

My Good Old Banger

banger = an old car which is in bad shape



Volkswagen Beetle

Everything was packed. The suitcases were in the trunk; two blankets and several small pillows were piled on the back seat; the ice chest was filled with fruit, soft drinks, sandwiches and other snacks to make the long trip pass more quickly. All that remained was to seat the children in such a way that they would not quarrel with each other too much, hop in ourselves, and we would be off. But, of course, that is not how things went. The engine would not start. Something was wrong with the ignition.

Active: We packed everything.

Passive: Everything was packed.

Active: We piled two blankets and several small pillows on the back seat.

Passive: Two blankets and several small pillows were piled on the back seat.

Active: We filled the ice chest with fruit, soft drinks, sandwiches, and other snacks

Passive: The ice chest was filled with fruit, soft drinks, sandwiches, and other snacks



trunk



ice chest = cooler

seat = make sb sit

quarrel = argue

hop in = get in, get into a car quickly

be off = set off = start a trip

how things went = how things happened

will → would

ignition = the system that we use to turn on a car; the system that produces sparks in the engine



ignition switch

I am not much of a mechanic, but I did open the hood to see if I could spot the trouble. But, as usual, I couldn't make head or tail of the engine. So the family climbed out and my wife and I proceeded to unload all that we had so carefully packed. I hailed a passing van and the driver agreed to tow the car to the nearest garage but for a rather large sum naturally.

I'm not much of a mechanic. = I don't know how to repair a car.

I **did open** the hood. = Indeed, I opened the hood. ⇒ **Emphatic**



hood (American)
bonnet (British)



tow rope (American)
towline (British)



tow truck (American)
breakdown truck (British)

spot = find, identify, notice

make head or tail of sth = understand sth

proceed = continue

unload ≠ load

unload = remove

hail = call

tow /toʊ/ = to pull a car, boat, etc. along, fastened behind another vehicle or boat

rather = fairly

sum = amount of money

The mechanic at the garage was cheerful and smiling, but this had no effect on my low spirits. I was further irritated when he immediately spotted the problem. The line to the battery had become loose, and only one twist of the wrist was needed to tighten it. I silently vowed to enroll in a course of automechanics at the first chance.

cheerful = very happy

spirits = morale = the way a person is feeling, or that people in general are feeling

Keep up your spirits!

further = more

irritated = annoyed

spot = notice, find out

line = cable

✚ loose ≠ tight

✚ loose = not fixed

✚ tighten ≠ loosen

twist = turning

✚ wrist = the part of the body between the hand and the arm

✚ ankle = the part of the body between the leg and the foot

vow /vaʊ/ = to make a determined decision or promise to do something

enroll = sign up, register

auto-mechanics = the skill of repairing cars

Taking a close look at my car, the friendly mechanic decided it was in bad shape and began to list the work he felt needed to be done on it. The engine needed a tune-up, the oil needed to be changed, the brakes needed to be adjusted, the spark plugs were dirty, and the shock absorbers definitely had to be replaced. (The garage not only did repairs but also stocked spare parts for most car models.) As he broke this disturbing news to me, he managed to clean the windshield, check the air pressure of the tires, and discover a small leak in the oil tank.

a close look = a careful look

decide = understand, come to a conclusion

tune-up /'tu:n.ʌp/ = the act of making small changes to an engine so that it works as well as possible

Active: The mechanic needed to change the oil.

Passive: The oil needed to be changed.



spark plug



shock absorber

stock = provide

spare part = an extra piece that can be used to replace a piece that breaks, esp. in a machine

as = when, while

disturbing = annoying

manage = be able to do sth

windshield (American) = windscreen (British)

leak = a hole or crack through which a liquid or gas can flow out of a container, or the liquid or gas that comes out

It took over two hours (and most of the money in my pocket) before my kind helper declared my car to be fit for travel. I drove home weary and heavyhearted and once again we set about loading the car. The ice in the ice chest had melted, most of the sandwiches had been eaten, and the fruit was far from inviting. The kids were quarrelsome and ill-tempered from the long wait. My wife, however, managed to put on a somewhat cheerful face. I took heart at this, and soon we were sailing along in high gear on the highway toward our destination.

over = more than

kind helper ⇒ the mechanic

declare = announce

fit = suitable

weary = tired

heavyhearted = sad, upset

set about = start, begin

Active: The children **had eaten** most of the sandwiches.

Passive: Most of the sandwiches **had been eaten**.

inviting = mouth-watering, delicious

quarrelsome = aggressive

ill-tempered = in a bad mood

She managed to put on a cheerful face. = She pretended that she was happy.

somewhat = to some extent, rather

take heart at sth = to feel encouraged because of sth

sail along = move fast, drive fast

⚙ low gear = gear 1, 2 or 3

⚙ high gear = gear 4 & 5

toward = towards = in the direction of

destination ≠ departure

departure = the place where a trip starts

destination = the place where a trip ends

We had barely passed the city limits when the steering wheel swayed to the right. I pulled the car over to the side of the highway and got out. I wasn't at all surprised to see that one of the rear tires was flat. Opening the trunk to take out the jack, I suddenly remembered I had forgotten to get a new tube for the spare tire. I came to the conclusion that we just weren't destined to go on holiday that day.

barely = hardly
sway = move
pull over ≠ pull out
rear = back ≠ front
come to a conclusion = conclude
destiny = fate
be destined to do sth = be supposed to do sth

Full Text:

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Sample Summary:

The text is a story about a family's failed attempt to go on a holiday trip. The narrator describes how they packed their car with suitcases, blankets, pillows, and food, but the car would not start because of a loose battery line. They had to unload everything and tow the car to a garage, where a friendly mechanic fixed the problem and also suggested many other repairs. The narrator paid a lot of money and felt frustrated and ignorant about cars. He drove back home and repacked the car with his family, but the food was spoiled and the children were cranky. They finally left the city, but soon had a flat tire and realized they had no spare tube. They decided to give up on their plan and return home. The story shows the disappointment and irritation of the narrator, who wishes he knew more about cars.

Source:

[Intermediate 2 \(anglophone.ir\)](http://anglophone.ir)