

## Introduction

This support pack accompanies the story:

### **Scarlett by Chris Rose**

To read or listen to the story online, go to:

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/stories/scarlett>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- a pre-reading vocabulary activity
- the story
- A comprehension activity



Scarlett is twelve years old and is trying to understand the world around her. She asks questions about everything, all the time. She also says that she already knows five languages...

## Before you read

Match the words and phrases in the table to the descriptions below.

1. particular	2. heroine	3. make fun of someone	4. impossible
5. navy	6. end up	7. inherit	8. personality

## Definitions:

- like the army but operates at sea
- a woman who is admired for doing something great
- the kind of person you are
- to finally be in a particular situation
- to get a characteristic from your parents or grandparents
- describes something that cannot happen
- this one and not another one
- to make a joke about someone (often unkindly)

## Scarlett by Chris Rose

Here's Scarlett, in the garden of a friend's house in London on a sunny summer morning, the kind of mornings that are unusual in England. Scarlett is twelve years old ("thirteen in November" she tells me), and is trying to understand the world around her. She asks questions about everything, all the time.

I tell her that I want to ask her a question, and I ask her why she's called "Scarlett", and what the name means, and if it comes from anywhere in particular, and she says:

"No it's just a stupid name my parents chose because they liked it. It doesn't mean anything."

I wonder if her parents named her after the heroine of a favourite film, perhaps, but then again, I know her dad and this sounds unlikely. I think they probably chose it just because they liked the sound of it.

Scarlett is worried about changing school after the summer, she worries that she's too short for her age and that the other children at the school will make fun of her. She shows me some pictures of the school she is at now, and her classmates. I look at the picture and it shows children of all heights and shapes and sizes. Some are tall, some are short, some are fat and some are thin. Some are black and some are white, and most of them are somewhere in between. Some have red hair and some have blond hair, some have long hair and some have short hair.

I tell her not to worry about the new school, tell her that she'll be ok, and ask her about the new subjects she'll be studying. She tells me that she's worried about learning French, and I tell her not to worry, that it isn't a very difficult language. She tells me that she already knows five languages.

"Five languages!" I shout. "That's impossible! How do you already know five languages?"

"Because I've got five languages in my body" she says.

I ask her what she means, and she starts to tell me the story of her family. Some of the story I already know. I've already heard stories about her grandfather. He was from Scotland; he was a sailor, but not a very good sailor, so he only got as far as Portsmouth, a big navy town on the south coast of England, not very far from Scotland at all. When he got to Portsmouth, he stopped there, left the navy and became a boxer. He lost fights and drank a lot. However, he still managed to see the world by meeting a woman who came from Laos. Nobody really knows how this woman had ended up in Portsmouth, but she still lives there, and I tell Scarlett that she should try and find out her grandmother's story.

"No, she's too old now" says Scarlett, "and anyway, she's lived in Portsmouth nearly all her life."

Scarlett's grandparents were only together long enough to produce a son, probably one of the only Scottish-Laotians in the world. They called him Bill, which is usually short for "William", but his name was just "Bill". Bill inherited his father's personality and his mother's looks, so the only thing he thought he could do was become a rock star. He never really managed to become a rock star, though, so now he works as a graphic designer.

I don't know Scarlett's mum, so I ask her to tell me about her mum.

"My mum's Polish" she says, "Well, not really, because she was born in Brighton, but her mum and dad are from Poland. But they've lived there, like, for always. But I know that her mum was from somewhere that was Germany, and then became Poland, so she's really German, I suppose. So that's another language that I've got in my body."

I ask Scarlett if she can actually speak all the languages that she says she has “in her body”, and she looks at me like I’m stupid.

“Of course not” she says. “But I’ve still got them in me!”

We count up her “languages”: Scottish, Laotian, German, Polish.

“That’s only four!” I tell her.

“No, there’s English too!”

“Of course there is” I say. And then I look at Scottish–Laotian–German–Polish–English

Scarlett, with her name that comes from nowhere and I ask her,

“And you Scarlett, where are you from?”

She thinks for a long time, such a long time that I think perhaps she hasn’t heard my question. But then before I can repeat it she looks up and at me.

“I’m from here”, she says. “I’m from London”.

THE END

## Comprehension Task

### True or false

Decide if the following statements are true or false.

1. Scarlett is a young and inquisitive girl.
2. Scarlett is very different from her classmates.
3. Scarlett can speak five languages.
4. Scarlett's parents are both English.
5. Scarlett has relatives from lots of different countries.
6. Scarlett has to think hard about her own identity.
7. Scarlett defines her identity by the language she speaks.
8. Scarlett's family history is quite complicated.
9. Scarlett thinks she comes from a city and not a country.

## Language task: Talking about families

### Gap fill

Read the text and fill in the gaps in the sentences with the names for different family members.

Anna met Hans in 1938. They got married and had three children - William, George and Elisabeth. William never married, but George married Concetta and had two children, Maria and Joe. Elisabeth married David and they had one child, who was called John. John got married to Molly, and they had one child called Leo, but after that they got divorced. John married again to a woman called Jenny, and they have two children called Thomas and Ryan. Maria didn't get married, but had a baby who she called Matthew. Joe never married.

Fill in the gaps in the sentences below with the words in the box.

1. Joe is Matthew's \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Anna is Matthew's \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Molly is John's \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Thomas and Matthew are \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Maria and Joe are Hans' \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Matthew is Hans' \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Leo is Jenny's \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Elisabeth is Maria and Joe's \_\_\_\_\_.

ex-wife	grandchildren
stepson	uncle    aunt
cousins	great-grandson
great-grandmother	

## Language task: Talking about different nationalities

### Gap fill

When you talk about people from different countries, you use adjectives to describe their nationality.

Some nationality adjectives end in -ish like English. Others end in -ian like Australian. Others are completely irregular. Fill in the gaps with the nationality adjectives.

Do you know what to call people from the following countries?

1. Marco is from Italy. He is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Magda is from Poland. She is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Kareem is from Kuwait. He is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Lee is from China. He is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Alana is from Laos. She is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Heidi is from Finland. She is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Willem is from the Netherlands. He is \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Mega is from Indonesia. She is \_\_\_\_\_.
9. Maria is from the Czech Republic. She is \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Erkan is from Turkey. He is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Answers

Before you watch: 1 - g, 2 - b, 3 - h, 4 - f, 5 - a, 6 - d, 7 - e, 8 - c  
 Comprehension Task: 1 - true, 2 - false, 3 - false, 4 - true, 5 - true, 6 - true, 7 - false, 8 - true, 9 - true  
 Language Task (families): 1 - uncle, 2 - great-grandmother, 3 - ex-wife, 4 - cousins, 5 - grandchildren, 6 - great-grandson, 7 - stepson, 8 - aunt  
 Language Task (nationalities): 1 - Italian, 2 - Polish, 3 - Kuwaiti, 4 - Chinese, 5 - Laotian, 6 - Finnish, 7 - Dutch, 8 - Indonesian, 9 - Czech, 10 - Turkish