but very beautiful **republic** – Dagestan. It is a multinational republic. People of 43 nationalities, speaking 38 national languages, live here. Imagine if the Russian language weren't the common language. How would we communicate with each other?

The nations are different, the languages are different, but there is one thing that unites all of our nationalities: it is **hospitality** and love of our Republic. No matter what nationality you are, you are always welcome in any mountainous village or family. The mountaineers used to say, “May the hearth of the house where the guest was offended perish.” The best food, the best bed, the best chair – all of these are for the guest. The other thing is a great respect for **elderly** people. Young people take good care of them. People respect their relatives and neighbors and are always ready to help them.

One day late in the evening my father saw a man standing in the city square with his bag. It was a late hour and my father came up to him and asked him, “Do you need anything?”

“I’m a **tourist** from St. Petersburg,” the man said, “and I don't know where my group is. I lost my way in the local market and when I came to the place where our bus was, there was nobody there. They went to Makhachkala without me, thinking that I



must have gone there **independently**. I have just been to the local hotel but there are no **vacant** rooms there.”

My father said, “I see you are a good man. Let us go to my house, and you may spend a night there and in the morning you’ll go home. My wife will give you a good supper.”

He came to our house. At first my mother told my father that it was not right to bring an unknown man to the house, but my father said that if a man was in need we had to help him. In the morning he left us saying that the people in Dagestan were very hospitable. He gave us his address and asked us to visit him in St. Petersburg.

I am very glad that I was born and live in Dagestan.

## **Exercises**

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea in the story?

1. It is important to be kind.
2. No one should separate from the group.
3. Dagestan is the only city where people are hospitable.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Finish the sentence with the best word in the list.

**republics hospitality elderly tourist independently vacant**

1. This room is empty; you can stay in this \_\_\_\_\_ room.
2. We give great respect to our \_\_\_\_\_ people.
3. Dagestan is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ in Russia.
4. He will have to travel to that city alone, \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Dagestani people are proud of their \_\_\_\_\_, and are kind to guests.
6. He is travelling around Russia; he is a \_\_\_\_\_.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Talk about hospitality in your home.
2. If you could travel, where would you like to go?
3. Was the mother or the father correct about letting the man stay in their home?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Choose one of the questions in Exercise III and write a long answer.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The tourist and hotel clerk: They talk about the tourist getting a room.
2. The father and the tourist: They meet in the city square.
3. The father and the mother: She disagrees about the unknown man coming to the house.
4. The writer and the tourist: She asks him all about St. Petersburg.
5. The tourist and the tour leader: They talk about the tourist being separated from the group.

## First Step to Friendship

*Alena Samarina, 15*  
*Samara*



On the 1st of September I had my first day at school № 133. Earlier I had studied at school № 32, and had many friends and was at home there.

But then on that first day: new people, new faces, new school. I stayed alone in the corner and watched my future classmates talking to each other. They laughed and spoke loudly, but I was still alone.

The girls looked at me as if I were an **alien** from another world, strange and **unusual**. I felt that I would never have friends here.

The bell rang, and everyone came in the room. I was the last student. I sat alone at the back of the class. Nobody talked to me. I was so confused!!!

The next day, when I sat (again alone) on the chair in the back and tried to **prepare** for my first lesson, one girl sat near me and said: “Hi! What’s your name?” The class had not yet started.

Little by little, Anya and I started to laugh. We told jokes to each other, and my **mood** became better and better.

The next day and next week, we spent all our time together! So, in this way I made a new friend.

Anya **cheered me up** when I was lost and alone. She was the first who made the first step to our friendship. It was very important for me at that moment! I’m happy. We are still friends.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Why does Alena feel so unhappy in her new school?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Match the words in bold to a word or phrase on the right.

- |                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. <b>alien</b>       | 1. get ready                     |
| B. <b>unusual</b>     | 2. make someone happy            |
| C. <b>prepare</b>     | 3. stranger, foreigner           |
| D. <b>mood</b>        | 4. to be different, not the same |
| E. <b>cheer me up</b> | 5. the way you feel, condition   |

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Discuss the problems of being new in any group, in or out of school.
2. What quality must Anya have in order to do what she did?
3. How old do you think Anya and Alena are?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. An email from Alena to a friend at her last school.
2. A summary of the story in five to seven sentences.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The teacher and the writer: After school, the teacher asks her how she can help.
2. Anya and a friend: They talk about the new girl, Alena.
3. The writer and her brother: They talk about their first day in school.
4. The writer and Anya: They make plans for the weekend.

## A Blue Pencil

*Gulnaz Akhmetzyanova, 16*  
*Ufa*



Alice was drawing a picture, but she had only one blue pencil. She decided to ask her classmate for a green pencil. But Dasha was very **rude** to Alice. I am not sure, but maybe Alice is poor. I am sure that Dasha is rich.

When they **handed in** their pictures to the teacher, she was surprised. Alice's picture was drawn with only a blue pencil. "Alice, why did you draw a picture in blue with no other colors?"

"I am sorry, teacher, but I have only one pencil, and it is blue." said Alice. "I asked Dasha to **loan** me a green pencil, but she said no."

The teacher was surprised, "Dasha is usually kind." But then the teacher learned from other classmates that Dasha was often rude with her classmates.

The next day, before class, the teacher said to Alice, "I want you to have these pencils so that you can draw pictures with many colors."

Alice was so happy and she **shared** her new pencils with other pupils in her class. The other girls were kind to her and helped her too.

The students didn't speak to Dasha all that day. The next day Dasha went to Alice, "I am sorry for being **stingy**. I know that is a very bad thing. Please forgive me." Dasha had learned a lesson.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea?

### *II. Vocabulary Practice*

Choose a word on the right that is an antonym (word with an opposite meaning) to a word on the left.

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| A. <b>rude</b>    | 1. generous         |
| B. <b>hand in</b> | 2. borrow           |
| C. <b>loan</b>    | 3. kind             |
| D. <b>share</b>   | 4. receive          |
| E. <b>stingy</b>  | 5. keep for oneself |

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Recall a time when someone was stingy or generous to you.
2. What do you think about what Dasha did?
3. How should the teacher help Dasha?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. A letter to Dasha to help her.
2. Create a dialogue between Dasha and Alice, about a week after the story.
3. Write a letter to Dasha's mother. Ask her to talk to Dasha about sharing.

### *V. Chronology*

Put these statements in order by numbering them 1-5.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ The other students said that Dasha was rude to classmates.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Alice had only one pencil.
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ The teacher gave Alice new colored pencils.
- D. \_\_\_\_\_ Dasha did not loan a pencil to Alice.
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ Alice handed in her “blue” drawing.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. Dasha and Alice: Alice asks Dasha for a pencil.
2. Teacher and Alice: The teacher asks Alice about her single-color drawing.
3. Two students: They talk about Dasha or Alice.
4. Dasha and her mother: Her mother talks to her about being generous.

## How I Changed my Opinion about a Person

*Anna Kalyuzhina, 15*  
*Novocherkassk*



This is a story about my classmates. A new girl, Irina, was in our class. She wasn't a bad girl, but she was of another **nationality**. Her hair didn't look like ours did. She didn't study in her last class and made many mistakes. Maybe that is why our classmates didn't like her. She never did homework. Some girls **complained** to the teacher.

Our teachers **constantly** made **remarks** to her, and that got boring for us. My classmates laughed at her and **teased** her. At a school meeting our teacher told our parents about it. That night, my mother asked, "Anna, I want you to be nice to Irina. The teacher said she has no friends." I thought about it and decided to try to be her friend.

The next day, I talked with Irina. I found her to be nice and kind. She liked music like I do. She liked shopping too. We became friends. I helped her with her homework and she began to study better.

I talked with my classmates about Irina. After that, they began to talk with her too. **We all learned from our mistake of judging another.**



## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Write what you think is the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete these sentences with the following words.

**nationality constantly remarks teased complained**

1. The teacher made \_\_\_\_\_ about her studying.
2. The girls \_\_\_\_\_ Irina about her hair.
3. They \_\_\_\_\_ that she didn't do her homework.
4. She was not of their \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. The teacher \_\_\_\_\_ told her to study more.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. When have you changed your opinion?
2. How does a poor student become a good student?
3. What activities do you enjoy with friends?
4. How did Anna help Irina?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a summary of the story.
2. Write a dialogue between Anna and Irina.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer and another girl: They talk about Irina's hair.
2. Teacher and Anna's mother: Teacher asks her to help Irina.
3. Anna and her mother: They talk about Irina.
4. The writer and two classmates: She tells them to be kinder to Irina.

## Apologizing Isn't a Weakness

Lyubov Manzheeva, 15  
Elista



Sveta didn't know what to do. Her best friends, Sasha and Masha, had gotten into an argument. How could that happen? And Sasha wanted her to choose between them!

It was unbelievable to Sveta. The friendship of the three girls had been an example for other students. Most of the girls in class envied their friendship.

But that day something happened to change all that. Sasha and Masha were sitting in the classroom, talking with **enthusiasm**. Sveta was reading her history book and at the same time listening to her friends. Soon Sveta noticed they had started to argue.

"Why are you always **complaining**?" Sasha said in an irritated voice.

"What? I am not complaining! You are wrong! If you don't like what I say, just tell me. I won't feel hurt."

The **quarrel** went on for a long time. The rest of the day Sasha and Masha wouldn't talk to each other. Then something more awful happened. Sasha came to Sveta and said, "As you know, Masha and I had an argument. She was so terrible. I can't stay friends with her because she doesn't understand me. You can't be friends with both of us. You must choose: me or her."

Sveta was shocked. “Sasha, you can’t ask me to choose between my two best friends.”

“Well you have to; I can’t be friends with you if you stay friends with Masha,” Sasha said. She turned into the classroom.

When Sveta got home, she went straight to her mother. “Mom, I need your advice. I’m in a difficult situation.”

“What happened?”

“Today Sasha and Masha quarreled. And now Sasha wants me to choose between Masha and her. What should I do?”

“That is a strange thing for Sasha to ask you to do. You are all best friends. You can’t break off your friendship that way. What do you think you could do?”

“Maybe I could help them **compromise**.”

“That’s good. Explain to both of them how important it is to be friends. You are right. Sometimes friends must compromise. It isn’t a weakness. Maybe someone will have to **apologize**. Only a strong person is capable of understanding a mistake and knowing when to admit this to another person.”

“Mother, you are so wise.”

The next day Sveta knew exactly what to do.

She found Sasha and Masha in the classroom sitting on opposite sides of the room. Sveta asked Sasha to go into the hall to talk. “I thought a lot about your quarrel. A wise person told me **‘to make a compromise doesn’t mean to be weak.’** Remember that Masha and you are friends, best friends. After all this time, you don’t want to destroy it in one moment, do you?”

Sasha looked down, “You’re right. What should I do?”

“Make up with her.”

“I guess I should apologize, but it is hard after all I said.”

Sasha kept her promise and the three of them saved their friendship. They learned that sometimes we just have to give in to someone else.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the story*

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Match the words with their definitions.

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| A. <b>compromise</b> | 1. to have a disagreement with someone             |
| B. <b>apologize</b>  | 2. to have great interest and excitement           |
| C. <b>complain</b>   | 3. to voice a negative opinion, express discontent |
| D. <b>advice</b>     | 4. two people giving in/up to solve a problem      |
| E. <b>quarrel</b>    | 5. suggestions on how to do something              |
| F. <b>enthusiasm</b> | 6. to say that you were wrong                      |

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Share a time when you had to apologize for something.
2. What advice would you give to the girls?
3. What was the argument between Sasha and Masha? Was it important?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. The dialogue when Sasha apologizes to Masha.
2. The main idea/s of this story in 3 to 5 sentences.
3. Sveta writes an email about this to a friend in another city.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Masha, Sasha, and Sveta: They are talking about going to the movies.
2. Sasha and Masha: They have a big argument about a boy they both like.
3. Sasha and her mother: They talk about her argument with Masha.
4. Sasha and Masha: Sasha is apologizing; Masha's reaction.

## How to Get Along with Classmates (from my own experience)

*Gevorg Mergelyan, 16*  
*Novocherkassk*



When I was six years old, my family moved to Russia from Armenia. When I went to school, I didn't know the Russian language at all, only two words “Да” and “Нет”. Also we lived in the bad **district** of town. My classmates didn't accept me. I was a foreigner. I didn't speak Russian and I was **weak**.

They were cruel to me every day, teasing me and wanting to fight. I could do nothing. But in my class there was a boy named Ivan who accepted and liked me. He even taught me Russian. He was also weak physically.

When I told my father about the problem, he played a great role in helping me. He made me go to judo and train there. I became very strong and won some competitions. I made friends with many **peers** in two years. Gradually I began to notice that my classmates **respected** me.

They were even afraid of my best friend Ivan because I stood up for my friend. He was a very clever boy, but he didn't like sports. Ivan liked reading and writing. He was an excellent pupil. He helped me and I also did well at school. There was a fine **mutual** understanding between him and me.

Soon my family moved from that district to a better one. I was very glad, but I missed my friend Ivan. In the new school my classmates accepted me at once.

My own life story shows how an intolerant attitude turned to respect. It is even good that I had such difficult situations in my life. Now I know how to **solve** such problems.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Ask these questions with your partner.

1. What was Gevorg's first problem?
2. What did Ivan do to help Gevorg?
3. Why did Gevorg's classmates insult him?
4. How did Gevorg's father help him?
5. How did Gevorg help Ivan?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete these sentences with the best words.

**mutual district peers solve weak respect**

1. Later he became friends with many of his \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. After he learned judo, he was not \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. They had \_\_\_\_\_ understanding about many things.
4. They were intolerant and showed him no \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. There are many ways to \_\_\_\_\_ problems.
6. He moved from a poor \_\_\_\_\_ to a richer one.

### *III. Now you Talk*

In a group, create three thinking questions to ask about this story. A thinking question cannot be answered in one or two words, like “yes” or “no”.

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. An answer to one of the questions in Exercise I.
2. Write a news report about a competition.
3. Write a character description of Gevorg and/or Ivan.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer and two bullies: They criticize him.
2. The writer and Ivan: They become friends.
3. The writer and his father: The father suggests solutions.
4. The writer and Ivan: They talk about their future.
5. The writer and a teacher: The teacher congratulates him for his wisdom.

## A Girl and a Wheelchair

*Olga Gonchar, 14  
Kazan*



Alina came to our class from another class in the school. She was 13 and she had **problems** with her legs; she couldn't move them and moved around with a wheelchair.

Everybody became very quiet when she **wheeled** herself into the room. Anna was in the back of the class whispering to Tatiana, and they both laughed. I looked at them with as mean a look as I could make. I helped the teacher bring books and supplies to Alina.

At break, Anna came up to me and said, "Olga, Alina is a **cripple**. We don't think it is cool for you to be friendly with her."

Tatiana added, "Right, if no one is friendly to her, maybe she will go back to her other class. We really don't want her in our class."

"This is unbelievable. What do you mean? Do you have a right to disapprove of someone just because she is **disabled**. You are the freaks." I was angry. I imagined what it would feel like to be in her place... Imagine no one wanting to be your friend, and because it is something you can't change.

I would hate to be looked at with **pity**, or fright or even **disgust**.

During the next class, I **observed** her for some time. She was just like any of us: a pretty face, bright eyes, nice smile. She laughed at the same jokes we did, she knew all the latest news in

politics, science, fashion and music. I decided that I wanted to become friends with her.

Several years later she had surgery on her legs and now she can walk, jump, run and enjoy her life. She also has lots of friends, but still she says that I'm her best friend.

Now we can go swimming, even dancing together! I'm glad that I was with her during that difficult period of her life. This experience helped me to understand different people better.

I'm convinced that it doesn't matter if a person has disabilities or not. Appearance plays an important role in our life, but it is not the main thing. **The main thing is to be a good person inside!**

## Exercises

### I. Understanding the Story

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner.

### II. Vocabulary

Match these words with a synonym/phrase on the right.

- |                    |                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A. <b>problems</b> | 1. feel sorry for                 |
| B. <b>to wheel</b> | 2. watch and look at              |
| C. <b>cripple</b>  | 3. difficult things to solve      |
| D. <b>disabled</b> | 4. move around in a wheeled chair |
| E. <b>pity</b>     | 5. someone who walks differently  |
| F. <b>disgust</b>  | 6. annoyance; extreme dislike     |
| G. <b>observe</b>  | 7. not being able to do something |

### III. Now you Talk

1. Retell the story, taking turns.
2. What would you have done if you had been Olga?
3. Describe another disability.

### IV. Now you Write

1. Describe the two main characters.



2. Write an email from Tatiana to Anna.
3. Write a summary of the story.

## V. Grammar Practice

Combine the two or three sentences into one. Example: She came into the room. The students left. “When she came into the room, the students left.”

1. She has lots of friends. I am still her best friend.
2. She had surgery. Now she can walk. She can dance too.
3. Anna said unkind things. Olga became angry.
4. I observed her. She laughed at the same jokes.

## VI. Role Play

1. Alina and the writer: Their first conversation after class.
2. The writer and Anna: They disagree about Alina.
3. Anna and Tatiana: They discuss getting Alina out of the class.
4. The writer and the teacher: They talk about how to solve the problem.
5. Alina and the writer (after the surgery): They plan what to do.

## Botanic

*Nina Bazan, 13*  
*Novocherkassk*



People who don't know me well sometimes call me "**botanic**". I think it happens because I get only A's in my studies. I love to read and often take part in different competitions. However, I don't think I am a botanic. In my opinion a botanic is a person who doesn't like to go walking or play sports but only likes to study, study and study.

One day I left the **library** and on my way I met a boy from my yard. His name was Victor. There were some books in my bag and when he saw them, he began to laugh.

I asked him, "What's up? Why are you laughing?"

"Hee, Hee! You are a botanic! Do you know this, Nina?"

I was annoyed when I heard it, but I answered, "Of course, I know. I'm a botanic. I do love studying! Everyone in our city knows this. I mean **clever** people. Have you any other questions?"

He was upset because he didn't **succeed** with his joke. "OK, I understand. I have no more questions. Bye!"

From this day on, I understood one important thing – if anybody says something to make you sad and **depressed**, agree with this person. Say you agree and then they don't know what to say. They won't laugh at you.

Now, to all rude questions I answer: "Yes, I'm so. Have you any other questions?"

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Write in one sentence the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, write a new sentence with these words.

1. **botanic**
2. **library**
3. **clever**
4. **succeed**
5. **depressed**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What is a “botanic” to you?
2. What can you do if someone calls you a name you don't like?
3. What did the narrator do to Victor to stop him?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Summarize what the narrator says to Victor to stop his rudeness, and then give your opinion of that approach to the problem.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the verb from past to present continuous. Example: He played basketball. He is playing basketball.

1. He called me a “botanic”.
2. She laughed at him.
3. I studied English.
4. I went to the library.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. Tanya and her teacher: They talk about her next competition.
2. Victor and the narrator: He teases her.
3. The narrator and her mother: They discuss her answer to Victor.
4. Victor and a friend: They talk about Nina.

## Being an Emo

*Milyausha Murzabaeva, 16*  
*Ufa*



Sometimes we don't like it when a friend changes. Liana has been my friend since we were children. We always liked the same things, the same dresses, and the same kind of music. But one day she said, "I want to be an 'emo'."

I knew about this style but I didn't like it. Emos are teenagers that wear pink and black clothes, and listen to what I think is ugly music. Emo is a style of clothes, a **lifestyle**, and it is very popular all over the world.

I said, "Liana, I don't want you to become an emo." "Sorry, but that's what I want," she replied. She became an emo. I was **surprised** that her parents didn't disapprove. I was still friends with her, but in her school her classmates and other friends became mean to her. They didn't like her new style. She was really sad. I was surprised that she didn't change her views. She just started wearing other clothes and made friends with other emos. I became sad too but I still tried to **support** her.

Liana liked her new style, her new friends, but was having a hard time with her classmates. Her parents **advised** her, "Stay an emo and change schools." I thought it was a good idea, except maybe her new classmates will hurt her too just because she doesn't look like them.

Eventually she found a **solution**. She just explained to her friends what an emo is and they understood her. In that way she made friends with her classmates again. She is still an emo and she is still in her old school.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, answer the questions.

1. How does Liana change?
2. How is this accepted by her classmates?
3. What solution do her parents suggest?
4. How does Liana solve the problem?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentences with the best word.

**solution advised supported surprised lifestyle**

1. Emo is a type of \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. My parents \_\_\_\_\_ me to help her.
3. I \_\_\_\_\_ her even when she became an emo.
4. Everyone was \_\_\_\_\_ by her new clothes.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ her parents suggested was to change schools.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What do you think about the emo lifestyle?
2. Describe that lifestyle.
3. How would your parents react if you wanted to be an emo?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Describe the emo lifestyle.
2. Write a letter to your grandmother, explaining why you are an emo.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Liana and the writer: They argue about Liana choosing to be an emo.
2. Liana and her parents: She convinces them.
3. The writer and her brother: He complains about Liana.
4. Two students and the writer: They ask about Liana.
5. Liana and the writer: They talk about her moving to another school.

## The Dream Came True

*Tuyana Kayukinova, 15*  
*Elista*



I met Alexandra two years ago and she told me about her life and her dream. She was a vet and wanted to open a pet **clinic**.

She said, “I need a lot of money to pay the rent. It is hard to find a good place. And when I find a good place, **the owner** of the shop asks a really high price! I don’t know what to do. I don’t have any ideas about how to get the money.”

Alexandra was very **upset** so I decided to help her. I told my friends about her, and we agreed we wanted to help her. We started working together to raise money for her dream. We worked as babysitters, waitresses, anything we could think of. After two months we had all the money we needed.

We paid for the **rent**. Alexandra could open her own pet clinic! She was very happy. “I’m very **grateful** that you helped me! It would have been impossible without you! My dream came true!” she said.

I said, “I’m very happy that our efforts were not in vain!”

Now, Alexandra has a great pet clinic, and we have become best friends.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea in this story?

1. There is usually a solution to a problem.
2. One should not have difficult dreams.
3. Vets take care of animals.

### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner answer the questions about the words in **bold**.

1. What different types of **clinics** are there?
2. Do you **own** anything? What?
3. When was the last time you were **upset**?
4. For what types of things/places does one have to pay **rent**?
5. When are you **grateful**? How do you show gratitude?

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Discuss a time when you were grateful for help from another.
2. What does one do in a clinic? Have you ever been to one?
3. Why are vets important? What is the long word for a “vet”?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write your opinion of this story.

### *V. Complete the Sentence*

Match the two parts to make a correct sentence.

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. Alexandra                   | 1. babysitting.                 |
| B. She didn't have             | 2. to make her dream come true. |
| C. My friends and I            | 3. money for the rent.          |
| D. We worked at jobs like her. | 4. very grateful that we helped |
| E. We earned enough            | 5. wanted to help her.          |
| F. Afterwards Alexandra was    | 6. wanted to become a vet       |

## *VI. Role Play*

1. Alexandra and the writer: Talking about the problem with the rent.
2. The writer and two friends: Discussing how they are going to raise the money.
3. Alexandra and the owner of the shop: They discuss the price of the rent.
4. The writer and her father: They disagree about her raising money for her friend.
5. The writer and her brother: She tries to get him to help raise the money.



## The Sunglasses

*Dinara Galiullina, 13*  
*Kazan*



Last year we had an unusual situation in my school. Diane joined our class, but she always looked sad and she always wore dark sunglasses. None of my classmates would talk to her.

One day our teacher said: “Dinara, you are the head of the class, so why don’t you try to communicate with Diane? She’s not bad!”

The next day, I went up to see her and said, “Hello, Diane! How are you?”

She replied, “Hi! I’m O.K.” And that was that. It looked like she didn’t want to be friendly.

Day after day, I began a **conversation** and over and over again, she said little. Finally, after a week she said, “Thank you for talking to me, Dinara! You are very nice and kind to me, but I’m afraid you’ll change your **opinion** about me if I tell you why I always wear sunglasses”.

I answered, “You shouldn’t worry! Tell me, I want to know!”

Then she told me her sad story. Diane had only one eye. She lost the other one when she was four years old. “I always put my glasses on, because I don’t want anyone to see my ugly eye.”

“Oh, don’t worry. I am your friend. There is nothing to worry about.” Diane was **grateful** that unlike many other silly children of my age, I could accept her secret. Only after that

conversation I **realized** how it would be difficult to study in our class - without any support - without any friends.

Diane decided to share her story with the class, so that they wouldn't have the wrong idea about her wearing glasses, but the reaction was awful. To my shame most of the classmates began to laugh at Diane and call her names like "Fool blind girl" or "One Eye".

Diane started crying. It was such a shock for her! I was mad and screamed from the top of my lungs: "Guys, it is wrong for you to act like this. Having only one eye does not mean she is stupid. And it doesn't give you any right to call her bad names! We study in one class; we need to be friendly to each other and we have to help each other. **She is as good as you and me**". I couldn't stay in that classroom. Diane and I left together.

Next day something **miraculous** happened. All the girls and boys asked Diane to forgive them for their rude behavior; they asked her questions and helped if she needed any kind of **assistance**. Finally, Diane had become a member of our class and I am proud of my classmates, because they were wise enough to understand that **we are all different, but all equal**.

## **Exercises**

### *1. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, answer these questions.

1. How was Diane different from her classmates?
2. How did the classmates act toward her?
3. What did the teacher ask Dinara to do?
4. Why didn't Diane talk to Dinara at first?
5. Why does Diane wear sunglasses?
6. How did Dinara react to Diane's story?
7. How did their classmates react to Diane's story?
8. What did Dinara and Diane do after the class reacted?
9. What did the classmates do the next day?
10. What conclusion do you make from these answers?

## *II. Vocabulary*

Match the words with the synonyms or definitions.

- |                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| A. <b>grateful</b>     | 1. help                    |
| B. <b>opinion</b>      | 2. people talking together |
| C. <b>conversation</b> | 3. thankful                |
| D. <b>realize</b>      | 4. magical                 |
| E. <b>miraculous</b>   | 5. idea                    |
| F. <b>assistance</b>   | 6. know                    |

## *III. Now you Talk*

1. What would you say to the class if you were the teacher?
2. Have you ever been in a similar situation? Describe it.
3. How else could Dinara have helped Diane?

## *IV. Now you Write*

Write a description of two of the characters.

## *V. Role Play*

1. Diane and the writer: Their first real conversation.
2. The writer and two girls: She talks to them about Diane.
3. The teacher and two students: She tells them they are wrong.
4. The writer and two boys: She tells them they are wrong.
5. The writer and her mother: The writer reports on what happened in the class.

## Peoples' Eyes Speak All Languages

*Zhavgarat Gadzhieva, 14*  
*Khasavyurt*



A year ago I happened to go to an **international** camp in Bulgaria. Before I went there I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to understand my new friends because I didn't speak English well.

In the morning I met boys and girls from different countries. There were children from Mongolia, China, Japan, United Kingdom, and from both North and South America. At first the main language was smiling. All people like kind words so we started making our own camp language **to communicate** with each other. It was difficult to understand my new friend from China, Pang. He knew English very well but **preferred** to keep silent and be alone. Once I asked him to tell me about China and his family.

He smiled, kept a short silence and finally said, "Our family lives in Beijing. There are eight of us in the family. My father is a **salesman**. My little brother wants to work as a **shop assistant**. He dreams of becoming a good salesman whom customers will love and from whom they will always buy different things. He wants to have the best shop in China." When he spoke, a smile appeared on his face.

I understand how important it is to be able to listen to a person, especially someone who is from a different culture. Later we became very good friends. Now he sends me e-mails or rings me up very often.

**An open heart and a welcome smile is a signal and call for friendship.**

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea in this story?

1. It is important to be afraid of strangers.
2. The writer is shy and not happy to meet others.
3. One can understand others if one reaches out to them.

### *II. Now you Talk*

1. What are the different ways to communicate with a new person?
2. Talk about a time when you tried to make a new friend, and how you did it.
3. Describe a situation when you have been in a similar situation.
4. In pairs or small group summarize the story in five sentences and then read to class.

### *III. Now you Write*

1. Write an email from Pang to the author of the story.
2. Write about a time when you had to reach out to someone.
3. Write a newspaper article about the camp. Add more details.

### *IV. Role Play*

1. The writer and her mother: Before leaving for camp, she tells her mother her fears.
2. The writer and roommate: They try to talk, but they don't know a common language.
3. A teacher at camp and two boys: They talk about the boys being too shy.
4. The writer and Pang: They have a conversation.
5. Two girls: They disagree about talking to people from different cultures.

## New Girl

*Tatiana Kegich, 14*  
*Novocherkassk*



Last school year a new girl came to our class. Her name was Anna. She didn't **communicate** with anybody. My friend asked me, "What? Do you think she is scared of us?" We didn't know why she acted the way she did.

My classmates didn't like that girl. She didn't study very well, but she knew one **subject**. It was French. When we went to the French class we all asked her different questions about the French language. She would talk to us then.

Now we know French better. But she knows French best of all. She taught us a lot. **Merci beaucoup** (as they say in France).

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Write the main idea of the story in a sentence.

### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, answer the questions about these words.

1. **communicate**: Why is it difficult to communicate with some people?
2. **subject**: Which subjects in school do you like?
3. **merci beaucoup**: Guess what this French phrase means.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Why didn't the students like Anna?
2. Talk about what makes one student better in a subject?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write a full description of Anna. Add your own details.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the pronouns to plural and make the verbs agree.

Example: **She** comes to our class. **They** come to our class.

1. She is scared of us.
2. He doesn't like her.
3. She knows French better.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. Anna and the writer: They talk about their classmates.
2. A boy and a girl: They talk about Anna.
3. Anna and the writer: They discuss French.
4. The teacher and the class: They talk about studying French.
5. The writer and Anna: Anna teaches “thank you” in French.

## Just Help Each Other

*Julia Minenko, 14*  
*Samara*



Last spring my parents and I were walking as **usual** on the banks of the Volga River. Suddenly we saw a stranger in a green overcoat who was lying on the ground. We could tell something was wrong.

My father ran to him and asked the stranger what was wrong. The stranger said one word in English, so my father asked again, this time in English, “How are you feeling? What is wrong?”

The stranger couldn't say anything because of problems with his heart. At the same time my mother said, “Sasha, run to get a policeman.” She called the **ambulance** and told them what she knew at that time. In 30 minutes the stranger was in a hospital.

My parents and I visited him often. After two weeks he was **released** from the hospital. Later when he came to our house, he said, “Nobody helped me. People passed me by. When they couldn't understand my poor Russian, they didn't stop to help.”

My father said, “It is because of your language and your nationality.”

My mother added, “Unfortunately in Russia the attitude toward people from different countries is often not one of kindness and **compassion**.”

Later, after this friendly stranger, Roger, became better, he gave us a present, a green parrot. This is my pet now.

Now I know that this man is no longer a stranger. I know that both he and my parrot are Australians.



## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Make three questions asking about the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary.*

Write a sentence with each word; be clear about the meaning.

1. **usual**
2. **ambulance**
3. **released**
4. **compassion**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. How can we get rid of prejudice toward others?
2. What do you think was physically wrong with Roger?
3. How would you act in the situation on the river banks?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a paragraph about being compassionate to those in need.
2. Write a new ending to this story.
3. Write about Julia going to Australia when she is an adult.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer's father and the doctor: They discuss Roger's health.
2. The writer and her mother: They tell the grandmother about the rescue.
3. Father and a neighbor: They disagree about helping strangers.
4. The writer and Roger: They talk about why he travels to other countries.
5. The writer and her friend: They argue about kindness to strangers.

## What is an Emo, Anyway?

*Liliya Mustafina, 14*  
*Ufa*



Earlier this year, my friend Elvira said, “I hate emos. I don't like their views on life or their type of music, or anything about their life style.”

I asked, “Is that fair? What is their **style** of music? What are their views on life?”

“Oh, Liliya, you know. They like **punk music**. They complain. They are very **emotional**. I especially hate their clothes. They are black and torn and out of style. They try to be different.”

“Well, what's wrong with that? Sometimes I wish I were a little more different.” I continued, “My cousin who is in the university is an emo right now. She wears her hair short with bangs; I think she **died** it black. I like her black thick glasses.”

Ever since my cousin, Masha, turned an emo, I have been **curious** about it. I read that it started in the mid 1980's and came out of punk rock. But for some reason, many people don't like them, and hurt their feelings by saying bad things to them, like calling them “**freaks**”. Some people even fight with them, even if they don't know anything about them. My friend Elvira joined in a fight once, even hitting an “emo” girl on the back.

Then one day Elvira and I made friends with someone new, Diana. We liked her a lot because she was funny, interesting, clever and cool! She was dressed in “normal” clothes.

But a few days later, we found out that she was an emo! We saw her in a store and she was in a black short skirt, black stockings, and her hair was black, with **spikes** all over her head.

“Diana, what are you doing dressed like that?” Elvira said, with surprise, even shock in her voice.

“I thought I told you that usually I dress like an ‘emo’. Is there anything wrong?”

Elvira and I forced a smile and we both said, “Oh, no, of course not. Everything's fine!”

We now know that emos, just like anyone, can be kind and friendly. They like different music and clothes but they respect our style of life, our music, and our clothes. They just prefer their style, the emo style. We must respect them, no matter how different they seem to us.

Diana, Elvira and I are still friends.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, discuss and write the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Look at the words in the story that are written in **bold**. Can you explain what the words mean? Use the following words in a different sentence.

1. **style**
2. **punk music**
3. **emotional**
4. **dyed**
5. **curious**
6. **freaks**
7. **spikes**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. How is the “emo” lifestyle different from yours?
2. Can someone change back and forth from “emo” to usual?
3. What would your parents do if you wanted to be an “emo”?

### *IV. Sentence Completion*

Finish the sentence with the phrases on the right.

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. The emos have             | 1. badly about emos.        |
| B. My cousin made me become  | 2. similar to punk music.   |
| C. Elvira talked             | 3. a different lifestyle.   |
| D. Diana, the new friend,    | 4. are still friends.       |
| E. Emo music is              | 5. was dressed like an emo. |
| F. Elvira, Liliya, and Diana | 6. curious about emos.      |

### *V. Role Play*

1. Elvira and the writer: They share their views of emos.
2. Elvira and an emo: Elvira attacks her verbally.
3. Two emos: Talking about why others dislike them.
4. Elvira, the writer, Diana: They talk about Diana being an emo.
5. The writer and Mom: They talk about a neighbor being an emo.

## A Long Hard Journey to Somewhere

*Zanda Mandzhieva, 15*  
*Elista*



“Does anybody have grandparents who lived in Siberia during the Great Patriotic War?” asked my history teacher.

“Yes, I have,” I said.

“Well, Zanda, could you write an essay about it? Write about what they went through at that time.”

“Er... I will try.” I went home and found Granny was knitting socks. She is 73 years old. In 1943 when she was eight, she was **exiled** with her parents to Siberia. I asked her to tell me something about it.

“Oh, dear. That was a long time ago. I wonder what I can tell you.”

She thought a while and then she started the story. “It was 64 years ago, a cold winter. We were sitting at home, but suddenly soldiers with weapons came into our home. They ordered us to take only necessary things and follow them. Then soldiers packed us in **freight** trains, in **freezing** train cars. And so began a long hard journey to... somewhere, we didn't know where. Everybody was starving. Many people died. Soldiers just threw them out on the tracks. Then somebody told us that we were being exiled to Siberia,” said Granny.

She continued, “We arrived in Siberia. It was so cold and snowing too! We were tired and almost **dead** from starvation. We had nowhere to go, no houses, no food, no heavy clothes for

this cold. We were sent to some families. We **approached** the houses, and knocked on the doors, but the doors and windows were closed to us. At first, nobody wanted to open their doors to us.”

“Finally we were **sheltered** by a kind Siberian woman. Thanks to her, we **survived**. She said, ‘Before your arrival, somebody said that you were cannibals’!” When my Granny remembered this, her face became sad and her eyes filled with tears.

In 1956, my Granny and her family were **allowed** to return to Kalmykia. She still remembers that wonderfully kind Siberian woman who did not see us as different.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Discuss this story’s main idea with a partner.

### II. Vocabulary

Explore and explain the words in **bold**.

1. What does it mean to be **exiled**?
2. What is **freight**?
3. What do you do when you feel like you are **freezing**?
4. When do you need **shelter**?
5. What do you do when a stranger **approaches** you?
6. Why were the Kalmyks able to **survive**?

### *Ila. More Vocabulary*

Match the words that are opposites.

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| A. freezing | 1. friends   |
| B. enemies  | 2. prevented |
| C. dead     | 3. rewarded  |
| D. punished | 4. burning   |
| E. allowed  | 5. alive     |

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Discuss why this exile happened.
2. Share whatever you know about the Great Patriotic War (1941-45).
3. Why was the Siberian woman tolerant of the Kalmykians?
4. What would you have done if you were a Kalmykian? A Siberian?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write about your answers to one or more of the above questions.
2. Write a summary of the story.
3. Write a dialogue between two people in this story.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Young Granny and two soldiers: She asks to stay at home.
2. Young Granny and the mother in the train: the young girl wants food.
3. The family and an intolerant Siberian family: The Siberian family refuses to help.
4. The young girl and a Siberian woman: The woman offers shelter.
5. The young girl and an old friend, 13 years later: They share experiences.

## Bulat and Basketball

*Aidar Gizatullin, 13*  
*Kazan*



Bulat and his parents moved into my neighborhood. On the first day at school he ran into trouble. My classmates whispered and laughed at him as it was unusual to have a newcomer. Poor Bulat was **surrounded** by the unfriendly **atmosphere**, so he sat alone at the last desk. He was alone all day.

I didn't like this situation, and I asked an older friend about this. She gave me good **practical** suggestions and told me to talk to him, to befriend him. She said, "Everyone wants to be accepted by others. No matter how they are different: religion, age, skin color or just being new, they want to be treated with respect and friendliness."

"It is true. In class last year, our teacher said that it is everyone's right to be respected," I said.

The next day Bulat came to school and again sat alone at the last desk. I went to the back and sat by him. He looked at me, but didn't say anything. He got "good" during the next class for his homework **assignment**. I found him during lunch break and we ate together. "Bulat, do you like any kind of sports?"

"I really like basketball; actually I was the best player in my school." After our lessons we went to the playground and played basketball. Bulat definitely is a great player! We walked home together because he lives near my house. We like a lot of the same things. Bulat is such a talented and interesting person! I



was lucky to be the first one in our class to discover his personality.

The first class next day was physical training and we played basketball with my classmates. It was after Bulat proved to be a strong player that the others started to respect him. Later he taught the boys some tricks, and they were thankful. Now our “newcomer” has many friends and he is happy with his present **status** in our class. I wish my classmates didn't need a newcomer to prove he is good at something before they give respect. Maybe they learned a lesson. I don't know. **We all need to be a little more tolerant.**

## **Exercises**

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner; write down what you think is the main idea.

### **II. Vocabulary**

In pairs create a sentence for each of the words.

1. **surrounded**
2. **atmosphere**
3. **practical**
5. **assignment**
6. **status**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What is your first reaction after reading this story?
2. What would you have done differently from the writer or Bulat?
3. Describe a similar situation you know about or experienced yourself.

#### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write about one of the discussion topics above.
2. Write your opinion of the story.

#### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the verb to present progressive. *Example: Bulat played basketball well. Bulat is playing basketball well.*

1. Bulat sat alone in the classroom.
2. I walked to the back of the room.
3. We lived near each other.
4. Bulat proved to be a strong player.
5. He taught the other boys some basketball tricks.

#### *VI. Role Play*

1. Bulat and his mother: They talk about his going to the new school.
2. Bulat and the teacher: Bulat complains and the teacher gives suggestions.
3. The writer and Bulat: They become friends and talk.
4. Three students in the gym: They talk about Bulat and about his playing basketball.

## The Kerchief and the Boys

*Aigul Abdullayeva, 15*  
*Khasavyurt*



As soon as I began to understand the **sense** of the words, my mother began teaching me how I must live when I grow up. She tried to explain many things to me but I didn't listen to her words **attentively**, because I thought I was doing quite well.

One day there were problems with the neighbor's children and mother said that they weren't learning important lessons, lessons about kindness.

On hearing my mother's words I asked, "Mother, what do you mean? How does one learn lessons about kindness?"

My mother said, "Aigul, live in such a way that nobody will feel bad because of you. Do not **offend** people. Share with them a last piece of bread if necessary, and the main thing is – you mustn't be a source of **grief**."

"I'll try to follow your advice, mother," I said, but it sounded difficult.

"Listen to me, my dear," my mother went on, "Once my mother told me the same thing and her advice helped me. First you need to think, and then speak and then do. Later, if I did something that was not proper, she would not yell at me but would say, 'Think about your **behavior**'."

I am in the 9th grade now and I know many people don't understand my way of living. Some might say that I think I am always right in my behavior, opinions, and how I treat other people. But my mother's advice helped me find the proper way of living and treating people.

Last year a new family moved into a neighboring house. They were Russians and moved here because the father was an oil industry worker. Their only child, a boy, didn't know anybody here.

One day he came up to me and said that he wanted to be my friend, and I was happy to do that.

Later, my boyfriend started fighting with him when he met him in my yard. I took my mother's kerchief and threw it on the ground between the fighting boys. They stopped fighting and looked at me. In Dagestan there is a tradition that if a woman throws her kerchief between the angry men, they must stop fighting and part.

I told them to be reasonable and instead of being **enemies**, to become friends. The boys followed my advice and now we are a good company of three.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Choose the main idea in this story.

1. A father knows best.
2. Her mother taught her how to live with kindness.
3. The boy next door made a lot of trouble for her.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Answer these questions about the words in **bold** with a partner.

1. What does she mean by **sense** in the first paragraph?
2. Why didn't she listen **attentively** to her mother?
3. How do you **offend** someone?
4. What does **grief** mean?

5. Describe what kind of **behavior** her mother wants from her.
6. How do we make **enemies**?

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What did her mother teach her?
2. Why did Aigul's boy friend start the fight?
3. Was her way of solving the problem a good one? Why?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a letter from Aigul to her best friend about the fight.
2. You are the boy friend: Write an explanation of why you started the fight.
3. Write your opinion of the story.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer and her mother: Her mother gives her advice.
2. The writer and new boy: They make friends.
3. The writer and her boyfriend: They talk about the new boy.
4. The writer, boy friend and new boy: They talk about the fight.
5. The writer and her mother: The writer tells her mother about the fight and what she did.

## Cruelty Problem

*Igor Khodakovsky, 14*  
*Novocherkassk*



This is a story about kids' cruelty to their classmates. The **bullies** in our class like to beat up all of the freshmen, but after a while, they usually stop.

However, Dasha, a freshman in our class, was a cry-baby, so they kept on teasing her. She had a lot of problems and was a little bit different. That made the bullies pick on her even more.

“Hi, Dasha, what do you have in your bag? Eww... it is bad food. You are strange.” They **insulted** her and took her things.

“Stop it. Stop it,” she said, and started crying. She cried a lot. That made them tease her more.

In one way, she had a strong character. She never complained to the teachers. But we told the teachers. We held some class meetings. We talked about Dasha and discussed how we could make the bullies stop. We came up with some ideas: talking to the bullies, the bullies talking to the teacher, **ignoring** them. But nothing worked. They didn't stop.

Dasha was always **depressed**. We felt so bad for her. After a few more months, we had another class meeting with those bullies and their fathers. Then those bullies promised that they would stop treating her that way. They didn't lie!

That was the end of Dasha's big problem.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Answer these questions.

1. What was Dasha's problem?
2. How did the bullies respond to Dasha?
3. What was the solution?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Match the words on the right with phrases on the left.

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| A. to feel very sad                        | 1. <b>insult</b>    |
| B. to say hurtful, damaging things         | 2. <b>bully</b>     |
| C. someone who is mean to a smaller person | 3. <b>depressed</b> |
| D. to act like someone isn't there         | 4. <b>ignore</b>    |

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What could teachers do to stop students from bullying other students?
2. Share a time when you saw kids being cruel.
3. How would you respond if someone bullied or teased you or your friend?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write about one of the subjects from Exercise III.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Dasha and two bullies: They insult her.
2. The teacher and the lead bully: Teacher scolds him; he responds.
3. The teacher and Dasha's mother: They discuss a solution to Dasha's problem.
4. Dasha and the writer: They talk about being depressed.
5. Four parents at a meeting: They talk about ways to solve the problem.

## An Occasion at the Bus Station

*Fatima Yanbayeva, 16*  
*Ufa*



It was very hot that day. On my way home, my bus stopped and I got off at the bus station. At once I noticed a man lying on a bench. All the people saw him and just **shrieked** with laughter. They thought he was drunk. But he wasn't.

Boys standing not far from the bench **giggled** loudly. One of them pointed to the bench, and said "Look at that old drunk."

Only one man stopped next to this person. All the people around turned and watched. This man turned to the boys and said: "What are you laughing at? He can be sick. It's very hot today. Why don't you understand that?" The boys stopped laughing at once.

The boys looked down. They looked **ashamed**.

The man talked to the sick man, the man that the boys called "drunk". But he was not drunk. He was sick because of the sun and the high **temperature**. He stood up with the help of that man and they walked away. I saw them going to the **pharmacy**.

That was the lesson I will never forget. We were all indifferent to a person in need. We are all people. We should help if someone needs help. That is one reason we are living on the Earth.



## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

1. Why did the people notice the man?
2. Why did they laugh at him?
3. What did the kind man do?
4. What do you conclude?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Answer the questions about some words in the story.

1. What is the difference between a **shriek** and a **giggle**?
2. What is the **temperature** when it's really hot?
3. Why were the boys **ashamed**? How does a person show shame?
4. What do you buy in a **pharmacy**?

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe an occasion when someone was **ashamed**.
2. Why do people get sick when it's hot?
3. What does this story teach you?

### *IV. Now you Write*

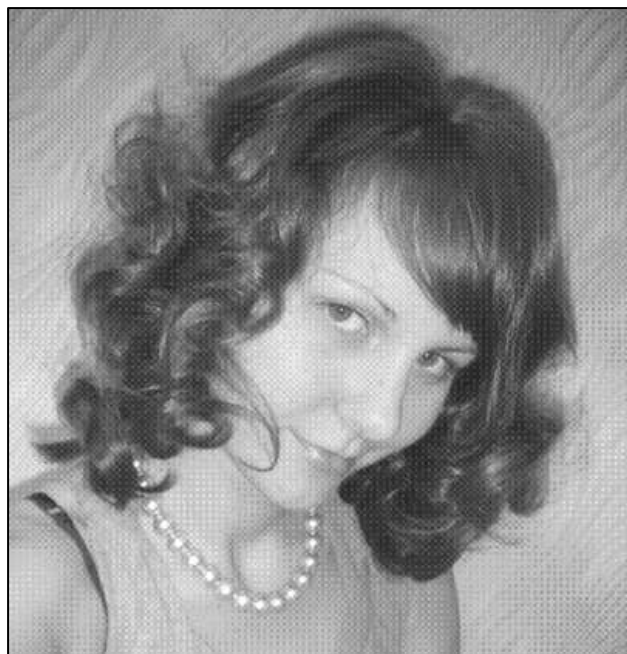
1. Write a summary of the story in five to seven sentences.
2. Write an email from the sick man to the helpful man, thanking him.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer and friend: They talk about the man on the bench.
2. Kind man and boy: He tells them to behave well.
3. Two boys: They laugh and joke about the sick man.
4. Kind man and sick man: They talk about the problem.

## The Boy and the Swimming Pool

*Katya Naumova, 15*  
*Samara*



It was five years ago. I was at the swimming pool. One little boy in our group, Ivan, was afraid of water, but our coach threw him in anyway. He cried! All the boys laughed at him. He cried more.

I felt really sorry for him. It was his **phobia**. Our **coach** made fun of him. After four months his parents took him from the swimming club. I hope that now he doesn't fear water! And I think that this **event** in his life helped him become stronger.

### Exercises

#### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, talk about the main idea.

#### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, answer the questions.

1. What is a **phobia**?
2. For what sport might you have a **coach**?
3. Name a recent important **event**.

### *III. Now you Talk*

Discuss any phobias you know.

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write a short summary of this story.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the subject of each sentence to “they” and change the verb to agree with the subject, if necessary. Example: He goes to the school. They go to the school.

1. He swims in the pool.
2. She was so sorry.
3. His friend takes him out of the water.
4. He is afraid of water.
5. He makes fun of the boy.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. Ivan and the coach: The coach wants Ivan to get in the water.
2. Ivan and two boys: They tease him about the water.
3. The writer and Ivan: She tries to help him.
4. Ivan's father and the coach: The father complains to the coach.
5. The father and two boys: He tells them they must not tease others.

## To Find Oneself

*Elzyata Kharaeva, 14*  
*Elista*



“It can't be true!”

“Yes, my honey. We need to move to town.”

“But Mom, my friends are here.”

“You can call them. Don't worry. You will find friends in your new school. Also, you will get a better **education** at the school in town”.

That was that. Until that moment, I was happy living in my small village. I live with my mom and she decided to take a job in a small company in town.

When I went into my new classroom, I saw only strangers. I worried. I tried to talk with some girls, but they **ignored** me. Then I heard one say, “She is from the country! Just look at her clothes.”

I was **embarrassed**. I noticed that the girls were dressed better than I was. In the village where I was born, people don't **judge** you by the way you are dressed. The village people are more friendly and helpful.

In the back rows sat one girl. She looked shy and friendly. After lessons she said, “Hello. My name is Elena.”

We went home together and talked about everything. We had a lot in common and she lived across from my house.

The next week Elena suggested, “Elzyata, you are so good in English. You should take part in the big English language contest. You are better than girls in our class.”

The next day I told my teacher that I wanted to take part in this contest.

Some of my classmates giggled. “Are you sure you want to **participate** in this contest?” said Vicky. “Do you know that only the best pupils can be in this contest? You can’t possibly win.”

I was “knocked out” by her mean words. That is when I decided to win! Every evening I studied grammar and new words. Elena helped me.

The day of the contest came. Vicky was there for the contest too. I just tried to do the best I could. Nothing else worried me.

In the evening we went to school to learn the results of this **competition**. Some of the students were calm, but others were nervous.

When the winners were announced I wasn't nervous, because it didn't matter to me. Taking part in this contest was more **valuable** than winning. The first place went to a girl from the country, and I was glad for her. Vicky looked disappointed. Both Vicky and I approached the girl who won and congratulated her.

That night Vicky seemed to change her attitude about people who were different. Anyway, I decided to study languages more and to take part in the next contest. I want to compete with Vicky again because she is a good rival.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Choose the main idea of the story.

1. One should not change schools.
2. Changing schools can sometimes help us to improve and grow.
3. Cities are not as nice as villages because they are too big.

### *II. Vocabulary*

**education**                      **ignored**                      **embarrassed** **judged**  
**participate**      **competition**      **valuable**

1. Preparing for the \_\_\_\_\_ made Elzyata study more.
2. Most of the students \_\_\_\_\_ Elzyata on her first day.
3. Elzyata learned that taking part in the contest was \_\_\_\_\_,
4. The girls \_\_\_\_\_ her for being different.
5. The mother said that the town school would give a better \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Elzyata decided to \_\_\_\_\_ in the English language contest.
7. Elzyata was \_\_\_\_\_ about her clothes.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe how and why people judge each other by their clothes.
2. What are the differences between city and village life?
3. What kinds of attitudes are written about in this story?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write about one of the subjects in Exercise III.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the verb tense from present to past. Example: Elena helps Elzyata study English. Elena helped Elzyata study English.

1. She knows about village life.
2. The country girl wins first place.
3. She has to move to the town.
4. The girls judge her clothes.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. The writer and her mother: They talk about moving to town.
2. The writer and two unfriendly girls: They sit at the same table in the cafeteria.
3. The writer, Vicky, and the teacher: They talk about who will be in the contest.
4. The writer and Vicky: They meet to congratulate the winner.

## No Borders Between Friends

Sasha Plotnikova, 15  
Kazan



I remember one boy, Batyr, from my school who was different from everyone there. He had some speech problems; sometimes we couldn't understand what he said. He was shy because of this. After a while he quit talking. Some of the kids said he was strange.

None of the children spoke to him. I think they were **embarrassed** if they didn't know what he said, and didn't like to ask him to **repeat** or to speak more slowly.

Every time when I saw Batyr, he'd be sitting by himself in the back of the class. Nobody **befriended** him; they would hardly even notice him. He was ignored by all the children of my grade.

One day, I walked to his desk. At first he didn't see me, so I said "Hi, Batyr."

"Are you talking to me?" he said with some kind of **shock** in his voice.

"Yes, I am. What are you doing?" That very moment I saw a beautiful picture and he continued drawing. "That picture is amazing. It is beautiful!" He was very happy to hear such words from me. "I don't draw very well, but I **appreciate** your drawing," I added.

After that day we explored our favorite things. The more I talked with Batyr, the more I understood what he said. When he wasn't nervous, I understood him better. We had common interests. Slowly we became good friends. He didn't seem strange to me anymore.

Two years ago he and his family moved to Israel, because his father, a doctor, signed a contract for work in one of the best hospitals there. My friend is living abroad with his family and is happy there. Nevertheless, we still communicate via email and handwritten letters. He sends me drawings sometimes. **There are no borders for real friendship!**

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea of the story?

1. It is better to ignore people with speech problems.
2. One never knows who will be a good friend.
3. Good friends always move away.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentence with the best word.

**embarrassed befriend noticed shocked appreciate/d border**

1. I was \_\_\_\_\_ when everyone looked at me.
2. When you live in different countries, you are separated by a \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. I was so surprised, I was \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. I decided to sit with him and \_\_\_\_\_ him.
5. He quit talking so no one even \_\_\_\_\_ him.
6. I \_\_\_\_\_ his drawing because it was so good.



### *III. Now you Talk*

1. How do people treat a person with speech problems?
2. Describe a relationship with someone that went across “borders”.
3. Discuss problems that could be called speech problems.

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Describe the two characters: The writer and the new friend.
2. Write an email exchange between them.
3. Write about a time when a good friend moved away.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The two new friends: Their first conversation.
2. The two new friends: Their talk about art the next day.
3. Batyr and his mother: He tells her about his new friend.
4. The writer and Batyr: They talk on skype across “borders”.

## Eyes on the Caspian Sea

*Elina Daghirova, 15*  
*Khasavyurt*



Two years ago a group of children from Khasavyurt went to the **holiday** center, “Kaspy,” which is on the shore of the Caspian Sea. I was among them. At first, we all tried to keep together as we didn’t know anyone else there.

In the evening I liked to walk in a nearby park. Several times I saw a girl sitting alone on a **bench**. I asked some girls about her and they told me that the girl was blind. So the next evening I went up to the girl and sat on the bench beside her.

“Hi, what’s your name? My name is Elina.” “My name is Kate. Are you from here?” she asked.

“I’m from Khasavyurt. Where are you from?”

“From Astrakhan. How do you like it here?”

“Great. I like the sea very much. Do you come here often?” I asked.

“Every summer,” she said. “My mother says that it is good for my eyes. I’m blind, but my mother still thinks that I’ll be able to see some day. I have been **operated on** twice and the doctors say there is one more operation to perform.”

I was very sorry for that nice girl and decided to make friends with her. We met in the park every evening and walked along the **paths** or simply sat on the benches, speaking about different things. Kate taught me to read the books for the blind. Kate had a great voice and we liked to sing together.

I like her very much. She is back in Astrakhan and is still waiting for the next operation. We often speak to each other on the telephone. I am glad I was “her eyes” that summer.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, discuss the main idea of this story.

### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner answer the questions about the words in **bold**.

1. Where do you like to go on **holiday**?
2. When or where do you use or see **benches**?
3. What conditions cause people to be **operated on**?

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Talk about anyone you have known with a disability like blindness or deafness.
2. Describe a time when you were kind to someone.
3. Talk about the Caspian Sea.

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. A short summary of this story.
2. Email exchange between Elina and Kate a year later.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer and her friend: They disagree about talking to the blind girl.
2. The writer and Kate: They go to Kate's house to meet the family.
3. The writer and Kate: They walk around the shore.
4. Kate and her mother: They talk about her new friendship.
5. The writer and her father: They talk about camp when she returns home.

## Tolerance

*Victoria Okhapkina, 14*  
*Novocherkassk*



A very kind and friendly girl named Shushan came into our class two years ago. She wasn't bad in any way but she came from another country.

Some of the kids in our class are either **unaware** or ignorant, but they wouldn't make friends with Shushan. Also they said bad things about her. They said, "Shushan is silly. Shushan is ugly."

I couldn't believe how mean these kids were. Some of the girls were friendlier; they made friends with her. But sometimes they changed and laughed with the others.

Shushan never complained about it to our teachers, but they knew about it. One day our class teacher said, "Students, I know what has been going on. This ugliness to Shushan must stop. You need to be tolerant and kind."

After discussing our **situation** she told us about one of her pupils. His name was Maxim. He **protected** people from other regions who were being **teased**. He stopped someone else who played jokes on his Ukrainian teacher. Maxim is now an **authority** in our school and under his **influence** our boys began to realize their mistakes.

After this, everyone made friends with Shushan and I hope that we never tease her or people from other places again. It was a good lesson for us!

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Write the main idea of this story.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Use these words to complete the sentences.

**tease authority unaware situation protected influence**

1. Children need to be \_\_\_\_\_ from bullies.
2. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ people for being different.
3. The child was \_\_\_\_\_ about how unkind he was.
4. The director was a/an \_\_\_\_\_ in the school.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_ in the classroom became worse.
6. Maxim was a good \_\_\_\_\_ on other boys.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What is the difference between being ignorant, unaware and stupid?
2. Why didn't Shushan complain?
3. If you moved to another region or another country, would people ridicule you? What would you do if they did?

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write a summary of the story.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Shushan and her mother: Her mother gives her advice.
2. Shushan and the writer: They talk about telling the teacher.
3. Shushan and mean (cruel) girl: They talk and disagree.
4. Teacher and Maxim: They discuss the situation in her class.
5. Maxim and mean (cruel) boy: Maxim tells him how he should act.

## Child's Cruelty

*Victor Kiktenko, 14*  
*Novocherkassk*



I study at the **technical** lyceum in Russia. Usually classes are so friendly with new pupils. But there are many **conflicts** with them too. This year a new girl came to our class. Her name was Dasha. At the first part of the year she was **humiliated** by her classmates. She thought, “Why are they so cruel to me?” And one day one boy started to treat her badly, even spat on her clothes because he thought that she was stupid and emotional.

But I didn't think so. In my opinion she was not stupid. After those sad days, she was so shocked. I was sitting with her at one desk. I tried to say to her that she should ignore this. But every day my classmates told her, “You are so stupid, you are like a boy.” It was not the first incident with the new pupils. Dasha was not the first. Some time earlier another incident in our class happened with an Armenian girl - Shushan. It was the same!

The main thing in this situation is to support people because they need it. And I did, I talked with her and the classmates. They stopped teasing Dasha. That sad story ended happily.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What is the main idea?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Explain these words to a partner.

1. **technical**
2. **conflicts**
3. **humiliated**

### *III. Now you Talk*

With a partner, discuss other problems in classes.

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write an email to Dasha saying you are sorry about these events.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Dasha and the writer: They talk about the cruel boy.
2. Dasha and her mother: Her mother talks to her daughter about the situation.
3. Teacher and Dasha's mother: They make a plan to improve the situation.

## Persistence

*Venera Khairullina, 15*  
*Samara*



I'd like to tell you about my friend as an example. Her name is Masha. She has always wanted to study foreign languages, because they are very interesting. Besides, in her opinion the knowledge of foreign languages gives a person many advantages, opens a way to the future, and extends **opportunities**.

So she was very happy that she entered the Institute. But after some time she **recognized** that she knew absolute nothing about English (without **exaggeration**). Though Masha tried hard, she wasn't able to improve. So her study **hung by a thread**.

Fortunately an outstanding teacher was recommended for some extra lessons. My friend **exerted** herself and was back on track in a short time.

Everyone must have persistence, patience and a wish to seek more in life. **Where there is a will there is a way.**

### Exercises

#### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea?

1. How hard it is to learn a foreign language.
2. It is important to work hard to succeed.
3. Masha was not intelligent.



## *II. Vocabulary*

Choose the definition that is closest to the word in **bold**.

**knew push was ready to be cut chance sticking to it over-rated**

1. She wanted the **opportunity** to study languages.
2. I **recognized** what her problems were.
3. She never **exaggerated about** her talent as a language learner.
4. Her friend's language-learning life **hung by a thread**.
5. To learn a foreign language, you must really **exert** yourself.
6. **Persistence** helped her to become better in languages.

## *III. Now you Talk*

Retell this story in your own words.

## *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a paragraph about your opinion of this story.
2. Write an email from Masha to a friend about this situation.

## *V. Role Play*

1. Masha and the writer: They talk about entering the language institute.
2. Masha and the teacher: The teacher talks to her about her bad grades.
3. Masha and her father: They talk about how she can do better.

## Never Satisfied

*Yamilya Gaitbayeva, 16*  
*Ufa*



Our class has had several teachers. I am **embarrassed** to say that we don't **appreciate** them when they are with us. Then when a new teacher comes, we like the **departing** teacher better than the new one. We are never satisfied. When our class moved into the 6<sup>th</sup> form, our favorite teacher got a higher position. Our new teacher, Mr. Bazan, was about 40 years old. We had gotten used to our old teacher and it was difficult for us to **accept** Mr. Bazan.

We didn't respect him the whole three years. He was a history teacher and we never listened to him. Boys in our class had a bad **attitude** toward him and treated him like he was our age. The last year of his work with us we began to accept him and some of us tried to listen to his lessons. He became our real friend and we could make jokes with him and laugh.

When we went to the 9<sup>th</sup> form, after working one month with us, Mr. Bazan also got a higher position. When he was leaving it was really very sad and we were very sorry. We were very sorry that Mr. Bazan, our friend indeed, wouldn't be with us any more. Some of the girls even cried.

So, you see, sometimes it's really very difficult to enter a group, even if you are a teacher.

Now we have a new class teacher, Mr. Ilnur. He's about 30-35 years old, and we don't accept him either. During his lessons we don't listen to him at all, even worse than before. It's embarrassing for me to admit this. I hope that soon everything will be better.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Choose one of these.

1. Students usually don't like teachers.
2. Often we don't appreciate what we have.
3. Teachers never dislike students.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Make a new sentence with the five words in bold. Example for the word “respect”: The teacher **respected** the students.

1. **embarrassed**
2. **appreciate**
3. **departing**
4. **accept**
5. **attitude**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. A time when your class didn't like a teacher.
2. Why does a class show disrespect to a teacher?
3. How would you feel if you were the teacher?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. A letter to a former teacher that you now respect more.
2. A description of the perfect (or near-perfect) teacher.
3. A description of the perfect student.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Mr. Bazan and students: They talk about how to treat the next teacher.
2. Two respectful students: Plan to teach others to be nicer to the teacher.
3. Two students: Talk about how they will miss Mr. Bazan.
4. Mr. Bazan and Mr. Ilnur: They give each other advice about students.
5. The writer and first teacher: They talk about a new teacher coming.

## Tanya's Troubles

*Amulanga Tyagusova, 15*  
*Elista*



My neighbor Tanya is one year older than I am, but we have been friends since childhood. She has always been kind and cheerful, she could stand up for herself. Moreover, she never allowed others to **offend** anybody in her presence.

Recently Tanya had to change schools as she had a fight there. Nobody really knew why such a thing happened. She was **expelled** from her school immediately and had to **transfer** to a new one. But things went worse for her: she was outside until midnight, having repeated quarrels with people on the street. Some parents in our street **forbade** their children to talk with Tanya.

Once I visited her and she had strange company in her house. These girls didn't look like "girls" to me; they were dressed and made up as adults. As soon as I entered, I saw an empty bottle lying on the floor, not a Coke, you know. They said ugly words. I felt clearly that my presence made them uncomfortable. Then they almost ordered Tanya to get some more drinks.

I went outside with Tanya, and I asked, "Are you enjoying your new mates?"

"We study in the same group. Logical, isn't it?" she answered. "I need someone to be friends with."

I said, "I don't think that they are your friends just because they study with you. It seems they're being careless with your kindness."

Tanya turned away, "If you don't like that I have new friends, then leave."

I didn't need to be asked twice. During that week, I saw those girls in our street several times. Though I was told to mind

my own business, doubts remained. One day my grandma told me that she had talked to Tanya's mother. The money in the house had begun to **vanish**. Tanya denied that her new friends were mixed up in it.

I decided to visit her. "Tanya, are you so blind not to notice such obvious things?"

"I realize it now," she answered, "but I want to keep their friendship. These friends are the only ones I have. I don't want to lose them."

"Why do you still call them 'friends'? They treat you terribly only because you allow them to do it."

Tanya turned away as she always did when we had arguments. She paused. "You think I am not able to understand? I am not happy about these girls. Mom has already **advised** me to change schools again. But why? Where would I go now?"

"I think my school can accept a new student even now. It's rather small, but we live as a big family there. I can ask my teacher. What do you think?"

"I wonder if that could happen. First I need to talk to my Mom. One problem is that you are lecturing me all over again. Besides, I am older than you." Tanya laughed. "By the way, am I still your friend? I demand first-class treatment after all."

I was happy to see my friend laughing. I knew she would overcome her problems.

## **Exercises**

### **I. Understanding the Story**

What do you think is the main idea of the story?

1. One can always find a solution.
2. Sometimes it is better to stay with your new friends.
3. Friends can never help you.

### **II. Vocabulary**

Apply what you know about these words to answer the questions.

1. What has **offended** you in the past?

2. Do you know anyone who was **expelled** from school? For what?
3. What sort of things do you **transfer**?
4. What do your parents **forbid** you to do? (Smoke? Stay out late?)
5. Why do things **vanish**?
6. Has anyone **advised** you to do something? What?

### III. Now you Talk

1. Why do you think Tanya got in a fight? Use your imagination.
2. How would you solve this problem if you were Tanya's mother?
3. Do you know a classmate who has gotten into this kind of trouble?

### IV. Now you Write

1. Rewrite the ending of the story.
2. Write a letter from Tanya to those bad friends.
3. Write your opinion of the story.

### V. Grammar Practice

Change statements into questions. Example: They moved to town. Did they move into town?

1. Tanya had to change schools.
2. Parents forbade their children to talk with Tanya.
3. Her friends were made up like adults.
4. They are not your friends.
5. Money was vanishing from the house.
6. My school can accept you now.

### VI. Role Play

1. Tanya and the teacher: They are talking about the fight.
2. Tanya and the writer: Tanya tells her about being expelled.
3. Two of Tanya's new "friends": They talk about taking money from the house.
4. Tanya and one friend: Tanya accuses her of stealing her mother's money.
5. Tanya and the writer: They try to solve Tanya's problem.

## The Cool Guys Aren't So Cool

*Timur Galimov, 13*  
*Kazan*



A whole group of kids were **transferred** from another school. One day in the boys' room after our physical education class one of my classmates said a really **stupid** thing.

Ivan said, “Those new kids! I don't think we should speak to them. We need to show them that we are united.”

One of his friends agreed, “We don't want anyone else joining in our group.”

Some boys agreed. My friends and I didn't say anything.

Soon we had one of the newcomers, Oleg, in our class. Ivan's group of boys wouldn't talk to him, but we did. I think that when a person comes to a new place, it is really hard for him and it is **stressful**. Besides, if nobody speaks to him he will be **miserable**. It also seems to me that every person can teach you something good. So if you have a lot of friends then you are very clever! So my suggestion is: **Meet new friends!**

After a while those “cool” boys saw that they were **mistaken**. They were the ones who felt left out, like outsiders, because our new boy was such a fountain of knowledge and fun!

### Exercises

#### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, write down what you think is the main idea.

## *II. Vocabulary*

Match the words in **bold** with the best synonyms/definitions.

- |                     |                                  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| A. <b>transfer</b>  | 1. very unhappy or uncomfortable |
| B. <b>stupid</b>    | 2. wrong, in error               |
| C. <b>stressful</b> | 3. not smart, ignorant           |
| D. <b>miserable</b> | 4. to change, to move            |
| E. <b>mistaken</b>  | 5. under pressure, difficult     |

## *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe Oleg by using adjectives (add some that are not in the story).
2. What does it mean to be “cool” to you? What do “cool” guys wear? How do “cool” guys act?

## *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write about a time when you were “new” somewhere.
2. Write about a time when you wanted to help a new person.
3. Email your cousin telling about this situation.

## *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the past tense to the present tense. Change other words if necessary. Example: She cried in the classroom. She cries in the classroom.

1. He met him before class.
2. He saw that the situation was stressful.
3. Oleg wanted to play with them.
4. He was miserable on the first day.
5. Ivan made a stupid suggestion.

## *VI. Role Play*

1. The “cool” guys: They talk about refusing to talk to anyone new.
2. Oleg and another transfer: They talk about “fitting in” with others.
3. The writer and a friend: They don't want to act unfriendly.



# My Younger Sister

*Naida Ismailova, 15*  
*Khasavyurt*



My mother has taught me to take care of Nina, my younger sister, and that we should always be ready to help each other in **difficult** times.

One day my sister came home in tears. “Nina, what’s the matter with you? Why are you crying?” I asked.

“Nothing,” she said. “Something has got into my eye. Everything is OK, Naida.”

“I can see that something is troubling you.”

Finally she said, “Someone hurt me today.”

“Tell me about it.”

Then she told her story. “During the **break** the boys were laughing loudly. I asked them to be quiet but then they were rude to me, saying it was silly for me to tell them how to **behave**. I know they wanted to show everybody that they were cool.”

I listened. I wanted to help her so much, because I am happy to have a little sister who **trusts** me. “I think those boys wanted to attract your attention. They don’t know that classmates must be tolerant and respect each other,” I explained.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Tell your partner what the lesson is in the story.

## *II. Vocabulary*

Explain these words to your partner.

1. **difficult**
2. **a break**
3. **trusts**
4. **to behave**

## *III. Now you Talk*

1. Discuss a time when you felt hurt by your classmates.
2. Talk about a time when you saw school children being rude to each other.
3. Describe your relationship with a sister or brother or cousin.

## *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write about a relationship between sisters or brothers.
2. Write a summary of this story.
3. Write a description of the two sisters. Add details.

## *IV. Grammar Practice*

Change the adjectives in **bold** to the comparative. Example: He was **careful** with money. He was **more careful** with money.

1. Nina was the **young** sister.
2. The boys were **rude** to her.
3. They said it was **silly** to say something.
4. My sister thinks I am **trustworthy**.
5. They must be **tolerant** toward her.

## *IV. Role Play*

1. Two sisters: They argue about who decides which TV program to watch.
2. The writer and her mother: They discuss how the writer should treat Nina.
3. Two sisters: They meet on the playground where some boys are being mean.
4. Nina and two boys: They argue on the playground.
5. A teacher and one boy: She tells him to be kinder.

## My Savior

*Kate Volkova, 14*  
*Novocherkassk*



Last year a new girl came to our dance club. Her name was Jane. My friends thought that she was a little crazy. One girl said, “Look at that funny haircut. She surely is ugly.”

Another girl, Larisa, said, “Let's call her 'crazy hair'.” They **teased** her every day. I didn't like that, but I said nothing.

Once in the evening I came back home, and I heard something behind me. I turned around and saw a big dog. I started running. The dog ran after me. I was scared and I fell down.

From the **crossroad** came a girl, and she scared the dog away with a stick and loud words. Then I heard, “Kate, is that you?” It was Jane. She saved me. I could not thank her enough.

From that time on, we became very good friends. Soon other girls became nicer to Jane and made friends with her. They didn't call her “crazy hair” again. **Actually**, I like her haircut.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Explain and explore these words in bold with a partner.

1. What does “**actually**” mean in the last sentence?

2. Why do people **tease** a small child?
3. What happens at a **crossroad**?

### *Ila. More Vocabulary*

Choose an antonym (opposite word) for words in **bold**. Example:

The dog was **behind** me. The dog was **in front of** me.

quiet normal pretty friendly

1. They said the haircut was **ugly**.
2. The dog was **scary**.
3. Jane said **loud** words.
4. They said her hair was **crazy**.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. How can you influence children who bully others?
2. Why didn't Kate say something when the girls teased Jane?
3. Does a teacher usually know that this "bullying" is happening?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a letter to the mothers of the children about their behavior.
2. Write a paragraph describing the dog incident, but add details.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Jane and two girls: They tease her about her hair.
2. The writer and one girl: Kate suggests they be more friendly to Jane.
3. The writer and Jane: They talk after the dog scare.
4. The writer and her father: They talk about the dog and Jane.
5. The writer, Jane, and one girl: They become friendly a week later.

## This Cruel World

*Dasha Kudinova, 14*  
*Samara*



Right now I like my school very much. It's a beautiful place with interesting people. In school now I have a lot of **buddies** and they are not only students, but teachers too. But it wasn't like that at one time.

Our teachers teach us to be **polite**. But some of us don't remember that lesson every day.

One day my life was terrible and **cruel**. When I came to school, all my friends turned their backs on me and giggled when they saw me.

I asked them: "Why do you do that?"

My best friend, Tatiana said: "You are a know-it-all. You are different and nothing more. It's your **fault**!"

I was so confused by this. I went to my teacher, "Why are they doing that?"

And she answered: "Dasha, you are a clever and nice girl. They are very cruel to you, because you are different. Maybe they are **envious** of you."

I said, "I always thought that it's better if you don't look like other people. Are you saying that sometimes it's not good? That sometimes we must be **similar**?"

After this conversation, I went to my "friends" and said to them, "I'm different but I'm not so strange." Then I went away.

The next day they came to my house and said: "Dasha, we are very sorry!" And after that we became real friends again.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Talk with a partner about the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentences with the best word from the list.

**buddy polite cruel fault envious similar**

1. My sister and I are \_\_\_\_\_ in both weight and height.
2. The mean girl was \_\_\_\_\_ in her teasing Dasha.
3. Life is so much more pleasant if we are \_\_\_\_\_ to everyone.
4. It was not Dasha's \_\_\_\_\_ that the girls were cruel to her.
5. Dasha thought that Tatiana was her \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The girls were \_\_\_\_\_ of Dasha.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. When and why are people envious of someone?
2. How is Dasha different? Make guesses about this.
3. Would you forgive this behavior as fast as Dasha did? Why or why not?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Describe the narrator. Create details.
2. Write from Tatiana's viewpoint about Dasha.
3. Write about the next incident, when these girls get along.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Tatiana and the writer: They argue about Dasha's differences.
2. The writer and the teacher: Dasha complains about the girls.
3. The writer and her mother: They talk about her “friends”.
4. The teacher and Tatiana: They talk about this cruelty.
5. Two girls and the writer: They go to her house to apologize.

## Unusual Behavior

*Alina Giniyatullina, 16*

*Ufa*



My father works as a biologist in the Academy of Sciences. He told me this story about a **postgraduate**.

“This young man, Igor, was clever but everyone thought he was strange. Maybe it was so because he was so **irritable** and also he suffered from **hypochondria**.”

“Father, what is that?” I asked.

“Hypochondria is a kind of sickness that causes a person to think he is ill. Besides that, he did have a **nightmarish** situation at home and he saw everything as a drama. You may wonder why he was able to continue in the university. He was a genius. He was talented. If this boy read a text, he could retell what he had read word by word.”

“How did he do in his studies?” I asked.

“He ignored getting ready for exams. But he could pass his exams perfectly. When he defended his dissertation, nobody believed he could do it. At the defense the doctors and candidates of biology science didn’t take him seriously. They asked him many questions. They were shocked that he answered them all brilliantly! On the contrary, he showed that he knew more than they did.”

I said, “That's amazing that so many people could be wrong about him.”

My father concluded: “We shouldn’t judge people by their **behavior** or appearance if we don’t know them well. Sometimes we are mistaken about them.”

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What is the father's conclusion?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Choose the best word to complete the sentence.

**hypochondria postgraduate nightmare irritable behavior**

1. The man suffered from \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. His \_\_\_\_\_ was highly unusual.
3. His situation was so extreme that his life was like a \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. The young man was often unpleasant and \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. He was a university \_\_\_\_\_ and wrote a dissertation.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe a hypochondriac's day.
2. Tell about a time when someone showed s/he was not as s/he appeared.
3. How would you know if someone is a genius?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. A summary of this story.
2. Write about how you would help a friend with hypochondria.
3. Write a description of this postgraduate. You can add details.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Father and the writer: They discuss different sicknesses.
2. Father and a doctor: They discuss this young postgraduate.
3. The writer and her friend: They talk about an irritable person they know.
4. Postgraduate at dissertation defense: Two doctors try to confuse him.
5. Postgraduate and father: After the defense, they talk about his success.



# Be Better than They Think You Are

*Altana Dorzhieva, 15*  
*Elista*



Natasha, Julia and Alicia are best friends. They were born and lived in the country. The three families happened to decide to move from the country to the city at the same time. That meant that the girls would be going to school in the city. On the first day, they were nervous, but Natasha said, “Don’t worry. At least we are together.”

Math was their first class. The teacher introduced them, “These are our new students: Natasha, Julia and Alicia. Let’s welcome them to our school.” After the teacher’s words, the students didn’t welcome them but **whispered** and some girls **giggled**.

During the break the three girls went to the cafeteria. They heard one of their new classmates say, “They are so weird. Look at them, what awful **rags** they wear, they are so **old-fashioned**.”

“You’re right. Maybe teens in the country don’t know about fashion.”

These words hurt the girls. Since that moment they were really disappointed with their classmates and with all students in the school.

A month later, the three girls were walking home and passed a group of boys. They were very “cool” boys and one of them, Valentin, was the most handsome boy in the school. All the girls wanted to be his girlfriend. He was interested in Alicia but she didn’t pay attention to him. Alicia’s **behavior** surprised him, because all the girls usually smiled at him, trying to attract his attention.

Alicia didn't even look at him. "Why don't you smile at Valentin?" asked Julia.

"I thought you said you like him the best of all the boys. It is obvious that he likes you," said Natasha.

"I am afraid that he doesn't like me. Anyway, I am too shy."

The next week Valentin saw her in the hall. He said, "Hello, I am Valentin. I heard you moved here recently. Would you care to go for a walk with me?"

She was surprised but happy. After that they started to go out with each other. Julia and Natasha were happy for Alicia. When the other students heard about their relationship, they were **shocked**. "The coolest boy in the school goes out with a girl from the country!" said one girl.

"I can't believe it," said another.

But Alicia and Valentin didn't pay attention to them. One day Alicia asked Valentin, "Why did you like me?"

"Because you're special. You're different. You're not like those foolish dolls. You didn't try to attract my attention. You're real."

"But other students don't think so. They don't like me and my friends. They think we're strange," said Alicia.

"Oh Alicia, don't pay attention to them. **Be better than they think you are.**"

After these words Alicia was even happier. Valentin helped her to understand that she and her friends were not that different from the others, and certainly not less valuable. Communication started and little by little they all realized any differences were not important and that they all deserved respect. Alicia, Julia and Natasha were thankful that Valentin was such a good friend.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner.

## *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, explain what these words mean.

1. **whisper**
2. **giggle**
4. **rags**
5. **old-fashioned**
6. **behavior**
7. **shocked**

## *III. Now you Talk*

1. Talk about a time when you saw students treat others with disrespect.
2. How is Valentin different from the other kids in his group?
3. Why do the three girls feel so disappointed in the school in the first month?

## *IV. Now you Write*

Write a summary of the story.

## *V. Grammar Practice*

Turn each of the following statements into question. Example:

They moved to town. Did they move into town?

1. They were welcomed by the teacher.
2. The girls were whispering.
3. They thought that their clothes were old-fashioned.
4. "Country teens don't know about fashion."
5. Alicia and Valentin did not pay attention to the talk.

## *VI. Role Play*

1. Julia, Natasha, and Alicia: They talk about moving to the city.
2. Julia and her mother: They discuss the students' disrespect.
3. Natasha and Alicia: They talk about Valentin.
4. Alicia and Valentin: They talk about the girls' problem in school.
5. Two teachers: They discuss creating a better atmosphere in the school.
6. Valentin and two "doll" girls: They disagree about Alicia.

# Incredible Shorty

*Diana Diyarova, 13*  
*Kazan*



This year my friend and I signed up to play on our school's volleyball team. It is such a great **privilege** and **responsibility** as we defend our school's name in city **competitions**.

Our teacher said that both of us were **potentially** strong players, but Tanya was really shy and didn't believe the teacher. Many of the older teammates, who also **envied** her, said that she was too short and clumsy to play on our team. They said that our team was too "professional" (that's what they called their team) for her. However, the coach didn't agree and kept her on the team.

Before the first game Tanya came to me and said that she was tired and was afraid to play. The entire game she sat on the bench and looked at me with sad eyes. The next game it was the same; she was afraid to play; she was afraid to lose. I tried to convince her that she was wrong and that she needed to play, but she would not listen to me.

All the other girls were happy to see her **weak**. But one day I hurt my leg and there was a really serious game, so the coach asked (almost forced!) Tanya to play in my spot.

It was something **incredible!!!** Tanya kept scoring. It was a beautiful victory – a victory of her spirit. She got stronger! All the older girls were surprised and apologized for their behavior. They still call her "Shorty", but it is different now. They call her "Incredible Shorty" and they are proud to play with her on our team! On weekends together with Tanya we give lessons to small children. I'm lucky to have Tanya – my best friend!

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, write down what you think is the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Look at the words in bold in the story. Discuss with a partner what these words mean.

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <b>privilege</b>      | 5. <b>envied, envy</b> |
| 2. <b>responsibility</b> | 6. <b>weak</b>         |
| 3. <b>competition</b>    | 7. <b>incredible</b>   |
| 4. <b>potentially</b>    |                        |

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Compare the two characters, Tanya and the writer.
2. Why do some people do well in sports and others do not?
3. What do you think of Tanya and the writer?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a paragraph or more, expressing your opinion about the story.
2. Write about any of the subjects in Exercise III.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the verb from present tense to present progressive.

Example: We defend our school. We are defending our school.

1. She plays volleyball every day.
2. The other players talk about her.
3. We give lessons to small children.
4. She sits on the bench and watches me.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. The writer and Tanya: They talk about playing volleyball.
2. The writer and coach: They talk about the team.
3. Tanya and other players: They tell her she is not good enough.
4. Tanya and the writer: They talk about her being “Incredible Shorty.”

# Good Friends Are the Best Medicine

*Dzamilia Elderova, 15*  
*Khasavyurt*



I was nine years old when I had a sore throat. My mother called the doctor. He came and examined me. He took my temperature which was very high, and examined my **throat**. He told my mother to take me to the hospital at once. I was left alone in the ward and felt quite **lonely** and **depressed**.

A nurse woke me up in the morning and made me take some medicine. I was lying, thinking how lonely I was. Suddenly I heard a knock at the window. At first I thought it wasn't for me. Then I heard it again. I went to the window, looked out and saw my friends standing under the window. They had come to see me before going to school.

"Hi, Dzhamilia. We heard you were sick, so we decided to visit you before classes. We are sorry you are not with us."

"I'm much better now. My **temperature** is not high today. I think they will let me leave the hospital soon. I am **bored** to death, with nothing to do. It is so nice of you to come and see me. How are you all?"

"Everything is OK with us. We miss you and need you at school. The teacher said to tell you hello and wishes you to be well soon. We are waiting for you."

I thanked them for coming. My temperature went down, maybe because of seeing my friends.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea in this story?

1. Sickness can kill you.

2. Kindness can make you better.
3. Hospitals are boring places.

## *II. Vocabulary*

In a pair or group, make a new sentence for these words.

- |                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. <b>throat</b>    | 4. <b>temperature</b> |
| 2. <b>lonely</b>    | 5. <b>bored</b>       |
| 3. <b>depressed</b> |                       |

## *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe what it is like to be in a hospital. Has this happened to you?
2. Tell about a time when someone was especially kind to you.

## *IV. Now you Write*

Write an email from the sick girl to a cousin.

## *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the past tense to the future tense. Example: The girl was sick. The girl will be sick.

1. My mother called the doctor.
2. The girls came to the hospital.
3. My temperature went down.
4. My parents took me to the hospital.

## *VI. Role Play*

1. The writer and her mother: At home they talk about what is wrong with her.
2. The writer, the mother, and the doctor: They discuss her sickness and what to do.
3. Two girls: They plan to go to the hospital to visit Dzhamilia.
4. The writer and her father: They talk about the visit of the school girls.
5. School girls and teacher: The girls report to the teacher about the visit.

## It's OK to Be Different

*Dasha Glukhova, 14*  
*Samara*



One day a girl came to our class. Her name was Natalia. We were in the fifth form. She was fat which seemed strange to us. We did not understand how children could be like Natalia.

Perhaps we thought like that because of our young age. We began to give her **unpleasant nicknames**.

Of course she did not like it. It hurt her. Natalia cried very often. The girls were sorry for her but the boys weren't. The boys were **cruel**.

Natalia's mother came to school to talk to our teachers. She asked them to help her daughter to **protect** her from her schoolmates. During our class meetings the teacher led us in a discussion of this problem.

After that some classmates stopped doing it but some boys continued to hurt her. Later we saw that Natalia was a very kind girl. She was always ready to help us. Natalia is still in our class. We made friends with her. I always say, "Fat doesn't mean bad."

### Exercises

#### *1. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea?

1. It is terrible to be different from other people in your class.
2. Natalia said bad things about the other children.
3. It is all right to be different.



## *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, answer these questions.

1. **unpleasant:** What things do you consider unpleasant?
2. **nicknames:** Share nicknames in your family or among your friends.
3. **cruel:** Remember and share a time when you saw someone being cruel.
4. **protect:** What does it mean to protect something or someone?

## *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe Natalia's situation.
2. Are boys more likely to tease others than girls are? If so, why?
3. What suggestions would you give to Natalia?

## *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a letter from one boy to Natalia saying you are sorry.
2. Write an email from Natalia to a friend.

## *V. Role Play*

1. Natalia and her mother: Natalia doesn't want to go to school.
2. Natalia and the writer: They talk to each other.
3. The writer and two boys: They argue about teasing Natalia.
4. The writer and her father: They talk about Natalia's problem.
5. The writer and Natalia: Two years later, they talk about the teasing.

## Don't Pass by the Person who is in Need

*Sabikhat Mazhidova, 14*  
*Khasavyurt*



One day late in the fall my friend and I were at the vegetable market because my mother had asked me to buy some vegetables for dinner. Suddenly we saw a girl who was sitting on the cold dirty **sidewalk**. She was dressed in a light **shabby** dress even though it was rather cold. She was begging for money. There are a lot Kurds in our Southern city nowadays who **migrated** here after the military actions in the north of Iraq. I was very sorry for the girl and decided to help her. I asked my friend to wait a little but she didn't want to listen, saying that there were lots of **beggars** at the market and I wouldn't be able to help everybody. Still I asked her to stop for a minute to talk to the girl.

"Hi, why are you sitting here?"

"My mother is ill and we have nothing to eat."

"Where are you from?"

"I'm from Iraq. When the army attacked our village my father was killed, but my mother and my three sisters left the village and went first to Azerbaijan and then to Dagestan."

"How do you live here?"

"We haven't got money to live on so I have to beg."

I went to the nearest shop, bought two loaves of bread and gave them to the girl. She was very **grateful**. Two loaves of bread are not enough to make their living but if all of us are **merciful** and do good deeds, life will be better for everybody. **Goodness opens people's hearts.**

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea in this story?

1. Begging is wrong.
2. The people of Dagestan are rich.
3. We should be kind to others in need.

### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, explain each of these words.

1. **sidewalk**
2. **shabby**
3. **migrated**
4. **beggars**
5. **grateful**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Describe what shabby clothes look like.
2. What is this Kurdish family's problem and why?
3. Why does the other girl refuse to help the Kurdish girl?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Your attitude toward beggars and begging.
2. Write about a time when you or your parents were asked for money.
3. Write about the difficulties for people caught in a war.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Two girls: Talking about whether they will help the beggar.
2. The writer and the Kurdish girl: They talk about the Kurdish girl's situation.
3. The writer and her mother: They talk about the author giving money to the girl.
4. The friend and her brother: The friend complains about the beggar.
5. The writer and the shop owner: They talk about buying food for the poor.

## Always First

*Yulya Gizzatullina, 16*  
*Ufa*



When I was 11 years old, I had a “best friend”. Her name was Sasha, but I don’t like to remember her name. During that year I began taking part in **various** contests. I took first place in the first **competition**. Everything was so great: I had a best girlfriend, and every time I entered a contest, I took first place.

One day I didn't feel good, but I knew that when I got to school my best friend Sasha would help me through a hard time. Just like every day, I found her in the hall, and said, “Hello, best friend.” (We called each other that.)

She didn't say anything. She didn't even say “hello”. She walked away.

I thought that something had happened to Sasha, and everything would be OK. Then I went up to other girls from my class. I couldn't believe it; they didn't talk with me either. I shared my **secrets** with them but they **betrayed** me. I asked Igor, a neighbor, “Do you know why the girls are not talking to me?”

Igor was not too happy to talk to me either, but he said, “Julia, I just heard them say something about you thinking you are so good.”

The teacher had found out about this situation. She asked Sasha, “Why are you ignoring Julia?”

Sasha said, “I don't know.” She looked a little sad, but then she went back to a group of girls.

I heard them say, “Julia is stupid and bad; forget about her.”

I started crying. Every thing broke to pieces for me. My teacher took me into a room. I asked her, “Why is my best friend Sasha being so mean?”

“Julia, have you done anything to her?” she asked me.

When I said no, she said, “Sasha may be **envious**. All the other girls may think you are winning too many contests.”

“Why is that bad?”

“Julia, they want to have your talent to win contests. Perhaps they wonder if you think you are better than they are,” said the teacher.

The next day, several of the boys were friendly, and two girls decided to be friendly and not follow that group of girls.

I had to change friends and find new ones. I still compete in contests and still get first place most of the time.

When I remember this incident, my mind asks, “Why did they do this? What did I do to them, that they didn't love me? I can't forget it.”

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Write down what you think is the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Choose the word from the following list that is closest in meaning to the word/s in **bold** in the sentence.

**betrayed secrets competition envy various**

1. The girls had a feeling of **wanting to have what she had**.
2. She usually told her friend **the ideas she would not share with others**.

3. Julia liked to take part in **different** events.
4. Her best friend **was false to** her.
5. Julia did well in every **contest**.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What other reason besides envy might be causing this?
2. Why were the boys nicer than the girls?
3. What kind of group behavior does this story illustrate?
4. What lesson could Julia learn from this?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a dialogue between Sasha and Julia.
2. Write advice from the teacher to both Sasha and Julia.
3. Write a letter from Julia to Sasha five years later.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer and her “best friend” Sasha: They talk the day before the problem.
2. The writer and Sasha: The writer asks Sasha what is wrong.
3. The writer and Igor: He tries to tell her what is wrong.
4. The teacher and Sasha: She asks Sasha why she is betraying Julia.
5. The writer and two new friends: They talk about being good friends.

## Feeling Alone

*Aleksandra Zakharova, 15*  
*Elista*



Timur is like all boys but last year he was really lonely. What happened? He was 14 years old, and at first sight he was a usual guy. **Unfortunately**, he doesn't have a mother, and lives with his father and grandmother. Everybody in our class knew about that and tried to be tolerant to him, but sometimes it was really hard.

He was in a gang and took money from his classmates. Well, it was bad, but I didn't complain about that. The main reason we didn't get along with him was his **unbearable** character: he was rude; he used awful words; he was always **irritated** and nervous. We didn't talk to him much.

As for me I didn't like him, but at the same time I didn't hate him. I just didn't have a close relationship with him.

Once he got ill for quite a long time, and nobody called him or visited him. I went. He was very happy to see me. He said that he was very sad that nobody came to visit. "I **blame** myself for it. I want to change myself, but I can't."

We had a long talk, and I learned a lot about him. It turned out that he was a nice guy, but very lonely. He didn't have any good friends, and he didn't know how to interact with his classmates. I decided to help him.

At first, we didn't have immediate results. The process went slowly, but steadily. He was trying to do his best.

Some of our classmates wanted to **challenge** and tease him, but I asked them to be tolerant. Eventually, he was closer to our classmates, and they could see that he was a good guy. The result was super! He became kind and **sociable**. Now he has made friends with many kids in our class. That's cool, I think! It's so bad to be alone, isn't it?

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Explain the words in **bold** in the following sentences.

1. He **challenged** his friend in a contest.
2. **Unfortunately**, he had no mother.
3. Being so alone was **unbearable**.
4. I tried to be **sociable** with him, but he was too rude.
5. He became **irritated** by his friends.
6. Timur **blamed** himself for his problems.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Why did the author visit Timur?
2. What could the teacher do to make this situation better?
3. Have you known anyone who was as difficult as Timur? Did the situation get solved?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. A summary of the story.
2. A description of Timur.
3. A letter to Timur's father from the teacher.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Timur and his grandmother: He is complaining about his classmates.
2. Timur and his father: They talk about his problems while he is sick.
3. Timur and two boys in his class: They are telling him how difficult he is.
4. Timur and the writer: They talk when the writer visits him.
5. Timur and the same two boys in his class: They talk after Timur changes.



# My Second Home

*Natia Ivardava, 14*  
*Samara*



In September I was scared and really worried. It was the first day in a new school. I was totally **confused**. I am not sociable and I am shy. I didn't know anyone.

I didn't know what I should do in this situation. I stayed in the same place like a **statue**. Then suddenly two girls approached and one said, "Hi, I'm Marina and this is Ira."

I said, "I am Natia. I'm pleased to meet you." After that I felt **calm** and in a few weeks I made new friends.

Since then this school has become my second home. The teachers are like mothers; they think about our future, help us to survive and solve problems. All of us learn French and English or German and English. It is hard but since everyone accepts each other, we can learn together.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea?

1. It is easy to make friends.
2. The right school can be a wonderful place.
3. It is hard to learn two languages.

### *II. Vocabulary*

1. Why was Natia **confused**?
2. When do you feel like a **statue**?
3. Is it good to be **calm**? Why?

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What are the problems of changing schools?
2. Describe yourself. Are you sociable? Shy? Outgoing? Fearful? Confident?
3. Talk about the difficulties of learning one or more foreign languages.

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write about a time, real or imaginary, when you went to a new school, camp, club, or team.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The writer, Ira, and Marina: They meet for the first time.
2. The writer and the French teacher: They discuss joining the French class.
3. The writer and her father: He questions her about the new school.

## Friends Forever

*Saltanat Mazhidova, 14*  
*Khasavyurt*



I live in a small street in Khasavyurt which is in the North of Dagestan. We know everybody in our street and are always ready to help each other in a difficult moment. Two years ago a new family moved into a neighboring house. They were Russian and came here from Rostov. There were three of them: a father, a mother and an 11-year-old daughter, Natasha.

She didn't go out often so she didn't know any children in our street. I decided to get **acquainted** with her. She was a good girl and we started to meet regularly and speak about things we were interested in.

Once she asked me if the boys in my school protected us from other boys who were not nice to us. I answered that they always protected us and were ready to help. I asked her why she asked me about this but she didn't answer.

One day she asked me to meet her at her school. When I went to her classroom, the teacher said that all the students were in the schoolyard. I went there and saw that two boys were **teasing** Natasha but her classmates **pretended** not to see this. I started shouting at those boys to make them stop teasing Natasha. At that moment some of the boys came to help and the **mean** boys ran away.

Later I asked Natasha why she hadn't told me about it before. She said that those boys were mean to her because she was the only Russian in the class. She was afraid to **complain**. She thought that we wouldn't be friends if I knew about that. I said that I would never **betray** her because I was her friend and friends were not left alone in trouble.

We are still good friends and always protect each other.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea in this story?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentence with the best word in the list.

**acquainted, teasing, pretended, mean, complain, betray**

1. The two girls became \_\_\_\_\_ with each other.
2. The boys were \_\_\_\_\_ the Russian girl.
3. If you \_\_\_\_\_ a friend, it means you turn against and hurt her.
4. She didn't want to \_\_\_\_\_ to the teacher.
5. The boys were \_\_\_\_\_ and cruel, when they teased Natasha.
6. The other children did not help and \_\_\_\_\_ it wasn't happening.

### *III. Now you Talk*

Share a time when you wanted to help a friend.

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write an email from Natasha to the author, saying the situation is now better.
2. Write a paragraph about the importance of helping friends.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Natasha and the writer: They make friends.
2. The writer and her father: They talk about her new friend who is Russian.
3. The writer and two boys: She tells them it is mean to tease. They respond.
4. Natasha and the teacher: They talk about the situation in the school yard.
5. Natasha and her mother: They talk about the situation in the school yard.

## A Story about Natasha

*Maria Pavlova, 16*  
*Novocherkassk*



It was in summer camp. There was a beautiful, funny and kind girl named Natasha. The other girls didn't like her. They always **teased** her. She tried to be friends with those girls but it didn't help. "Natasha, don't sit by us at lunch. This is our table," said Dasha, the meanest girl.

Natasha wanted to leave the summer camp.

One day when all the girls and boys were swimming in the sea, Dasha had **trouble** in the water and cried, "Help! I'm sinking!" She couldn't swim back; it was too far. Nobody heard her. Only Natasha saw the girl and swam out and saved her. Natasha is a good swimmer, and knows **life saving**.

When everyone heard that story, they ran up to Natasha and **congratulated** her for saving Dasha's life. From that day, everyone respected Natasha.

### Exercises

#### *I. Understanding the Story*

What do you think is the main idea of this story?

#### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner explain what the words mean in the story.

1. **teased**

3. **life saving**

2. **trouble**

4. **congratulated**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Why did the girls tease Natasha?
2. What conclusions can you make about these girls?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a character description of Dasha or Natasha.
2. Write a description of the camp and camp activities.
3. Write a congratulatory letter to Natasha for saving Dasha's life.

### *V. Grammar Practice*

Change the verb from the past to the future tense.

Example: They teased her. They will tease her.

1. They swam in the sea.
2. They ran up to Natasha.
3. She congratulated her.

### *VI. Role Play*

1. Natasha and Dasha: Dasha tells her she isn't wanted in her group.
2. Natasha and the writer: She asks Natasha to stay at the camp.
3. Natasha and camp director: They talk about Natasha leaving.
4. Natasha and Dasha: They talk after the swimming incident.

## A Strange Boy

*Katya Sycheva, 14*  
*Samara*



When I entered a new school and passed into a new **grade** I got to be friends with one girl, Tanya. Soon I made a lot of other friends, but Tanya was always **special**.

One day I noticed a boy; he was alone and nobody wanted to be with him because he wore glasses and was **slightly odd**. Actually, that boy, Misha, was very **cheerful** and kind but for some reason nobody wanted to be friends with him.

I was a little afraid of talking to him because I was afraid that others would laugh at me. But I did and now we are good friends. We walk together, enjoy ourselves and I am afraid of nothing.

I think everybody should be tolerant and keep company with whomever he or she wants to. After all, the important thing in a person is not his or her **appearance** but his or her inner world! I understand and realize it and I am glad because this is real life and the truth.

### Exercises

#### *I. Understanding the Story*

Write a thinking question to ask about the main idea. A thinking question is about the ideas in a story, not the facts.

#### *II. Vocabulary*

With a partner, answer the questions about the words in **bold**.

1. What is another word for **grade** as it is used in the story?
2. How can someone be **special**? How is **special** a good thing?
3. “**Slightly**” changes the meaning of “**odd**” above. How?

4. What does a person do when s/he is **cheerful**?
5. Describe the **appearance** of someone.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. What do you think are the reasons nobody speaks with Misha?
2. Where do our attitudes come from?
3. Discuss why the author is afraid to talk to Misha.

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write an email from Tanya to Misha.

### *V. Match the phrase on the right that completes the sentence.*

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The boy wearing glasses | A. with Misha.               |
| 2. Everyone                | B. had no friends.           |
| 3. My first friend         | C. people would laugh at me. |
| 4. I was afraid that       | D. should be tolerant.       |
| 5. I made friends          | E. was named Tanya.          |

### *IV. Role Play*

1. The writer and Tanya: They disagree about Misha.
2. Tanya and her mother: They talk about “strange boys”.
3. The writer and her father: She asks why “glasses” are a problem.
4. The writer and Misha: They talk about football.



## Dream Team

*Ilnur Digramov, 17*  
*Ufa*



This **occasion** took place in our school. It was the beginning of a rainy October. At this time our school held basketball **gatherings**. It was like a casting call. The main players of the team were looking for better players. When they saw me they **ignored** me, because there were other boys who were stronger and “cooler”. I was new to the team and the main players already knew the others and they had good relations with each other.

One tall boy, Misha, said, “Ilnur, your class is full of losers. There is no use in our watching you play. Just go home.” They didn't **allow** me on the court.

I said, “Won't you just let me try out for the team?” In the end I was ignored so I went home.

During the next few months, I kept training, and I got better and better. I didn't smoke so my lungs were good, and that helped me to run for a long time without stopping.

In March I received a proposal to join the team, all because I was **determined** and I didn't quit. During the championship our team showed good results. I became part of the team. All together we were the dream team of the 20<sup>th</sup> gymnasium! This is my story with a happy ending.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What is the main lesson in this story?

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentence with the best word in the list.

**gathered ignored determination allow occasion**

1. They didn't \_\_\_\_\_ me to practice with them.
2. The gathering was a/an \_\_\_\_\_ for me to try out for the team.
3. We players \_\_\_\_\_ on the basketball court.
4. The “cool” players looked away and \_\_\_\_\_ me.
5. I showed \_\_\_\_\_ by training for months.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Why is it so hard for an outsider to “break into” a team?
2. How is a sports team like a class?
3. What does it mean to be a “dream team”?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write about a “dream team” that you know about.
2. Write a letter of apology from Misha to Ilnur.

### *IV. Role Play*

1. The writer and “cool” player: They discuss why he isn't good enough.
2. The writer and coach: The coach encourages him to keep training.
3. Misha and father: They talk about the team ignoring new players.
4. Coach and the writer: They talk after the championship game.
5. The writer and his father: They talk about the team.

## A Brave Boy

*Delgr Adyaeva, 15*  
*Elista*



I'm sure that all people are **equal**. Tim is my classmate. He came to our school four years ago. He was not only shy, but he was physically **disabled**. He can't write with his right hand and it is difficult for him to write with his other, but he must.

One day some boys in the class laughed at him. "You are strange!" they said. Then two others said, "**Alien!**  
**Extraterrestrial!!**"

They didn't want to communicate with him. I was so sorry for him. It was very difficult for him to study in our class. Our teacher said, "It's so silly, boys! He is a very good guy." The girls agreed with her.

This year we study in the 10<sup>th</sup> form. We became older and wiser. Tim is everyone's friend now. Everyone chats with him.

Tim is courageous and I admire him. I think that those boys who didn't understand him last year now admire him too. **We all learned to respect him, even though he is different.**

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

Discuss this story's main idea with a partner.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Explore and explain these words with a partner.

1. **equal**
2. **disabled**
3. **alien**
4. **extraterrestrial**

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Discuss all the disabilities that you know about.
2. What would you have done if you were in Tim's class?
3. What else could the teacher have done?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write about this event from Tim's point of view.
2. Write a dialogue between Tim and the writer of the story.

### *V. Role Play*

1. Tim and the writer: Making friends.
2. Tim and his mother: They talk about his troubles at school.
3. The writer and the mean boys: He tells them to stop being mean.
4. Tim and two girls: The girls want to be friends with Tim.

## An Unusual Friendship

Sofa Bunimovich, 13  
Kazan



Things change quickly. One morning in September a girl came into our class. The teacher said “Good morning everyone. I want to **introduce** you to Keira. She has just arrived from Vancouver, Canada.”

She was tall with big glasses and was carrying many books. She also wore a funny-looking dress. After the classes we talked to our teacher. We were not happy as we already had more girls in our class than boys.

The next day, she walked toward me and I met her with a **cold look**. She sat by me. (Why me again?!) She said, “Hello. My name is Keira. What's your name?” I already knew her name. I told her mine. She smiled at me.

One week later, things had already changed. We could tell that Keira was very smart! She was the most intelligent girl in our class! Because she was very shy, she didn't talk to my classmates; it's only our teachers and sometimes me who were in touch with her. She sat next to me and helped me a lot.

Two weeks later, more changes. My classmate Tom came to me and said that I shouldn't be friends with Keira. I asked why. He said: “Because you are a boy! You can't be friends with some stupid **foreign** girl!”

I answered: “Then it is my problem, not yours! Why should I listen to you at all?” I think that Tom didn't like my answer, because we had a fight.

The next day I came to school and sat next to Keira again. She knew what happened the day before. She said, “Maybe we should no longer be friends” and she moved to another desk.

I followed her and said, “Don’t **pay attention** to those stupid boys. We are still friends, right?!” She smiled and **nodded**. I hope that our friendship will never end!

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, discuss what you think is the main idea.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentence with the word/s closest in meaning to the word in bold.

1. **introduce** She \_\_\_\_\_ her to us. a) told b) presented c) helped
2. **nodded to** Keira \_\_\_\_\_ Sofa. a) refused b) thought c) agreed with
3. **pay attention to** They \_\_\_\_\_ her. a) watch b) hurt c) take
4. **foreign** Keira was \_\_\_\_\_. a) rude b) lovely c) unknown
5. **cold look** We gave her a \_\_\_\_\_. a) bad reception b) prize c) sweet

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Why is a friendship between a boy and girl unusual?
2. What is Tom's problem with the writer's friendship with Keira?
3. What would you have done if you had been the writer or Keira?
4. Describe the three characters: the writer, Keira, Tom.

#### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a letter or an email from Keira to a friend in Canada.
2. Write a summary of the story.
3. Write an interview with Keira by a reporter from the school paper.

#### *V. Role Play*

1. Keira and the writer: She is helping him with his English homework.
2. Keira and her sister: Keira tells about her first week in the new school.
3. Tom and the writer: They argue about his friendship with Keira.
4. Keira and the writer: She tries to break off the friendship.
5. The writer and his father: The writer tells him about Keira.

## The Teacher is my Protector

*Almina Malloosmanova, 15*  
*Khasavyurt*



At the very beginning of attending our Access school I found myself in a difficult position: I was afraid to speak English. I didn't know English well and I thought that if I made a mistake while speaking, everybody would laugh at me. My teacher saw this and didn't **bother** me for a couple of lessons. Three days later he asked me to stay in the classroom after the class.

“Why do you feel so uncertain and nervous during the lesson?”

“I don't know. I **suppose** because I don't know the students well,” I replied.

“But why are you afraid to read and speak English? I know you are doing well,” said my teacher.

“I think that other students will laugh at me if I make a mistake.”

“My dear girl, you mustn't be afraid of the students. They are good children and I give you my word they are ready to help you if you make mistakes or do anything wrong. You mustn't be so shy. I think we'll start right now. Take your textbook and let's read together.”

We began reading, retelling the story and speaking together. I tried hard to prepare for the next lesson and was waiting for the moment when I could show him that I wasn't a fool. At first I **stumbled** but then I became more confident and read quite well. He **praised** me and I realized that he understood my shyness and **awkwardness** and wanted to encourage me. I think we understand each other now. Now I attend school with much joy.



## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

What is the lesson in this story?

1. Don't work hard.
2. The girl is not a good student.
3. Her teacher helped her to be brave in class.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Complete the sentence with the best word in the list.

**bother suppose stumbled praised awkward**

1. She wasn't sure of her reading and \_\_\_\_\_ over some words.
2. To think something without really knowing it is to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. At first he didn't want to \_\_\_\_\_ her about her English.
4. The teacher \_\_\_\_\_ her English.
5. If you aren't comfortable speaking English, you feel \_\_\_\_\_.

### *III. Now you Talk*

In small groups, tell the story from beginning to end, taking turns.

### *IV. Now you Write*

Write a short summary of this story.

### *V. Role Play*

1. The teacher and the writer: They talk about her shyness.
2. The writer and her mother: They talk about her problems at school.
3. The writer and a new friend: They make friends after class.
4. The writer and her brother: They argue over the importance of learning English.

## Don't Hurt my Friend

*Elmira Kaipova, 14*  
*Ufa*



One day a boy, Artur, in our village thought it was “**cool**” to say something **ugly** and hurt my friend. He was about 11 years old and he hurt my best friend, Fatima.

She didn't say anything to me but when I went outside I saw that she was crying. I asked, “What happened?”

She said, “Nothing.”

“Fatima, tell me about it.” She then told me about the way he had acted and I decided to talk with him about his rudeness.

The next day I met him, “Why did you hurt my friend?” His name was Artur.

“Elmira, I don't want to listen to you,” he said.

“Artur, was it you who hurt Fatima?”

“Yes, why do you care? It's not you.”

“She is my best friend. Wouldn't you **take care of** your best friend?”

He looked away for a while. “I don't have a best friend. I guess I am sorry. I don't know why I did that to her.”

“Well, I will call her over here and you can **apologize** to her.”

He did this and now we are all friends.

## Exercises

### *I. Understanding the Story*

With a partner, discuss what this story says about friendship.

### *II. Vocabulary*

Answer the questions about the words in bold.

1. How do young people use the word “**cool**”?
2. “**Ugly**” usually refers to the way you look. What does it mean here?
3. How does the writer **take care of** her friend, Fatima?
4. How do you **apologize** to someone? Give an example.

### *III. Now you Talk*

1. Tell about a time when you were hurt by what someone said.
2. What would you have done if you were friends with Artur?
3. What would your mother say to you if you were Artur?
4. What does it mean to apologize to someone?

### *IV. Now you Write*

1. Write a letter to Artur.
2. Write a short original story about friendship.
3. Write a description of any of the characters (add details).

### *V: Role Play*

- A. The writer and Fatima: They talk about what Artur did.
- B. The writer and Artur: She asks him why he hurt Fatima.
- C. Artur and Fatima: He apologizes to her.
- D. Artur and his mother: She talks to him about rudeness.
- E. Fatima and the writer: Fatima thanks the writer.

**Answer Key**  
Alphabetically by the Titles of Stories

<b>A Blue Pencil</b>	II. A3, B4, C2, D5, E1 V. B1, D2, E3, A4, C5
<b>A Girl and a Wheelchair</b>	II. A3, B4, C5, D7, E1, F6, G2 V. Answers vary. Here are some suggestions: 1. Although she has lots of friends, I am still her best friend. 2. Since she had surgery, she can walk and dance. 3. When Anna said unkind things to Olga, she became angry. 4. When I observed her, she laughed at the same jokes.
<b>A Long Hard Journey to Somewhere</b>	Ila. A4, B1, C5, D3, E2
<b>A Story about Natasha</b>	V. 1. They will swim in the sea. 2. They will run up to Natasha. 3. They will congratulate her.
<b>A Strange Boy</b>	V. 1B, 2D, 3E, 4C, 5A
<b>Always First</b>	II. 1. envy, 2. secrets, 3. various, 4. betrayed, 5. competition
<b>An Unusual Friendship</b>	II. 1b, 2c, 3a, 4c, 5a
<b>Apologizing Isn't a Weakness</b>	II. A4, B6, C3, D5, E1, F2
<b>Be Better Than They Think You Are</b>	V. 1. Were they welcomed by the teacher? 2. Were the girls whispering? 3. Did they think that their clothes were old-fashioned? 4. Don't country teens know about fashion? 5. Did Alicia and Valentin pay attention to the talk?
<b>Being an Emo</b>	II. 1. lifestyle, 2. advised, 3. supported, 4. surprised, 5. solution
<b>Botanic</b>	V. 1. He is calling me "botanic". 2. She is laughing at him. 3. I am studying English. 4. I am going to the library.
<b>Bulat and Basketball</b>	V. 1. Bulat is sitting alone in the classroom. 2. I am walking to the back of the room. 3. We are living near each other. 4. Bulat is proving to be a strong player. 5. He is teaching the other boys some basketball tricks.
<b>Cruelty Problem</b>	II. A3, B1, C2, D4

<b>Don't Pass By the Person Who Is in Need</b>	I. 3
<b>Dream Team</b>	II. 1. allow, 2. occasion, 3. gather, 4. ignored, 5. determination
<b>First Step to Friendship</b>	II. A3, B4, C1, D5, E2
<b>Friends Forever</b>	II. 1. acquainted, 2. teasing, 3. betray, 4. complain, 5. mean, 6 pretended
<b>Good Friends Are the Best Medicine</b>	I. 2 V. 1. My mother will call the doctor. 2. The girls will come to the hospital 3. My temperature will go down. 4. My parents will take me to the hospital.
<b>How I Changed My Opinion about a Person</b>	II. 1. remarks, 2. teased, 3. complained, 4. nationality, 5. constantly
<b>How to Get Along with Classmates</b>	II. 1. peers, 2. weak, 3. mutual, 4. respect, 5. solve, 6. district
<b>Incredible Shorty</b>	V. 1. She is playing volleyball every day. 2. The other players are talking about her. 3. We are giving lessons to small children. 4. She is sitting on the bench and watching me.
<b>It's OK to be Different</b>	I. 3
<b>My Dagestan</b>	I. 1 II. 1. vacant, 2. elderly, 3. republics, 4. independently, 5. hospitality, 6. tourist
<b>My Savior</b>	IIa. 1. pretty, 2. friendly, 3. quiet, 4. normal
<b>My Second Home</b>	I. 2
<b>My Younger Sister</b>	IV. 1. Nina was the younger sister. 2. The boys were ruder to her. 3. They said it was sillier to say something. 4. My sister thinks I am more trustworthy. 5. They must be more tolerant toward her.
<b>Never Satisfied</b>	I. 2
<b>New Girl</b>	V. 1. They are scared of us. 2. They don't like him. 3. They know French better.
<b>No Borders Between Friends</b>	I. 2 II. 1. embarrassed, 2. border, 3. shocked, 4. befriend, 5. noticed, 6. appreciated

<b>Our Teacher's Story</b>	I. 1 V. 1. The boy was rude. Was the boy rude? 2. They thought it was fun to tease Lasha. Did they think it was fun to tease Lasha? 3. They didn't want to be friends with her. Didn't they want to be friends with her? 4. The teacher told her story. Did the teacher tell her story?
<b>Peoples' Eyes Speak All Languages</b>	I. 3
<b>Persistence</b>	I. 2 II. 1. chance, 2. knew, 3. over-rated, 4. was ready to be cut, 5. push, 6. sticking to it
<b>Tanya's Troubles</b>	I. 1 V. 1. Did Tanya have to change schools? 2. Did parents forbid their children to talk with Tanya? 3. Were her friends “made up” like adults? 4. Are they your friends? 5. Was money vanishing from the house? 6. Can my school accept you now?
<b>The Boy and the Swimming Pool</b>	V. 1. They swim in the pool. 2. They were so sorry. 3. They took him out of the water. 4. They are afraid of water. 5. They make fun of the boy.
<b>The Cool Guys Aren't So Cool</b>	II. A4, B3, C5, D1, E2 V. 1. He meets him before class. 2. He sees that the situation is stressful. 3. Oleg wants to play with them. 4. He is miserable on the first day. 5. Ivan makes a stupid suggestion.
<b>The Dream Came True</b>	I. 1 V. A6, B3, C5, D1, E2, F4
<b>The Kerchief and the Boys</b>	I. 2
<b>The Sun Glasses</b>	II. A3, B5, C2, D6, E4, F1
<b>The Teacher is my Protector</b>	I. 3 II. 1. stumbled, 2. suppose, 3. bother, 4. praised, 5. awkward
<b>This Cruel World</b>	II. 1. similar, 2. cruel, 3. polite, 4. fault, 5. buddy, 6. envious

<b>To Find Oneself</b>	<p>I. 2</p> <p>II. 1. competition, 2. ignored, 3. valuable, 4. judged, 5. education, 6. participate, 7. embarrassed</p> <p>V. 1. She knew about village life. 2. The country girl won first place. 3. She had to move to the town. 4. The girls judged her clothes.</p>
<b>Tolerance</b>	<p>II. 1. protected, 2. ridicule, 3. unconscious, 4. authority, 5. situation, 6. influence</p>

**Lessons in Kindness:**

**ACCESSing English through Students' Stories**

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