

Reading Quiz 1

Sylvie's lucky mistake

When I left school, I went to England for the first time as an au pair in Newcastle-under-Lyme, a market town about 150 miles north of London. I had booked a train ticket from London to Newcastle online – it would take three hours and I would arrive in Newcastle at 9.30 p.m. on the Sunday evening. The family who I would be working for would meet me there.

When I was on the train, about halfway there, I asked a ticket inspector what time we would arrive at Newcastle-under-Lyme. He looked at me and said 'You're going in the wrong direction for Newcastle-under-Lyme. This train is going to Newcastle-upon-Tyne.' I didn't have very much English so it took a while for him to explain patiently that there were two different towns, both called Newcastle, and the one I was going to was unfortunately 200 miles further north than the one I needed to get to. As I was feeling very anxious, I asked him what I should do. He told me there was no station in Newcastle-under-Lyme, and that I would have to get off the train at York and take another train to a town called Stoke-on-Trent. And then a bus.

When I got to York that evening, however, I discovered that there were no more trains to Stoke-on-Trent until the next day. I was 17, from a small French village, and I had never travelled on my own before. I also had very little money, not enough for even a cheap hotel. I didn't know what to do. I felt I was going to cry. Suddenly, a woman in her 40s, who had heard the conversation said, 'Excuse me, but if you need somewhere to stay in York, I live here with my family. We have a spare room and you're welcome to stay with us.'

I often think, if there had been a station at Newcastle-under-Lyme, or if I had known more about English geography, or if I'd been less careless about my booking, I wouldn't have got on that train. So then I wouldn't have met Jill, the lady from York. And if she hadn't been so kind, I wouldn't have stayed with her. Oh, and obviously I wouldn't eventually have married Ben, her son!

I Read the story and tick (✓) A, B, or C.

Example: Sylvie first visited England when she was 18.

A True ☐ B False ☒ C Doesn't say ☐

1 Sylvie bought a return ticket from Newcastle to London.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

2 The English family was planning to meet her when she got to Newcastle.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

3 When she spoke to the ticket inspector, she realized that she had travelled too far south.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

4 The nearest train station to Newcastle-under-Lyme is Stoke-on-Trent.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

5 The inspector advised her to get another train the next morning.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

6 Sylvie wasn't worried about where she could stay that night.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

7 A woman offered her a bed in her spare room.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

8 Sylvie feels that her life changed because she hadn't booked her train carefully.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

9 Jill kindly lent Sylvie some money.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

10 Sylvie is now Jill's mother-in-law.

A True ☐ B False ☐ C Doesn't say ☐

2 Read the article again. Mark the sentences T (true) or F (false).

Example: Sylvie went to England to look after some children. T

1 Sylvie booked her train ticket before she arrived in London.

2 Sylvie thought that the train journey would last no more than three hours.

3 Newcastle-under-Lyme is south of London, not north.

4 When she realized her mistake, Sylvie started looking for a hotel in York.

5 Sylvie wouldn't have met Ben if she hadn't made a mistake with her train ticket. ____