

High-Intermediate 2
Unit 9 Reading
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1. What are the dangers of procrastination?
2. Do you ever put things off until it is too late or almost too late to do anything about it?

procrastination = putting off for tomorrow or another time what you can do right now

procrastinator = a person who procrastinates a lot

I meant to Call ...

The clock radio boomed on at 8.30 and jarred Steve Reynolds awake. It was a Saturday morning, and as Steve rolled over, he caught a glimpse through the window of heavy, dark clouds in the sky. He heard the sound of rain pouring down. It looked like it was going to be another one of those rainy, sleepy days. Even though it was Saturday, he needed to go to work, and he'd asked one of the security people to open the office so that he could use the computer to work on the annual report. It was supposed to have been completed and left on his boss's desk three days ago. It had to be done today! Steve sighed and pulled the covers up over his head. He didn't want to go to work, but he knew he had to. But to sleep for just a few more minutes wouldn't hurt, would it?

mean ⇒ meant, meant

mean = intend, want

jar sb awake = force sb to wake up

catch a glimpse of sth = see sth for a short time

he'd asked = he had asked

annual = yearly

be supposed to = be expected to

sigh (v.) = to exhale (push out air from your mouth) in order to show your dissatisfaction

covers = bedclothes

When Steve woke up the second time, the clock read 10:35. He'd better get rolling if he was going to get anything done today. He went into the kitchen and put a cup of coffee into the microwave to heat it up. He glanced at two pieces of mail that had been lying on the counter for more than a week now. One was a postcard from his veterinarian reminding him that Omar, his pet cat, was supposed to have gotten his distemper and feline leukemia shot a month ago. The other piece of mail was a letter from his mother, who lived in a nursing home in a town thirty miles away. The letter was actually two weeks old. Steve hadn't spoken to his mother recently, and he was sure she expected him to have written or called by now, though of course she hadn't said anything about it. He really should give her a call—maybe when he came back from work tonight. He sat down at the dining room table and glanced at the newspaper while he drank his coffee and ate a doughnut. Omar, who loved to be held, jumped up into his lap, but Steve pushed him off, annoyed. "Not now, Omar—I don't feel like holding you right now. Later!"

glance = to look at sth briefly

veterinarian = a doctor for animals = vet

shot = injection, vaccination

distemper = an infectious disease among animals especially cats and dogs

feline (adj.) = related to cats

leukemia = a serious disease in which too many white blood cells are produced

lap = the flat area between the waist and knees of a seated person

Steve's plan was to spend just a couple of hours finishing the report, but it took him all day. When he got home at 6:30 in the evening, he was drained and irritable. The message light on his answering machine was blinking, but Steve thought he'd wait until later to listen to the messages. Feeling too tired to cook a regular meal, he called and ordered some Chinese food to be delivered. He'd planned to fix a leaky faucet, but it was so late that he decided it wasn't worth starting, so he settled down in front of the TV set.

drained = too tired, run-down, exhausted

irritable = bad-tempered, getting annoyed easily

leaky (adj.) = which leaks

faucet (American) = tap (British)

The next day was Sunday. It stopped raining, and the sun was shining brilliantly. Steve got up at 8:00 feeling refreshed and spent a leisurely hour reading the Sunday paper. He'd arranged to meet his friend Anne at 1:00 for lunch at a new restaurant that was rumored to have excellent omelets. The lunch was delicious, and Steve enjoyed Anne's company. Driving by a shopping mall on his way home, Steve stopped to get his mother a birthday present. Her seventy-fifth birthday had actually occurred a month previously, but they had agreed it wasn't important to celebrate the exact day. The important thing was the thought, no matter when the gift came. Steve had said, "Mom, I want to get you the right thing, something really nice. I don't want to be rushed into it." His mother had agreed, saying, "Of course, son. I'm long past the age when I expect to be fussed over for a silly birthday or be Oven a birthday party."

Anne's company = being with Anne

fuss over sb/sth = pay too much attention to sb/sth

- *Everyone fussed over the baby.*
- *He spent hours fussing over the details of the speech.*

When Steve walked into his apartment, he noticed that the red phone message light was still blinking, and he realized he had forgotten to listen to his messages the evening before. He pressed the play button and heard the first message:

Hi, Steve, this is Mom. I wanted to tell you that I'm going into the hospital for a couple of days. I just haven't been feeling well these last two weeks or so, and the doctor thinks I need to have some tests. Maybe you could give me a call later if you have time. My number at the hospital is 688-9294.

The machine beeped, and then the second message came on:

Steve, this is Doctor O'Brien at Parkland General Hospital. Please give me a call right away at 688-9299.

Steve's heart was racing now, and he quickly dialed the number. The phone was answered by an aide, and it took several minutes for Dr. O'Brien to be tracked down. Finally, Steve heard the doctor's voice on the other end:

"This is Mark O'Brien."

"Hello, Dr. O'Brien, this is Steve Reynolds. I got a message on my machine this morning from my mother. She said she was going into the hospital. Then I got your message. Is everything OK? She's all right, isn't she?"

"Steve, your mother had a heart attack yesterday afternoon. She's in intensive care. Her condition is stable, but she's in pretty serious condition. You'd better get down here right away."

blink = (of a light) flash on and off in a regular or intermittent way

- *The car's right-hand indicator was blinking.*

right away = immediately

aide = assistant

track sb down = find sb

Intensive Care (Ward) = ICU

Source:

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