

You were really lucky!

Yes. If he hadn't helped me, I would have missed the train.

9A Lucky encounters

1 READING & SPEAKING

a Answer the questions with a partner. Say what you would do and why.

What would you do if...?

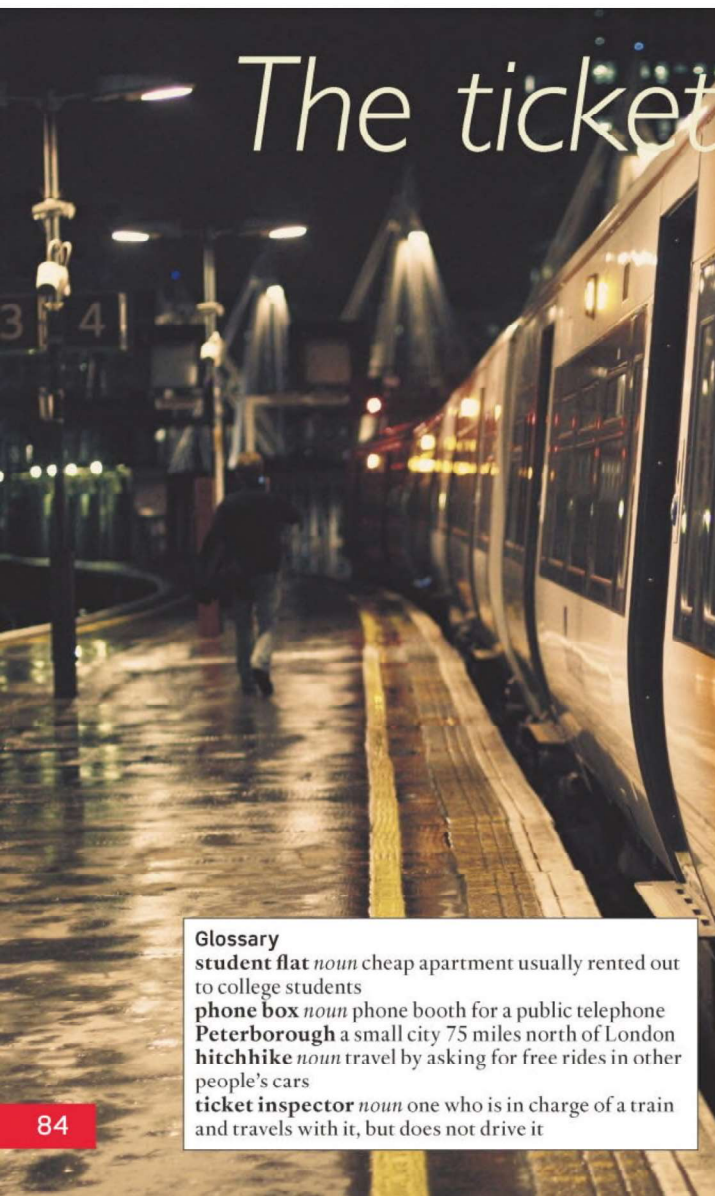
- 1 somebody on the street asked you for money on your way home tonight
- 2 you were driving home at night and you saw somebody who had run out of gas
- 3 you saw an old man being attacked on the street by a couple of teenagers
- 4 you were in a line at a bus station or airport and someone asked to go in front of you because he / she was in a hurry

b Read the beginning of a true story by the writer Bernard Hare, about something that happened to him when he was a student. Then in pairs, decide what you think happened next.

c (5 2)) Now listen to what happened. Were you right?

d Listen again and answer the questions.

- 1 What did Bernard have to do as soon as he got off the train?
- 2 How did Bernard react?
- 3 What did the ticket inspector then ask him to do?



The ticket inspector

I was living in a student flat in North London, when the police knocked on my door one night. I thought it was because I hadn't paid the rent for a few months, so I didn't open the door. But then I wondered if it was something to do with my mother, who I knew wasn't very well. There was no phone in the flat and this was before the days of mobile phones, so I ran down to the nearest phone box and phoned my dad in Leeds, in the north of England. He told me that my mum was very ill in hospital and that I should go home as soon as I could.

When I got to the station I found that I'd missed the last train to Leeds. There was a train to Peterborough, from where some local trains went to Leeds, but I would miss the connection by about 20 minutes. I decided to get the Peterborough train – I was so desperate to get home that I thought maybe I could hitchhike from Peterborough.

"Tickets, please." I looked up and saw the ticket inspector. He could see from my eyes that I'd been crying. "Are you OK?" he asked. "Of course I'm OK," I said. "You look awful," he continued. "Is there anything I can do?" "You could go away," I said rudely.

But he didn't. He sat down and said, "If there's a problem, I'm here to help." The only thing I could think of was to tell him my story. When I finished I said, "So now you know. I'm a bit upset and I don't feel like talking anymore. OK?" "OK," he said, finally getting up. "I'm sorry to hear that, son. I hope you make it home."

I continued to look out of the window at the dark countryside. Ten minutes later, the ticket inspector came back.

Glossary

student flat *noun* cheap apartment usually rented out to college students

phone box *noun* phone booth for a public telephone

Peterborough a small city 75 miles north of London

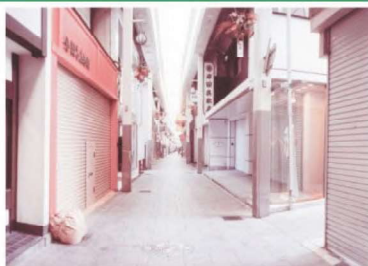
hitchhike *noun* travel by asking for free rides in other people's cars

ticket inspector *noun* one who is in charge of a train and travels with it, but does not drive it

- e After this story was on the news, several people wrote in with their stories about being helped by strangers. **A** read *The students*, **B** read *The angel*.

The students

I was living in Korea at the time, teaching English. I had to leave the country and return again because of problems with my visa, so I booked a ferry to Fukuoka in Japan. I intended to change some South Korean money into Japanese yen when I got there, but when I arrived, I discovered it was a holiday in Japan and all the banks were closed. I didn't have a credit card, so I walked from the ferry terminal toward the town wondering what I was going to do without any Japanese money. I was feeling lonely and depressed when suddenly I heard a young couple speaking French. I asked them if they spoke any English, and they told me (in good English) that they were Belgian students. When I explained my problem, they immediately offered to take me around the city and look for somewhere where I could change money. They paid for my bus ticket, and they took me to several places, and in the end, we found a hotel where I was able to change my cash. They then invited me to join them and their friends for the evening. I had a fantastic night and have never forgotten how they changed all their plans just to help a stranger. – *Karina*



The angel

It was a cold Sunday evening in Manchester. I was a college student, and my girlfriend and I had been invited to dinner with our tutor at his house about 18 miles away. We decided to go on my motorcycle, but we hadn't realized how cold it was, so we hadn't dressed warmly enough, and after ten minutes on the bike we were absolutely freezing. When we were about half way there, the bike started to make a funny noise and then stopped. We had run out of gas. We stood at the side of the road, shivering with cold, and not sure what to do.



Suddenly a passing car stopped. The driver got out, opened the trunk of his car, and took out a can of gas. He walked up to my bike, opened the gas tank, and poured the gas in. He then closed the tank and got back into his car, without saying a single word, and drove away. We couldn't believe our luck. We sometimes wonder if the man who rescued us was an angel... – *Andy*

- f In pairs, tell each other your story. Tell your partner:

Where it happened
 What the problem was
 What the stranger(s) did to help

- g Which of the three stories do you think was a) the most surprising b) the most moving? Why?
- h Have you ever helped a stranger, or been helped by a stranger? What happened?

2 GRAMMAR third conditional

- a Match the sentence halves from the story.

- 1 If the inspector hadn't stopped the train to Leeds, ...
- 2 If the couple hadn't helped Karina, ...
- 3 If the man in the car hadn't stopped, ...

A she would have been alone without any money.

B they would have had to walk for miles in the cold.

C he would have missed his connection.

- b Now look at the sentences below. Which one describes what really happened? Which one describes how the situation might have been different?

- 1 If the inspector hadn't stopped the train, he would have missed his connection.
- 2 The inspector stopped the train, so he didn't miss his connection.

- c ➤ p.148 Grammar Bank 9A. Learn more about the third conditional and practice it.

3 PRONUNCIATION

sentence stress

- a (5 4)) Listen and repeat the sentences. Copy the rhythm.

- 1 If I'd **known** you were **sick**, I would have **come to see** you.
- 2 If the **weather** had been **better**, we would have **stayed longer**.
- 3 If I **hadn't stopped to get gas**, I **wouldn't** have been **late**.
- 4 We would have **missed** our **flight** if it **hadn't** been **delayed**.

- b (5 5)) Listen and write five third conditional sentences.

- c ➤ **Communication** Guess the conditional A p.106 B p.108.