Unit 17 · Surprise and Dismay

STUDY NOTES

The unit in one line

- **surprise** (something unexpected: *Wow! Really? No way!*) and **dismay** (the shock of bad news: *Oh no! What a pity!*)
- a story (*Fair Shares*), a hotel conversation, a prize; the three past tenses on a time line; **echo questions** and **exclamations**

Getting started

- **exclamations** fall ↘: *How amazing! Wow! I can't believe it! Oh my gosh! Incredible!*
- **questions of surprise** rise ↗: *Really? Are you joking? Are you kidding?*
- **I can't believe it!**: *believe* needs *it* or *this* after it
- **song** (*The Clever Pig*, **Roald Dahl**): a pig on a farm in **England** with a huge brain: does sums, has read **every book**, knows why planes fly
  - one question beats him: **what is life really about?** Why was he born?
  - **drive round the bend** = nearly drive mad; **puzzle out** = find the answer by thinking; **alas** = sadly

Reading I: Fair Shares

- **Ali** (elder): **cunning**, greedy; **Abraham** (younger): kind, honest, trusts him
- their father left only a **cow** and a **date tree**
- the steps:
  1. Ali's "fair" plan: the **front** of the cow to Abraham, the **hind** part to Ali; the tree's **top** to Ali, the **bottom** to Abraham; each profits from his own **portion**
  2. Abraham feeds the cow; Ali milks it, sells the **milk**, keeps the money; *Oh, no!* (dismay)
  3. a villager's idea: while Ali milks, Abraham beats the **front**; the cow kicks; *the front is mine*; Ali agrees to share the money and the feeding
  4. Ali cuts holes in the top of the tree; sweet juice **seeps** into pots; he sells it for a **huge** sum
  5. a friend's advice: while Ali is up the tree, Abraham **chops** the trunk: *the bottom is mine*; Ali can't **interfere**
  6. Ali sees his mistake: *How foolish I have been!*; **ashamed of** his selfishness, asks to be **pardoned**; they share and live happily
- **the twist**: Ali's own rule used against him, without breaking a word of the agreement
- **true / false:**
  - nothing left (**F**: a cow, a tree)
  - elder less clever (**F**: Ali cunning)
  - Ali sold the milk (**T**)
  - Abraham never beat the cow (**F**)
  - tree to the younger (**F**: divided)
  - cut while Ali up the tree (**T**)
  - lived happily (**T**)
- answers: front part to Abraham · **two things** divided · holes to let the **juice** out to sell · Ali **shouted**, then **realized his mistake**
- date palms really are tapped for sweet **sap** (Bangladesh, eastern India), boiled into jaggery

Key words

cunning: clever at tricking people.
portion: a part, a share.
hind: at the back.
utter: say.
resolve: settle a problem.
intact: untouched, still there.
seep: flow out slowly, drop by drop.
huge: very big.
chop: cut with strong blows.
interfere: get in the way.
ashamed of: feeling bad about a wrong you did.
pardon: forgive.
vacant: empty, free.
check-out time: when guests must leave their rooms.
in advance: ahead of time.
facilities: the rooms and services a place offers.
brochure: a thin booklet with pictures and information.
in comparison to: compared with.

Pronunciation: the tone of surprise

Tone	When	Examples
falling ↘	an exclamation: you are sure what you feel	*No way! My goodness! What a nice song! How amazing you are!*
rising ↗	a question: *Is it true?*	*Oh, really? Are you serious?*

- the loudest word carries the feeling: *How a**MAZ**ing you are! No **WAY**!*

Grammar I and II: the past tenses on a time line

Tense	Form	Use	Example
past simple	went, saw, reached	a finished action; events in order	*Abraham **fed** the cow.*
past continuous	was / were + -ing	going on at a past moment	*Ali **was milking** the cow when it kicked.*
past perfect	had + past participle	the **earlier** of two past actions	*Ali **had sold** the milk before Abraham asked.*

- diagram 1: *When I **saw** him, he **was dancing***: a long action (wavy line), a moment in its middle (a cross)
- diagram 2: *He **had slept** before I **reached** home*: count back from now: the earlier one takes *had*; the past perfect = **the past of the past**
- **while** + the long action; **when** usually + the short one: *The phone **rang** while I **was washing** dishes.*
- choose: **was cycling** (hit by a car) · **took** off at 10 · **went** yesterday · **left / wasn't having** · France **won** in 2018 (won 1998, 2018)

- a past feeling + **because** + what came before → past perfect:
  - **had known** · **hadn't eaten** · **had lost** (keys) · **had worked** · **had snowed** · **had lost** (bags) · **hadn't seen**
  - going on → **was singing** · **was washing**
- the wolf story:
  - the scene → past continuous: **was waiting**, **was carrying**
  - the steps → past simple: **was**, **asked**, **told**, **disappeared**, **opened**, **saw**, **approached**, **saw**, **ran**

Listening: a prize!

- a couple win a prize, then look at the date: *Wow! Fantastic! Really?* → *Oh no! What a pity!*

In the table	Answer
prize	**a weekend for two**
includes	**train travel, a hotel, museum tickets**
use it by	**Saturday 20th**
they must go to	John and Charlotte's **wedding**
they don't know	who could use the **prize**

- what would you do? *If I **won** …, I **would** …*

Reading II: At the Hotel

- a tourist and a **receptionist**:
  1. a **double** room on the **second floor**; he wants the **ground or first floor**; none **vacant**; two free after **check-out time**
  2. check-out at **12 noon**; she says it is quarter past eleven; his watch says ten to eleven; *How come?*; hers says **11:20**, set minutes ago: his watch is **slow**
  3. wait on the **sofa**; the hotel's **facilities** in a **brochure** (rooms on page ten)
  4. *Oh, no! The rooms are really expensive.*: not expensive **compared to** others nearby, she says; the best service
- polite: *sir*, *I'm afraid your watch is a little slow*, *Don't worry*
- **surprise and dismay** in it: *That's great!* · *Oh, no!* · *How come?* · *Oh, dear! There's something wrong with my watch.* · *Oh, no! The rooms are really expensive.*
- answers: at a hotel **reception** · **two** vacancies · his watch **slow** · surprised and unhappy at the **price**

Speaking: echo questions and exclamations

- an **echo question** answers news: the statement's **helper verb** + its **subject as a pronoun**, positive or negative **as said**; rising = *Really? Tell me more.*

Statement	Echo
She **is** from Solukhumbu.	**Is** she?
She **can't** speak Nepali.	**Can't** she?
They **have** moved.	**Have** they?
I **like** durian. (no helper)	**Do** you?
Jina **met** her. (no helper)	**Did** she?

- or repeat the surprising words: *A new room partner? In the market?*
- echo ≠ tag: the listener echoes (*"She can't swim."* ***"Can't she?"***); a tag turns it round (*She can't swim, **can** she?*: Unit 18)
- when to say it:
  - **Really?**: hard to believe
  - **Wow!**: amazing
  - **Oh no!**: something went wrong
  - **What a surprise!**: an unexpected visit or gift
  - **I find that very surprising.**: calm, polite
  - **You must be kidding.**: hard to believe, often annoying
- reacting: *"I don't understand the assignment."* ***"Don't you?"*** · *"Gita had a nice vacation."* ***"Did she?"*** · *"The party was terrible."* ***"Was it?*** *What a pity!"*

Writing

- **punctuation**: four sentences, each a capital and a full stop; a comma before *but* / *and* joining two sentences
  - *The case of the cow was resolved, but the issue of the tree was intact.*
- **completing a conversation**: *Not much, I read a book.* ***What about you?*** · *I've been really tired lately.* → ***Have you? Oh dear!*** *What from?*
- **a picnic dialogue**: where, when, who, what to take; a surprise and some bad news; two echo questions (*Can he? How wonderful!* · *Oh no! It might rain.*)
- **project:** note the surprise and dismay in a film: two lists, read five aloud with the right tone

Extra bit: more expressions of surprise

Expression	Use	Example
Really?	interest, surprise	*I don't like chocolate.* — **Really?**
Are you for real?	disbelief, among friends	*I got an A+!* — **Are you for real?**
No way!	can hardly believe it; or a firm *no*	*I met a famous singer.* — **No way!**
What a / an …!	+ (adjective) + noun	**What a** wonderful day! **What an** idea!
How …!	+ adjective or adverb	**How** amazing! **How** fast she runs!
Wow!	so good it seems unreal	**Wow!** You are great.

- **What a** + singular noun; plural or uncountable: just **What** (*What lovely flowers!*); **How** + adjective alone (*How lovely!*)

COMMON MISTAKES

✗ I can't believe!
✓ I can't believe **it**!

✗ How a lovely day!
✓ **What a** lovely day! (or *How lovely!*)

✗ What beautiful!
✓ **How** beautiful!

✗ What a beautiful views!
✓ What a beautiful **view**! (or *What beautiful views!*)

✗ "Pemba has climbed Everest twice." "Does he?"
✓ "**Has** he?"

✗ Rina was tired because she has studied all night.
✓ … because she **had studied** all night.