

Lesson 18: Childhood

Nora and Jolene are chatting about their experiences as children. Listen to their conversation and choose the best answer for each question:

Listening Comprehension

- 1. Nora describes the accidents she had at...**
 - a. a birthday party
 - b. her school
 - c. the circus
- 2. Jolene's case of mistaken identity happened at...**
 - a. a gas station
 - b. a grocery store
 - c. a restaurant
- 3. When Jolene stayed up late, she used to...**
 - a. eat snacks
 - b. play outside
 - c. read in bed
- 4. Nora got in trouble when she...**
 - a. appeared to be missing
 - b. broke something inside a closet
 - c. made too much noise and woke her parents up
- 5. Jolene usually wasn't punished because...**
 - a. her behavior was good
 - b. her father was lenient
 - c. her parents didn't find out about what she did
- 6. After school, Nora would...**
 - a. accompany her mother to various places
 - b. attend sports practice
 - c. do homework for several hours
- 7. How did Nora feel about summer camp?**
 - a. she loved it
 - b. she hated it
 - c. she sometimes liked it, and sometimes didn't like it

Conversation Text

Nora: I was so **clumsy** when I was a kid. There was this one time my family went to the circus, and I remember **tumbling** down three **flights of stairs**, crashing into the popcorn seller, and finally colliding with a girl eating ice cream.

Jolene: **Yikes!** Yeah, I was pretty uncoordinated, too. Did you ever mistake strangers for your parents?

Nora: No. Did you?

Jolene: **A bunch of** times. Once I was in the grocery store, and my mom was busy rearranging the food in our cart. I saw this dark-haired man **leaning** into a freezer to grab some frozen meals. He looked just like my dad from the back. So I ran up to him, hugged him and said “hi dad!” When he turned around, both of us were **startled**.

Nora: I can imagine! Did you ever **stay up** past your bedtime when you were a kid?

Jolene: **You bet.** I would turn off my lights, then go under my bed sheets with a flashlight to read or do coloring books.

Nora: Sometimes me and my two brothers would **sneak out** of our rooms and play **hide and seek** in the dark. We’d have to wait till about midnight, to be sure my parents were **sound asleep**.

Vocabulary

clumsy = not graceful or physically coordinated; always having accidents

tumbling down = falling in a disorganized way

flights of stairs = each section of stairs going from one floor to another is called a “flight”

Yikes! = an expression of surprise or mild shock

A bunch of = several; many

leaning = inclining the body

startled = mildly frightened or shocked

stay up = remain awake

You bet = definitely

sneak out = go out in a quiet, secret way

hide and seek = a game where some people hide and one person looks for them

sound asleep = sleeping deeply; not likely to wake up

Jolene: Sounds like fun! But did you ever get in trouble?

Nora: Yeah, one time when I **dozed off** while hiding in a closet. My brothers couldn't find me, so they **gave up** and went to bed. Then in the morning, my mom saw I wasn't in my room and she **flipped out**.

Jolene: That's funny! Well, not so much for your mom at the time. But I'm sure she was **glad** you were all right.

Nora: Of course she was – but we still got punished. All three of us were **grounded** for a week – *and* we had to do extra **chores**.

Jolene: I usually managed to **weasel out of** getting punished. My mom was pretty strict, but my dad was a total **pushover**. Every time I **pleaded with** him to let me off the hook, he'd eventually **give in**. It used to **drive my mom up the wall**.

Nora: That definitely **wouldn't fly** with my parents. When it came to decisions involving us kids, they **backed each other up**.

Vocabulary

dozed off = fell asleep

gave up = stopped, desisted

flipped out = became very upset and agitated

glad = happy

grounded = a punishment where kids/teenagers are not allowed to leave the house to meet their friends or do fun things

chores = obligatory tasks (especially housework)

weasel out of = escape an obligation in a deceptive way

a pushover = someone who is easily persuaded

pleaded with = asked with a lot of emotion

give in = stop resisting and agree to do what someone else wants you to

drive my mom up the wall = make her very annoyed

wouldn't fly = wouldn't work

backed each other up = supported each other

Jolene: Sometimes I wish I could **turn back the clock** and be a kid again. I used to **roam around** the neighborhood **without a care in the world**.

Nora: Not me. After picking me up from school, my mom would **drag me along** on all her **errands**.

Jolene: Bummer. What about during the summers, did you ever go to summer camp?

Nora: Every year! I think my parents sent us to camp just to **get us out of their hair**. But it was awesome, we got to do stuff like horseback riding, canoeing, having water balloon fights, **the whole nine yards**.

Jolene: Those were the days, that's for sure!

Vocabulary

turn back the clock = go back to how things were in the past

roam around = move around a large area without any particular direction

without a care in the world = completely free of worries

drag me along = take me when I wasn't willing to go

errands = short trips to perform specific tasks for daily life (going to the supermarket, bank, post office, etc.)

Bummer. = That's unpleasant

get us out of their hair = get us away so we would stop bothering them

the whole nine yards = and everything included in an experience

those were the days = that was a good time in the past

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Three words are not used.

a bunch of	doze off	gave in	pleaded with	up the wall
bummer	errands	give up	startled	yikes
clumsy	flips out	glad	tumble	you bet

1. Am I going to be at your performance? _____! I wouldn't miss it for the world!
2. I can't believe I knocked over my glass of water for the second time! I'm so _____.
3. If you feel like you're starting to _____ while driving, you should stop the car and get some rest.
4. I was _____ to hear that you had a safe trip.
5. My cat was _____ when I slammed the door and it made a loud noise.
6. My girlfriend is extremely organized; she _____ if I put things back in the wrong places.
7. She _____ the attacker not to hurt her children.
8. So many students requested an extension of the deadline that the teacher finally _____.
9. They had to cancel their vacation because their dog got sick. That's a total _____.
10. We might be a few minutes late because we need to run a couple of _____ this afternoon.
11. I can't get this song out of my head, and it's driving me _____.
12. If you need a napkin, there are _____ them over there on the counter.

Speaking Task

Nora describes her wonderful memories of going to summer camp when she was a child. Tell me about a nice memory you have from your childhood or teen years.

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. a
5. b
6. a
7. a

Vocabulary Quiz

1. you bet
2. clumsy
3. doze off
4. glad
5. startled
6. flips out
7. pleaded with
8. gave in
9. bummer
10. errands
11. up the wall
12. a bunch of