

Writing

A SHORT STORY

- a Read the story. What was the “small mistake”? What happened in the end?



It was only a small mistake, but it changed my life forever. I had been working at JB Simpson's for ten years. It was a small ¹*family-run* company that exported outdoor furniture. I was ²_____ happy with my job. I got along ³_____ with the owner, Arthur Simpson, but not with his wife, Linda. She was a loud, ⁴_____ woman, who ⁵_____ used to turn up at the office and start criticizing us for no reason. Everyone disliked her.

One afternoon Mrs. Simpson came in while I was finishing writing a report. She looked at me and said, “If I were you, I wouldn't wear that color. It doesn't suit you at all.” I was wearing a ⁶_____ pink shirt that I was very ⁷_____ of, and her comment really annoyed me. I typed a ⁸_____ email to Alan Simmonds in sales. “Watch out! The old witch is here!” and pressed send. A couple of minutes later I was surprised to receive an email from Mr. Simpson asking me to come to his office ⁹_____. When I opened the door I saw his wife glaring at the computer screen. I realized, to my horror, what I had done. I had clicked on Simpson instead of Simmonds. ¹⁰_____ I was packing my things. I had been fired!

- b Using adverbs and adjectives helps to make a story come alive and makes it more enjoyable to read. Complete the story with an adjective or adverb from the list.

aggressive an hour later family-run fond
frequently immediately new quick very well

- c You may want to write some dialogue as part of your story. Rewrite the following with the correct punctuation. Use the dialogue in the story to help you.

i want to talk to you about an email you sent
Mr. Simpson said coldly

- d Look at the **highlighted** time expressions in **Useful language** and complete them.

Useful language: time expressions

_____ **that moment** the door opened.
As soon _____ I saw him, I knew something was wrong.
Ten minutes _____, I went back to sleep.
 _____ **morning in September** I got to work early.
 We got to the station **just** _____ **time** to catch the train.

- e You are going to write a story beginning with one of the sentences below. With a partner, choose which story to write and discuss what the plot could be.
- 1 It was eleven o'clock at night when the phone rang.**
 - 2 Alex had been working hard all day and was looking forward to going home.**
 - 3 We had been driving for four hours when we saw the sign for a small hotel and decided to stop.**
- f **Plan** the content.
- 1 Write what happened simply, in about 50 words.
 - 2 Think about how you could improve your story by adding more details, e.g., with adjectives and adverbs.
 - 3 Think about what tenses you need for each part of the story, e.g., how to set the scene, what significant events happened before the story starts.
- g **Write** 120–180 words, organized in two or three paragraphs. Use a variety of narrative tenses and adverbs and adjectives to make your story more vivid. Use time expressions to make the sequence of events clear.
- h **Check** your short story for mistakes (grammar, punctuation, and spelling).

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