

## Incredibly short stories

## Mini sagas

A mini saga is a story that is told in exactly 50 words. The original idea came from science fiction writer Brian Aldiss.



A

She recognized the writing on the envelope **immediately**. The Gypsy had warned her that she had no future with this man, yet here he was – five lonely years after their last meeting, begging her to join him in New York. She felt **unbelievably** happy as she stepped on board the *Titanic*.

B

He was worried. **Unfortunately**, since his wife's death, his teenage daughter had become **increasingly** difficult. They had agreed 2:00 a.m. as the latest return time from nightclubs. It was now 3:30. He prepared himself for confrontation as the door opened. "Dad!" she shouted **angrily**. "I've been frantic. You're late again."



C

"He always has dinner at six," she told the maid. "No beef. He has dessert in the garden. Fill the bath at eight – he goes to bed early." "When will I meet the master?" the maid asked, as she tripped over a sleeping poodle. "You already have," laughed the housekeeper.



D

My house looks as if it's been hit by a bomb. Since I'm terrible at organizing, I bought a new book, *Key to Organizing Your Life*. I felt so proud. I started cleaning the bookcase. **Five minutes later** I couldn't believe my eyes. I'd bought the same book **last year**.

## Glossary

**beg** ask sb very strongly or anxiously for sth  
**confrontation** a situation where there is angry disagreement  
**frantic** very worried  
**maid** female servant  
**master** man who has people working in his house as servants  
**poodle** a small dog with very curly hair  
**housekeeper** woman employee in charge of a house and its servants

From *Mini Sagas*

## 1 GRAMMAR adverbs and adverbial phrases

- a Read the four mini sagas and match them with the titles below. You don't need to use one of the titles.  
**Generation gap   The last laugh   Good intentions   In the cards   Meeting the boss**
- b Read the mini sagas again. Some of them are fairly cryptic, and the story is not immediately obvious. In pairs, explain each story in your own words. Which story do you like most / least?
- c Look at the **highlighted** adverbs or adverbial phrases in the stories. Think about what they mean and notice their position in the sentence. Write them in the correct place in the chart.

## Types of adverbs

**Time** (when things happen, e.g., *now*) immediately

**Manner** (how you do something, e.g., *slowly*)

**Frequency** (how often sth happens, e.g., *sometimes*)

**Degree** (describing / modifying an adjective, e.g., *very*)

**Comment** (giving an opinion about a phrase, e.g., *luckily*)



d Use your instinct. Where should the adverb go in these sentences?

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1 He speaks three languages.                         | <b>fluently</b>    |
| 2 I have breakfast during the week.                  | <b>hardly ever</b> |
| 3 My brother was in a car crash, but he wasn't hurt. | <b>fortunately</b> |
| 4 It's often hot in New York in July and August.     | <b>extremely</b>   |
| 5 When I know the date, I'll call you.               | <b>right away</b>  |

e **p.134 Grammar Bank 2C.** Read the rules and do the exercises.

f **2.8** Listen to some sound effects or short dialogues. Then use the adverb in **bold** to complete the sentence.

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1 When he got to the bus stop, <u>the bus had just left.</u>       | <b>just</b>       |
| 2 They were having a party when ...                                | <b>suddenly</b>   |
| 3 He thought he had lost his boarding pass, but ...                | <b>luckily</b>    |
| 4 The woman thought Andrea and Tom were friends, but, in fact, ... | <b>hardly</b>     |
| 5 The driver couldn't see where he was going because ...           | <b>hard</b>       |
| 6 The Chinese man couldn't understand the other man because ...    | <b>incredibly</b> |

## 2 VOCABULARY confusing adverbs and adverbial phrases

a Match each pair of adverbs with a pair of sentences.

- |                        |                                     |                         |                          |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| right now / actually   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | in the end / at the end | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| especially / specially | <input type="checkbox"/>            | late / lately           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ever / even            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | near / nearly           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| hard / hardly          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | still / yet             | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Adverb**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1 a Her Spanish isn't very good. She can <input type="text"/> say anything.    | _____ |
| b He works very <input type="text"/> – at least ten hours a day.               | _____ |
| 2 a My boss always arrives <input type="text"/> for meetings.                  | _____ |
| b We haven't seen Mary <input type="text"/> . She's been very busy.            | _____ |
| 3 a <input type="text"/> of the concert, everybody applauded.                  | _____ |
| b I didn't want to go, but <input type="text"/> they persuaded me.             | _____ |
| 4 a I love all sports, but <input type="text"/> basketball.                    | _____ |
| b All her clothes are <input type="text"/> made for her in Paris.              | _____ |
| 5 a She looks younger than me, but <input type="text"/> she's two years older. | _____ |
| b He's unemployed <input type="text"/> , but he's looking for a job.           | _____ |
| 6 a It's <input type="text"/> stopped raining. We'll be able to leave soon.    | _____ |
| b Does your boyfriend live <input type="text"/> here?                          | _____ |
| 7 a Have you found an apartment <input type="text"/> ?                         | _____ |
| b No, we're <input type="text"/> looking.                                      | _____ |
| 8 a Have you <input type="text"/> been to Texas?                               | _____ |
| b I've been all over the US – I've <input type="text"/> been to Alaska!        | _____ |

b Now decide which adverb goes where and write it in the adverb column. Compare with a partner, and say what you think the difference is between the two adverbs.

c Cover the adverb column and look only at sentences 1–8. Try to remember the adverbs.

## 3 PRONUNCIATION

word and sentence stress

a Underline the main stressed syllable in these adverbs.

absolutely actually almost apparently  
definitely especially even extremely  
fortunately ideally incredibly luckily  
unfortunately

b **2.9** Listen and check.

Remember: adverbs, like other “information” words, are usually stressed in a sentence.

c **2.10** Now underline the stressed words in each sentence. Listen and check. Practice saying the sentences.

- There was a lot of traffic, and unfortunately we arrived extremely late.
- We definitely want to go abroad this summer, ideally somewhere hot.
- It's incredibly easy – even a child could do it!
- I thought he was Portuguese, but actually he's Brazilian.
- You said they'd already gone, but apparently they're still here.
- I absolutely love Italian food, especially pizza.

## 4 WRITING

a You are going to write a mini saga.

Your story must be exactly 50 words (not including the title) and you must include at least two adverbs. Contracted forms (e.g., *I'd*) count as one word. First, choose one of the titles below.

**A summer romance**      **Revenge is sweet**  
**The lie**      **Never again**

- Think of a plot. Then write a first draft without worrying about the number of words.
- Now count the words and then try to cut or add words until the story is the right length. Write your final version.
- Read two other students' stories. Which do you like best?