

Introduction

This collection features the humorous folk tales attributed to Nasreddin Hodja, a Turkish legend. The stories are known throughout the world of Islam.

The first edition of Ray Clark's collection was published in 1991 in Story Card format – each illustrated tale on a separate card. In 2004 Pro Lingua brought out a new edition as a reader with pages that were easy to remove to make cards. Ray added an additional twenty-six to the book and recorded them all to provide listening practice – an audio book. In 2017 a digital edition of the first forty stories is being published with audio and interactive exercises. The audio book CD is still available, and in response to pleas from several teachers who have loved the Story Card format of the tales, this third edition is now available.

The basic idea of this collection of stories is quite simple: People like to read, tell, and listen to stories, jokes, and anecdotes. In this collection there are 40 illustrated stories, each on one page, backed by a page of prompts. Each story is a short, humorous tale in clear, modified English. The cards progress from short and easy to longer and more difficult. They can be used by a range of learners, from beginners to students at the advanced level.

The stories are not intended to teach new material to the learners, although they may encounter new words and unfamiliar grammatical structures. The purpose is to stimulate speaking practice, and to provide reading and listening practice. By telling the stories, the students will develop skill at the discourse level, learning to link sentences to each other in a coherent manner, from introductory sentences to the final punch line. Weaving the sentences together in connected speech is an essential skill for successful communication. Storytelling is an effective and enjoyable way to develop this skill.

The collection is used most effectively by working with the stories on a regular basis, from one a day to one a week. By continuing with the storytelling over several days or weeks, the students will have the opportunity to improve their narrative skills. At some point, you may want to model dramatic readings of the stories to encourage the students to use pauses, voice modulations, and gestures to make the storytelling more effective.



The stories may be used in a variety of ways. The possibilities are many, but the following list of suggestions may be helpful.

1. Trading Stories – the basic technique. Give each student in the class a different story card. Have them read through the story while you circulate to help with comprehension. As the students finish and feel they are ready to tell their story, have them find another student with whom, without looking at the text, they exchange stories. For the first time through, allow them to look at the prompts on the back of the card. When the two students have finished sharing, they split up and find other partners to tell their stories to. This can and should continue several times, until they are telling the stories fluently and confidently.

There are several variations to this technique and other activities that can be done with the stories. A few are suggested below.

2. Chain Stories. Arrange the students in a circle. An even number of students works best. Give a story to every other student in the circle. The students with the stories tell their stories to the students to their left who do not have stories. Then each person who listened turns to the person on their left and tells that person the story, and so on. This technique works better with students at a higher proficiency level.

3. **Story-A-Day.** Each day one student tells a story to the class.
4. **Dictation.** Dictate a story to the students. This is especially good for practicing the punctuation associated with direct speech.
5. **Direct/Indirect Speech Practice.** Read the direct speech lines from a story and have the students rewrite the direct quotes as indirect, and vice versa.
6. **Write with Prompts.** Have the students look at the prompts page and write the stories following the sequence of prompts. After writing, they can compare their sentences with the original.
7. **Listen and Write.** Read a story to the students and then have them write it out from memory. Then have them compare their sentences with the original.
8. **Act it Out.** Give a story to a group of students (the number of students will depend on the story) and have them perform it for their classmates. It may be necessary to have a narrator as well as actors.
9. **Collecting Stories.** Each student shares a favorite Hodja story with a friend not in the class and asks for a story in return. The student brings this new story back to class and presents it live, recorded, or in written form.

From time to time, students and teachers have asked for more stories, and so **Twenty-six Additional Stories** are available for listening practice on the CD. Like the forty illustrated stories, they may be used in a variety of ways:

- For listening comprehension practice. Play – pause – ask.
- For note-taking and re-telling, writing out, or acting out.
- For dictation using the pause and rewind functions.