

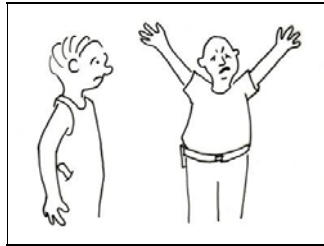
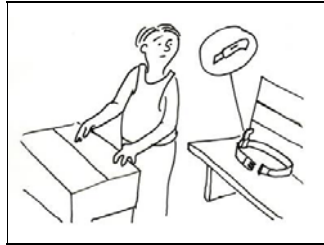
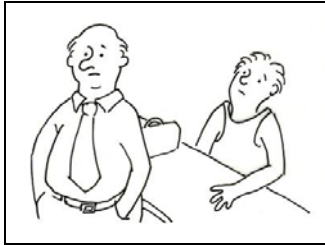
Workplace Scenarios  
Communication Skills and Problem Solving



# THE MISSING UTILITY KNIFE

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## Preview: Listen to the Story



## The People

- Manny, a new worker
- The office manager
- Another worker

## The Place

- A shipping company




## The Problem

- Manny has to cut open boxes
- He doesn't have a knife, so he borrows the knife of a co-worker

**Activity 1: Decide True or False**

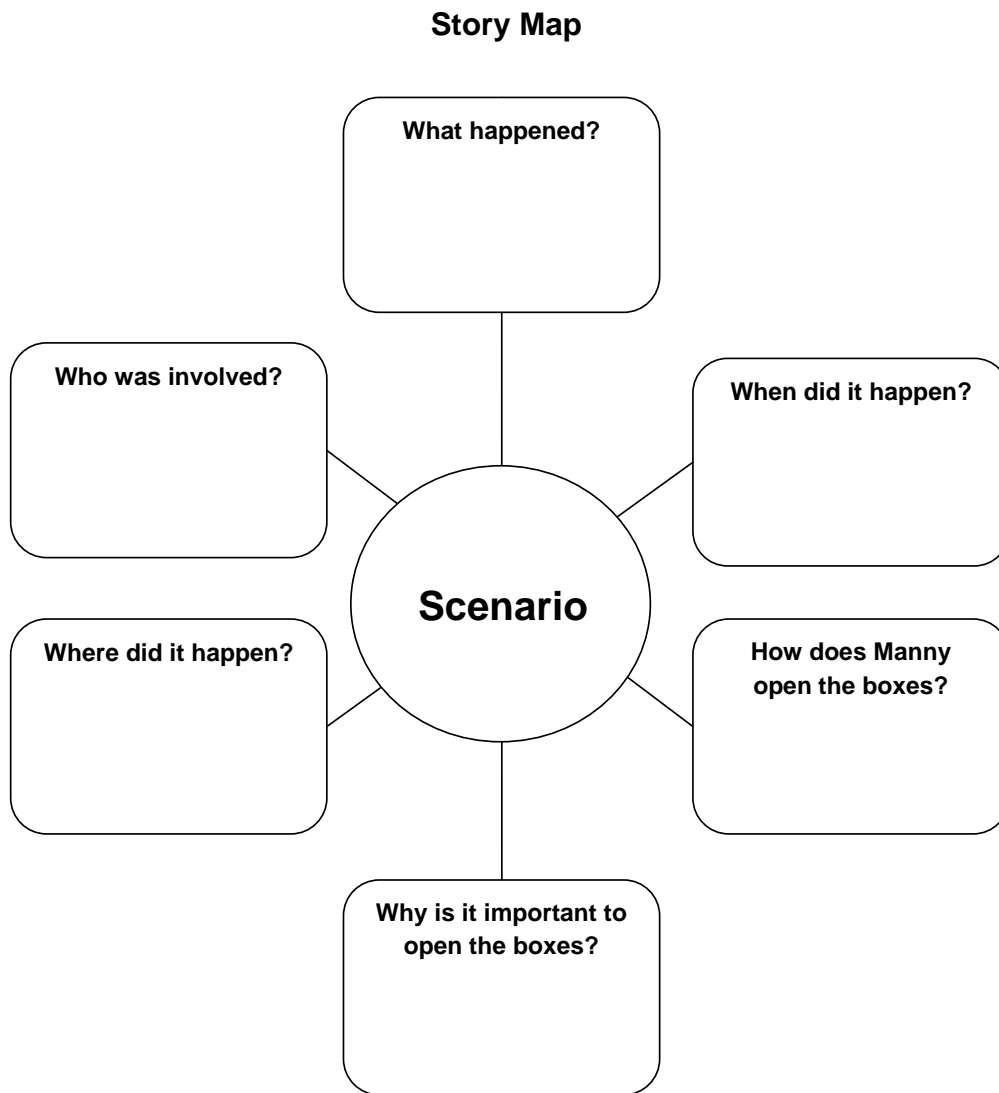
Your teacher will make a few statements (sentences) about the story. If the statement is **true**, hold up a **green** piece of paper. If the statement is **false**, hold up a **red** piece of paper. If you are **not sure**, hold up a **yellow** paper. Explain your reasons.

**Example**

Manny lives in San Antonio		Manny lives in El Paso
Manny spends his lunch time at work		Everybody goes out to lunch but Manny stays back
Manny drives a sports car to work.		The story does not tell us. There is no way of knowing.

## Activity 2: Discuss the Story

What happened? Who was involved? Where did it happen? Why is it important to open the boxes? How does Manny open the boxes?



### Activity 3: Describe the Problem in Your Own Words



1.



2.



3.



4



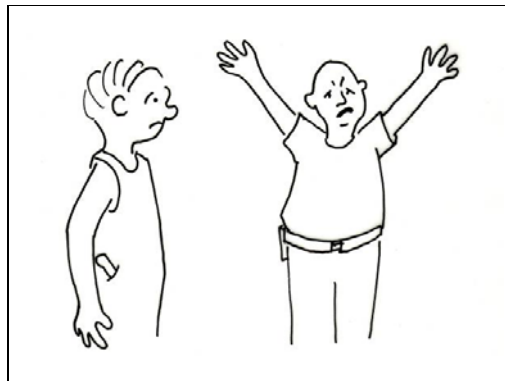
5.



6.



7.



8.

**Activity 4: Read the Story with Pictures**

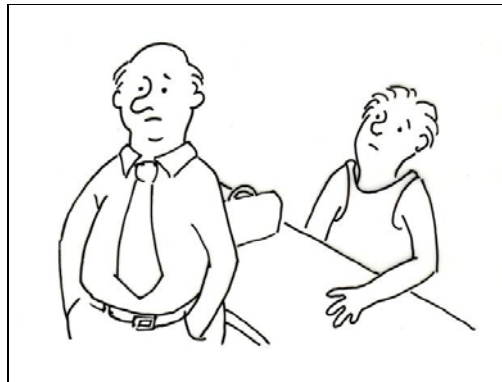
1. This is a story about Manny Rodriguez. Manny lives in El Paso. He drives a fork lift for a company called Continental Warehousing. His job is to drive the forklift to unload packages from trucks. Manny is new on the job, and he doesn't know his co-workers.



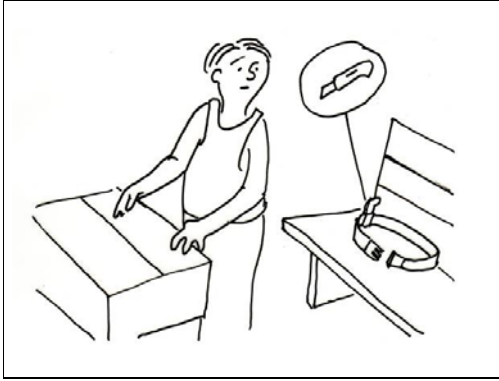
2. At noon, everyone goes to lunch. Manny is alone. He sits down, opens his lunch bag, and pulls out a sandwich.



3. Then the office manager comes up to him and says: "Thank goodness someone is here. I think somebody made a mistake. I need you to cut open some boxes so I can see what's inside. It is very important. I need it pronto."



4. Manny answers, "Sure, right away." The manager turns away and says, "Good, I'll be back in ten minutes."



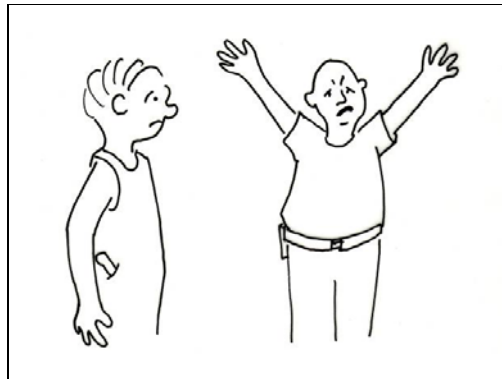
**5.** Manny goes over to the boxes and then realizes he doesn't have his utility knife. He needs it to cut open the boxes. He can't remember where he put his knife. He looks around. A co-worker has left a tool belt on the bench. There is a utility knife in the tool belt.



**6.** He borrows the knife and rushes to cut the boxes open. He finishes his job just before the office manager comes back. Manny sticks the utility knife in his pocket and shows the manager the open boxes.



**7.** The manager looks inside and seems relieved. He says, "Good, it's the right shipment. Now tape these boxes back up." Manny completes the job and decides to go outside to finish his break. He's thinking, "I hope no one else will ask me to do work on my break."



**8.** When he comes back from break, he hears the loud voice of a co-worker. The co-worker yells, "Someone stole my knife. It was right here in my tool belt. Wait until I get hold of him!" The knife is still in Manny's pocket. He doesn't know what to do. He wants to tell the truth. But he doesn't want to get into trouble.

## Activity 5: Read the Story without Pictures

### THE MISSING UTILITY KNIFE

This is a story about Manny Rodriguez. Manny lives in El Paso. He drives a fork lift for a company called Continental Warehousing. His job is to drive the forklift to unload packages from trucks. Manny is new on the job, and he doesn't know his co-workers.

At noon, everyone goes to lunch. Manny is alone. He sits down, opens his lunch bag, and pulls out a sandwich. Then the office manager comes up to him and says: "Thank goodness someone is here. I think somebody made a mistake. I need you to cut open some boxes so I can see what's inside. It is very important. I need it pronto."

Manny answers, "Sure, right away." The manager turns away and says, "Good, I'll be back in ten minutes."

Manny goes over to the boxes and then realizes he doesn't have his utility knife. He needs it to cut open the boxes. He can't remember where he put his knife. He looks around. A co-worker has left a tool belt on the bench. There is a utility knife in the tool belt.

He borrows the knife and rushes to cut the boxes open. He finishes his job just before the office manager comes back. Manny sticks the utility knife in his pocket and shows the manager the open boxes. The manager looks inside and seems relieved. He says, "Good, it's the right shipment. Now tape these boxes back up." Manny completes the job and decides to go outside to finish his break. He's thinking, "I hope no one else will ask me to do work on my break."

When he comes back from break, he hears the loud voice of a co-worker. The co-worker yells, "Someone stole my knife. It was right here in my tool belt. Wait until I get hold of him!" The knife is still in Manny's pocket. He doesn't know what to do. He wants to tell the truth. But he doesn't want to get into trouble.

**Activity 6: Consider the Options**

Discuss with a partner. Imagine you are in Sara's position. What are your options? What can you do? What can you say?

### Activity 7: Discuss Choices and Consequences

Work individually. Think about the options that Manny has. Then think about the consequences for each option – good or not so good. Write down the options – then write down the consequences for each option.

#### Example:

Options	Consequences
1. <i>Manny can lie and say he didn't take the knife</i>	1. <i>Someone will find out and Manny will always be "the guy who lies"</i>
2. <i>Manny can ask the office manager to cover for him</i>	2. <i>The office manager thinks Manny is weak.</i>

Options	Consequences
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

#### Discussion:

Work in your team and share your ideas. What do you think is the best option for Manny? What are your reasons? Present your best option to the rest of the class.

**Activity 8: Finish the Story**

Work in your team. Create a story for your best option. You can tell your story in sketches (pictures) or in writing.

**Activity 9: Create a Dialog**

Work with a partner. Practice the first part of the dialog. Then finish the dialog. Be creative. Decide: What does Manny do? What does she say? Who is the other person?

Manny (to himself): *Oh, man, I can't believe it. I forgot to put back the knife, now I'm in real trouble. This guy is really mad. But it's not really my fault – it's not my job to open boxes. The office manager asked me.*

**The co-worker:** Who took my knife?!?

**Another co-worker:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manny:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The co-worker:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manny:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The co-worker:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 10: Present a Role Play**

Practice your dialog in class and at home. Then practice without the script. Perform your dialog in front of the class or in front of your team. Your class mates will watch Manny and offer suggestions.

**Rubric**

<b>Manny</b>	<b>No evidence</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>	<b>Did Well</b>
Opens the conversation			
Explains the problem			
Listens to the co-worker.			
Apologizes to the co-worker.			
Closes the conversation			

## Activity 11: Language and Vocabulary Practice

Read the story *The Missing Utility Knife* one more time with your team. Then look at Useful Words and Expressions below. Discuss these expressions with your team. If you are not sure, look at the pictures and reread the story.

### Useful Words and Expressions

1. fork lift
2. utility knife
3. unload packages
4. new on the job
5. realize
6. tool belt
7. bench
8. relieved
9. tape back up

## Vocabulary Match-up

Work individually. Write the correct word next to the definition. Use the story to help you.

Word	Definition
	tool for cutting
	a short table you can sit on
	equipment for lifting boxes
	just starting work
	take packages off a truck or out of a container
	A belt to hold tools
	become aware; notice
	redo; close again with tape
	no longer worried

### Activity 12: Personal Dictionary

Write down all the words you want to know. Then write down something that will help you remember the word. You can write down a definition or a sentence. You can draw a picture so you can see the situation in your mind. You can also write down the translation. Study the words and expressions! Your teacher may give you a quiz.

Word	Memory Help
Tape <b>back</b> up	Tape up one more time. Manny opened the boxes with the utility knife and then he taped them back up.

**Comment [HW1]:** Call you back;  
back up; give it back to me;

### Activity 13: Challenge Activity for Advanced Students

#### Special Expression: “back”

English has many expressions that use the word **back**. Sometimes *back* means again. For example, the office manager tells Manny, *tape the box back up*. At other times, back can mean reverse or put in the original position.

**Read the sentences with a partner. How do you say these expressions in your language? Explain your answers to the class.**

1. I'm sorry, I can't talk on the phone right now, *I'll call you right **back***.
2. I want to make sure you got the street address right. *Can you say the address **back** to me?*
3. When you are finished with my pen, *can you please give it **back** to me?*
4. You closed the box too soon. We still have equipment to pack up. *Could you please open it **back** up?*
5. **Back** up for a minute. What were you saying?
6. Don't say everything you think. *Sometimes it is a good idea to hold **back** a little.*

### Activity 14: Word Study

In English, you can take a word like **load** or **do** and add a short word like **un-** at the beginning. You then get the words **unload** or **undo**. Unload is the opposite of load. Undo means trying to put something back the way it was. Unbelievable is the opposite of believable. Unattractive is the opposite of attractive and so on.

#### Say the words and make a sentence

Positive	Negative
believable	unbelievable
attractive	unattractive
educated	uneducated
load	unload
do	undo

#### Write the negative word

Positive	Negative
happy	
concerned	
informed	
written	

**Cultural Notes: Agree or Disagree**

Read the following sentences and discuss them. Do you agree or disagree? Circle your answer. Be prepared to explain your reasons.

1. If a manager asks you to do something on your lunch hour, you should refuse. Your lunch hour is your lunch hour. (agree | disagree)
2. In the workplace, the tools belong to everybody – not just one person. (agree | disagree)
3. When you want to borrow something, you have to ask permission. It is an unwritten rule of the workplace. (agree | disagree)
4. It is a good idea to use your own tools and not somebody else's. (agree | disagree)
5. In some companies, workers must buy their own tools. (agree | disagree)
6. If you make a mistake, you apologize. (agree | disagree)
7. If you don't have the right tool, tell the supervisor or a manager. (agree | disagree)
8. It's better to confess to a mistake than to be quiet – even if you get into trouble. (agree | disagree)
9. It's better to get into trouble, than to be a liar. (agree | disagree)
10. When in doubt, tell the truth. (agree | disagree)

**Cultural Notes: Tell Your Story**

Do you remember a time when you were in trouble? May-be you borrowed something or may-be there was another reason.

Do you remember a time when someone borrowed something from you and didn't give it back?

What happened? Who was involved? How did you feel? How did the story end?

Use the story map below to organize your story.

**Story Map**

