Words and Their Stories: Grapevine (Teacher Handout)

1. Story

Some of the most exciting information comes by way of the grapevine. That is so because reports received through the grapevine are supposed to be secret. The information is all hush hush. It is whispered into your ear with the understanding that you will not pass it on to others.

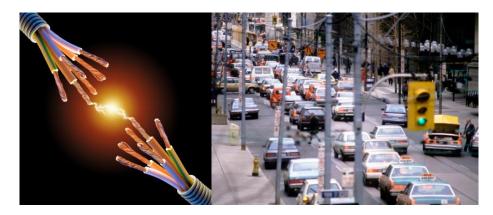
You feel honored and excited. You are one of the special few to get this information. You cannot wait. You must quickly find other ears to pour the information into. And so, the information - secret as it is – begins to spread. Nobody knows how far.



The expression "by the grapevine" is more than one hundred years old.

The American inventor, Samuel F. Morse, is largely responsible for the birth of the expression. Among others, he experimented with the idea of telegraphy – sending messages over a wire by electricity. When Morse finally completed his telegraphic instrument, he went before Congress to show that it worked. He sent a message over a wire from Washington to Baltimore. The message was: "What hath God wrought?" This was on May twenty-fourth, eighteen forty-four.

Quickly, companies began to build telegraph lines from one place to another. Men everywhere seemed to be putting up poles with strings of wire for carrying telegraphic messages. The workmanship was poor. And the wires were not put up straight. Some of the results looked strange. People said they looked like a grapevine. A large number of the telegraph lines were going in all directions, as crooked as the vines that grapes grow on. So was born the expression, by the grapevine.



Some writers believe that the phrase would soon have disappeared were it not for the American Civil War. Soon after the war began in eighteen sixty-one, military commanders started to send battlefield reports by telegraph. People began hearing the phrase by the grapevine to describe false as well as true reports from the battlefield. It was like a game. Was it true? Who says so?

Now, as in those far-off Civil War days, getting information by the grapevine remains something of a game. A friend brings you a bit of strange news. "No," you say, "it just can't be true! Who told you?" Comes the answer, "I got it by the grapevine."

You really cannot know how much – if any – of the information that comes to you by the grapevine is true or false. Still, in the words of an old American saying, the person who keeps pulling the grapevine shakes down at least a few grapes.



2. Vocabulary



V•Alearningenglish	Grapevine
	Vocabulary
True or False?	
Telling everyone a secret is a good e keep information hush-hush.	example of how to
	1 miles
True	244
• False	AT
	या ।

Correct	Choice
х	True
	False

V•Alearningenglish 🙆 🔰	Grapevine
	Vocabulary
An inventor is someone who:	
Creates new things as a job	
Makes jobs to stimulate the economy	Che .
Hears things by the grapevine	
Invents the telegraph	

Correct	Choice
	Creates new things as a job
	Makes jobs to stimulate the economy
х	Hears things by the grapevine
	Invents the telegraph

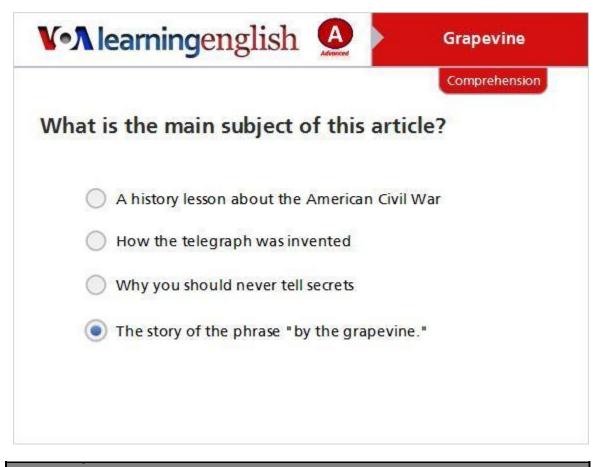
	Vocabular
atch each word w	vith its closest meaning.
honored	greatly respected
telegraph	a long-distance message
	quality of products or jobs

Correct	Choice
honored	greatly respected
telegraph	a long-distance message
workmanship	quality of products or jobs

3. Comprehension

Why did people start calling telegraph line grapevine?" Secrets were sent through telegraph lines The first message sent was about grapes	prehension
grapevine?" Secrets were sent through telegraph lines	nal
	s "the
The first message sent was about grapes	
Because the lines were crooked like a grapevine	
People in those days were uneducated	

Correct	Choice
	Secrets were sent through telegraph lines
х	The first message sent was about grapes
	Because the lines were crooked like a grapevine
	People in those days were uneducated



Correct	Choice
	A history lesson about the American Civil War
	How the telegraph was invented
х	Why you should never tell secrets

V•Alearningenglish	Grapevine
	Comprehension
True or False?	
Today, hearing things "by the grapev you heard it through a telegraph.	ine" means that
you noura it in ough a teregraph.	
🔿 True	
False	
	<u> </u>

Correct	Choice
	True
Х	False

4. Listening

Question #1

Read: "The information is all hush hush. It is whispered into your ear with the understanding that you will not pass it on to others."



Correct	Choice
х	True
	False

Read: "When Morse finally completed his telegraphic instrument, he went before Congress to show that it worked. He sent a message over a wire from Washington to Baltimore."

Which of the following things is true a passage you just listened to?	Listening bout the
passage you just listened to?	bout the
Morse's inventions never worked	
A message was sent from Washington to Balt	imore
Congress saw that the telegraph worked	
A message was sent from Baltimore to Washi	naton

Correct	Choice
	Morse's inventions never worked
	A message was sent from Washington to Baltimore
х	Congress saw that the telegraph worked
х	A message was sent from Baltimore to Washington

Read: "You really cannot know how much – if any – of the information that comes to you by the grapevine is true or false."

V•Alearningenglish	Grapevine
	Listening
True or False?	
The grapevine is <i>not</i> a reliable source of information.	
True	00 -0
False	
	a the second

Correct	Choice
х	True
	False