

THE CUP OF SUGAR



A FANTASTIC TALES SHORT
STORY FOR ENGLISH READING
AND SPEAKING

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Introduction

Have you ever borrowed something from a neighbour?

Should neighbours help each other?

Do you pay back or give back anything you borrow from a neighbour?

What if it were just one cup of sugar?

The Cup of Sugar

There was a knock at the door and Susan got up from the sofa to answer it.

She opened the door and saw her neighbour Becky.

“Hi,” said Becky. “I want to return this cup of sugar I borrowed the other day.”

In her hands, she had a cup of sugar. Earlier in the week, Becky had knocked on Susan’s door and asked to borrow a cup of sugar.

She said she was making pancakes and needed some sugar but had forgotten to buy any in the supermarket.

Susan thought it was no problem to give Becky one cup of sugar.

What is a cup of sugar anyway? It’s nothing.

And neighbours should help each other. Shouldn’t they?

“Oh, Becky,” said Susan. “Don’t be silly. I don’t need you to return a cup of sugar. Neighbours should help each other. It’s nothing at all.”

Becky smiled back at her. Her eyes wide open.

Then, Susan could hear her telephone ringing inside the house.

“I gotta get that,” she said. And she waved goodbye to Becky and closed the door.

About an hour later, there was another knock at the door.

Susan ran to answer it, and there was Becky. A cup of sugar in her hand.

Becky was smiling, but there was a tightness around her lips.

“Susan, dear,” she said. “I would like to return this cup of sugar I borrowed.” She raised the cup of sugar for Susan to see. “All debts must be paid.”

Susan stared back at the cup of sugar. And a relatively smaller cup than the cup she had originally given to Becky.

With the emphasis on the word ‘given’.

She had given Becky this cup of sugar. That is what neighbours did. They helped each other.

And now this woman — *a woman she had waved to in the morning* — wanted to be petty about the whole situation and make it into a kind of contest.

Susan stared back at Becky.

“I don’t want it,” she said with a smile of her own. “I gave you that sugar in good faith. There is no need to return it.”

And with that, she politely, but firmly, closed the door.

Susan went back to her sofa. She planned on doing some reading for the rest of the day.

No sooner had she sat down and got comfortable than there was a very loud banging on the front door.

Susan immediately knew who it could be and marched to the door to open it.

There was Becky, this time with a full one-kilo bag of sugar.

“Here is your damn sugar!” she yelled. And threw the bag over Susan’s shoulder.

It landed at the bottom of the stairs with a dull thud.

The opening of the bag split open and some of the sugar granules spilled out onto the carpet.

Susan stared at it in disbelief.

Just as she turned to respond to Becky, she saw her marching back across the road to her own house.

Susan went into a quiet rage.

The nerve of this woman!

She grabbed her car keys and drove at great speed to the local supermarket. There she bought all the stock of sugar that the supermarket had on its shelves and drove back home again.

She placed all the sugar on Becky's doorstep. Over twenty bags in total. That would show her.

Then she went back home and called Becky on the phone.

"Hi, Becky, dear," she said. "There is no need for you to return any sugar. I have left a little something for you on your doorstep."

She put the phone down and rushed to the window.

There she saw Becky opening her own door and catching the sight of all the bags of sugar on her doorstep. She let out a scream of anguish and Susan covered her mouth to laugh.

Susan went to the kitchen. She put the kettle on to make herself a well-deserved cup of tea.

"That showed her," she thought to herself.

It was so juvenile, the way some people behaved.

There was that time when her husband Dan had borrowed some hedge clippers from the old man up the road, Mr Sykes.

He had them for just two days before Mr Sykes came banging on the door, demanding them back again.

Where are my hedge clippers? He yelled through the letterbox.

The kettle boiled, and Susan poured hot water on the tea in the pot. She glanced out the window to look at her lawn.

And there was another occasion when her son had left his bike

parked on the sidewalk in front of their house.

Susan came outside to see a note on her front door. It demanded that people make sure the walkways in the neighbourhood were left clear at all times.

She poured the brewed tea into her cup. Then opened the fridge door to take the milk out.

It's like Dan said: *You can choose your friends, but you can't choose family or neighbours.*

She poured a dash of milk into her tea, then went to the cupboard for the sugar.

She pulled the cupboard door open but couldn't see the sugar.

Where was it?

Susan looked in the other cupboards, but it was not there.

How could it be?

Had she run out of sugar?

She scrambled around the kitchen, looking for the bowl of sugar. But she could not see it.

It was like it had disappeared completely.

She looked at the inviting cup of tea. She couldn't enjoy it without her usual one spoon of sugar in it.

There was only one thing to do.

Becky would have some sugar. She always had sugar.

Only a couple of weeks ago, Susan had borrowed a cup of sugar from her.

Yes, that's what she would do. She would ask Becky for some sugar.

She grabbed a cup and marched to the door to knock on Becky's door.

After all, that's what neighbours were for.

Right?

Reading Comprehension Questions

Below is a list of reading comprehension questions based on the story above.

Try to answer them according to the story.

You can find model answers to all the questions at the end of the lesson plan.

Who are the two characters in this story?

What was Becky visiting Susan at the beginning of the story?

What was Susan's reaction when Becky tried to return the borrowed cup of sugar?

How was the conversation between Susan and Becky interrupted?

How much time had passed before Becky knocked on the door a second time?

Why did Becky insist on returning the cup of sugar?

What phrase did she use to emphasize her point?

What did Susan notice about the size of the cup of sugar in Becky's hand?

How did Susan respond to Becky the second time she knocked on Susan's door?

What was Susan's plan for the rest of the day?

What was Becky holding in her hands the third time she came to Susan's door?

What did Becky do with this object?

How did Susan respond this time?

Did she speak to Becky?

Where did Becky go?

Describe Susan's feelings at this point in the story.

What did Susan do next?

Where did she go?

How much sugar did she buy?

What did she do with all the sugar she bought?

How many bags of sugar in total?

How did Susan make contact with Becky?

What did Susan tell Becky?

How did Susan observe Becky?

What was Becky's response when she saw all the sugar on her doorstep?

How did Susan respond?

What did Susan do next?

What previous account does the story talk about between her husband and another neighbour?

What had Susan's son done with his bike on another occasion?

What did her husband say about neighbours?

When Susan finished making her tea, did she find any sugar in her cupboard?

How much sugar does Susan usually like to put in her tea?

Who does she think she can ask for a cup of sugar?

The Cup of Sugar – story and reading comprehension questions

This is the short story and the reading comprehension questions divided into clear sections.

It might be easier to use this format for certain classes and level.

You can find model answers to the questions at the end of the lesson plan.

Section 1

There was a knock at the door and Susan got up from the sofa to answer it. She opened the door and saw her neighbour Becky.

“Hi,” said Becky. “I want to return this cup of sugar I borrowed the other day.”

In her hands, she had a cup of sugar. Earlier in the week, Becky had knocked on Susan’s door and asked to borrow a cup of sugar. She said she was making pancakes and needed some sugar but had forgotten to buy any in the supermarket.

Susan thought it was no problem to give Becky one cup of sugar.

What is a cup of sugar anyway? It's nothing.

And neighbours should help each other. Shouldn't they?

"Oh, Becky," said Susan. "Don't be silly. I don't need you to return a cup of sugar. Neighbours should help each other. It's nothing at all."

Becky smiled back at her. Her eyes wide open.

Then, Susan could hear her telephone ringing inside the house.

"I gotta get that," she said. And she waved goodbye to Becky and closed the door.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- Who are the two characters in this story?
- Why did Becky knock on Susan's door earlier in the week?
- What did Susan think about lending Becky a cup of sugar?
- What does Susan say when Becky tries to return the sugar?
- What interrupts their conversation?

Section 2

About an hour later, there was another knock at the door.

Susan ran to answer it, and there was Becky. A cup of sugar in her hand.

Becky was smiling, but there was a tightness around her lips.

“Susan, dear,” she said. “I would like to return this cup of sugar I borrowed.” She raised the cup of sugar for Susan to see. “All debts must be paid.”

Susan stared back at the cup of sugar. And a relatively smaller cup than the cup she had originally given to Becky.

With the emphasis on the word ‘given’.

She had given Becky this cup of sugar. That is what neighbours did. They helped each other.

And now this woman — a woman she had waved to in the morning — wanted to be petty about the whole situation and make it into a kind of contest.

Susan stared back at Becky.

“I don’t want it,” she said with a smile of her own. “I gave you that sugar in good faith. There is no need to return it.”

And with that, she politely, but firmly, closed the door.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- How much time had passed before Becky knocked again?

- How did Becky behave the second time she came over?
- What phrase did she use to emphasize her point?
- What did Susan notice about the size of the cup?
- How did Susan respond to Becky this time?

Section 3

Susan went back to her sofa. She planned on doing some reading for the rest of the day.

No sooner had she sat down and got comfortable than there was a very loud banging on the front door.

Susan immediately knew who it could be and marched to the door to open it.

There was Becky, this time with a full one-kilo bag of sugar.

“Here is your damn sugar!” she yelled. And threw the bag over Susan’s shoulder.

It landed at the bottom of the stairs with a dull thud.

The opening of the bag split open and some of the sugar granules spilled out onto the carpet.

Susan stared at it in disbelief.

Just as she turned to respond to Becky, she saw her marching back across the road to her own house.

Susan went into a quiet rage.

The nerve of this woman!

Reading Comprehension Questions

- What was Becky holding the third time she came over?
- How did she act?
- What happened when she threw the bag of sugar?
- What was Susan's reaction?
- Did Susan speak to Becky this time?
- Where did Becky go?

Section 4

She grabbed her car keys and drove at great speed to the local supermarket.

There she bought all the stock of sugar that the supermarket had on its shelves and drove back home again.

She placed all the sugar on Becky's doorstep. Over twenty bags in total. That would show her.

Then she went back home and called Becky on the phone.

"Hi, Becky, dear," she said. "There is no need for you to return any sugar. I have left a little something for you on your doorstep."

She put the phone down and rushed to the window.

There she saw Becky opening her own door and catching the sight of all the bags of sugar on her doorstep.

She let out a scream of anguish and Susan covered her mouth to laugh.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- What did Susan decide to do in response to Becky?
- How many bags of sugar did she buy?
- What did she say when she called Becky?
- What was Becky's reaction when she saw the sugar?
- How did Susan feel about her own actions?

Section 5

Susan went to the kitchen. She put the kettle on to make herself a well-deserved cup of tea.

"That showed her," she thought to herself.

It was so juvenile, the way some people behaved.

There was that time when her husband Dan had borrowed some hedge clippers from the old man up the road, Mr Sykes.

He had them for just two days before Mr Sykes came banging on

the door, demanding them back again.

Where are my hedge clippers? He yelled through the letterbox.

The kettle boiled, and Susan poured hot water on the tea in the pot. She glanced out the window to look at her lawn.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- What was Susan thinking as she made tea?
- What incident does she recall involving her husband and a neighbour?
- How does this memory connect to the sugar situation?

Section 6

And there was another occasion when her son had left his bike parked on the sidewalk in front of their house.

Susan came outside to see a note on her front door.

It demanded that people make sure the walkways in the neighbourhood were left clear at all times.

She poured the brewed tea into her cup. Then opened the fridge door to take the milk out.

It's like Dan said: You can choose your friends, but you can't choose family or neighbours.

She poured a dash of milk into her tea, then went to the cupboard for the sugar.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- What other past event does Susan remember now?
- What note did someone leave on her door?
- What was Dan's opinion about neighbours?

Section 7

Susan looked in the other cupboards, but it was not there.

How could it be? Had she run out of sugar?

She scrambled around the kitchen, looking for the bowl of sugar.

But she could not see it.

It was like it had disappeared completely.

She looked at the inviting cup of tea. She couldn't enjoy it without her usual one spoon of sugar in it.

There was only one thing to do. Becky would have some sugar.

She always had sugar.

Only a couple of weeks ago, Susan had borrowed a cup of sugar from her.

Yes, that's what she would do. She would ask Becky for some

sugar.

She grabbed a cup and marched to the door to knock on Becky's door.

After all, that's what neighbours were for.

Right?

Reading Comprehension Questions

- What did Susan discover about her sugar supply?
- How much sugar does she usually like in her tea?
- What solution did she come up with?
- Who does she plan to visit?
- Why is the ending ironic?

True or False

Look at all the statements below.

Decide whether they are true or false in relation to the story.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Susan borrowed a cup of sugar from Becky.

At the beginning of the story, Susan is happy to accept the returned cup of sugar from Becky.

Becky threw a bag of sugar over Susan's shoulder.

Susan bought over twenty bags of sugar from the local supermarket.

Susan called Becky on the phone to inform her about the sugar she had left on Becky's doorstep.

Becky was very happy to see all the sugar on her doorstep and she cried with joy.

Susan's husband's name is Dan.

Mr. Sykes is Susan's next-door neighbour.

A previous time, Susan found a note on her front door demanding that walkways in the neighbourhood be kept clear at all times.

Susan could not find any sugar in her kitchen cupboards.

Susan's son left his bike parked in their backyard.

Susan decided to ask Becky for some sugar.

Essential Vocabulary

Knock	Good faith	Sidewalk
Borrow	Firmly	Dash
Pancakes	Rage	Kettle
Supermarket	Nerve	Brew
Silly	Supermarket	Cupboard
Debt	Stock	Scramble
Petty	Juvenile	Inviting
Contest	Hedge clippers	March
		Neighbour

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Knock — *To strike an object, usually a door, with your hand, making a loud noise. This is to signify that you wish to enter.*

Sidewalk — *A paved area at the side of the road where pedestrians can walk.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

I knocked on the manager's door and waited for him to answer me.

It was a great day to walk along the sidewalk in my neighbourhood.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help improve all your English skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Words, Synonyms and Antonyms

Look at the table below.

You will see a list of words, synonyms and antonyms. Match each word with the correct synonym and antonym.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Word	Synonym	Antonym
Knock	Childish	Frown
Borrowed	Welcoming	Silence
Smile	Grin	Calmness
Good faith	Rap	Unwelcoming
Yelled	Insistent	Returned
Disbelief	Trust	Whispered
Rage	Hastened	Delayed
Rushed	Lent	Flexible
Scream	Astonishment	Open
Juvenile	Shriek	Mistrust
Demanding	Shouted	Mature

Inviting	Fury	Belief
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As an extra exercise, try to make sentences using some of the synonyms and antonyms in the table above.

This will help you broaden your vocabulary and you will be able to speak and write in English more effectively.

Words and Meanings

Look at the table of words below.

Stock	Rage	Kettle
Debt	Pancakes	Silly
Good faith	Cupboard	Contest
Knock	Sidewalk	Juvenile
Hedge clippers	March	Scramble
Neighbour	Petty	Brew
Supermarket	Firmly	Borrow
Inviting	Nerve	Dash

Now match each of the above words with one of the meanings below.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Something owed or due to another person, usually meaning money.

Goods kept in a warehouse or shop that are for sale.

To take and use something that belongs to someone else but with their permission, and with the intention of returning it.

Immature behaviour or the behaviour of a person who acts or thinks like a young child.

Courage, audacity or impudence.

To make one's way quickly or awkwardly up a steep incline or over rough ground using one's hands and feet.

Foolish or lacking in common sense, usually applied to something that someone did or said.

A feeling that is violent, uncontrollable anger.

Of little to no importance or trivial.

A set of tools used for cutting the shrubs or plants in a garden.

To strike a surface hard, usually with your knuckles and usually on a door, in order to gain access.

Appealing, attractive or welcoming.

A pathway on the sides of a road where pedestrians can walk.

To do something in a strong or definite manner.

A special enclosed space in a kitchen to store food items or crockery.

To walk in a quick or determined way.

Soft flat cakes made from a batter of eggs, milk and butter. Fried on both sides and usually served with lemon juice squeezed on top.

A small quantity of something, usually a liquid.

A competition in which two people or more, or two teams, play against each other in a sport, game or other activity.

A person who lives next door or nearby.

A large place where people can buy food and other household items.

A metal container used for boiling water.

The process of preparing and making something to drink, usually beer or tea.

To act honestly or with sincerity between each other.

Hidden Words

Look at the table of words below.

Dash	Cupboard	Petty
Rage	Sidewalk	Inviting
Juvenile	Pancakes	Borrow
Supermarket	Brew	Knock
Contest	Kettle	Scramble

Now use each word in the sentences below.

The tense or form of the word may change in the sentence.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

In the end, our discussion about whose turn it was to clean the kitchen became _____.

Tina swam to shore and _____ onto the beach.

I like strong coffee so I only add a small _____ of milk.

The boy next door often says very _____ things; so I ignore him.

I waited for the tea to _____ and then sat down to read my book.

As Tom was walking down the _____ near his house, he saw the postman and called out to him.

Craig wanted to _____ some money from the bank so he could buy a new car.

The spelling test has turned into a huge _____ between me and my classmate.

Betty hoped that the _____ was still open so she could buy some bread.

A watched _____ never boils.

My mother flew into a _____ when she saw my school report.

There was a loud _____ at the door and I jumped with a start.

Mike opened the _____ and a mouse jumped out!

Every Sunday morning, we have _____ for breakfast.

My teacher gave me an _____ smile and I sat down.

Discussion Questions

What do you think about Susan's initial reaction to Becky returning the cup of sugar?

Was this appropriate? Polite? Or ill-mannered?

Do you believe Susan was justified in feeling annoyed by Becky's insistence on returning the sugar?

Why do you think Becky was so adamant about returning a small cup of sugar?

What could Susan have done differently to handle the situation with Becky?

If you were in Susan's shoes, how would you have dealt with this?

What do you think about Becky's behaviour throughout the story?

Was this justified?

Discuss the dynamics of neighbourly relationships portrayed in the story.

Do you think the two women know each other very well?

Are they behaving rationally?

What do you think about Susan's decision to retaliate by buying and delivering multiple bags of sugar to Becky's doorstep?

What would make her do such a thing do you think?

Is this a rational thing to do? Why/why not?

Was Susan's reaction to Becky's scream of anguish justified?

How do you think Susan's relationship with Becky changed throughout the story?

What do you think are the underlying reasons for Becky's behaviour towards Susan?

Did some other event happen between the two women in the past?

What do you think about Susan going to ask Becky for some sugar at the end of the story?

After all the things that have happened, can Susan justify asking Becky for some sugar? Why/why not?

Do you think Susan reacted in the right way in the story?

Susan seemed to retaliate in a very strong way towards Becky? Was this necessary?

How would this story be told if both the characters were men? Would it be the same? Or different?

Explain your reasons and ideas.

How was Susan's reaction to Becky any different between her

husband and Mr Sykes? Was it the same? Or different?

Do we live under any kind of social pressure to be nice to our neighbours?

How could proper communication between Susan and Becky have resolved things more easily?

What could they have done better?

What does the English expression 'tit for tat' mean? Is this story a good example of that?

Have you ever had a disagreement with a neighbour? How did you resolve it?

Do you get on well with your neighbours?

Or do some of your neighbours give you trouble?

Talk about your neighbours in class.

Group Discussion

This is a group discussion activity.

Look at all the prompts below.

Each one talks about interactions between neighbours.

Are these requests reasonable?

***If a neighbour asked you this request, what would you say?
How would you react?***

Neighbour 1: *When you come home late at night, you close your door too loudly. It makes too much noise. Can you close your door quietly? I don't want you to disturb my sleep.*

Neighbour 2: *I don't like the music you listen to. Can you listen to some other kind of music? I only like piano music so please only listen to this from now on.*

Neighbour 3: *Why did you turn off your Wi-Fi? I need to use your Wi-Fi or I cannot connect to the internet. It's very selfish of you to use a password. Give me the password so I can also use your Wi-Fi!*

Neighbour 4: *Can I borrow your hedge clippers? I need to trim my shrubs and hedges and my hedge clippers are broken. Would it be OK to borrow yours? I will return them immediately after I finish with them.*

Neighbour 5: *I have an emergency! I have to go to hospital. Can you look after my son for a couple of hours? I will come and collect him as soon as I get back.*

Neighbour 6: *We are having a party this Saturday. Do you mind if some of our guests park their cars in front of your house? It's just that there is nowhere else to park. If it's not convenient, please let me know.*

Go through all the scenarios one by one.

Discuss the request in detail and then discuss whether the request is reasonable or not.

If the request is reasonable, how would you react?

If it is unreasonable, how would you react then?

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

Divide into pairs and turn the whole story above into a play.
Take all the dialogue from the story and then add more dialogue to it to create your play.

In pairs, practice your role play.

Then, when you are ready, show the class!

Below is a script of all the dialogue from the story.

Add your own lines of dialogue to make it into a complete play of your own.

Becky: *Hi, I want to return this cup of sugar I borrowed the other day.*

Susan: *Oh, Becky, don't be silly. I don't need you to return a cup of sugar. Neighbours should help each other. It's nothing at all.*

Susan: *I gotta get that.*

Becky: *Susan, dear, I would like to return this cup of sugar I borrowed. All debts must be paid.*

Susan: *I don't want it, I gave you that sugar in good faith. There is no need to return it.*

Becky: *Here is your damn sugar!*

Susan: *Hi, Becky, dear, there is no need for you to return any sugar. I have left a little something for you on your doorstep.*

Debate

This is a debate activity.

The class should be divided into two teams — **Team A and Team B.**

Team A

You believe that we should always help neighbours. It is our moral and public duty to help the other people who live in our community.

By helping others it makes us feel good and it is for the common good of the neighbourhood to help the people who live nearby.

Team B

You believe we should not help our neighbours. We do not owe these people anything and we should only try to help our family and friends. Our neighbours are not our friends.

If we help our neighbours, they will start to take advantage of us.

Divide the class into two teams. The two teams should have the same number of people.

Question Panel

Now choose two or three people as the question panel.

These people will ask questions of the two teams. They will make sure that everyone has the chance to speak during the debate.

The question panel should ask a question by asking members of both teams.

Ask one question of a person in Team A. Then ask the same question of someone in Team B.

Questions

Here is a list of questions you can use below.

You should add your own follow-up questions — or simply ask questions of your own.

Do we have a moral duty to help our neighbours in their times of need? Why/why not?

How do we define who our neighbours are? Which neighbours should we help? Which ones should we not help?

Should we only help the neighbours who live closest to us? Or should we try to help any of the neighbours within our community?

Are there any benefits for us by helping our neighbours? What do we get out of it by helping them?

Is there any benefit to the community at large by helping our neighbours?

Can you think of any situations where helping our neighbours might have a negative consequence?

What if there were a law that said we must help our neighbours? Do you think this is a good idea?

Is there a limit on how much help we should give to our neighbours? What is the limit? Can you give examples?

If we help our neighbours, does it create a stronger sense of community where we live? Why/why not?

What is more important? Helping our neighbours or giving to charity? Explain your reasons.

Should local governments create policies to help neighbours? Or should it be from the community? Explain your reasons.

Do different cultures have different ideas about helping neighbours?

What kind of dangers or risks are there from helping neighbours?

Can neighbours take advantage of us or exploit us in some way?

Do rich people or poor people treat their neighbours differently? Which group has a better sense of community?

If we help our neighbours, should we expect something in return? Why/why not?

Conclusion

At the end of the debate, talk about the different opinions you all made or have.

Have your opinions about helping neighbours changed in any way?

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

You are going to continue the short story from the beginning of the lesson plan.

Take a look at the prompts below and use ONE to continue your story.

Susan knocks on Becky's door, but there's no answer. As she waits, she notices something odd about Becky's house. What does she see there?

Susan decides to confront Becky about the sugar incident, but when she arrives, she finds Becky in tears. What could have happened to upset her neighbour?

As Susan approaches Becky's door, she overhears a heated argument inside. Curiosity getting the better of her, she listens in. What is the argument about?

Unable to get sugar from Becky, Susan decides to ask another neighbour for help. But the second neighbour refuses to help Susan. How does Susan react?

Susan's search for sugar takes her on a journey through the neighbourhood, where she encounters various quirky characters. Who does she meet, and how do they contribute to the story?

When you have finished writing your short story, you should read it out loud in front of the class.

Ask the other students and your teacher for feedback.

Or you can hand your writing to your teacher for a full review.

Reading Comprehension Questions – Model Answers

The answers provided below are sample responses. Your own answers may use different wording or sentence structure, and that's perfectly fine—as long as the meaning is similar.

If you're unsure whether your answer is acceptable, please check with your teacher.

Who are the two characters in this story?

The two characters in this story are Susan and her neighbour Becky.

Why did Becky knock on Susan's door earlier in the week?

Becky knocked on Susan's door earlier in the week to borrow a cup of sugar because she was making pancakes and had forgotten to buy any.

What did Susan think about lending Becky a cup of sugar?

Susan thought it was no problem and believed that neighbours should help each other.

What does Susan say when Becky tries to return the sugar?

Susan tells Becky not to be silly and says there is no need to return the sugar because it was nothing.

What interrupts their conversation?

Their conversation is interrupted by Susan's telephone ringing inside the house.

How much time had passed before Becky knocked again?

About an hour had passed before Becky knocked again.

How did Becky behave the second time she came over?

Becky was smiling, but there was a tightness around her lips, suggesting she was not pleased.

What phrase did she use to emphasize her point?

She said, "All debts must be paid."

What did Susan notice about the size of the cup?

Susan noticed that the cup Becky brought back was smaller than the one she had originally given her.

How did Susan respond to Becky this time?

Susan smiled and told Becky she didn't want the sugar back because she had given it in good faith.

What was Becky holding the third time she came over?

Becky was holding a full one-kilo bag of sugar.

How did she act?

Becky was angry and yelled at Susan before throwing the bag of sugar over her shoulder.

What happened when she threw the bag of sugar?

The bag landed at the bottom of the stairs and split open, spilling sugar onto the carpet.

What was Susan's reaction?

Susan stared at it in disbelief and felt a quiet rage inside.

Did Susan speak to Becky this time?

No, Susan did not speak to Becky this time.

Where did Becky go?

Becky marched back across the road to her own house.

What did Susan decide to do in response to Becky?

Susan decided to buy a large amount of sugar and dump it on Becky's doorstep as revenge.

How many bags of sugar did she buy?

She bought over twenty bags of sugar.

What did she say when she called Becky?

She told Becky that there was no need to return any sugar and that she had left something on her doorstep.

What was Becky's reaction when she saw the sugar?

Becky screamed in anguish when she saw the bags of sugar.

How did Susan feel about her own actions?

Susan felt amused and covered her mouth to laugh.

What was Susan thinking as she made tea?

Susan thought she had shown Becky a lesson and reflected on how juvenile some people could be.

What incident does she recall involving her husband and a neighbour?

She remembered when Mr Sykes demanded hedge clippers back just two days after Dan borrowed them.

How does this memory connect to the sugar situation?

It shows that Susan feels people in the neighbourhood overreact and hold grudges over small things.

What other past event does Susan remember now?

Susan remembered someone leaving a note on her door because her son had left his bike on the sidewalk.

What note did someone leave on her door?

The note demanded that the walkways be kept clear at all times.

What was Dan's opinion about neighbours?

Dan believed you can choose your friends, but not your family or neighbours.

What did Susan discover about her sugar supply?

Susan discovered that she had run out of sugar.

How much sugar does she usually like in her tea?

She usually likes one spoon of sugar in her tea.

What solution did she come up with?

She decided to ask Becky if she could borrow some sugar.

Who does she plan to visit?

She plans to visit Becky.

Why is the ending ironic?

The ending is ironic because after all the drama and pettiness over sugar, Susan ends up needing to borrow some from Becky herself.

True or False — Answers

These are the correct answers to all the True or False statements.

How many did you get right?

Susan borrowed a cup of sugar from Becky. (False: It was Becky who borrowed sugar from Susan.)

At the beginning of the story, Susan is happy to accept the returned cup of sugar from Becky. (True)

Becky threw a bag of sugar over Susan's shoulder. (True)

Susan bought over twenty bags of sugar from the local supermarket. (False: She bought all the stock of sugar, but we don't know exactly how much sugar she bought.)

Susan called Becky on the phone to inform her about the sugar she had left on Becky's doorstep. (True)

Becky was very happy to see all the sugar on her doorstep and she cried with joy. (False: She screamed in anguish.)

Susan's husband's name is Dan. (True)

Mr. Sykes is Susan's next-door neighbour. (False: Mr. Sykes is the old man up the road.)

A previous time, Susan found a note on her front door demanding that walkways in the neighbourhood be kept clear at

all times. (True)

Susan could not find any sugar in her kitchen cupboards. (True)

Susan's son left his bike parked in their backyard. (False: He left it on the sidewalk in front of the house.)

Susan decided to ask Becky for some sugar. (True)

Words, Synonyms and Antonyms — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

Were you successful?

Word	Synonym	Antonym
Knock	Rap	Open
Borrowed	Lent	Returned
Smile	Grin	Frown
Good faith	Trust	Mistrust
Yelled	Shouted	Whispered
Disbelief	Astonishment	Belief
Rage	Fury	Calmness
Rushed	Hastened	Delayed
Scream	Shriek	Silence
Juvenile	Childish	Mature
Demanding	Insistent	Flexible
Inviting	Welcoming	Unwelcoming

Words and Meanings — Answers

All the correct answers are below.

How was your score?

Knock — *to strike a surface hard, usually with your knuckles and usually on a door, in order to gain access.*

Borrow — *to take and use something that belongs to someone else but with their permission, and with the intention of returning it.*

Pancakes — *soft flat cakes made from a batter of eggs, milk and butter. Fried on both sides and usually served with lemon juice squeezed on top.*

Supermarket — *a large place where people can buy food and other household items.*

Silly — *foolish or lacking in common sense, usually applied to something that someone did or said.*

Debt — *something owed or due to another person, usually meaning money.*

Petty — *of little to no importance or trivial.*

Contest — *a competition in which two people or more, or two teams, play against each other in a sport, game or other activity.*

Good faith — *to act honestly or with sincerity between each*

other.

Firmly — *to do something in a strong or definite manner.*

Rage — *a feeling that is violent, uncontrollable anger.*

Nerve — *courage, audacity or impudence.*

Stock — *goods kept in a warehouse or shop that are for sale.*

Juvenile — *immature behaviour or the behaviour of a person who acts or thinks like a young child.*

Hedge clippers — *a set of tools used for cutting the shrubs or plants in a garden.*

Sidewalk — *a pathway on the sides of a road where pedestrians can walk.*

Dash — *a small quantity of something, usually a liquid.*

Kettle — *a metal container used for boiling water.*

Brew — *the process of preparing and making something to drink, usually beer or tea.*

Cupboard — *a special enclosed space in a kitchen to store food items or crockery.*

Scramble — *To make one's way quickly or awkwardly up a steep incline or over rough ground using one's hands and feet.*

Inviting — *appealing, attractive or welcoming.*

March — *to walk in a quick or determined way.*

Neighbour — *a person who lives next door or nearby.*

Hidden Words — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

So how did you do?

Brew — I waited for the tea to **brew** and then sat down to read my book.

Rage — My mother flew into a **rage** when she saw my school report.

Pancakes — Every Sunday morning, we have **pancakes** for breakfast.

Knock — There was a loud **knock** at the door and I jumped with a start.

Contest — The spelling test has turned into a huge **contest** between me and my classmate.

Dash — I like strong coffee so I only add a small **dash** of milk.

Petty — In the end, our discussion about whose turn it was to clean the kitchen became **petty**.

Sidewalk — As Tom was walking down the **sidewalk** near his house, he saw the postman and called out to him.

Supermarket — Betty hoped that the **supermarket** was still open so she could buy some bread.

Cupboard — Mike opened the **cupboard** and a mouse jumped out!

Inviting — My teacher gave me an **inviting** smile and I sat down.

Kettle — A watched **kettle** never boils.

Juvenile — The boy next door often says very **juvenile** things; so I ignore him.

Borrow — Craig wanted to **borrow** some money from the bank so he could buy a new car.

Scramble — Tina swam to shore and **scrambled** onto the beach.

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