English for the Real World

Parent-School Series

Reporting an Absence

Written by: Krishna Harrison-Munoz • Trish Kerns • Ernestina Madriles • Anita Warmack
English for the Real World

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ENGLISH FOR THE REAL WORLD PARENT-SCHOOL SERIES
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Writers: Krishna Harrison-Munoz, Trish Kerns, Ernestina Madriles, Anita Warmack
Workbook Design: Krishna Harrison-Munoz

Special thanks for administrative support and guidance to:
Kathy Hamilton, EGACE Interim Vice-Principal, EL/Civics Coordinator,
Mary Prather, SCUSD/Old Marshal Adult Education Center Principal

Sacramento, California
February 2003
A LOOK AT THE REAL WORLD

Meet...

The Hernandez Family

Francisco Hernandez
Ana Hernandez
Clara Hernandez

The Patel Family

Sonia Patel
Leah Patel

The Video Teachers

Mr. Wordsworth
Miss Fischer
Mr. Chow
THE OBJECTIVES

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

After this lesson, you will be able to:

- Call your child’s school to report an absence
- Decide when it’s okay for your child to miss school
- Write a note to your child’s school to report an absence
A. Practice with the video. Look listen and repeat.

1. **absent/absence**
   - Where is Clara? She is not at school.
   - Clara is absent today. Her absence is excused.

2. **attend**
   - I go to Partridge Elementary school.
   - Ramon attends Partridge Elementary School.

3. **attendance**
   - I go to school every day. I have good attendance.
   - Attendance at school is important

4. **miss**
   - I don't want to miss school. I want to go to school.
   - Clara doesn't want to miss school.

5. **reason**
   - I am sick. That is the reason for my absence.
   - What is the reason for Clara's absence?

6. **responsibility**
   - It is my responsibility to take my children to school.

7. **rule**
   - What are the school rules?

8. **sick**
   - I have a fever and a sore throat. I am sick.
   - Clara is sick with the flu.

9. **get behind/ be behind**
   - Leah does not want to get behind in her schoolwork.

10. **be on time**
    - Leah needs to be on time for school.

11. **excused absence**
    - You are sick. You have an excused absence.
    - Clara has an excused absence. It is okay.
**WORDS WORK PRACTICE**

**Example:** Three children are **absent**/miss this week.

1. It is a parent’s __rule/ responsibility___ to call the school.

2. Leah went to the doctor’s office. She has an **excused absence/attendance**.

3. Ramon stays home because he is ___sick/ miss____.

4. Regular ___absent/ attendance___ is important for school.

5. Ana likes Clara to **miss/ attend** school everyday.

6. Watching TV is not a good ___absent/ reason___ to miss school.

7. School starts at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. That’s the ____rule/ arrive____.

8. Francisco wants Clara to **be on time/ attendance** for school.

9. Clara is sick and has to **attendance/ miss** school.

10. Leah’s **attend/ absence** is excused.
C. Unscramble the words. Write the words in the blanks.

miss  be on time  excused absence  responsibility  attend
reason  sick  absence  be behind  attendance  absent

Example: Francisco wants Clara to have good attendance (ecnadttane) at school.

Francisco wants Clara to 1. _________________(eb no itme) for school.

Clara’s throat hurts. She feels 2. _________________(ksic). Francisco checks Clara’s temperature. She is sick. She cannot go to school. He calls the school. He tells the clerk the 3. ________ (sronae) for Clara’s

4. _________________(bascene). Clara needs to 5. _________________ (ssmi) school today.

Leah is ready for school. She trips on a chair. She falls down. She hurts her ankle. Leah knows the rule when she is 6. _________________(beasnt).

She tells Sonia it is her 7. _________________(ytilibisonreps) to call the school. Sonia calls the school. She listens to the telephone answering machine. She gives information about Leah. She can’t 8. _________________ (ttadne) school today.

Sonia has an 9. _________________(sedxecu baesenec) from school. Leah will be absent one day. She is not 10. _________________(hebnid) in her classes.
Hello. This is Partridge Elementary School. To report an absence, please leave your name, your relationship to the child, your child’s first and last name, your child’s teacher and the reason for the absence. Thank you very much.

This is Sonia Patel. I’m Leah Patel’s mother. Leah’s in Room 10. She’s in Miss Fisher’s class. She’s in Miss Fisher’s class. She’s in Miss Fisher’s class. She’s in Miss Fisher’s class. She’s in Miss Fisher’s class. She’s 4. today because she hurt her ankle. The doctor told her to stay home and rest. She’ll return to tomorrow. Thank you.
**REAL LIFE READING**

**E. Read about the five kinds of excused absences.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excused absence from school:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Your child is sick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Your child is at the dentist’s office and cannot get an appointment after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Your child is at the doctor’s office and cannot get an appointment after school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Your child is at the funeral of a family member.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Your child is attending a religious ceremony.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**F. Look at the excused absences above. Write the number in front of the sentence.**

Example: **1** Clara is home with a sore throat.

1. ________ Sara is at the funeral of her grandfather.
2. ________ Ramon has a sore tooth. The dentist’s office is open from 8:00–3:00.
3. ________ Leah needs an x-ray of her ankle. The doctor can only see her at 10 a.m.
4. ________ Lisa and Lien need to attend a religious ceremony with their parents.
5. ________ Leah and Clara have the flu.
### REAL LIFE CRITICAL THINKING

G. Read the reason for the absence. Check ✓ if it is an excused absence or not an excused absence. Do the example and number 1 with the video. Do numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 on your own.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Excused Absence</th>
<th>Not Excused Absence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Example:**
Clara’s not at school.
She’s visiting her family in Peru. | ✓ | |
| 1. Leah’s at her uncle’s funeral. | | |
| 2. Ramon’s at the dentist.
The dentist’s office hours are 8 a.m.–3 p.m. | | |
| 3. Leah is not at school.
She’s at home with her baby sister.
Her mother is at the supermarket. | | |
| 4. Sarah is at home for the end of Ramadan.
She is attending a religious ceremony. | | |
| 5. David is not at school.
He’s at home playing video games. | | |
| 6. Carmen works at her family store every morning. | | |

Is Clara’s absence excused?
### GRAMMAR RULES

#### THE VERB "BE"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><em>am</em></td>
<td><em>an ESL student.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td><em>are</em></td>
<td><em>late.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She</td>
<td><em>is</em></td>
<td><em>sick.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td><em>are</em></td>
<td><em>at home.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td><em>are</em></td>
<td><em>at school.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### THE VERB "BE" WITH CONTRACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><em>I’m</em></td>
<td><em>I’m an ESL student.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td><em>You’re</em></td>
<td><em>You’re late.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She</td>
<td><em>He’s</em></td>
<td><em>He’s sick.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td><em>We’re</em></td>
<td><em>We’re at home.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td><em>They’re</em></td>
<td><em>They’re at school.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NEGATIVES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><em>am not</em></td>
<td><em>not an ESL student.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td><em>are not</em></td>
<td><em>not late.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She</td>
<td><em>is not</em></td>
<td><em>not sick.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td><em>are not</em></td>
<td><em>not at home.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td><em>are not</em></td>
<td><em>not at school.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NEGATIVES WITH CONTRACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td><em>I’m not</em></td>
<td><em>not an ESL student.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td><em>You’re not</em></td>
<td><em>not late.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He/She</td>
<td><em>He’s not</em></td>
<td><em>not on time.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td><em>We’re not</em></td>
<td><em>not sick.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They</td>
<td><em>They’re not</em></td>
<td><em>not at home.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**I’m Mr. Chow.**

**I’m on time.**

---

**H. Study the grammar rules above. Match the words.**

**Example:**

1. He is
2. I am
3. You are
4. She is
5. We are
6. They are

- *We’re*
- *You’re*
- *I’m*
- *They’re*
- *She’s*
- *He’s*
GRAMMAR PRACTICE

I. Use the correct form of the verb *be*.

**Example:** Clara and Leah ______ are ______ students at Partridge School.

1. Clara ____________ at home today.

2. Leah and Clara ____________ absent from school this week.

3. I ____________ sick. I need to miss school today.

4. Ramon and you ____________ on time for class today.

5. Miss Fisher tells the class, “I ____________ happy to see you.”

J. Change the sentence to make it negative.

**Example:** The students are late for class today.

______________ The students are not late for class today.

1. Clara and her father are at the park today.

______________

2. It is the teacher’s responsibility to write a note.

______________

3. Clara and Ramon are Mrs. Patel’s children.

______________

4. You are late for class today.

______________

5. I am behind in reading.

______________
**GRAMMAR PRACTICE**

**K. Look at the chart. Write sentences. Use contractions. Where are they?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Where are they?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clara and Ramon</td>
<td>at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Fisher</td>
<td>at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez</td>
<td>at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Wordsworth</td>
<td>at the office.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example:* Leah: She's at school.

1. Clara and Ramon: ________________________________
2. Miss Fisher: ________________________________
3. Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez: __________________________
4. Mr. Wordsworth: ________________________________
5. Write about yourself: I __________________________

**L. Use contractions for the underlined words.**

*Example:* Leah is not at school today. Leah isn’t at school today.

1. Mr. Chow is not late.

2. Clara and Mr. Hernandez are not at the park today.

3. Sonia and Francisco are not in the same family.

4. Leah is not behind in her homework.

5. Ramon is not in Ms. Fisher’s class.
REAL LIFE SPEAKING

M. Practice the dialogue.

School Clerk: Hello, Partridge Elementary School. How may I help you?

Francisco Hernandez: This is Mr. Hernandez. I’m calling because my child is going to be absent today.

School Clerk: Okay. What is your child’s name?

Francisco Hernandez: Clara Hernandez.

School Clerk: Who’s her teacher?

Francisco Hernandez: She is in Miss Fischer’s class in Room 10.

School Clerk: What is the reason for the absence?

Francisco Hernandez: She is sick. Her throat hurts and she has a fever.

School Clerk: Okay. Thank you for calling.

Francisco Hernandez: You’re welcome. I’m calling because my child is going to be absent today.
REAL LIFE WRITING

N. Read the sample note. Practice writing a note to your child’s teacher. Explain your child’s absence from school.

Name of teacher
Date
Child’s full name and your relationship to the child
Date of absence
Reason for absence
Your full name and telephone number

1. Name of teacher
2. Date
3. Child’s full name and your relationship to the child
4. Date of absence
5. Reason for absence
6. Your full name and telephone number

1. Dear Ms. Fisher,

My 3. daughter, Clara Hernandez, was absent on 4. Tuesday, March 3, and Wednesday, March 4. 5. She had a fever and a stomachache. She is better now.

Sincerely,

6. Francisco Hernandez
444-1212

2. March 5, 2003

1. Dear ________________,

My ________________, ________________, was absent on ________________, ________________. ________________ had a___________________________.

Sincerely,

6. __________________________
O. Simulate calling your child’s school. Tell why your child can’t come to school. Fill in the boxes below. Do these five things.

1. Identify yourself
2. Identify your child’s name and your relationship to the child
3. Identify the teacher’s name and the classroom number
4. Identify the reason for absence
5. Give a closing statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sonia’s Information</th>
<th>Your Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your name</strong></td>
<td>1 This is Sonia Patel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s name and relationship to the child</strong></td>
<td>2 I’m Leah Patel’s mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher’s name and classroom number</strong></td>
<td>3 Leah’s in room 10. She’s in Ms. Fisher’s class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reason for the absence</strong></td>
<td>4 She hurt her ankle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing statement</strong></td>
<td>5 Thank you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hello. This is Partridge Elementary School.

This is Sonia Patel. I’m Leah Patel’s mother.
CHECK YOUR LEARNING

P. Read the sentences below.  Circle the best answer.

Example:  1. Write a note to school when your child is ________.
   a. attend  b. absent  c. a video game  d. a parent
   1. You need to call the school when your child is _____________.
      a. reason  b. absent  c. a video game  d. a parent
   2. Your child must have ________________ to miss school.
      a. happy  b. a book  c. a bad  d. an excused absence
   3. Your child’s ________________ is important every day.
      a. doctor  b. bus  c. game  d. attendance
   4. If your child is ________________, keep him home.
      a. sad  b. smart  c. sick  d. late
   5. I missed a lot of school and I _______ _____________ in my studies.
      a. got behind  b. got up  c. got ready  d. got happy
   6. She _____________in Miss Fisher’s class.
      a. is  b. are  c. am  d. be
   7. Arriving on time for school _________________ a rule.
      a. are  b. aren’t  c. is  d. am
   8. _____________time to go. Are you ready?
      a. I’m  b. They’re  c. It’s  d. You’re
   9. “Hello. This is Sonia Patel. ___________Leah Patel’s mother.”
      a. We’re  b. I’m  c. They’re  d. He’s
   10. When are _____________going to Peru?
      a. I  b. it  c. he  d. they
1. **Elk Grove Unified School District:**

   “Parent & Student Handbook”
   Excused absences, permissive absences, truancy → page 22

   General Information → 686-5085

   Finding child’s school of attendance → 686-7755

   Web Site: www.egusd.k12.ca.us

2. **Sacramento City Unified School District**

   Newspaper: “Connections”
   Information sent to homes in the district

   General Information → 643-7400

   Finding School of Attendance → 643-9435

   Web Site: www.scusd.edu

3. **Sacramento County Department of Health Services**

   Recorded message listing services and telephone numbers → 875-5877

   County health clinic information → 874-8912
### ANSWERS

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<th>Page 5</th>
<th>Page 6</th>
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</thead>
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<td><strong>C. Words Work Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>D. Real Life Listening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. responsibility</td>
<td>1. be on time</td>
<td>1. name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. excused absence</td>
<td>2. sick</td>
<td>2. reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. sick</td>
<td>3. reason</td>
<td>3. is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. attendance</td>
<td>4. absence</td>
<td>4. absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. attend</td>
<td>5. miss</td>
<td>5. school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. reason</td>
<td>6. absent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. rule</td>
<td>7. responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. be on time</td>
<td>8. attend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. miss</td>
<td>9. excused absence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. absence</td>
<td>10. behind</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 7</th>
<th>Page 8</th>
<th>Page 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F. Real Life Reading</strong></td>
<td><strong>G. Real Life Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td><strong>H. Grammar Rules</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. 4</td>
<td>1. excused absence</td>
<td>1. He is = He's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 2</td>
<td>2. excused absence</td>
<td>2. I am = I'm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 3</td>
<td>3. not excused absence</td>
<td>3. You are = You're</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. 5</td>
<td>4. excused absence</td>
<td>4. She is = She's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 1</td>
<td>5. not excused absence</td>
<td>5. We are = We're</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. not excused absence</td>
<td></td>
<td>6. They are = They're</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 10</th>
<th>Page 10</th>
<th>Page 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Grammar Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>J. Grammar Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>K. Grammar Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. is</td>
<td>1. Clara and her father are not at the</td>
<td>1. They're at home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. are</td>
<td>park today.</td>
<td>2. She's at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. am</td>
<td>2. It is not the teacher's</td>
<td>3. They're at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. are</td>
<td>responsibility to write a note.</td>
<td>4. He's at the office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. am</td>
<td>3. Clara and Ramon are not Mrs.</td>
<td>5. I'm . . . (many possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patel's children.</td>
<td>answers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. You are not late for class today.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. I am not behind in reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 11</th>
<th>Pages 13 &amp; 14</th>
<th>Page 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>L. Grammar Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>N. Writing &amp; O. Action</strong></td>
<td><strong>P. Check Your Learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Mr. Chow isn't late.</td>
<td>1. Mr. Chow isn't late.</td>
<td>1. b 6. a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Clara and Mr. Hernandez aren't at the park today.</td>
<td>2. Clara and Mr. Hernandez aren't at the park today.</td>
<td>2. d 7. c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sonia and Francisco aren't in the same family.</td>
<td>3. Sonia and Francisco aren't in the same family.</td>
<td>3. d 8. c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Leah isn't behind in her homework.</td>
<td>4. Leah isn't behind in her homework.</td>
<td>4. c 9. b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ramon isn't in Ms. Fisher's class.</td>
<td>5. Ramon isn't in Ms. Fisher's class.</td>
<td>5. a 10. d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### F. Real Life Reading

- 1. 4
- 2. 2
- 3. 3
- 4. 5
- 5. 1

### G. Real Life Critical Thinking

- 1. excused absence
- 2. excused absence
- 3. not excused absence
- 4. excused absence
- 5. not excused absence
- 6. not excused absence

### H. Grammar Rules

- 1. He is = He's
- 2. I am = I'm
- 3. You are = You're
- 4. She is = She's
- 5. We are = We're
- 6. They are = They're

### I. Grammar Practice

- 1. is
- 2. are
- 3. am
- 4. are
- 5. am

### J. Grammar Practice

- 1. Clara and her father are not at the park today.
- 2. It is not the teacher's responsibility to write a note.
- 3. Clara and Ramon are not Mrs. Patel's children.
- 4. You are not late for class today.
- 5. I am not behind in reading.

### L. Grammar Practice

- 1. Mr. Chow isn't late.
- 2. Clara and Mr. Hernandez aren't at the park today.
- 3. Sonia and Francisco aren't in the same family.
- 4. Leah isn't behind in her homework.
- 5. Ramon isn't in Ms. Fisher's class.

### N. Writing & O. Action

- Answers will vary for Writing #1-6 and Action #1-5

### P. Check Your Learning

- 1. b 6. a
- 2. d 7. c
- 3. d 8. c
- 4. c 9. b
- 5. a 10. d