

MINI SAGAS

Mini sagas

A mini saga is a story which must be told in exactly 50 words. The original idea came from science fiction writer Brian Aldiss and the British newspaper the *Daily Telegraph* has run several mini-saga competitions.



A

She recognized the writing on the envelope immediately. The Gypsy had warned her that she had no future with this man, yet here he was – five lonely years after their last meeting, begging her to join him in New York. She felt **unbelievably** happy as she stepped on board the *Titanic*.

B

He was worried. Unfortunately, since his wife's death his teenage daughter had become increasingly difficult. They had agreed 2.00 a.m. as the latest return time from nightclubs. It was now 3.30. He prepared himself for confrontation as the door opened. 'Dad!' she shouted **angrily**. 'I've been frantic. You're late again.'



C

'He always has dinner at six,' she told the maid. 'No beef. He has dessert in the garden. Fill the bath at eight – he goes to bed **early**.' 'When will I meet the master?' the maid asked, as she tripped over a sleeping poodle. 'You already have,' laughed the housekeeper.

D

My house looks as if it's been hit by a bomb. Since I'm **hopeless** at organizing, I bought a new book *Key to organizing your life*. I felt **so** proud. I started cleaning the bookcase. **Five minutes later** I couldn't believe my eyes. I'd bought the same book **last year**.

From *Mini Sagas*

Glossary

beg ask sb very strongly or anxiously for sth
confrontation a situation where there is angry disagreement
frantic very worried
maid female servant
master man who has people working in his house as servants
poodle a dog with very curly hair
housekeeper woman employee in charge of a house and its servants
hopeless very bad

A) Read the four mini sagas and match them with the titles. You don't need to use one of the titles.

Generation gap - The last laugh - Good intentions - Written in the cards - Meeting the boss

B) Look at the highlighted adverbs or adverbial phrases in the stories. Think about what they mean and notice their position in the sentence.

Write them in the correct place in the chart.

Types of adverbs	
Time (when things happen, e.g. now)	
Manner (how you do something, e.g. slowly)	

Frequency (how often something happens, e.g. sometimes)	<i>always</i>
Degree (describing/ modifying an adjective, e.g. very)	
Comment (giving an opinion about a phrase, e.g. luckily)	

adverbs and adverbial phrases

- 1 I don't understand you when you speak **quickly**. The driver was **seriously** injured.
- 2 I **never** have breakfast. He's **always** late.
- 3 They'll be here **soon**. It rained **all day yesterday**.
- 4 I've **nearly** finished. We're **incredibly** tired. He works **a lot**.
- 5 **Unfortunately**, we arrived half an hour late. **Ideally**, we should leave at 10.00.

- Adverbs can describe an action (*he walked slowly*) or modify adjectives or other adverbs (*it's incredibly expensive, he works very hard*). They can either be one word (*often*) or a phrase (*once a week*).

- 1 **Adverbs of manner** (how somebody does something) usually go after the verb or phrase. However, with passive verbs they usually go in mid-position (before the main verb but after an auxiliary verb).

- 2 **Adverbs of frequency** go before the main verb but after the verb *to be*.

⚠ *sometimes / usually / normally* can go at the beginning of a sentence too.

- 3 **Adverbs of time** usually go at the end of a sentence or clause.

- 4 **Adverbs of degree** (which describe how much something is done or to modify an adjective).

- *extremely, incredibly, very*, etc. are used with adjectives and adverbs and go before them.
- *much* and *a lot* are often used with verbs and go after the verb or verb phrase.

- *a little / a bit* can be used with adjectives or verbs, e.g. *I'm a bit tired. She sleeps a bit in the afternoon.*

- 5 **Comment adverbs** (which give the speaker's opinion) usually go at the beginning of a sentence or clause. Other common comment adjectives are *luckily, clearly, obviously, apparently*, etc.

⚠ Most other adverbs go in mid-position, e.g. *I **just** need ten more minutes. She didn't **even** say goodbye.*

Use your instinct. Where should the adverb go in these sentences?

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1) He speaks three languages. | <i>fluently</i> |
| 2) I have breakfast during the week. | <i>hardly ever</i> |
| 3) My brother was in a car crash, but he wasn't hurt. | <i>fortunately</i> |
| 4) It's often hot in Greece in July and August. | <i>extremely</i> |
| 5) When I know the date, I'll call you. | <i>straight away</i> |

VOCABULARY

Confusing adverbs and adverbial phrases

A) Match each pair of adverbs with a pair of sentences.

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| at the moment / actually | especially / specially |
| ever/even | hard/hardly |
| in the end/ at the end | late/lately |
| near / nearly | still/yet |

1) A - Her French isn't very good. She can _____ say anything.

B - He works very _____ at least ten hours a day.

2) A - My boss always arrives _____ for meetings.

B - We haven't seen Mary _____. She's been very busy.

3) A - _____ of the concert, everybody applauded.

B - I didn't want to go, but _____ they persuaded me.

4) A - I love all sports but _____ basketball.

B - All her clothes are _____ made for her in Paris.

5) A - She looks younger than me, but _____ she's two years older.

B - He's unemployed _____, but he's looking for a job.

6) A - It's _____ stopped raining. We'll be able to leave soon.

B - Does your boyfriend live _____ here?

7) A - Have you found a flat _____?

B - No, we're _____ looking.

8) A - Have you _____ been to Texas?

B - I've been all over the USA - I've _____ been to Alaska!