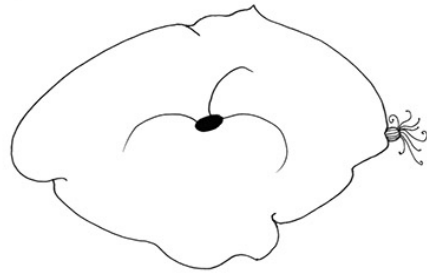


Stories

A Very Special Cushion

You could use this story
in a **Flyers** class.



Harry and Sophia have a favourite hobby. They both enjoy playing chess! Last Sunday, Harry called Sophia.

‘How about a game of chess in the park, Sophia?’

‘That sounds like a great idea,’ Sophia answered. ‘It’s going to be a really warm day. I’ll bring some lemonade.’

‘OK,’ Harry said. ‘And I’ll bring some cookies. Let’s meet under the tallest tree there, at four o’clock.’

‘Sure!’ Sophia said. ‘I’ll cycle there. Will you?’

‘Yes,’ said Harry. ‘See you later!’

‘OK!’

At five past four, Harry was already sitting under the tallest tree in the park. Sophia arrived at ten past four.

‘Sorry I’m late!’ she said. ‘I had a problem with one of my tyres. I had to change it before I could leave home. I’m not having a lucky day, today. I also fell off my bike because I was cycling here too fast!’

‘Are you alright?’

‘Yes.’

‘And is your bike alright?’

‘Yes.’

‘Good. Well don’t worry about being late,’ Harry said. ‘It’s really nice just to sit here and watch the river. And look at the swans! There are three of them here today. I must remember to bring some bread for them next time. I really enjoy feeding them.’

‘So do I!’ Sophia said. ‘Hey! You’re sitting on a cushion!’

Harry smiled. ‘Yes. This is a very special cushion!’

‘Where did you get it?’ Sophia asked.

‘It was my Grandmother’s but she didn’t want it. I liked it a lot so she gave it to me.’

Sophia smiled. ‘Have you got a very special cushion for me, too, Harry?’

Harry laughed and laughed. He almost fell off his very special cushion because he was laughing so much. ‘Sorry! No,’ he said.

‘Oh well... Never mind!’ Sophia said and sat down on the ground.

Harry took the chess board out of his backpack. Then he took out the little bag that he kept the chess pieces in, but a butterfly flew past and Harry dropped it. All the chess pieces fell on to the grass.

Karen Saxby

Creative teaching material for young learners

'So, you fall off your bike and now the chess pieces fall out of the bag. What next?' Harry said.

'Perhaps you'll fall into the river, Harry!' Sophia said.

'I'm not going to do that,' Harry answered.

He opened the chess board and put it on the ground. Then the two friends picked up all the black and white chess pieces, put them on the board and began to play.

Their first game ended at half past four. Sarah won. Harry won the second game. Sarah won the third game. Then they sat and talked about college and music and other people in their class and their favourite TV programmes and drank some lemonade and ate the cookies. Then they started a fourth game. Sophia was winning when Harry remembered to check his phone. It was a quarter to six.

'Sorry, Sophia,' he said. 'I can't finish this game. I really should go home now.'

'No problem,' Sophia said. She started putting the little black and white chess pieces back into Harry's little bag. Harry stood up, picked up the chess board and began to put it back into his backpack.

But then suddenly, something very strange happened. A green egg fell from the tree and landed in the middle of Harry's very special cushion!

Sophia couldn't believe it. 'It's a *falling off* or *falling out of* or *falling down* day, today!' she said. 'I fell off my bike, then you almost fell off your cushion, then the chess pieces fell out of their bag and now a bird's egg has fallen down from the tree.'

'I agree,' Harry said, 'But I didn't fall into the river!'

'Not yet!' Sophia said. 'But what a pretty egg this is. What kind of bird's egg is it? It's green with brown spots on it. Do you know, Harry?'

'No, I don't,' Harry answered. 'But we can't leave it here. I'll climb the tree and try to find its nest.'

Which he did! Up and up and up Harry went with the little green egg in his pocket. Sophia watched him from below.

'Be careful!' she called. 'Please don't fall! Can you see the nest yet?'

'No!' Harry said. And up and up and up he went again.

'Wow!' he called, 'I've found it.'

Karen Saxby

Creative teaching material for young learners

Three other eggs were safe in the nest. Harry took the fourth egg out of his pocket and very slowly put it back into the nest between two of the others. Then, with his phone, he took a photo of the nest with the four green eggs in it and climbed back down the tree again.

‘That was a brave and very kind thing to do, Harry.’ Sophia said.

When Harry arrived home, his father said, ‘How many games did you win, Harry?’

‘One,’ Harry answered.

‘And Sophia?’

‘Two,’ Harry answered.

‘What else did you do? Did you see any swans?’

‘Yes! There were three of them there today,’ Harry answered.

‘Did you go for a walk by the river?’

‘No,’ Harry answered.

‘Did you buy ice creams?’

‘No,’ Harry answered. ‘But I climbed the tallest tree and took a photo of a nest with four bird’s eggs in it!’

Harry showed his father the picture on his phone. ‘Do you know what kind of bird’s eggs these are, Dad?’

‘They are blackbirds’ eggs, Harry. But why did you take this picture?’

Harry pointed to the egg in the middle of the nest. ‘Because I saved this one. It fell out of the tree!’

‘And it didn’t break?’

‘No. It was very lucky. It landed on grandma’s old cushion! The one that she gave to me. It’s a very special cushion, I think.’

‘Amazing!’ Harry’s dad said. ‘Well, I’m very glad that you didn’t fall out of the tree, too.’

Harry laughed. ‘Yes!’ he said, ‘I’m also very glad that I didn’t fall into the river!’

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Creative teaching material for young learners

Teaching notes

Not on the YLE Flyers wordlist yet: 'almost' 'Never mind!' 'piece' (as in chess piece) 'to check' and 'glad'. Also 'blackbird' of course.

You might like to:

- *review / teach the prepositions that we can add to the verb 'to fall'. I didn't include 'to fall over' here, but you could do that.*
- *explain that glad means almost the same as happy or pleased. We can say, for example,
I'm glad / pleased / happy about that.
I'm glad / pleased / happy + because / that + clause.
I'm glad / pleased / happy + clause.*
- *find and review the past continuous forms that learners can find in this story.*
- *bring learners attention to the replies to the questions, for example:*

<i>Did/Do/Will/Are you...?</i>	<i>Yes / No.</i>
<i>How many...?</i>	<i>One / Two etc (ie a number)</i>
<i>Why...?</i>	<i>Because..</i>
- *review the difference between kind (adj) and a kind of (n) and go on to ask learners to suggest adjectives that describe a perfect friend, (eg kind, brave, funny, happy, clever, silly, friendly, quiet, strong). Let them choose and write the suggestions on the board. Ask the class to vote for which adjective they think is the most important one.*
- *do a visualisation. Ask learners to close their eyes for two minutes and silently imagine that they are sitting on a cushion in the park watching the swans and the river. What else do they see, hear, feel and smell? Learners in groups feedback to the others.*
- *ask if anyone in the class also enjoys playing chess. What other board games do they play (if they do). Are board games too old fashioned to be enjoyable now? What games does the class play at home (apart from video games)?*
- *ask if anyone has a suggestion for a different title to the story. Write suggestions on the board. The class votes for the one they like best.*