

2 Thirteen Equals One

Our vicar is always raising money for one cause or another, but he has never managed to get enough money to have the church clock repaired. The big clock which used to strike the hours day and night was damaged during the war and has been silent ever since.

One night, however, our vicar woke up with a start: the clock was striking the hours! Looking at his watch, he saw that it was one o'clock, but the bell struck thirteen times before it stopped. Armed with a torch, the vicar went up into the clock tower to see what was going on. In the torchlight, he caught sight of a figure whom he immediately recognized as Bill Wilkins, our local grocer.

'Whatever are you doing up here Bill?' asked the vicar in surprise.

'I'm trying to repair the bell,' answered Bill. 'I've been coming up here night after night for weeks now. You see, I was hoping to give you a surprise.'

'You certainly did give me a surprise!' said the vicar. 'You've probably woken up everyone in the village as well. Still, I'm glad the bell is working again.'

'That's the trouble, vicar,' answered Bill. 'It's working all right, but I'm afraid that at one o'clock it will strike thirteen times and there's nothing I can do about it.'

'We'll get used to that Bill,' said the vicar. 'Thirteen is not as good as one, but it's better than nothing. Now let's go downstairs and have a cup of tea.'



Comprehension and Précis

In not more than 80 words describe what happened from the moment the vicar woke up. Do not include anything that is not in the passage.

Answer these questions in note form to get your points:

1. What woke the vicar up?
2. What was the time?
3. How many times did the clock strike?
4. Where did the vicar go?
5. What did he take with him?
6. Whom did he see in the clock tower?
7. What did Bill Wilkins say he was trying to do?
8. Had Bill Wilkins succeeded in repairing the clock or not?
9. Was the vicar pleased or angry?
10. What did he offer the grocer?

Vocabulary

Give another word or phrase to replace the following words as they are used in the passage: vicar (l. 1); repaired (l. 4); damaged (l. 6); silent (l. 7); with a start (l. 9); caught sight of (l. 15).

Composition

Write a composition of about 200 words using the ideas given below:

Title : A Sticky Business.

Introduction : A small village—the church clock suddenly stopped—no one could explain why.

Development : The vicar climbed into the clock tower—found that the clock had been invaded by bees—full of honey and wax.

Conclusion : A bee-keeper was called—removed the queen bee—the other bees followed—the clock was cleaned—working again.

Letter-writing

Write six phrases which could be used to begin letters to friends.

Key Structures

What is happening? What always happens? (1 KS 188)

Note that with the word *always* we can sometimes say:

Our vicar is always raising money. (l. 1)

He is always getting into trouble.

She is always writing letters.

Exercise

Underline the verbs in the passage that tell us *what is happening* now. Note how they have been used.

Special Difficulties

Phrases with *in*. Compare 1 SD 108, 200.

Study these examples:

'Whatever are you doing up here Bill?' asked the vicar *in surprise*. (l. 18)

Please write *in ink*, not *in pencil*.

We have a great deal *in common*.

The swimmer seemed to be *in difficulty*, but he managed to reach the shore *in the end*.

I didn't feel well so I spent the day *in bed*.

We have received fifty applications *in all*.

The thieves were disturbed and left *in a hurry*.

I can't borrow any more money; I'm already *in debt*.

Mary's *in love* with a sailor.

There wasn't a person *in sight*.

He didn't realize that he was *in danger*.

The little boy was *in tears*.

Exercise

Use a phrase with *in* in place of the words in italics.

1. I left home *very quickly* so as not to miss the train.
2. I suppose I shall finish this *eventually*.
3. In the early morning there was not a person *to be seen*.
4. Shall I write *with a pen* or *with a pencil*?
5. They haven't many interests *which they share*.
6. Why is that little girl *crying*?