

RECURSO GRATIS • NIVEL PRINCIPIANTE

# Tres minutos tarde

An A2 story about a busy morning, a difficult choice, and discovering what responsibility really means.

**ROUTINE**

**CHOICE**

**HONESTY**

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## ANTES DE LEER

# Get ready

Valeria has an important appointment and cannot arrive late. On the way, she must choose between her schedule and helping someone.

## Before you begin

Is it ever acceptable to be late? Explain your answer.

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## Reading goal

Notice vocabulary for schedules, decisions, transportation, and explaining a delay.

## THE STORY · PART 1

# A careful plan

Valeria had a job **interview** at nine o'clock on Monday morning. She wanted to work at a neighborhood medical office.

The office manager had written one important instruction: 'Please arrive ten minutes early.'

Valeria prepared everything the night before. She ironed her shirt, printed her **résumé**, and checked the bus schedule twice.

Her alarm rang at six thirty. She followed her usual **routine**, ate breakfast, and left home with plenty of time.

At eight twenty, she got off the bus two blocks from the office. She smiled because she was ahead of **schedule**.

Then she heard a bag fall behind her. An older man had dropped his groceries beside the sidewalk.

Oranges rolled toward the street, and a glass jar broke. The man tried to bend down, but he looked **unsteady**.

Several people walked around him. Valeria looked at her phone: 8:22.

If she stopped, she might be late. If she continued walking, someone else might help.

She took one step toward the office, then turned around.

## THE STORY · PART 2

# A difficult choice

‘Are you hurt?’ Valeria asked. The man said his name was Mr. Rivera and explained that he felt **dizzy**.

Valeria helped him sit on a bench. She moved the broken glass away and collected the groceries that were safe.

‘My daughter lives nearby,’ Mr. Rivera said, but his hands shook as he searched for her number.

Valeria called the daughter and described their **location**. Then she waited with him.

At 8:39, a car stopped beside them. Mr. Rivera's daughter thanked Valeria and promised to take him to a doctor.

Valeria began to run. She reached the medical office at 9:03—exactly three minutes late.

At the front desk, she felt **embarrassed** and out of breath.

‘I am sorry for the **delay**,’ she told the receptionist. ‘A man became ill on the sidewalk, and I stayed until his daughter arrived.’

She did not make an **excuse** or change the story. She knew the manager might cancel the interview.

The receptionist asked Valeria to take a seat.

## THE STORY · PART 3

# The right kind of responsibility

A few minutes later, the office manager, Dr. Chen, entered the waiting room.

‘Punctuality is important here,’ she said. ‘Our patients depend on us.’

Valeria nodded. ‘I understand. I planned carefully, but I made a choice to help. I should have called the office while I was waiting.’

Dr. Chen noticed that Valeria accepted **responsibility** instead of blaming the bus or Mr. Rivera.

During the interview, she asked about Valeria's experience. They also discussed how employees should respond to unexpected problems.

That afternoon, Dr. Chen offered Valeria the job.

‘You were three minutes late,’ she said, ‘but you showed **compassion**, honesty, and good judgment. Next time, remember to communicate.’

On her first day, Valeria arrived fifteen minutes early. She created a phone reminder with the office number and always contacted her coworkers when plans changed.

A week later, Mr. Rivera visited the office for an appointment. He was surprised to see Valeria at the front desk.

They both smiled. Her delay had not been part of her plan, but the lesson became part of her new routine.

**Being responsible means respecting time—and knowing when a person needs you more than a clock does.**

# Words for time and decisions

| <b>interview</b>      | entrevista                |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>résumé</b>         | currículum / hoja de vida |
| <b>routine</b>        | rutina                    |
| <b>schedule</b>       | horario / programa        |
| <b>unsteady</b>       | inestable                 |
| <b>dizzy</b>          | mareado/a                 |
| <b>location</b>       | ubicación                 |
| <b>embarrassed</b>    | avergonzado/a             |
| <b>delay</b>          | retraso / demora          |
| <b>excuse</b>         | excusa                    |
| <b>responsibility</b> | responsabilidad           |
| <b>compassion</b>     | compasión                 |

## COMPREHENSION

# Check your understanding

## A. Choose

1. Where is Valeria's interview? a) A hotel b) A medical office c) A grocery store
2. Why does Mr. Rivera need help? a) He feels dizzy b) He misses the bus c) He loses his phone
3. What time does Valeria reach the office? a) 8:57 b) 9:00 c) 9:03
4. What should Valeria have done while waiting? a) Called the office b) Left the groceries c) Changed her story

## B. True or false

1. Valeria leaves home without planning. TRUE / FALSE
2. Valeria accepts responsibility for not calling. TRUE / FALSE
3. Dr. Chen offers Valeria the job. TRUE / FALSE

## C. Write

Do you agree with Valeria's decision? Explain. Write one polite sentence you can use when you are delayed.

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## ANSWER KEY

# Review your work

A. 1. b 2. a 3. c 4. a

B. 1. False 2. True 3. True

## Suggested answer

Yes. Valeria protects a person who may be ill, but she also learns to communicate. Polite sentence: I am sorry for the delay; I will arrive in approximately ten minutes.

**KEEP GOING**

Practice: I planned to arrive early, but an unexpected situation delayed me.