Mole

Tutor: You probably think I look funny.

*Student: Oh no. Not at all.*

Kind of you to say so.

*Not at all.*

I expect you do, all the same.

*No. You look lovely. Really.*

Really?

*For a mole, I mean.*

Mmmm…

*Lovely.*

I wouldn’t have a clue, myself.

*You wouldn’t have a clue?*

What I look like.

*Really?*

Not a clue.

*Oh?*

Nor what you look like, come to that.

*Why?*

I’m a mole, aren’t I?

Oh…

Moles can hardly see a thing!

*No, I suppose not.*

I can hardly see a thing!

*Your eyes are tiny.*

Well…

*In fact I can hardly see them.*

Can’t you? Why not?

*They’re buried in fur.*

That’s to protect them.

*Really?*

I do a lot of digging.

*Lovely fur, by the way.*

Thank you.

*I suppose your eyes are safe.*

Mmmm…?

*Buried in fur.*

Oh. Yes.

*Mmmm…*

And I don’t need them much.

*Don’t need your eyes much?*

No.

*Why not?*

Well, I live underground.

*I suppose.*

Dark down there.

*I suppose you don’t need to see well, then.*

Not underground, no.

*It must be funny.*

What?

*Spending all your time in the dark.*

Not really.

*Not for a mole, I suppose.*

No*.*

*Mmmm…*

I like it down there.

*Really?*

Never rains.

*No.*

Peace and quiet.

*Do you live with a lot of other moles?*

No.

*Oh.*

Can’t stand company.

*Do you have a wife?*

Well, there is a lady mole not far away.

*But you don’t live with her?*

No.

*Oh.*

Sometimes I visit her.

*Oh.*

But she likes her own company best.

*Oh*

Just like me really.

*You make a terrible mess.*

What?

*Sometimes.*

What are you talking about?

*Sometimes you make a terrible mess.*

I do no such thing!

*Yes you do.*

My tunnels are as clean as a whistle!

*Oh yes. I didn’t mean your tunnels were messy.*

Well, what do you mean then?

*I meant your molehills make a mess of lawns.*

Make a mess of lawns?

*A terrible mess.*

What are you talking about?

*There are molehills all over the place.*

It’s only the odd pile of diggings.

*Well, that’s it you see.*

What’s the problem?

*Well, it spoils the lawn.*

I have to throw soil out from time to time, don’t I?

*Oh yes, I can see that.*

Well then…

*But it makes a lawn look a mess.*

I can’t see the problem.

*Well…*

It’s only the odd molehill.

*It spoils the look of a lawn. That’s all I’m saying.*

I still don’t see what there is to get so upset about.

*It just spoils the look of a lawn.*

Oh?

*Molehills all over a nice green lawn.*

I really can’t see the problem.

*Well...*

And anyway, I only dig a tunnel once.

*Mmmm…?*

When I’ve built my tunnels, I’m done.

*What do you mean?*

The job’s done.

*But what does that mean?*

Well, it means when I’m finished, I’m finished.

*What are you saying?*

Once I’ve dug my tunnels, I don’t need to dig any more for a while.

*So? What are you saying?*

So all you have to do is take the molehill and spread it a bit.

*You mean you won’t throw any more up?*

No. Probably not.

*Well…*

End of problem, I should have thought.

*I never thought of it like that.*

Much better than killing me, you know.

*Good heavens! I hadn’t thought of killing you!*

People do. People do.

*Oh*…

But then another mole moves in to take my place.

*I suppose…*

And what does he do first thing?

*Digs a whole lot of new tunnels.*

Probably.

*Throws up a whole lot of new molehills.*

Best to leave me alone, don’t you think?

*Hadn’t thought of that.*

No. I know. Nobody ever does.

*Can I ask how you live down there?*

What do you mean?

*Do you live in your tunnels all the time?*

Mmmm…?

*Do you live underground all the time?*

Gosh, yes! No point me coming up, is there?

*I suppose not…*

Dangerous, too!

*How do you mean, dangerous?*

A lot of animals kill moles, you know.

*I suppose they do.*

Hawks, dogs and cats.

*I suppose so.*

Even people.

*Yes. I suppose so…*

I can’t see a dicky bird above ground.

*No, I don’t suppose you can*

I’m helpless up there.

*And you can’t run, either, can you?*

Pardon?

*You’re rather short and stout.*

Short and stout?

*Your legs are short and stick out to the side.*

Well…

*Not much use above ground.*

I hope you’re not being rude?

*Oh no. But they are short and they do stick out.*

My legs are for digging.

*Of course they are.*

At which they are very much better than yours, if I may say so.

*Oh yes. Sorry. They’re wonderful legs.*

Thank you.

*For digging, anyway.*

I can tunnel 20cms a minute, you know!

*20cms a minute? That’s amazing.*

You’re right. It is amazing.

*And you’re quite small, aren’t you?*

I’m only 15 cms long.

*Really?*

I can dig 20 metres of tunnel in a day.

*Wow.*

20 metres a day…

*What are your tunnels like?*

Extensive. I think that’s the word.

*How do you mean, extensive?*

They extend a long way, of course.

*Oh. How far do they extend?*

Well, I’ve probably dug about 1,000 metres of tunnel.

*But that’s a kilometre!*

It is.

*That’s a long tunnel!*

Well, it isn’t a straight line.

*Isn’t it?*

It goes round and about.

*Does it?*

Up and down.

*Oh.*

I have tunnels which are just under the ground.

*Yes, I know.*

And tunnels which are deep down.

*Do you?*

You only know about the shallow ones.

*How deep is your deepest tunnel?*

Maybe a metre.

*Do you go up and down these tunnels all day?*

Well, I go looking for food quite a bit.

*And when you want a rest, where do you go?*

Deep down I have a few rest areas.

*Rest areas?*

Places where I have hollowed out spaces to rest.

*You make it sound quite cozy.*

Comfortable, down there.

*Sounds it!*

Peaceful!

*Yes, it must be.*

I get hungry a lot.

*What do you eat?*

You don’t want to hear about that!

*People say you eat earthworms.*

Mmmmmm… Lovely earthworms.

*Well…*

Beetles, too, if I can catch them.

*Do you eat many a day? Earthworms, I mean.*

Well, yes. I suppose I do, one way or another.

*How many do you eat in a day?*

I like to eat about half my own weight every day.

*Half your own weight every day?*

Get peckish otherwise.

*Half your own weight?*

Is that a problem?

*Well, if I did that I’d be enormous!*

And?

*I’d be enormous!*

Well, you did remark that I was stout.

*Mmmm…*

I think that’s the word you used.

*Oh, I’m sure I never said that.*

“Short and stout” you said.

*Well…*

You can’t keep stout if you don’t eat.

*I suppose not.*

I like to be stout.

*Do you?*

Keeps me warm.

*I suppose it would.*

And tunnelling is hard work.

*Must be.*

No good on an empty stomach.

*No. I suppose not.*

So I eat a lot of worms.

*Yes.*

If I can catch them, of course.

*How do you catch your worms?*

Mmmm?

*Can you hear them going through the soil?*

Yes. I can smell them too.

*Really?*

I can smell an earthworm a long way off.

*Amazing!*

Often they burrow into the tunnel and I just pick them up.

*I suppose earthworms are not very clever.*

No. They’re not. They’re stupid, but they’re delicious.

*Can I ask you something?*

Go on.

*What about when it floods?*

It’s difficult.

*Must be.*

Sometimes I can get by in a rest area.

*I suppose there is plenty of air in there.*

If it floods for a long time, though, I could be in trouble.

*Oh.*

And if the water gets into my tunnels I’m in real trouble.

*What would you do then?*

Might make a dash for the surface and try to swim away.

*Can you swim?*

A bit. Not well.

No, I suppose not.

And someone is bound to spot me and eat me.

*Oh.*

So far so good, though.

*Yes.*

Well, it’s been nice to meet you.

*And you.*

Must dash. I’m getting hungry again.

*See you around!*

Or something.

*Bye!*