

---

# **EASY TRUE STORIES**

**A PICTURE-BASED  
BEGINNING READER**

**by Sandra Heyer**

---



---

---

# Contents

---

UNIT 1	<b>The Color TVs</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>
UNIT 2	<b>The Man in the Blue Car</b> . . . . .	<b>6</b>
UNIT 3	<b>There's Something in the Mattress</b> . . . . .	<b>10</b>
UNIT 4	<b>Yawning Is Contagious</b> . . . . .	<b>14</b>
UNIT 5	<b>A Love Story</b> . . . . .	<b>18</b>
UNIT 6	<b>No More Space!</b> . . . . .	<b>22</b>
UNIT 7	<b>Looking for Love</b> . . . . .	<b>26</b>
UNIT 8	<b>Sunshine in a Box</b> . . . . .	<b>30</b>
UNIT 9	<b>Two Happy Men</b> . . . . .	<b>34</b>
UNIT 10	<b>The Trip to El Palmito</b> . . . . .	<b>38</b>
UNIT 11	<b>A Problem with Monkeys</b> . . . . .	<b>42</b>
UNIT 12	<b>The Kind Waitress</b> . . . . .	<b>46</b>
UNIT 13	<b>No More Housework!</b> . . . . .	<b>50</b>
UNIT 14	<b>Alone for 43 Years</b> . . . . .	<b>54</b>
UNIT 15	<b>The Lawn Chair Pilot</b> . . . . .	<b>58</b>
UNIT 16	<b>Rent-A-Family</b> . . . . .	<b>62</b>
UNIT 17	<b>The Power of Love</b> . . . . .	<b>66</b>
UNIT 18	<b>I Think I'm Your Mother</b> . . . . .	<b>70</b>
UNIT 19	<b>The Escape from Cuba</b> . . . . .	<b>74</b>
UNIT 20	<b>The Cheap Apartment</b> . . . . .	<b>78</b>
	<b>To the Teacher</b> . . . . .	<b>82</b>
	<b>Answer Key</b> . . . . .	<b>89</b>

---

# Introduction

---

*Easy True Stories* is a beginning reader for students of English as a Second Language. It can be a first reader for students who have had some experience with English. The stories, written primarily in the present tense, are told in simple yet natural language.

*Easy True Stories* contains 20 units, each centered on a story that was adapted from a newspaper or magazine article. In answer to those students who think that some stories are too amazing to be true: Yes, the stories are true, to the best of our knowledge. All come from reputable news sources.

The advantage of basing the textbook on true stories is that real life provides stories that are often more gripping and more intriguing than those that come from an author's imagination. The disadvantage is that vocabulary and story length cannot be quite as rigidly controlled. To help students understand the new vocabulary and follow the story line, each unit of *Easy True Stories* includes a pre-reading page that tells the story in nine drawings. Following are some suggestions for using the pre-reading drawings and other elements of the units. Teachers new to the field might find the ideas especially helpful. Please remember that the suggestions are offered as exactly that: suggestions. Teachers should, of course, feel free to adapt these strategies to best meet their students' needs.

## PRE-READING

Read the story aloud to students as they look at the drawings on the pre-reading page. Begin by saying "Number One" and slowly reading the sentences that the first picture illustrates. Then say "Number Two" and read the appropriate sentences. Continue in this manner. Saying the numbers of the pictures in the course of the story ensures that students are looking at the right picture.

Sometimes in reading the story aloud, you might want to break it down into even smaller chunks of meaning. In Unit 1, for example, the story begins, "Jim is looking out his window." Instead of reading this exactly as it is written, you might say, "The man's name is Jim. He is looking out his window." Breaking the story down into smaller pieces and pausing between the pieces gives students more time to digest the information.

Sometimes you'll need to digress from telling the story in order to clarify concepts and vocabulary. Again, Unit 1 provides an example. The second sentence of the story in Unit 1—"He sees two men in his neighbor's driveway"—contains two words that are probably new: *neighbor* and *driveway*. You might go to the board and draw stick figures of Jim and his neighbor, their houses, garages, and driveways, verbally labeling the items as you draw. Then return to picture two of the story.

If you have access to an overhead projector, you could make transparencies of the pre-reading pages and show them this way, rather than having students follow in their

textbooks. Then you can point to the drawings as you tell the story. With erasable markers, you can draw arrows to items, add drawings of your own, or write words next to the pictures.

After telling the story, you might want to check comprehension by reciting lines from the story and asking students to say the numbers of the corresponding pictures. Or, to bring students one step closer to reading, you could write key words on the board and ask students to say the numbers of the drawings in which those words are depicted. (To keep the atmosphere relaxed, call on the whole group for the answers, rather than on individuals.)

For most beginning students, the pre-reading activity is a crucial aid to understanding the written story. However, students who have had considerable experience with written English in their native countries but understand very little spoken English might benefit from reversing the procedure: reading the story first and *then* listening to it while looking at the pictures.

## READING THE STORY

After listening to the story, students read the story silently. Students who finish reading before their classmates can go on to the exercises. Some students might want a little time to consult their bilingual dictionaries for the meanings of words that are still unclear.

In a beginning ESL class there is often a wide range of reading proficiency: Some students understand every word they read, while others get only the gist of the story. Assure students in the latter category that it is not essential to understand every word. The ability to be comfortable with a certain amount of ambiguity is a great asset to a beginning reader.

## THE EXERCISES

**Vocabulary and Comprehension.** Each unit offers a variety of vocabulary and comprehension exercises. Use of the exercises can be tailored to the individual teaching environment and style. Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The exercises can be completed in class or assigned as homework. At the back of the book there is an answer key to the exercises.

**Discussion.** Some of the discussion exercises ask students to brainstorm to create lists. These activities are ideal for beginning students because they don't require students to produce whole sentences. Another advantage is that brainstorming activities can succeed without the whole class participating. Students who aren't ready to speak can listen and learn from the language their classmates and teacher produce.

Many of the discussion exercises ask students to respond to statements by circling *yes* or *no*. Some of the statements—such as "there are big snakes in my country"—invite further discussion. Some students will

---

expand on their answers; others will simply answer the question. It is best not to make a big fuss over students' reticence. Beginning students need a "silent period" before they begin to speak, during which they try to make sense of the new language. Students who do not talk much may simply need a longer silent period than their more talkative classmates.

**Writing.** Most of the writing exercises will produce error-free writing; they are based on copying. Other writing exercises will result in writing that is not free from errors.

Some teachers may choose to correct the errors, while others may not; here teachers must use their own judgment.

The exercises are not included to make students struggle; choose exercises that your students can complete successfully. Both the exercises and reading selections are intended to build students' confidence along with their reading skills. Above all, it is hoped that reading *Easy True Stories* will be a pleasure, for both you and your students.

*Easy True Stories* is the first book in the *True Stories* reading series. It is followed by *True Stories in the News*, *More True Stories*, and *Even More True Stories*.

# UNIT 1

## 1. PRE-READING

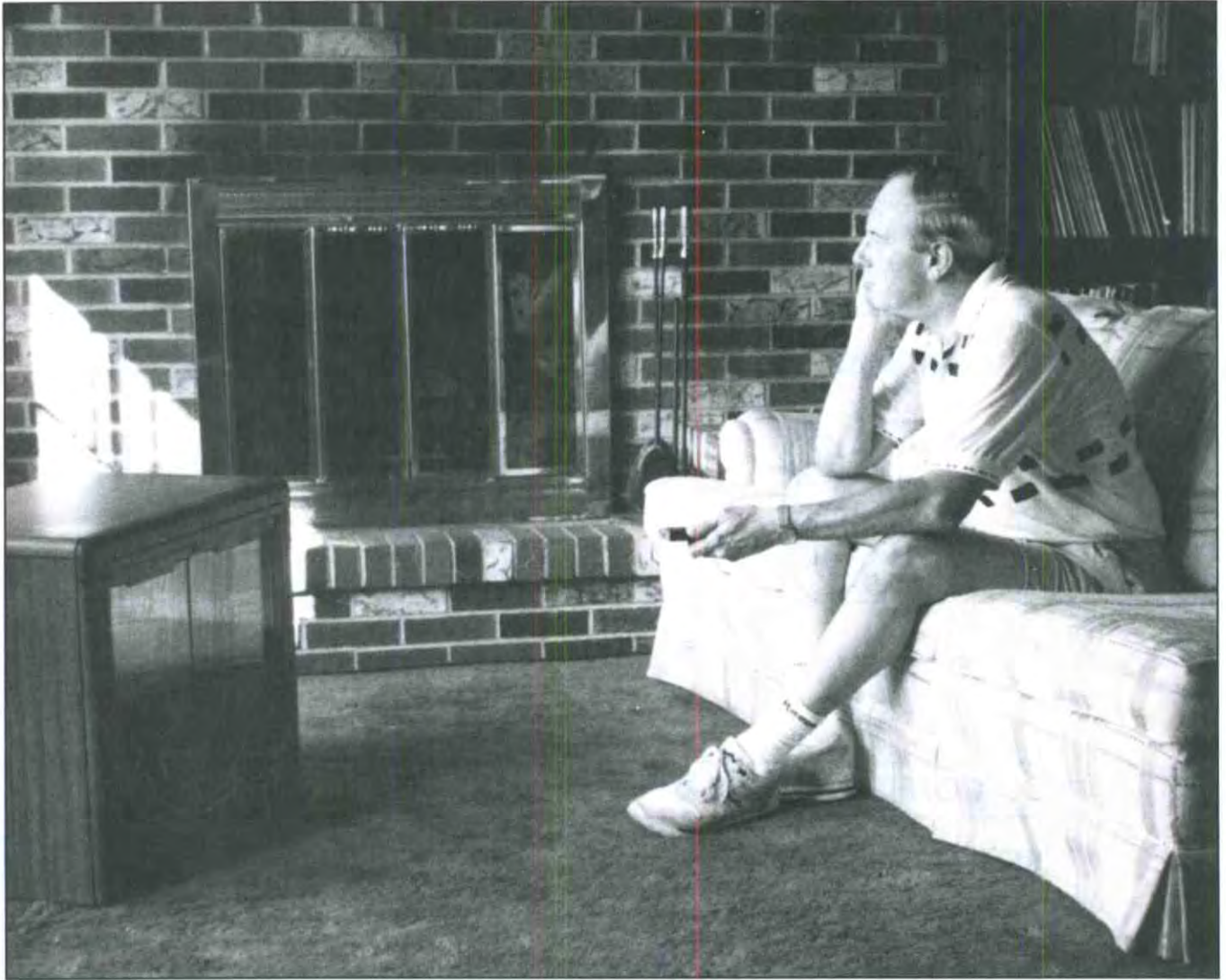
Look at the pictures. Listen to your teacher tell the story.



---

# The Color TVs

---



**J**IM is looking out his window. He sees two men in his neighbor's driveway. The men are carrying a big color TV. They are carrying the TV to a truck.

Jim opens his window. "Hey!" he says to the two men. "Are you TV repairmen?"

"Yes," the men answer.

"Are you going to fix that TV?" Jim asks.

"Yes," the men answer again.

"My TV is broken," Jim tells the men. "Can you take my TV, too?"

"Sure," the men say. "We can take your TV."

Jim gives the men his color TV. The men put the two TVs in the truck and drive away.

Jim never sees his TV again.

The two men aren't TV repairmen. They are robbers.

---

## 2. VOCABULARY

---

Match the words and the pictures. Write your answer on the line.

neighbor

driveway

carry

fix

drive away

robber



1. driveway      2. \_\_\_\_\_      3. \_\_\_\_\_



4. \_\_\_\_\_      5. \_\_\_\_\_      6. \_\_\_\_\_

---

## 3. COMPREHENSION

---

### REMEMBERING DETAILS

Which sentence is correct? Circle *a* or *b*.

- a. Jim sees two cars in his neighbor's driveway.

b. Jim sees two men in his neighbor's driveway.
- a. The men are carrying a big table.

b. The men are carrying a big color TV.
- a. Jim asks the men, "Are you going to fix that TV?"

b. Jim asks the men, "Are you going to watch that TV?"
- a. Jim tells the men, "My TV is broken."

b. Jim tells the men, "My TV is old."
- a. The men put the TVs on the truck and pay Jim \$25.

b. The men put the TVs on the truck and drive away.

