



Unit 1

Text A

Half a Day

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I Introduction

1 Background

The author of the story uses a strategy commonly used in fiction writing—the protagonist returns after being absent for a short time to find everything changed beyond recognition. The best example is perhaps “Rip Van Winkle”, a short story by American writer, Washington Irving (1783–1859). Rip is a simple good-natured man. One fine day he went with his dog to the mountains to hunt squirrels. He drank something a queer old man offered him, and fell fast asleep. When he woke up he found himself an old man and that great changes had occurred in his village during his absence. In the village inn the portrait of King George III had been replaced by one of General Washington. This technique is often used to emphasize rapid changes in society.

The setting of the story is not clear, but this is not important as long as what the author tries to get across is something universal.

2 Structure

The text can be roughly divided into three parts, which can be subdivided into several sections.

I. The narrator's unwillingness to go to school (paras. 1–7)

- A. He was unwilling to go to school. (paras. 1–3)
- B. His father told him the purpose and importance of school. (paras. 4–7)

II. The narrator's experience at school (paras. 8–16)

- A. He began to like school: friends, sweethearts and activities. (paras. 8–14)
- B. He found unpleasant things, too: school work, rivalries, fighting, and physical punishment. (para. 15)
- C. He realized what lay ahead of him: exertion, struggle and perseverance. (para. 16)

III. The changes the narrator found after school (paras. 17–20)

- A. He didn't find his father waiting for him at the gate and the street had changed. (para. 17)
- B. He couldn't find his way home. (para. 18)
- C. He found himself an old man. (paras. 19–20)

3 Teaching Tips

1. Warm-up questions (about the students' first day at college)

- Was it hard for you to leave home for the first time in your life? Who saw you off at the railway station/airport? Who came to school with you? What did he/she/they say to you on the way?
- What do you think is the business of university? What do you expect to learn here?
- Did you feel you were a stranger the first day you arrived?
- Did you find the university just as you had imagined? In what way was it as you imagined, and in what way was it not? (Were you disappointed when you found it wasn't as good as you had expected?)
- Do you find life at college rich and colorful or tedious and boring?
- Do you have trouble adjusting to life here?
- What do you think you should do to get the most out of college?

2. Questions to check on pre-class work

- What's the purpose of school, according to the boy's father? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with the lady in the story that a school is a home to the children? Why or why not?
- What did the boy realize about school? Was it all fun?
- What do you think of the changes that had taken place in the outside world during his half day inside the school? Do you think the outside world had changed for the better or for the worse?
- Which sentence in the text do you think can be used as a motto for your college years? Please explain.

3. A question for discussion at the end of the unit: What do you think is the message the author intends to get across?

The following are a few possibilities:

- Time and tide waits for no man.
- There is nothing permanent in life but change.
- Education can never keep up with changes in society.
- Life is short and time is precious.
- Life is a dream. Do not take anything seriously.

II Language Focus

1. Word formation

- 1) **noun suffixes:** -(a)tion/sion, -ment, -ness, -er/or
- 2) **adjective suffixes:** -ful, -less, -ed
- 3) **adverb suffix:** -ly

2. Verb patterns

- 1) **make** (see, hear, let, help, watch, feel, have) **sb/sth do sth**
- 2) **make** (find, keep, feel, think, consider) **sb/sth + adj**
- 3) **find** (see, hear, watch, keep, feel, notice) **sb/sth doing sth**

3. Idioms and expressions

a matter of
ahead of
at home
be convinced
be employed
be full of
be irritated
(street) be lined with gardens
be over and gone
(fields) be planted with trees
be surrounded by
between morning and sunset
for a long time

for the first time
from the first moments
from time to time
here and there
in a daze
in addition
in front (of)
in half a day
in vain
nothing but
on one's own
on the corner
on the surface

4. Verb phrases

arrive at
bring about
burst into tears
cling to
come along
come into view
come over
come to a halt
come up to sb
disappear to
fall in love with
fool around
form people into
give rise to
glance at
go on with
hurry towards
let up
look around
make a man out of sb

reach out one's arm
resort to
return to
rush towards
show off
smile at
sort people into ranks
step aside
stretch out one's arm
take advantage of
take over
take sb across
tear sb away from
throw into
turn towards
wait for
wake up
walk along a street
walk alongside
yell at

5. Verb + noun collocations

announce an event	lose one's way
begin life	play games
border the place	punish a person
change one's mind	reach the house
clutch one's hand	say goodbye
cover a place	scold the child
cross a street	shake the air
dry one's tears	show the various continents
eat delicious food	sing a song
employ workers	take a nap
face life	take a walk
find no trace of	take steps
find one's way somewhere	tell a story
invade a place	watch our progress
lift weights	

6. Sentence patterns

- 1) I walked alongside my father, **clutching** his right hand.
- 2) ... this was **the day I was to** be thrown into school...
- 3) ... we walked along **a street lined with** gardens...
- 4) **I wasn't convinced.**
- 5) I did not **believe (that)** there was really any good to be had in...
- 6) How **could** all this **have happened** in half a day...?
- 7) Here and there **stood conjurers showing off** their tricks...
- 8) **Extremely irritated**, I wondered when I would be able to cross.

7. Grammar

- 1) past participle as attributive modifiers
- 2) relative clauses with *those, who*

III Detailed Discussion of the Text

1. I walked alongside my father, clutching his right hand. (para. 1)

clutching his right hand: This is a present participle used to modify the main verb “walked”, showing the manner in which the narrator walked.

More examples from the text:

My mother stood at the window watching our progress... (para. 2)

I turned towards her from time to time, hoping she would help. (para. 2)

“I’m not punishing you,” he said, laughing. (para. 4)

The bell rang, announcing the passing of the day and the end of work. (para. 17)

2. They did not make me happy. (para. 1)

I wasn’t happy as I usually was when I had new clothes to wear.

Here “they” refers to the narrator’s new clothes.

3. ... as this was the day I was to be thrown into school for the first time. (para. 1)

... because it was the day I started school.

to be thrown into school: “To throw sb into” is not usually used with the word “school”. Here, the expression is used to show that the little boy in the story didn’t want to go to school. He was forced by his father to do so. The phrase is generally used with nouns denoting unpleasant places, such as to be thrown into prison/jail.

cf **to throw sb out (of a place):** to force sb to leave a place

eg They’ll throw me out (of school) if I fail three exams.

school: When the word means a place where children go to be educated, it is both countable and uncountable. When referring to such a place in general, it is used as an uncountable noun, as it is here in this sentence.

More examples from the text:

“Why school?” I asked my father. “What have I done?” (para. 3)

“School’s not a punishment.” (para. 4)

I had never imagined school would have this rich variety of experiences. (para. 13)

4. My mother stood at the window watching our progress, and I turned towards her from time to time, hoping she would help. (para. 1)

our progress: our slow and difficult movement towards the school (My mother was anxious to know how my father would get me to go.)

from time to time: sometimes, but not very often

eg He goes to see his grandparents from time to time, about five or six times a year.

hoping she would help: hoping she would stop my father taking me to school, or talk to my father so that he would change his mind about sending me to school

Question: What does the sentence tell us about the boy’s relations with his parents?

It seems that the boy was closer to his mother. Probably his mother was gentle while his father was strict.

5. ... a street lined with gardens... (para. 2)

... a street where there are gardens along both sides...

lined with...: a past participle phrase used here to modify “a street”. It can be regarded as a relative clause cut short.

eg a novel (that was) written by Charles Dickens
 personal computers (that are) made in China

6. Why school? (para. 3)

Why do I have to go to school? / Why are you going to throw me into school?

This is an elliptical question. Such questions are common in conversation.

More examples:

- 1) — Headmaster: We want you to go and tell the boy’s parents the news.
 — Teacher: Why me?
- 2) — Father: We’ll go to Tianjin this weekend.
 — Daughter: What for? (Why this weekend? / Why Tianjin?)

7. What have I done? (para. 3)

I don’t think I’ve done anything wrong to be punished like this. (Children often think that taking them away from Mom is the worst punishment.)

This is a rhetorical question—one that expresses strong feelings or opinions and doesn’t require an answer. It is used to say something more positively than a statement would.

8. It’s a place that makes useful men out of boys. (para. 4)

to make... (out) of sb/sth: to make sb/sth become...

eg The army made a man of him.
 Hardships help make a man (out) of a boy.
 I don’t think you can make a football star (out) of Johnny.

9. Don’t you want to be useful like your brothers? (para. 4)

This is also a rhetorical question.

More examples:

- Can’t you see I’m busy? (Don’t disturb me!)
- What good is a promise to an unemployed worker? (An empty promise is useless to an unemployed worker.)
- Does nothing ever worry you? (I don’t understand how you can be so carefree.)

10. I did not believe there was really any good to be had in tearing me away from my home and throwing me into the huge, high walled building. (para. 5)

I didn't think it was useful to take me away from home and put me into that building with high walls. (The school looked like a prison to the boy.)

It is no good/use doing sth or there is no good to be had in doing sth: It is not useful to do sth.

More examples:

It's no good crying over spilt milk. (proverb)

It's no use talking to him.

to tear oneself/sb away from...: to (make sb) leave a place or a person unwillingly because one has to

eg Can't you tear yourself away from the TV for dinner?

The young artist couldn't tear himself away from da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.

11. ... we could see the courtyard, vast and full of boys and girls. (para. 6)

vast and full of boys and girls: This adjective phrase modifies "the courtyard". When used as an attributive modifier, adjective phrases are often placed after the noun they qualify.

More examples:

There's nothing wrong with the computer.

It's something important to my family.

Can you recommend some books easy for first year students to read?

full of: having a large number/amount of sth

eg The boy's pocket is full of candies.

The girls are full of admiration for pop stars.

Life is full of joys and sorrows.

12. Go in by yourself... (para. 6)

Go into the school alone... (His father is not going with him.)

by oneself: alone; without anyone else

13. Put a smile on your face... (para. 6)

Make an effort to smile...

14. clung to his hand (para. 7)

held his hand tightly

15. **“Be a man,” he said. “Today you truly begin life.”** (para. 7)

“Be brave,” he said. “Your life begins today.”

This means that your carefree days are gone forever. Starting from today, you’ve got something important to do—to learn and to prepare yourself for the rest of your life.

man: a person who is strong and brave or has other qualities that people think are characteristic of males

eg Mrs Baker found that her daughter was more a man than her son was.

cf **to be man enough (to do sth/for sth):** to be strong or brave enough

eg He is not man enough to accept his failure gracefully.

16. **You’ll find me waiting for you when it’s time to leave.** (para. 7)

I’ll come to fetch you when school is over. I’ll be waiting for you here at the gate.

Here the present participle “waiting for you” is used as object complement (宾语补足语).

17. **Then the faces of the boys and girls came into view.** (para. 8)

Then I could see the faces of the boys and girls.

come into view: to begin to be seen

eg As soon as we turned the corner, the palace came into view.

18. **I felt I was a stranger who had lost his way.** (para. 8)

In this strange place, I felt confused and didn’t know what to do.

lose one’s way: to become lost

eg The boys lost their way in the forest.

19. **I did not know what to say.** (para. 11)

question word + to do: often used as the object of certain verbs

eg Faced with so many books I didn’t know which to choose.

Would you please tell me how to get to the National Library?

20. **to burst into tears** (para. 11)

to suddenly start to cry

burst into (sth): to begin to do (sth) suddenly

eg The boys burst into laughter.

His family burst into song.

The car burst into fire/flame(s).

The audience burst into applause.

cf **burst out (doing sth):** to begin (doing sth)

eg The boy burst out crying.

His family burst out “Happy birthday!” as he walked into the room.

21. A lady came along, followed by a group of men. (para. 11)

Probably the lady was the headteacher of the school.

followed by a group of men: a past participle phrase that tells us how the lady came (or in what manner the lady came)

22. The men began sorting us into ranks. (para. 11)

The men began arranging us into lines/rows.

sort: to put people or things in a particular order or to separate them into groups

eg The children are sorted into three study groups.

She sorted her old books into two piles.

23. We were formed into an intricate pattern in the great courtyard... (para. 11)

We were made to stand in different places to form regular lines or shapes in the big courtyard...

24. ... from each floor we were overlooked by a long balcony roofed in wood. (para. 11)

... we could be seen from the long, roofed balcony on each floor.

overlook: to provide a view of, especially from above

eg Our classroom overlooks a beautiful garden.

roofed in wood: with wooden roof

25. Well, it seemed that my misgivings had had no basis. (para. 13)

Well, perhaps my doubt, worry and fear about what school would be like were all groundless (without good reason). / Well, it seemed that I was wrong to think that school was a dreadful place.

26. From the first moments I made many friends and fell in love with many girls. (para. 13)

This is a humorous remark which suggests that the boy's attitude toward school changed a great deal. He found school a nice place to be in, and began to enjoy life there immediately.

27. I had never imagined school would have this rich variety of experiences. (para. 13)

I had never thought life at school would be so colorful and interesting.

28. ... we were told the story of the Creator of the universe. (para. 14)

... we were told how God created the world.

the Creator: God for Christians or Allah for Muslims

29. ... woke up to go on with friendship and love, playing and learning. (para. 14)

... after the nap, we continued our business at school—making friends, falling in love, playing and learning.

go on with sth: to continue an activity, especially after a pause or break

eg Let's go on with it after the lunch break.

to go on with...: an infinitive phrase of result, denoting the “result” of the action expressed by the main verb “woke up”. Note the difference between the infinitive of result and that of purpose.

They lifted a rock only to drop it on their own feet. (of result)

He picked up a stone to hit the attacking snake. (of purpose)

30. Our path, however, was not totally sweet and unclouded. (para. 15)

School wasn't just fun and pleasure. (There were serious tasks and unpleasant things, too.)

31. It was not all a matter of playing and fooling around. (para. 15)

What we did at school wasn't just playing and wasting time doing nothing useful.

all: (*adv*) completely

a matter of sth/of doing sth: sth that results from or requires sth else

eg Learning to speak a foreign language is a matter of practice. (Learning to speak a foreign language requires practice.)

History is always a matter of interpretation.

College success is partly a matter of setting your own goals and following them.

fool around: to waste time instead of doing sth that you should be doing

32. Rivalries could bring about pain and hatred, or give rise to fighting. (para. 15)

When two or more boys fell in love with the same girl, it might cause the boys to suffer, or to hate each other, or to fight.

bring about sth: to make sth happen

eg Science has brought about many changes in our lives.

The war brought about great human suffering.

give rise to: (*formal*) to cause or produce sth

eg Poor living conditions give rise to many diseases.

His absence from social events has given rise to rumors about his health.

33. And while the lady would sometimes smile, she would often yell and scold. (para. 15)

Though the lady sometimes smiled at us, she often shouted at us and scolded us.

would: used to show that a past action occurs pretty often

while: a conjunction of concession

More examples:

While I did well in class, I was poor at sports.

While I understand what you say, I can't agree with you.

34. Even more frequently she would resort to physical punishment. (para. 15)

She used physical punishment more than she scolded us.

physical punishment: sth that causes physical pain or discomfort to the pupils, especially beating. Physical punishment (体罚) was a common practice in the old days when people believed in the saying: "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

resort to sth: to make use of sth; to turn to sth (especially sth bad) as a solution

eg Try not to resort to violence.

They had to resort to threats when they failed to persuade them to leave.

35. In addition, the time for changing one's mind was over and gone and there was no question of ever returning to the paradise of home. (para. 16)

Besides, it was impossible for us to quit school and return to the good old days when we stayed home playing and fooling around all day. Our childhood was gone, never to come back.

there is no question (of sth happening/sb doing sth): there is no possibility

eg There is no question of their dismissing you at the moment.

the paradise of home: a metaphor comparing home to paradise

Similar expressions:

He's a shrimp of a man. (He's very short.)

36. Nothing lay ahead of us but exertion, struggle, and perseverance. (para. 16)

We would have to do our best and keep working very hard until we finished school. This was what I imagined our schooldays would be like. / The kind of life that was waiting for us at school would be full of exertion, struggle and perseverance.

but: a preposition, meaning "except", often used with negative words

eg The prisoners were given nothing but cornbread to eat.

No one but Tina was absent from class today.

nothing but: only

eg Right now he thinks about nothing but his research.

She ate nothing but an apple for lunch.

but exertion, struggle, and perseverance: This prepositional phrase modifies “nothing”. Normally such phrases are placed right after “nothing”, but that would make the subject of the sentence too long.

37. Those who were able took advantage of the opportunities for success and happiness that presented themselves. (para. 16)

When opportunities came along, capable students would seize them to achieve success and happiness.

take advantage of sth: to make use of sth (such as an opportunity) well

eg We must take full advantage of our trip to Britain.

The farmer took advantage of the good weather and got all the wheat in.

Note: “To take advantage of sb” means to treat sb who is generous or helpful unfairly

eg The couple asks Jane to babysit so often that I think they are taking advantage of her.

present itself/themselves: (*formal*) (opportunity or problem) to occur often when you don't expect it/them

eg The opportunity presented itself and she took advantage of it.

Problems have presented themselves one after another since then.

38. I said goodbye to friends and sweethearts and passed through the gate. (para. 17)

I said goodbye to friends and girls I was fond of and went out of the gate.

39. When I had waited for a long time in vain... (para. 17)

When I had waited for my father for a long time, but he didn't appear/turn up...

in vain: uselessly; without a successful result

eg They searched in vain for the missing child. (They searched for the missing boy, but did not find him.)

His parents tried in vain to persuade him to quit smoking.

40. on one's own (para. 17)

alone; by oneself; without help

eg Today young people like to live on their own.

At college, we ought to learn how to work on our own.

41. ... came to a startled halt. (para. 17)

... greatly surprised by the changes I discovered, I stopped suddenly.

come to a halt: to stop

eg The car came to a halt just before it hit an old man.

Work came to a halt when the power/electricity was suddenly cut off.

cf **to bring sth to a halt:** to cause sth to stop

eg Air traffic in the country was brought to a halt by heavy snowstorms.

42. When did all these cars invade it? (para. 17)

When did all these cars come into the street? / When did so many cars appear in the street?

invade: to enter a place in large numbers, especially when unwanted or in a way that causes confusion

eg The city was invaded by football fans during the World Cup.

43. How did these hills of rubbish find their way to cover its sides? (para. 17)

How did the street come to be covered with so much rubbish on both sides? Where did it come from?

(sth) find its way: to arrive or get to a place

44. High buildings had taken over... (para. 17)

High buildings now stood where there used to be fields that bordered the street...

(sth) take over (from sth else): to become more important, successful, or powerful than the other thing, and finally replaces it

eg Cars gradually took over from horses.

Personal computers have taken over from typewriters.

45. ... here and there stood conjurers showing off their tricks, or making snakes appear from baskets. (para. 17)

This is an inverted sentence. The subject is “conjurers”; the main verb is “stood”.

Inversion occurs because the subject is too long. The two present participle phrases “showing...” and “making...” modify the subject “conjurers”.

here and there: in various places

46. Then there was a band announcing the opening of a circus... (para. 17)

announcing...: that was announcing...

47. ... with clowns and weight lifters walking in front. (para. 17)

The “with + noun + doing” construction is used adverbially modifying “announcing”.

48. ... but the stream of cars would not let up. (para. 18)

... but it looked as if the line of cars would never stop moving.

let up: (*informal*) (of an unpleasant situation) to stop or become less serious

49. Extremely irritated, I wondered when I would be able to cross. (para. 18)

I was very angry and didn't know when I could cross the street.

The past participle phrase “extremely irritated” denotes the state the boy, or the old man, was in when he was waiting to cross the street.

IV Translation of Text A**半日**

纳吉布·马福兹

我走在爸爸的身旁，紧紧抓住他的右手。我的衣着全是新的：黑色的鞋子，绿色的校服和红色的帽子，可我一点儿都不高兴，今天，我就要第一次给扔进学校里去了。

妈妈站在窗口注视着咱们爷俩的步伐，我时不时回头看她，希望她能出来干预。可咱们还是沿着马路继续往前走，马路的两旁是果园和庄稼地，地里种着各种作物，还有梨树和椰枣树。

“为什么我得去上学？”我问爸爸，“我做错什么事了？”

“我可不是在惩罚你，”他笑着说，“上学不是一种处罚，学校是把孩子培养成有用人才的地方。难道你不同意像你的几个哥哥那样，成为有用的人吗？”

他的话没有让我信服，我真看不出愣把我从家里拉出来，扔进那个筑着高墙的大房子里有什么好处。

来到了校门口，咱们看到宽大的庭院里全是孩子，男孩和女孩都有。“你自己进去吧，”爸爸说，“跟他们呆在一起，笑一个，给他们做个榜样。”

我迟疑不决，紧紧抓住爸爸的手，可他轻轻地把我推开，“拿出男子汉的样子来，”他说，“你的人生从今天真正开始，放学时，我会在这里等你。”

我往前迈了几步，那些孩子的面庞映入了我的眼帘。可我谁也不认识，他们也不认识我，我感到自己是个迷了路的陌生人。后来几个男孩开始好奇地瞥了我一眼，其中一个走了过来，问道：“谁带你来的？”

“我爸爸，”我小声回答。

“我爸爸死了，”他简短地说。

我不知道该说什么才好。这会儿，大门已经关上了，好多孩子一下子哭了起来。接着，铃响了，一位女士走了过来，身后跟着一群男士。他们开始把我们分成若干排，在四周高楼耸立的院子里，我们排成了复杂的队列。高楼的每一层都有带木顶的、狭长的阳台，从每个阳台上，都可以清楚地看到我们的队形。

“这是你们的新家，”那位女士说，“这里也有爸爸和妈妈，有能使你们快乐、对你们有益的一切。擦干眼泪，高高兴兴在这里生活吧！”

看来，我原先的疑虑是毫无根据的了。一开始，我就交了好多朋友，并且喜欢上了好多女孩子。我没想到学校生活会如此丰富多彩。

我们玩各种各样的游戏，在音乐教室里我们第一次唱歌，老师给我们上了第一节语文课。我们见到了地球仪，它能转动，显示出各个大洲和各个国家；我们又开始学数字，听老师讲造物主的故事。午饭吃的是美味的食物，饭后小睡片刻，醒来后又接着交朋友、“谈恋爱”、玩耍、学习。

不过，学校生活并不都是这么甜蜜、充满阳光的。我们得处处留心，要有耐心。上学不全是玩耍和胡闹，同学之间的竞争会带来痛苦、仇恨，或者引起打斗。那位女士虽然有时面带微笑，但也常常对我们大喊大叫和厉声斥责，更多时候她会对我们进行体罚。

除此之外，此时改变主意为时已晚，我们再也不能回到天堂般的家里去了，摆在我们面前的只有努力、奋斗和坚持。那些能干的同学抓住机遇，获得成功，得到幸福。

铃响了，宣告了学校一天的结束，学习暂告一段落。孩子们奔向再次打开的大门，我与我的那些朋友和知心女孩告别，迈出了校门。我环顾四周，但没发现爸爸的影子，他答应过要在门外等我的。我走到路边等他，等了很长时间，他还是没有来，这时我决定自己回家，还没走几步，我就惊讶地停了下来，天哪！那条两边有果园的马路怎么没了？它跑到哪里去了？这些汽车是什么时候闯到街上来的？这些人又是在什么时候跑到马路上来休息的？堆积如山的垃圾怎么忽然占满了路的两侧？路边的庄稼地又到哪里去了呢？取而代之的是高楼大厦，马路上到处都是孩子，喧嚣声使空气都嗡嗡起来。到处都是杂耍艺人在卖艺，他们或变戏法或是耍弄筐里爬进爬出的蛇。接着，乐队奏响了马戏的序曲，小丑和举重大力士走在了最前面。

天啊！我感到迷糊，感到周围的一切都在转动，我真急了。这一切变化怎么可能发生在从早上到日落的半天中呢？我到家后会从爸爸那儿找到答案的，可是，我的家在哪儿呢？我急匆匆地赶到十字路口，因为我记得要穿过马路才能到家，但车流不息。我十分恼火，不知道什么时候才能过去。

我在原地站了半天，直到在街角熨衣店工作的那小伙子向我走来。

他伸出胳膊，对我说：“老爷爷，我换您过去吧。”