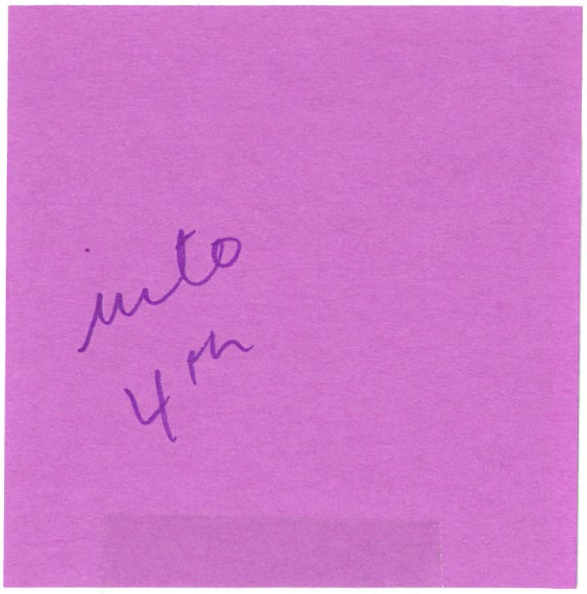
Dear Parents,

This summer assignment is designed for students to complete over the summer to help retain information and keep students reading. My hope is that they are already reading very interesting story books, magazines, articles and nonfiction texts. This summer assignment will ensure that students will keep working on reading and comprehension over the summer time. The assignment will not be due until August 21, 2017. The following scale will be used for grading students.

3 Passages completed will earn a C
5 Passages completed will earn a B
7 Passages completed will earn an A
More may be completed for additional points.

Please contact me with any questions regarding this assignment.

Ms. Taylor
mstaylor@emschool.org



Fireflies in the Garden

By Robert Lee Frost

Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,
And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kind of insect is this poem about?

A) dragonflies
B) fireflies
C) grasshoppers
D) ants

2. What does the poet compare and contrast fireflies with in this poem?

A) stars
B) planets
C) comets
D) planes

3. Read these lines from the poem:

And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

What can you conclude from these lines?

A) The fireflies cannot act like they are stars for very long.
B) The fireflies do not want to be like stars.
C) The fireflies are able to shine brightly like stars without ever stopping.
D) The fireflies can grow to be the same size as stars.

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4. Read these lines from the poem:

That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

Why might the poet have included the phrase "of course" in the last line?

A) to show that the poet does not really know much about fireflies
B) to show that the poet thought the fireflies would be able to sustain the part
C) to show that the poet wishes that fireflies could sustain the part
D) to show that the poet is not surprised that fireflies cannot sustain the part

5. What is the main idea of this poem?

A) Although stars are larger in size, fireflies are more beautiful than stars.
B) Fireflies live in the garden, while stars appear in the sky.
C) Fireflies can seem very star-like, but only for a short time.
D) Fireflies and stars are both interesting things to study.

6. Read these lines from the poem:

And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.

Why might the poet have chosen to use the word "achieve" in the last of these lines?

A) to make it seem like fireflies do not want to look like stars
B) to make it seem like fireflies sometimes look like stars by accident
C) to make it seem like fireflies are very intelligent insects
D) to make it seem like fireflies are trying and succeeding at looking like stars

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7. What does the word "they" refer to throughout the poem?

A) skies
B) flies
C) stars
D) parts

8. What are two ways that the poet contrasts flies and stars in this poem?

9. In what way are flies similar to stars, based on the poem?

10. "Emulating" means imitating, or trying to be like something else. Why might the poet have called fireflies "emulating flies" in this poem? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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A Trip to Taughannock

By ReadWorks

Crunch, crunch, crunch. With each step she took, Eliza made a crunching sound on the stone path she was walking on. Her dad and brother, Kenyon, were far behind her. She always liked to run ahead. When she turned around to see if they were still there, they looked like little ants. They were at the bottom of the hill.

"Come on, slowpokes!" she yelled down to them. Her voice echoed through the trees that lined the trail.

Up ahead, she could see a wooden bench. She slowly jogged to the rest stop and plopped down on a bench. To her right, she noticed an information sign. "Taughannock Falls State Park," it read in big block letters at the top. Eliza remembered having a hard time learning how to spell the tricky name. Her dad taught her how to pronounce it, "Tuh-ga-nick," but spelling it wasn't easy. Underneath the heading, there were a few paragraphs about the big waterfall at the end of trail. Eliza noticed it mentioned where the name "Taughannock" might have come from. It either referred to a Native American chief who used to live in the area, or a Native American word, "Taconic," which means "in the trees."

Eliza already knew plenty about the park, since her father often drove her and her brother there from their home in Ithaca, New York. It was only a ten-minute drive. Eliza loved going to the state park. She would try to explore new trails, or look for little frogs and lizards. She would collect stones she found pretty and add them to her collection back home.

"You know, Taughannock Falls is one of the highest waterfalls around here," her dad said when he and Kenyon reached the bench where Eliza was sitting.

"We knowwww," Eliza and Kenyon said at the same time. Every time they hiked in the park, their dad always told them the same facts.

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"It's even taller than Niagara Falls!" their dad said, laughing. He liked to tease them.

They continued on the trail, stopping every so often for Eliza to pick up an interesting-looking stone. After twenty minutes, they noticed a dry creek bed down off the path. The light tan stone reached far into the distance, and formed a smooth surface of rock.

Eliza noticed some small puddles in some areas. "Can we go dip our feet in the water?" she asked her dad. It was getting hot, and she wanted to cool down.

"Let's go!" her dad said, and both Eliza and Kenyon went running down to the creek bed.

"You know, this used to be full of water," their dad said while they peeled off their shoes. "But since this has been such a hot summer, the creek dried up."

Eliza tried to picture the smooth stone covered in flowing water, full of small fish and stones. She dipped her toe in one puddle, but it was too warm. It was shallow, so the sun heated the water. She looked for another puddle, deeper this time.

"Come over here!" Kenyon called out. He was standing by a larger pool of water, and started to splash water on his arms and legs. "This one is cool!"

After the three enjoyed what was left of the creek, they pulled their shoes on and started back on the trail. They wanted to get to the big waterfall. After walking for a while, Eliza noticed a wooden bridge in the distance. "We're almost there!" she called out.

She ran ahead, like usual, knowing that the bridge meant that they were close. Suddenly, she saw it. It looked like it stretched all the way up to the clouds. The water made a loud crashing noise as it hit the rocks at the bottom of the falls. It amazed her every time she saw it.

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. Who is Eliza hiking with?

2. Where does the story take place?

3. Read these sentences from the text about the Taughannock waterfall.
"It looked like it stretched all the way up to the clouds."
What does this description suggest about the waterfall?

4. Why does Eliza love going to the state park?

5. What is the main idea of this story?

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6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"Her dad and brother, Kenyon, were far behind her. She always liked to run ahead. When she turned around to see if they were still there, they looked like little ants. They were at the bottom of the hill."

What does the author mean by the phrase "they looked like little ants"?

7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

It is getting hot, ____ Eliza dips her feet in the water to cool down.

8. What is at the end of the trail Eliza and her family are hiking?

9. Describe the waterfall using two details from the story.

10. Why does Eliza feel amazed when she sees the waterfall? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

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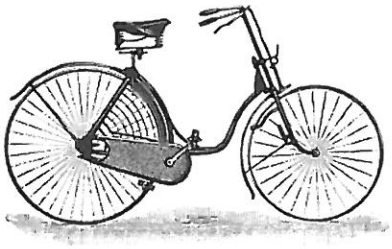
Fixing My Sister's Bike

Kyria Abrahams



I love to fix things. I'm only eight years old, but I can figure lots of stuff out by myself. I want to be a scientist when I grow up.

Last week, the red, shiny reflector came off my sister's bicycle seat. My sister Ariel said she wanted to take it to the bicycle repair shop to be fixed.

"No way!" I stopped her. "I know how to fix things, so I'll fix this too!"

"Well, it had better work!" Ariel said. She looked like she didn't believe me.

I got some rope from the closet, and I tied the reflector right back onto the bike. It dangled a little bit, but it still worked just fine.

"It looks messy," Ariel said.

When my dad came home, I showed him how I had fixed the bike.

"Do you think that's the best solution?" he asked me.

I looked over at the reflector. On second glance, it didn't look that secure after all. There were some pieces of rope hanging off.

I shrugged.

"Yes! It's fine!" I said.

I thought it was the best solution. I had come up with it, after all, so it had to be the best.

"Okay," he said. "Let's see how long it stays attached to the bike."

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My dad said he was proud of me for taking initiative. That means I see something that needs to be fixed and do it without being told!

"I think I have a new lesson for you, though," Dad said. "I want to show you how to conduct an experiment."

I had come up with a solution to a problem, and now the second step was to test it under different conditions.

I asked my sister when she was planning to go for a bike ride. She said at 2:00 p.m.

I grabbed a pen and a piece of paper and made two columns on the paper. One column said GOOD, and one column said BAD. At 2:00, I went outside to watch her ride.

First, she rode down the sidewalk and the reflector stayed on. I made a checkmark in the GOOD column.

Next, she went over a bump and the reflector stayed on. I made another checkmark. Good again!

Then, she rode underneath a tree. *Uh oh!* I knew what was coming next.

One of the branches from the tree swept across the back of her bike, and the next thing I knew the whole reflector was untied and on the ground!

Ariel cried out, "My reflector!"

I made another checkmark, this time in the column that said BAD.

"Back to the drawing board!" I said.

"Grrr!" said Ariel.

Later that night, my dad and I sat down with my paper to look at the checkmarks.

"Under what conditions did the reflector stay on the bike?" he asked me.

I looked. "Well, it stayed on when the bike was riding normally, but it fell off when it was hit by that tree branch."

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"What you have on that sheet of paper is called *scientific data,*" Dad said. "What do you think you can learn from this?"

"I don't think the rope worked very well," I said.

"I don't think so, either," he said. "But you did have to test it first to be sure."

"Well, I tested it and now I know."

"What will hold the reflector on a little bit better?"

"Let's use glue!" I said.

We went downstairs, where the family keeps all our tools. Dad pulled the bike up onto the bench and took out the Super Glue.

I'm not allowed to use strong glue by myself. So we did this part together.

We let the glue dry overnight, and the next day I conducted my experiment all over again.

"You're not going to break my reflector again, are you?" my sister asked. She looked a little mad and suspicious.

"Well, I don't think so," I told her. "But that's what this experiment is for. Do you trust me?"

"I guess so," Ariel said. "But mainly because Dad helped this time!" She stuck her tongue out at me.

I made her ride the bike exactly the same way she had the last time so that we could try to recreate the conditions. This is important in a scientific experiment.

She rode down the sidewalk. The reflector stayed on. So far, so good!

Then, I had her go over the bump again. The reflector stayed on. I made another checkmark. But now it was time for the final test.

"Okay, get ready!" I yelled. "It's time to ride under the tree!"

Just like last time, my sister rode under the tree. However, this time, the reflector stayed on the bike.

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"Yay! It didn't fall off!" Ariel squealed happily.

I was pretty proud myself. I made a great big checkmark in the GOOD column, and then drew a smiley face just for fun.

I turned around to see that my dad had been watching the entire time.

"Excellent work, little scientist," he said. "You recreated the experiment and found the solution to your sister's bike problem."

"And I saved us a trip to the bike shop!" I said.

"You sure did," Ariel said. And then she gave me a great big hug.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What keeps falling off Ariel's bicycle?

A the front wheel
B the back wheel
C the reflector
D the seat

2. The narrator is the person who is telling the story. In this story, the narrator is Ariel's sibling. How does the narrator finally solve the problem of the reflector falling off Ariel's bike?

A by taking Ariel's bike to a repair shop
B by tying the reflector on with some rope from a closet
C by asking their dad to fix the reflector by himself
D by gluing the reflector on with help from their dad

3. Rope does not keep the reflector on the bike as well as glue does.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

A Ariel's father helps to glue the reflector onto the bike after the reflector falls off a second time.
B After the reflector is tied onto the bike with rope, it stays on when Ariel rides down the sidewalk.
C After the reflector is tied onto the bike with rope, it stays on when Ariel rides over a bump.
D The reflector falls off after being tied onto the bike, but it does not fall off after being glued on.

4. Why does Ariel give the narrator a hug at the end of the story?

A Ariel is upset about how long it has taken to fix the bike.
B Ariel is happy that the narrator has fixed the bike.
C Ariel is excited to take her bike to a repair shop.
D Ariel is confused because she does not understand how the narrator fixed the bike.

5. What is this story mainly about?

A two siblings who do not get along until their dad makes them be nice to each other
B a bike that is unsafe to ride because it is falling apart
C a problem with a bike and what the narrator does to solve it
D a girl whose bike breaks and what happens when she takes it to a repair shop

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6. Read the following sentence: "Last week, the red, shiny **reflector** came off my sister's bicycle seat."

What does the word "**reflector**" mean?

A a wheel that turns very slowly
B something that shines when light hits it
C a type of metal that is worth a lot of money
D a safety pad that someone riding a bicycle wears

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

The narrator tries fixing the reflector with glue _____ rope does not work.

A after
B although
C before
D so

8. What causes the reflector to fall off Ariel's bike after it has been tied on with rope?

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9. What are the three bike riding conditions that the narrator has Ariel recreate after gluing the reflector on Ariel's bike?

10. Why is recreating these conditions important to the narrator's experiment?

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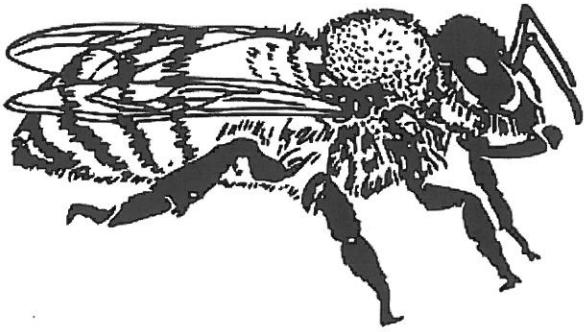
How to Have an Adventure



To have an adventure, first you need to have a dog. You also need to have a small backpack, some juice, and a sandwich, in case your adventure makes you hungry. Although you don't need a map, a route, or a plan—it's best to have no plan at all, in fact—it's never a bad idea to have a goal. For instance, you could want to know what happens to the golf balls that are collected from the sand traps each evening. Or you may wish to learn what it's like to play on the school playground when no one else is there. Or you might want to find out which Mexican restaurant in town sells the best taco. (If you are trying to have this adventure, you will not need a sandwich.)

Kurt had a backpack, juice and a sandwich. He had the best dog in the world, a sad-eyed bulldog named Roscoe. And he had a goal. Having already solved the mysteries of the missing golf balls, the empty playground, and the taco tasting, he had something far more adventurous in mind for this sweltering summer Sunday. With Roscoe at his side, Kurt was going to venture where no boy had gone before. He was going to answer questions that no one but he dared ask. He was going to confront the bees.

Ever since his family moved to town, Kurt had wondered where the honey came from. In their last town, Kurt's mother bought honey at the store in a little plastic bear, the same as everyone else. But since the big move—that's what Kurt's dad always called it, "the big move"—their honey came in a jar, with a crooked label that had obviously been applied by hand. "Hilltop Hives," it said. "Locally Made, Locally Eaten."

"How local is this honey?" he asked his mom the night before, as he spread it on a biscuit.

"Pretty local," she said. "The woman who makes it lives somewhere in town."

"On a hill?"

"Yep. The one behind the movie theater."

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That was all Kurt needed. He had his plan.

The hill behind the movie theater was not a big one. It was easy to walk up it if you took the main road—you could even ride your bike—but nobody ever had an adventure by walking on roads. While the usher wasn't looking, Kurt and Roscoe walked around the back of the movie theater, where the dumpsters were: a concrete corner littered with broken glass and empty soda cans.

"The guys who work here must drink a lot of soda," said Kurt. "But if they work at a movie theater, how come they don't just get big fountain drinks for free?" He wrote this question down in his notebook, to be answered on a future adventure. He helped Roscoe over the wall—the old dog didn't climb as well as he used to—and heaved himself after. The concrete scratched his palms a little, but Kurt did not worry about it. An adventurer fears no pain.

As they scrambled up the hill face, Kurt sweated and Roscoe panted. Halfway up, they paused for a juice break. "On an adventure," Kurt reminded Roscoe, "it's vital to stay hydrated." The dog panted in agreement as he sipped his juice. "Okay, buddy," said Kurt as he wiped the juice from his chin. "Onward!" They went onward together, stepping over gnarled tree roots and under low-hanging branches, until they reached the top. Kurt peered over the edge of the hill, to make sure nothing dangerous lay ahead. It was then that he saw the alien.

"Oh, wow," he said.

The creature wore a bulky white spacesuit, with a screen on the helmet that obscured its face. It held a wheezing brown weapon, which sprayed smoke all around.

"That is a pretty freaky alien," Kurt said. "And probably really dangerous. Let's go see."

Kurt swallowed his fear, and a little more juice, as he approached the creature. Intent on whatever it was doing with the smoke-weapon, the alien did not turn around. Kurt was very close to it now. The alien didn't see him—it wasn't too late to turn around. He sweated, from fear instead of heat, and decided it would be safer to run away. He was about to turn around when Roscoe chimed in.

"Bark!" said Roscoe. "Bark bark bark."

The alien whirled around. It definitely saw them now. The alien grabbed Kurt's hand and pulled him back towards the hill. Roscoe followed, because that is what dogs do. Kurt screamed, but only a little. A good adventurer never loses his cool.

"What are you doing here?" said the alien.

"Having an adventure!" said Kurt.

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A strange sound came from behind the alien's mask, a throaty rippling sound, like gift wrap being ripped. The alien, Kurt realized, was laughing. It raised its hands to the helmet, and lifted the mask.

"Welcome to Hilltop Hives," said the alien, who was—Kurt now saw—not an alien at all. It was a lady, with short brown hair and crinkles around her smile. "I'm Brenda. I'm sorry for grabbing your wrist like that. But bees can be very dangerous if you're allergic."

"I'm not allergic to anything, and I'm not afraid of anything."

"What about him?" she said, pointing at Roscoe.

"He's not afraid of anything except for thunder."

"Well then. Want to meet the bees?"

First, Brenda gave Kurt a bee-suit of his own—with heavy canvas gloves and a helmet just like hers, with a screen that let in light but kept out bees. It was hot in the suit, but he liked being hot better than being stung. Once he was outfitted, they approached the hives. There were six of them, each taller than Kurt, with boxes and boxes piled on top of each other. Brenda explained to Kurt that she takes care of the hives and protects them so that the bees have a safe place to make their honey.

"Each one of those is full of bees?" asked Kurt.

"Yep," she said. "Tens of thousands."

"Wow. You have more pets than anyone I know."

She opened one of the hives, moving very slowly, so as not to upset the creatures inside.

Within the box were eight slats, each covered in honeycomb, and full of swiveling, swarming, waggling bees. Kurt's eyes went wide as she explained to him how the bees worked, how they lived and died, and how every moment of their life was spent making honey in service of their queen.

"What do they make the honey out of?" he asked.

"Pollen," she said. "From flowers."

"Where do they get the flowers?"

"Everywhere! I grow flowers all around the hill, without using any harmful chemicals that can kill the bees. But the bees don't just use the flowers on the hill here. They fly up to five miles each day to find new flowers, then come home and tell the other bees about it, using a special kind of dance."

"You're joking."

"I never joke about honey."

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Kurt peered closely at a cluster of quivering bees. It did look a little bit like they were dancing.

"Five miles," he said. "There's a lot you can see in five miles."

"No kidding," she said. "For bees, every day is an adventure."

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where do Kurt and Roscoe go on their adventure?

A inside a movie theater
B a planet in outer space
C the emergency room of a hospital
D a hill with lots of bees

2. What is the plot of this story?

A An alien comes to earth, hides on the top of a hill, and kidnaps a boy.
B A boy goes on an adventure to Hilltop Hives and meets the bees there.
C A dog gets lost, a boy goes looking for it, and he finds it in a Mexican restaurant.
D A woman puts on a bee-suit, decides to take off the helmet, and gets stung.

3. Read this sentence from the story: "'For bees, every day is an adventure.'"

What evidence from the story supports this statement?

A The hives that Kurt sees are taller than he is.
B The honey that Kurt's family eats comes from Hilltop Hives.
C Kurt sees a creature with a wheezing brown weapon that sprays smoke.
D Bees fly up to five miles every day to find new flowers.

4. Why does Kurt think Brenda is an alien when he first sees her?

A Brenda has short brown hair and crinkles around her smile.
B As Kurt is about to turn around and run away after climbing the hill, Roscoe barks.
C Brenda is wearing something that looks like a white space suit with a helmet hiding her face.
D Brenda explains to Kurt how bees work, how they live and die, and how they spend their lives making honey.

5. What is a theme of this story?

A the dangers of talking to people you do not know
B the harmful effects that pollution has on animals
C the excitement of having an adventure
D the fun of growing up and becoming an adult

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6. Read the following sentence: "Kurt **swallowed his fear**, and a little more juice, as he approached the creature."

What does it mean that Kurt **swallowed his fear**?

A Kurt kept his fear under control
B Kurt touched his throat with one hand
C Kurt was too afraid to keep going
D Kurt screamed for help

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Kurt wants to find the bees; _____, he does.

A however
B particularly
C initially
D ultimately

8. According to the story, what do you need to have an adventure?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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9. What is an example of an adventure that Kurt went on before his adventure at Hilltop Hives?

10. Based on the story, what does it mean to have an adventure? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

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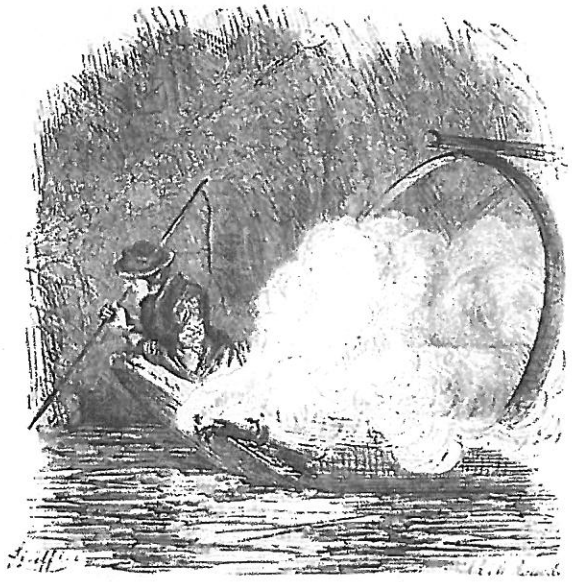
Lessons from Fishing

By ReadWorks



Morgan has always loved fishing. He is about to graduate from high school and has been fishing his entire life. His entire family loves to go fishing—even his grandmother! Morgan started learning how to fish before he could even walk.

"My dad would have to hold the pole," he said, "and I'd reel."

By the time Morgan was two, he could hold the fishing pole all by himself. Now he is eighteen years old and still goes fishing a lot. He tries to make sure he can go at least once every few months. He has gotten even better at it than his father and his grandfather!

When Morgan was ten years old, he caught the biggest fish of his life. It was 4:45 a.m., and he was out in his boat at his favorite fishing spot. But he just wasn't catching anything. Suddenly, he felt his fishing pole bend forward, and the reel started spinning! He had caught a fish, and it was trying to get away! The fish kept trying and trying to get away, but Morgan held on tight. He struggled with the fish for 45 minutes before he finally caught it! When Morgan finally pulled the fish into the boat, it was almost as big as he was!

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The fish was 42 inches long, just 5 inches shorter than Morgan, and wider than him. The fish was so big, Morgan even got to have his picture on the cover of a magazine!

However, Morgan says not every fishing experience turns out so well. Once, when he was 12, he had a fishing experience he will never forget! He was out fishing one morning, and it was very cold. To make matters worse, he also wasn't wearing enough clothes. However, he had caught a fish, and it was one of the largest he had ever caught. After catching it, he attached it to his boat using a stringer, which is a device used to attach the fish to the boat while still keeping it in the water.

When Morgan went to pull the fish out of the water, it escaped with the stringer and started swimming away! He immediately jumped in after it, right into the cold water! Of course, he couldn't outswim the fish, so it got away. "We never saw the fish again; I was freezing, and I lost my stringer," said Morgan. "But it's funny if you think about it." Morgan always tries to have a positive attitude when he is fishing. He thinks being a fisherman has also taught him some important lessons about life. "Fishing has created the person I am," he said. "It brings out the better in me, and it shows me there's more to life than what goes on immediately. Some days you'll get nothing, and the next day you'll go out and catch the biggest fish."

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. When did Morgan start learning to fish?

A when he was two years old
B before he could walk
C when he was 10 years old
D when he was about to graduate from high school

2. In the passage, the author compares which two events?

A a fishing trip when Morgan caught a fish AND a fishing trip when he caught a fish and then lost it
B a fishing trip with his father AND a fishing trip with his grandfather
C a fishing trip when Morgan fell off the boat AND a fishing trip when Morgan went swimming
D a fishing trip with a big, strong fish AND a fishing trip with a small, fast fish

3. In the passage, the author says that Morgan "goes fishing a lot" and that he "has gotten even better at it than his father and his grandfather." Based on this evidence, what can be concluded about the sport of fishing?

A Fishing can be learned in less than a week.
B Being good at fishing takes a lot of practice.
C Only teenagers are good at fishing.
D Fishing is best taught by family members.

4. Read the following sentences from the passage:

"The fish kept trying and trying to get away, but Morgan held on tight. He struggled with the fish for 45 minutes before he finally caught it!"

Based on this evidence, how can Morgan best be described?

A determined
B lazy
C angry
D uncertain

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5. What is the main theme of the story?

A Learning how to fish is a good way to learn how to swim.
B Fishing makes you strong if you hold onto the pole.
C Fishing is a good family activity.
D Fishing is like life, with some days that are a success and other days that are not.

6. Read the following sentences: "When Morgan went to pull the fish out of the water, it escaped with the stringer and started swimming away! He immediately jumped in after it, right into the cold water! Of course, he couldn't **outswim** the fish, so it got away."

What does the word "**outswim**" mean?

A to get out of the water
B to swim faster than
C to swim slower than
D to swim past the boat

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Morgan jumped in the water _____ it was cold.

A after
B because
C when
D even though

8. Explain how Morgan caught the biggest fish of his life when he was ten years old.

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9. Why does Morgan like fishing so much? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

10. Morgan thinks that being a fisherman has taught him important life lessons. Identify one of these important life lessons that Morgan may have learned from being a fisherman by using evidence in the text.

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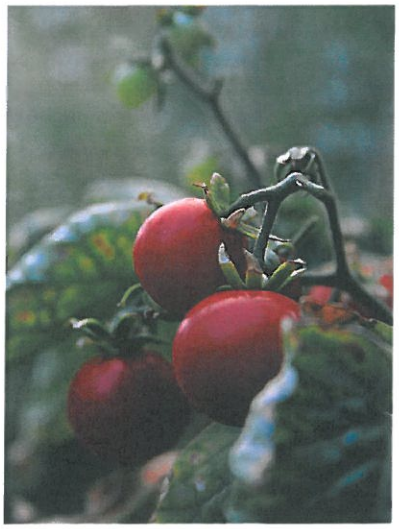
Magic Tomatoes

By Edward I. Maxwell



Luke's father is a farmer. To be more precise, his dad is a fruit-and-vegetable farmer. Instead of cows, pigs, sheep, and horses, Luke's house is surrounded by corn, squash, lettuce, and tomatoes.

Luke does not mind that there are no animals. In fact, he likes living on a fruit-and-vegetable farm much better. If you asked Luke, he would say that a fruit-and-vegetable farm is magical.

"What do you mean, magical?" Luke's friend Tom asked one day.

"Well, it's like this," said Luke. "My dad casts a spell, and soon enough the fruits and vegetables appear where there used to be bare dirt!"

Now, Luke knows that this is not really *magic*. But all the same, he feels it is pretty special that his dad is able to create something as grand as a corn field where there used to be nothing. Sometimes, Luke sets his alarm clock, so he can wake up before the sunrise, too. He eats cereal with his dad and asks him what spells he is going to cast.

"I'm planting tomatoes today, son," Luke's father explained. "Tomatoes ripen best in very hot summer heat, so I need to plant the seeds early in spring. That way there will be tall, healthy tomato vines once August arrives."

"How do you make sure the vines grow tall and healthy?" Luke asked.

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"They grow strong when you give them care and attention and have a little bit of hope," his father laughed.

"Can I help?" Luke begged.

"Of course!" exclaimed his father.

So on days Luke did not have school, he helped his father, and Luke learned more about his dad's magical work.

Luke learned that a tomato plant indeed needs a lot of care. He spent one whole day in the early June sun, sinking wooden stakes into the ground by young tomato sprouts. After the tomato vines had grown a little taller, Luke tied them to the stakes so that they would not topple over and lose their special fruit.

"The tomatoes sure need a lot of attention!" Luke exclaimed one late afternoon. He had been double and triple tying the vines, because the weather forecaster had predicted wind and rain for that night. Luke's father wanted to make sure his tomatoes did not get blown over in the storm.

"Most worthwhile things do require a lot of attention, Luke," replied his father with a smile.

"What do you mean?" asked Luke.

"Well," said his father, standing up straight and wiping the sweat from his forehead. "We should pay close attention to things that make our lives better."

"That is why you pay attention to Mom?" asked Luke.

"Yes," replied his father. "I pay close attention to you and Mom, because you both make my life better. You both make me very happy."

The rest of Luke's work that day went by a lot quicker. Taking care of the tomato plants, Luke imagined he was taking care of his mom and dad. With a little bit of family magic and a lot of attention, Luke was certain these would be the most beautiful tomatoes he had ever seen once August arrived.

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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. What kind of farmer is Luke's dad?

A) a dairy farmer
B) a grain farmer
C) a fruit-and-vegetable farmer
D) a cow-and-chicken farmer

2. One effect in this story is that Luke learns about tomatoes and farming. What is the cause?

A) Luke's house is surrounded by lettuce.
B) Luke helps his father grow tomatoes.
C) Luke explains what he means by "magical" to his friend Tom.
D) Luke sometimes sets his alarm clock so that he can wake up before sunrise.

3. Luke's father pays a lot of attention to his son.
What evidence from the story supports this statement?

A) Luke's father is a fruit-and-vegetable farmer.
B) Luke's father says that most worthwhile things require a lot of attention.
C) Luke's father pays a lot of attention to Luke's mother.
D) Luke's father listens to his son's questions and answers them.

4. What is Luke's opinion of the work his father does?

A) Luke thinks his father's work is special and interesting.
B) Luke thinks his father's work is a waste of time and money.
C) Luke thinks his father's work is strange and confusing.
D) Luke thinks his father's work is evil and dangerous.

5. What is a theme of this story?

A) the benefits of exercise
B) the effects of being lazy
C) giving care and attention to worthwhile things
D) making friends with people who are different from you

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6. Read the following sentences: "Luke's father is a farmer. **To be more precise**, his dad is a fruit-and-vegetable farmer."
Why does the author start the second sentence with the words, "**To be more precise**"?

A) to make readers look up a word
B) to make sure readers are paying attention
C) to create a clear picture in readers' minds
D) to let readers know that more detail is coming

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.
Luke asks about his father's work on the farm; _____ he starts helping his father with work on the farm.

A) before
B) then
C) for example
D) on the contrary

8. If you asked Luke, how would he describe a fruit-and-vegetable farm?

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. Why is Luke certain that the tomato plants he is working with will become "the most beautiful tomatoes he had ever seen" once August arrives?

_____
_____
_____
_____

10. Based on the story, is farming magical? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the passage.

_____
_____
_____
_____

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A Little about Ants

By Mimi Jorling

There are lots of different kinds of ants: carpenter ants, leaf-cutter ants, sweet ants, fire ants, and many more. They are different colors, too. They can be red, or brown, or black. Some are very, very small, and some are rather big. Whatever their differences, though, all ants are social creatures. They live in large groups called colonies. Some ant colonies are big and have millions of ants. There are different types of ants in the colony, and they each have different jobs. The queen lays eggs. Soldier ants protect the queen and the colony. They also gather food and attack other colonies if they need new nesting space. Worker ants take care of babies, look for food, and build ant homes (anthills or mounds). Soldier and worker ants are female. Male ants' only job is to mate with the queen in order to produce eggs, which hatch into baby ants.

Ants are busy little insects. It's easy to see them moving quickly here and there. Sometimes you can see them carrying a small piece of something, or dragging part of a leaf somewhere. Sometimes you even see two ants helping each other carry the same crumb. But where are they going and what are they doing? Ants may seem to be just running around, but they are actually important parts of their ecosystem, their world under our feet.

One thing ants do to help their ecosystem is to keep soil healthy. By constantly digging through the soil, they create spaces in it. Soil needs space inside it for air and water. Without air and water in soil, the tiny creatures that live in soil would not survive.

Ants also help bring nutrients to soil. When they bring food particles to their nests, they add nutrients to soil because they don't eat everything they bring. Their leftovers stay in the soil and break down into nutrients for other creatures living in the soil.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the text, what are social creatures that live in large groups called colonies?

A ants
B flies
C grasshoppers
D beetles

2. What does the author describe in the first paragraph?

A the importance of ants to their ecosystem
B the ways in which ants keep soil healthy
C the food that ants bring to their nests
D the jobs done by ants in a colony

3. Ants are busy insects. What evidence in the text supports this conclusion?

A Ants move quickly from one place to another.
B Male ants' only job is to mate with the queen.
C Some ants are very, very small, and some are rather big.
D Ants can be red, or brown, or black.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"Ants may seem to be just running around, but they are actually important parts of their ecosystem, their world under our feet.

"One thing ants do to help their ecosystem is to keep soil healthy. By constantly digging through the soil, they create spaces in it."

Based on this information, what can you conclude about where the ecosystem of an ant is?

A The ecosystem of an ant is in the ocean.
B The ecosystem of an ant is in the air.
C The ecosystem of an ant is in the soil.
D The ecosystem of an ant is in the desert.

5. What is a main idea of this text?

A Ants can be red, brown, or black.
B Ants are important parts of their ecosystem.
C Soil needs space inside it for air and water.
D Sometimes two ants help each other carry the same crumb.

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6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Whatever their differences, though, all ants are social creatures. They live in large groups called colonies. Some ant colonies are big and have millions of ants."

What does the author probably mean by writing that ants are "social" creatures?

A Ants are creatures that help their ecosystem.
B Ants are creatures that like to spend time with their friends and family.
C Ants are creatures that work hard and carry things.
D Ants are creatures that live together in groups.

7. Read this sentence from the text.

"There are lots of different kinds of ants: carpenter ants, leaf-cutter ants, sweet ants, fire ants, and many more."

How could this sentence be rewritten without changing its meaning?

A There are lots of different kinds of ants, including carpenter ants, leaf-cutter ants, sweet ants, fire ants, and many more.
B There are lots of different kinds of ants, instead carpenter ants, leaf-cutter ants, sweet ants, fire ants, and many more.
C There are lots of different kinds of ants, finally carpenter ants, leaf-cutter ants, sweet ants, fire ants, and many more.
D There are lots of different kinds of ants, next carpenter ants, leaf-cutter ants, sweet ants, fire ants, and many more.

8. What do worker ants do? Include three pieces of information from the text in your answer.

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9. Explain how ants help bring nutrients to the soil. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Explain how worker ants help their ecosystem. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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Sunflowers

By Mimi Jorling

A sunflower is a big, circular, yellow flower that looks a lot like the sun. Sunflowers also need a lot of sun to grow. Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers. The center part is made of one kind of flower, and the petals around it are another kind of flower.

We use sunflowers in many different ways. One thing we do with them is look at them! Many people add them to gardens because they are so big, bright, and colorful. They can also be cut and brought inside. They will last a long time in a vase. A vase is a pretty jar, bottle, or other container that is used to hold flowers.

Sunflower seeds are also good to eat. People, birds, and animals, including squirrels and chipmunks, love to eat sunflower seeds. They can be difficult to eat if they are still in their shells, but they are filled with protein and are good for you! Sunflower seeds also have a lot of oil in them. It can be squeezed out and collected. Many people use sunflower oil for cooking and in recipes.

Sunflowers are pretty flowers, and they give us and other animals food. Be careful of the stems, though—they are rough and very scratchy!

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a sunflower?

A a big, circular, yellow flower
B a big, triangular, red flower
C a small, circular, blue flower
D a small, triangular, purple flower

2. What does the author describe in the second paragraph?

A the center of a sunflower
B different ways people use sunflowers
C animals that love to eat sunflower seeds
D food that is made with sunflower oil

3. Sunflowers provide food to people and animals. What evidence in the text supports this statement?

A "Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers."
B "We use sunflowers in many different ways. One thing we do with them is look at them!"
C "They [sunflowers] will last a long time in a vase. A vase is a pretty jar, bottle, or other container that is used to hold flowers."
D "People, birds, and animals, including squirrels and chipmunks, love to eat sunflower seeds."

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"We use sunflowers in many different ways. One thing we do with them is look at them!"

Based on the information in this text, why might people look at sunflowers?

A because sunflower seeds are filled with protein
B because sunflower seeds have a lot of oil in them
C because sunflowers need a lot of sun to grow
D because sunflowers are bright and pretty

5. What is the main idea of this text?

A Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers.
B The stems of sunflowers are rough and scratchy.
C Sunflowers are pretty flowers that give people and animals food.
D Sunflower seeds can be difficult to eat if they are still in their shells.

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6. Read this sentence from the text.

"Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers."

Why might the author have used the phrase "lots and lots" here?

A to call attention to how bright sunflowers are
B to call attention to the amount of flowers that make up sunflowers
C to call attention to how small the flowers that make up sunflowers are
D to call attention to how much sun sunflowers need to grow

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"Sunflower seeds are also good to eat. People, birds, and animals, including squirrels and chipmunks, love to eat sunflower seeds. They can be difficult to eat if they are still in their shells, but they are filled with protein and are good for you!"

What does the word "they" in the last sentence refer to?

A people
B birds and animals
C squirrels and chipmunks
D sunflower seeds

8. What do sunflower seeds have inside them?

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9. What do people use sunflower oil for?

10. Read this sentence from the text.

"We use sunflowers in many different ways."

Explain what part of a sunflower might be most useful to people. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

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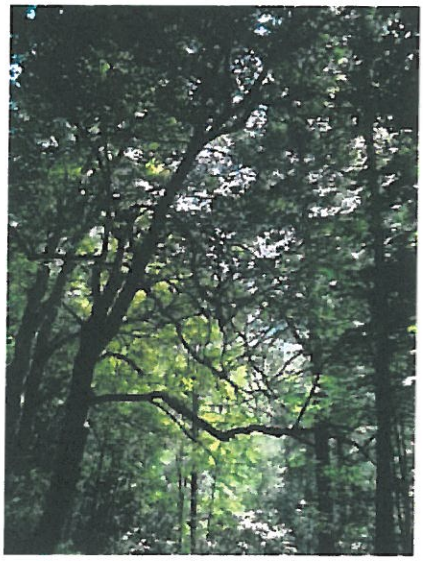
Happy Trails

By ReadWorks



The morning she left for Camp Kanawa, Maria awoke with a lump in her throat and an ache in her stomach. She had gone on plenty of sleepovers. She'd even spent a whole weekend at Aunt Jolie and Uncle Ed's. So why was she so nervous?

No breakfast today, she thought, imagining the ache turning into nausea and a horrible road trip after a full meal. Then the smell of French toast wafted upstairs. As usual, Maria's stomach grumbled as soon as the French toast-scented air hit her nostrils. *On the other hand, maybe a good breakfast is exactly what I need.*

She gave her arms and legs a good stretch and ambled downstairs.

"There's my big camper!" her mom said, squeezing Maria's shoulders with one arm the way she did when she wanted to give a hug but was in too much of a rush for a full embrace. She walked briskly to the stove, placed two pieces of French toast on a plate and tapped a canister above them, powdered sugar snowing down.

"Just like you like it: super fluffy, slightly crispy..."

"...and lightly dusted," said Maria, already in position, armed with knife, fork, napkin and full glass of milk.

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Maria poured a puddle of maple syrup beside the toast and topped each piece with a little mountain of whipped cream.

"Get started while it's hot. Your father's coming down in a minute. I told him to shave. Don't want the grizzly bear—I mean, grizzly beard—to send your new bunkmates running for the woods."

"Okay, okay," Maria's dad said with a sneaky smile. "Clean as a whistle. Just like you ordered."

"*Just* like I ordered?"

"The mustache stays. Admit it, you love it."

Maria's mom shrugged.

"I think it's hip," Maria said, dipping a bite in some syrup.

"Well, your old man *is* hip," her dad said, moving his head the way he did when he wanted to look like a cool surfer dude but looked more like an Egyptian robot. "In fact, I was the most popular kid at my camp."

"For the record, it was science camp," Maria's mother reminded her, "and his rise to fame was thanks to what was known as The Great Explosion."

"Accident or genius? The world may never know," Maria and her dad said in unison, using their deepest, most mysterious voices. They slowly broke out of character and into laughter.

"In all seriousness, Maria, popularity is not important," her mother said, looking her straight in the eyes. "Finding the people who like you for you—that's what matters."

"Your mom speaks the truth, Sugar," said Maria's dad, wiping his thick mustache with a napkin. "Just be yourself. You'll have a blast."

* * * *

Just be yourself. Just be yourself. Maria repeated the words like a mantra as she sat with her new cabin mates in a circle on the grass.

"Cool bracelet," said the skinny, freckled redhead sitting next to her.

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"Thanks. I made it in an embroidery class I took this winter."

"Whoa! That's impressive. Can you teach me how?"

"If you teach me how to do a braid just like the one in your hair. I've mastered the art of French toast eating, but *definitely* not French braiding."

A loud whistle hushed the girls' laughter and buzzing all around them. They looked up to see a beautiful older girl blowing into an acorn top between her thumbs. Her skin was tan and eyes were dark brown, like Maria's, but her dirty blonde hair made Maria feel bored of her plain, black hair.

"Hello! I'm Audrey, one of your two cabin counselors."

"And I'm Gina, your other cabin counselor," said the pale girl with curly, brown hair and eyes that were icy blue in color, yet warm.

"And you ladies are the Dragonflies!" Audrey lifted her arms in the air as she announced it. "Each cabin here at Camp Kanawa is named after a different insect."

"The Cockroach boys—age twelve and thirteen like you—think they've got the best mascot. I beg to differ. Dragonfly girls are as tough as dragons and graceful as...well, dragonflies."

"That sounded better when we rehearsed it," Gina said lightheartedly.

The ache in Maria's stomach had officially turned into butterflies—the excited kind.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

1. At the beginning of the story, where is Maria about to go?

A a sleepover
B Camp Kanawa
C Aunt Jolie and Uncle Ed's
D school

2. How do Maria's feelings about camp change in the story?

A At first Maria is nervous, but then she is excited.
B At first Maria is excited, but then she is nervous.
C At first Maria is excited, but then she is bored.
D At first Maria is nervous, but then she is sad.

3. Maria is anxious and nervous about going to camp. What evidence from the story best supports this statement?

A Maria decides to eat French toast for breakfast before going to camp.
B Maria's parents give her advice about making friends at camp.
C Maria and her mom joke with her dad about being hip and cool.
D The morning she leaves for camp, Maria wakes up with a stomach ache

4. Read the following sentences: "*Just be yourself. Just be yourself.* Maria repeated the words like a mantra as she sat with her new cabin mates in a circle on the grass."

Based on this information, what conclusion can you make?

A Maria is confident that she will make friends.
B Maria is not sure if she will like her cabin mates.
C Maria is nervous about making friends.
D Maria has already made some new friends.

5. What is this story mostly about?

A Maria goes to camp for the first time.
B Maria really loves to eat French toast.
C Maria discovers her love for dragonflies.
D Maria jokes with her parents over breakfast.

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6. Read the following sentences:

She walked briskly to the stove, placed two pieces of French toast on a plate and tapped a canister above them, powdered sugar **snowing down**.

"Just like you like it: super fluffy, slightly crispy..."

"...and lightly dusted," said Maria, already in position, armed with knife, fork, napkin and full glass of milk.

What does the author mean when she describes the powdered sugar as "**snowing down**"?

A The powdered sugar was cold like falling snow.
B The powdered sugar was wet like falling snow.
C The powdered sugar smelled like falling snow.
D The powdered sugar looked like snow as it fell.

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____, Maria is nervous about camp, but soon after she arrives, she becomes excited instead.

A Finally
B Initially
C Especially
D Although

8. What advice does Maria's mom give her before going to camp?

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9. Maria is nervous about going to camp, but after she arrives at camp she becomes more excited than nervous. What causes Maria's feelings to change?

10. Based on the information in the story, will Maria likely have a good time at camp? Support your answer using details from the story.

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