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THE ADVENTURES OF A COPPER COIN



My readers will perhaps ask why a little paisa should write its own autobiography. Autobiographies, I know, are generally written by very important persons. I am not a politician or a millionaire, I am not even a hundred rupee note. But I consider that the true marks of greatness are not money or power, but experience, wisdom and character. If that is so, I can claim to be great in my small way. I have a lot to tell. That, I think, is a good reason for writing this autobiography.

To begin with, I was born in an underground rock in the earth. That was millions of years ago when the earth was still a red-hot ball. I do not remember much about that time because I was a little child and it all happened very long ago. About eighty years ago I was dug out of the earth, melted, and turned into a bar of bright red copper. That was the beginning of my adventures. After a time I was taken to a mint, melted again, and minted into a small coin. On my face was stamped the figure of George V and my name was written on the other side. I was a quarter of an anna and was called a pice.

I had a number of brothers in the mints, looking exactly like myself. We were a very big family; but in a short time we were all sent out into the world. I was not at all sorry to leave the mint, for I always felt that I was born for great adventures. We were taken to a bank; from there some of us were taken to a big business house and put into a money-box. At that time I was very proud of my beauty and youth. My brothers and I laughed and sang, and made a great deal of noise. In the corner of the box there was an old one hundred rupee note with ink-marks on his face. He was the proudest person I have ever known.



He looked hard at me and said, “You, worthless fellow! I don't touch people like you.” I disliked his proud character and rude manners, but said nothing. Pride goes before a fall; the next day he was taken out and locked up in an iron safe. I guess the fellow had a long rest there. We were considered, ‘worthless’, so we were not put into the iron safe, but left free to travel and see the world.

In the business house my brothers and I had to part; and I never saw them again. I have learned by long experience that life is like that; for every meeting there is a parting. Many of my brothers were given out as change. I was given to the office boy. He took me out and exchanged me for six *beedies* at a *panshop*. The shopkeeper gave me to an old woman, and she dropped me into a beggar's bowl. I remained in the bowl for a day in the hot sun, but next day my travels began again. I changed hands quickly and moved from place to place, meeting all kinds of people, beggars and kings, policemen and pick-pockets.

Once a miser locked me up in a box, but only for a few days; after that he exchanged sixty-four of my kind for a rupee-note. Misers have always been good to me; in fact I have a soft corner for them in my heart. Misers do harm only to themselves; spendthrifts bring suffering to themselves and to others. Still, the world hates misers and has a kind of liking for spendthrifts; I have never understood the secret of this.

New Words :

autobiography : the story of a person's life written by that person.

millionaire : a very rich person.

melted : became liquid

mint : a place where money is made

worthless : having no value

rude : showing lack of respect for other people.

bowl : a container with a wide open mouth

miser : who loves money and hates spending it.
 spendthrifts : who spends too much money
 harm : damage

EXERCISES

1. (a) *Answer the following:*

- (i) How many pices make one rupee?
- (ii) Who writes autobiography generally ?
- (iii) What, in the opinion of the pice, are the true marks of greatness?
- (iv) Where was the pice born?
- (v) What happened to it about eighty years ago?
- (vi) What was done to the bar of copper?
- (vii) Why was the pice not sorry to leave the mint?
- (viii) Where was it taken to from the mint?
- (ix) Who spoke rudely to it?
- (x) What happened to the proud hundred-rupee note?
- (xi) What did the office boy do with the pice?
- (xii) What did the miser do with it?
- (xiii) Why does the pice think that spendthrifts are worse than misers.

(b) *Fill in the blanks with words given in the box:*

bars	copper	mint	melted	stamped
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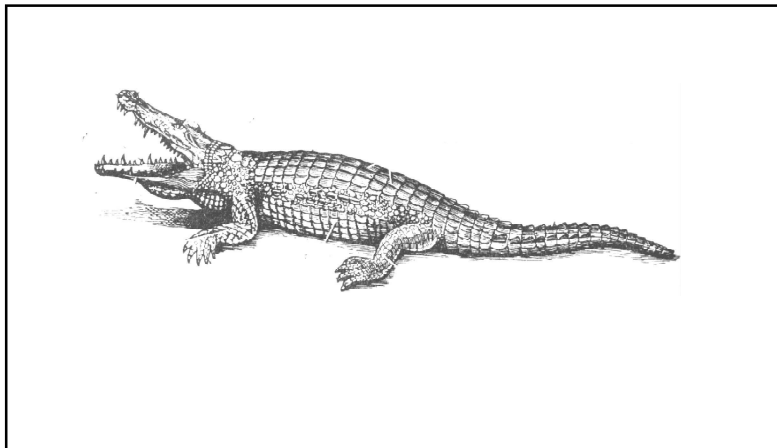
1. A pice is made of It is made in the First, copper is dug out of the earth and made into..... . These are taken to a mint, and minted into coins. On my face wasthe figure of George V.
2. **Select the suitable words from the box and complete the following sentences:**

liking	part	exchange	iron	bowls
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- (1) If you eat threeof rice at every meal, you will get very fat.
- (2) A spade is made of wood and
- (3) When a man is sent to prison, he has to from all his dear ones.
- (4) The poor man had no money and was very hungry, so he decided to his coat with some food.
- (5) He enjoys having sweets; he has a great..... for them.
3. (a) *Ask questions beginning with **can** for which the following can be the answer. One is done with you.*

Example : No, I cannot draw a crocodile.

Can you draw a crocodile?



- (1) No, my friend cannot ride a horse.
- (2) No, I cannot use a computer.
- (3) No, my cousin cannot swim in the sea.
- (4) No, my friend cannot climb steep rocks.
- (5) No, my brother cannot cook Chinese food.

(b) *Use “cannot” or “be able to” to whichever is correct in the blanks below:
One is done for you.*

- (1) Mangi is only five years old. He cannot read a long story. By next year he will be able to read long stories.
- (2) It is raining. I _____ post this letter today. I'll _____ post it tomorrow.
- (3) The mangoes are not ripe. We _____ eat them today. We will _____ eat them after two days.
- (4) Naba has only ten rupees. He _____ buy fruits for his family today. Tomorrow he will get his pay. Then he will _____ buy lots of nice things for them.
- (5) Modhu is ill. He _____ attend school today. He will _____ attend school after some days.

4. (a) *Add a few letters and make new words:*

f _ _ _ *get* *r* _ _ _ *ember* *p* _ _ _ *ice*
o _ _ _ *side* *c* _ _ _ *pare*

Now fill in the blanks with the words newly formed.

- (1) I'll to bring the book.
- (2) My father often his glasses at home.
- (3) There is a crowd the stadium.
- (4) The caught the robber.
- (5) He is ready to his lessons.

(b) The following word-groups are not in proper order. Arrange them in proper order to make meaningful sentences.

- i) Ten years am old I.
- ii) Doctor is father a my.
- iii) Tomba brother elder my is.
- iv) Manipur beautiful is a place.
- v) Love I teacher my.
- vi) Yesterday caught fish I.
- vii) It raining now is.
- viii) Flying are birds in the sky.
- ix) Blue the looks sky.
- x) The sets in west the sun.

(c) Look at the following words:

In front of

In the morning

At a glance

To a city

Each of these word-groups has some meaning, but none of them makes complete sense.

The words are in order. So they make some sense, but not complete sense. Some more information is needed to make complete sense out of these words. For example :

What is	—————→	<i>in front of ?</i>
What happened	—————→	<i>in the morning ?</i>
What did you see	—————→	<i>at a glance ?</i>
Who went	—————→	<i>to a city ?</i>

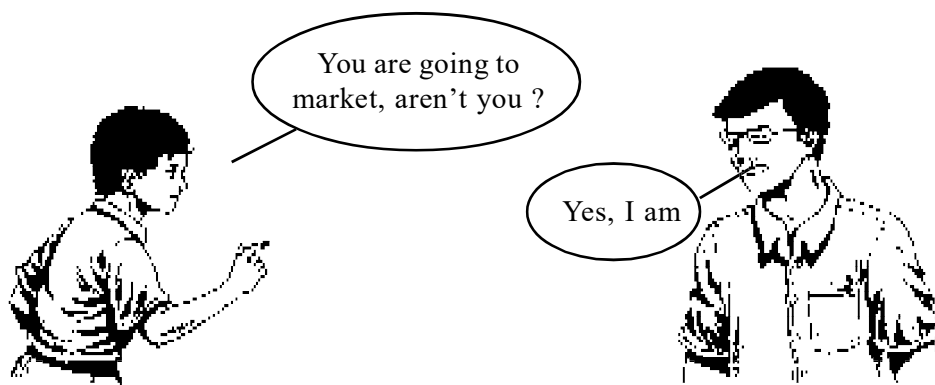
Such word/groups that make some sense but not complete sense are called 'phrases'. A **Phrase** is a group of words that makes some sense, but not complete sense.

5. Find out whether the following groups of words are Sentences or Phrases :

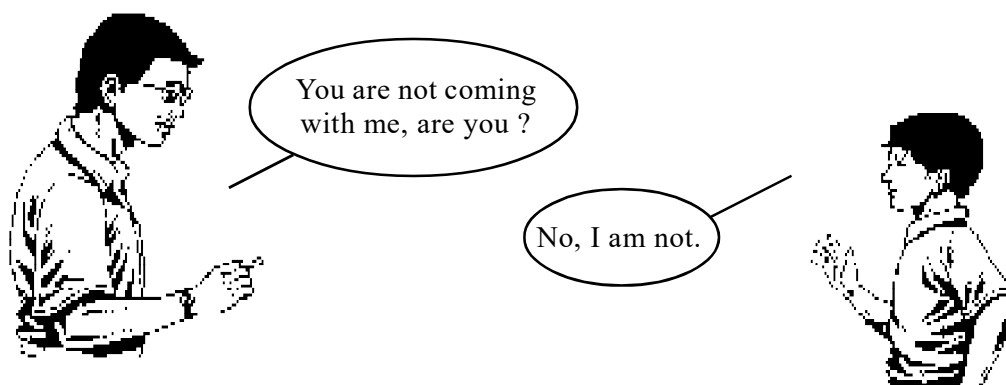
- (1) My name is Rajanikanta.
- (2) My mother teaches English in a school.
- (3) On the bank of a river
- (4) I like to eat ripe mangoes
- (5) Sour grapes
- (6) Bitter enemies
- (7) Fast friends
- (8) We shall one day climb Mt. Everest.
- (9) At 10 o'clock
- (10) We passed the examination.

6. Read the following and observe the pictures going with it:

Thoi is in the room. He sees his father dressing up. He thinks that his father is going to market. So, he tells his father what he thinks. But he is not very sure. In order to be sure, he quickly adds a question to his statement.



The father wants Thoi to stay at home and read his lesson. So, he states what he feels. But to make it sure that Thoi is not coming with him, he adds a question quickly to his statement.



Such type of adding a question to the end of a statement is called '**question tag**'. Tags are formed using an auxiliary or a form of 'be' or 'do' followed by a personal pronoun referring to the subject.

As shown in the example, the tag question is in negative form when the statement is in Positive/Affirmative and, it is in Positive form when the statement is in the Negative.

Now, add tag questions to the following statements :

- 1) It is quite warm,
- 2) You didn't know that question,
- 3) They are in the room,
- 4) She will not come tomorrow,
- 5) He played football for Manipur,
- 6) I am your friend,
- 7) We must try hard to win the match,
- 8) I am not a liar,
- 9) You have seen the Tajmahal,
- 10) We should help one another,

Note :(i) Negative tags are always contracted e.g.

'are not they' = 'aren't they'

'do not you' = 'don't you'

'have not I' = 'haven't I'

(ii) Negative tag with 'I' is 'aren't I' when 'am' is the main verb or the auxiliary.

e.g. I'm controlling it, aren't I ?