



A Gift to My Elementary School in Gaza

By Ramzy Baroud

I managed to collect three hundred dollars and decided to send to my old elementary school in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza. The purpose of the gift, as I outlined to my fifth grade English teacher, Zaki, was to honor the pupils of the barely standing refugee school. "To honor students with good grades?" my teacher proposed. "No, all the students".

I knew too well that the amount of money could hardly repair one damaged wall in the tattered school, still run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). I knew that three hundred dollars would even fall short of obtaining brand new chairs for only one of the classrooms, with battered roofs that block neither rain nor sun. But I didn't have the heart to exclude any of these young, tired faces from a possible smile of joy the three hundred dollars could bring, however inadequate the sum may be.

Over two decades have passed since my "graduation" and entry to the Middle School, also run by UNRWA. Separating the two schools was a wall, which the students eventually toppled over to make an easy escape route for the first and second graders during Israeli army raids.

It is unfortunate that most of the images that crowd my memory, despite the passing of time, are of some reference to soldiers, military jeeps, bullets, teargas and the dark smoke from burning tires. I remember too well the first army attack on our school. A few soldiers crept in from the least popular corner of the school, near an old orchard, and began firing teargas into the

schoolyard. I knew I was supposed to run, but didn't know where exactly, since my tears, fear and the unbelievable pain in my throat left me nearly paralyzed.

Unlucky for us first graders, the raid was initiated from our end of the school. We ran in circles screaming for our mothers to come and help. Some of us managed to escape, others like me fell on the sand, on top of my giant schoolbag, having no sense of direction. It was then that the sixth graders came to our rescue, some distracting the soldiers and others escorting the rest of us out. I didn't know that this was to be expected. But I later learned that it was an old school tradition. It was also a sad tradition for the parents to flood the school area in a panic, some still in their pajamas, looking for their children.

I ran home to tell my mother all about it. The tears, snot, and sand covering my face were enough to tell it all. But as I began visualizing the glorious story I was about to tell in my head, and as I pictured her hugging me and running to get me a falafel sandwich to ease my pain, I spotted her running toward the school herself, looking for me, full of dust, tears, and shouting my name.



Activity 3 Going Shopping

Look at Eman's shopping list. Then look at the list of items in Abdallah's store.

Eman's Shopping List		
1. oranges	3. flour	5. cookies
2. eggs	4. milk	6. cucumbers

Abdallah's Store			
1. bread	4. tuna fish	7. rice	10. cookies
2. salt	5. coca cola	8. sugar	11. milk
3. apples	6. flour	9. salt	12. hummus

Work with a partner. One person can be Eman and the other person can be Abdallah. Work together to make conversations like this:

Eman: Good morning! Do you have any flour?

Abdallah: Yes, I do.

—or—

Eman: Good morning, do you have any cucumbers?

Abdallah: No, I'm sorry, I don't have any.

Activity 4 Prepositions of Time

1. Underline the time expressions in this passage:

I made an appointment to see Dr. Kafri at 3pm on Tuesday 11th February to discuss my application for a job. Unfortunately he was involved in a car accident in the morning and phoned to cancel the appointment. I made another appointment to see him at 10am on Friday 21st February. However, when I got to his office, his secretary told me that his wife was sick and that he was not coming into the office that day. She suggested I reschedule for sometime in March. So I made a third appointment to see Dr. Kafri at 1pm on Monday March 10th. This time I actually got to see him. However, he informed me that they had now filled all the vacancies and suggested I contact him again in 1998. I assured him he would not be seeing me in either this or the next century.

2. Write the time phrases into this table:

AT	IN	ON
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3pm...

3. Make up a rule to explain when to use 'at,' 'in' and 'on' in time expressions.

Activity 5 'Give' and 'Explain'

A. What is the difference between verbs like 'give' and 'explain'?

She gave a book to her father. (grammatical)

She gave her father a book. (grammatical)

The policeman explained the law to Mary. (grammatical)

The policeman explained Mary the law. (ungrammatical)

B. Indicate whether the following sentences are grammatical or ungrammatical:

1. They saved Mark a seat.
2. His father read him a story.
3. She donated the hospital some money.
4. They suggested Mary a trip on the river.
5. They reported the police the accident.
6. They threw Mary a party.
7. The bank lent Mr. Thatcher some money.
8. He indicated Mary the right turning.
9. The festival generated the college a lot of money.
10. He cooked his girlfriend a cake.

C. Work out a rule for verbs like 'give' and 'explain'.

1. List the verbs in B that are like 'give' and those that are like 'explain'.
2. What is the difference between the verbs in your two lists?

In conclusion, we can say that tasks, like the ones above, should require the students to either engage communicatively with a language function or should encourage them to investigate into the workings of the language so that through the task they develop their competence.

References:

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