



## Cause and effect

### Reading Comprehension Worksheet

#### Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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**Cause and effect** are about how one thing can cause something else to happen.

The **cause** is *why* something happened.

The **effect** is *what* happened.

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Here is a story about why birds build their nests differently. Think about **cause** and **effect** as you read.

#### The Magpie's Nest

Of all the birds in the air, the magpie builds the very best nest. Long ago, all the birds came to Magpie and asked her to teach them how to build nests. So Magpie got them all together and began to show them how to do it.

First, she took some mud and patted it into the shape of a pancake. "Ah ha!" said Thrush, and away she flew. So Thrush still builds her nest out of mud.

Then Magpie arranged some twigs around in the mud. "Well of course," said Owl, and away she flew. Owls have never made better nests than that.

Magpie turned the edges of the pancake up into a bowl shape, and put more twigs around the outside. "What a good idea!" said Sparrow, and Sparrow makes messy nests to this day.

And so it went on. Each bird took away some knowledge of how to build nests, but none of them waited to the end. Finally, only silly Turtle-dove was left, and she hadn't been paying any attention all along. She had just been sitting there saying her silly cry. "Take two, take two-o-o-o. Take two, take two-o-o-o."

Magpie was adding the last twig to her lovely nest. "Take two, take two-o-o-o" cried Turtle-dove.

Magpie looked at Turtle-dove. "One's enough," she said.

But the Turtle-dove kept on saying, "Take two, take two-o-o-o."

Then Magpie got angry. "One's enough, I tell you."

Still Turtle-dove repeated, "Take two, take two-o-o-o. Take two, take two-o-o-o."

At last, Magpie got even angrier. No one but silly Turtle-dove was left to see her lovely nest that she had worked so long to build. She flew away to find some worms, and refused to show the birds how to build a nest again. And that is why different birds build their nests differently.

In this story, what is the **effect** of each **cause**? Circle your answer.

<b>cause</b>	<b>effect</b>
1. Magpie makes the very best nest. What happened because Magpie makes the very best nest?	Long ago, all the birds asked Magpie to teach them how to build nests.
	Magpie did not want to teach the other birds how to build nests.

<b>cause</b>	<b>effect</b>
2. Thrush watched Magpie pat some mud into a pancake shape, and flew away. What happened because Thrush flew away after watching Magpie shape the mud?	Thrush still makes her nest out of mud.
	Thrush still doesn't know how to build a nest.

<b>cause</b>	<b>effect</b>
3. Sparrow flew away before Magpie's nest was finished. What happened because Sparrow flew away before Magpie's nest was finished?	Sparrow still makes messy nests.
	Sparrow came back and said she was sorry.

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4. Here is a **cause**: Each bird took away some knowledge of how to build nests, but none of them except silly Turtle-dove waited until the end. What was the **effect**?

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5. Here is a **cause**: No one but silly Turtle-dove was left to see the lovely nest that Magpie had worked so hard to build. What was the **effect**?

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### Answer Key

1. Long ago, all the birds asked Magpie to teach them how to build nests.
2. Thrush still makes her nest out of mud.
3. Sparrow still makes messy nests.
4. Accept any reasonable response, such as, none of the birds learned to build a nest as nice as Magpie's.
5. Accept any reasonable response, such as, Magpie got angry, and refused to show the birds how to build a nest again.



## Compare and contrast

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### Reading Comprehension Worksheet

#### Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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When we **compare** two things, we tell how they are *alike*.

When we **contrast** two things, we tell how they are *different*.  
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Here are two stories. As you read, think about how the stories are *alike*, and how they are *different*.

#### Fox and Bear

Fox saw the field being planted with corn. He went to visit Bear, and suggested that they share the field. Fox said he would have the tops of the crop, and Bear would have the roots. When the crop was grown, Bear did not like having only the roots of the corn plants. But it was what they had agreed. The next year, Fox saw the field being planted with turnips. He went to visit Bear. He said that, to be fair, this year Bear would have the tops of the crop, and Fox would have the roots. When the crops were grown, Bear was unhappy again. He had only the bitter tops, while fox had the nice sweet turnips. But it was what they had agreed. However, Bear never agreed to share the field with Fox again.

#### Camel and Pig

Camel said being tall was best, and Pig said being short was best. Camel said if he was wrong, he would give up his hump. Pig said if he was wrong, he would give up his curly tail. They came to a garden inside a low wall. Camel reached his long neck over the wall and ate his fill. Pig could not even see over the wall. Then they came to a garden inside a high wall, with a covered gate. Pig went through the gate and ate his fill. Camel was too tall to go through the gate. They thought about all this, and decided that Camel would keep his hump, and Pig would keep his curly tail, because, as Pig said, "Tall is good when tall is needed; of short, the same is true."

Some of these details are true of just one of the two stories. Some are true of both stories. Some are not true of either story. Read each detail, and select the best answer.

1. The characters are animals.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
2. Someone learns a lesson.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
3. One character is smarter than another.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
4. The characters disagree about something in the beginning.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
5. The characters agree about something in the beginning.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
6. The setting is indoors.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
7. One character tricks another.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story
  
8. The characters never agree about anything.  
A. "Fox and Bear" only                      C. Both stories  
B. "Camel and Pig" only                      D. Neither story

~~~~~

9. What is one other detail that is *alike* or *different* in the two stories?

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## Answer Key

1. C
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. A
8. D
9. Accept any reasonable response.



## Main idea and summarizing

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### Reading Comprehension Worksheet

#### Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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The **main idea** of a paragraph is what the whole paragraph is *mostly about*.

The **details** are *small pieces of information* that make the paragraph more interesting.

A **summary** includes the **main idea** of *each of the paragraphs* in a story. It does not include the **details** of the paragraphs.

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As you read this story, look for the **main idea** of each paragraph. These can be put together to make a **summary** of the whole story.

Anthony's teacher, Mr. Rivera, gave the class a different kind of homework assignment. The assignment was to watch the weather report on television every night for a week. Mr. Rivera told the students some things to listen for as they watched each night's report. He also gave them a worksheet to fill out while they watched.

Mr. Rivera said to look at the large weather map that they would see behind the weather reporter. He told them that they might see a large blue line or a large red line on the map. There might be both a blue line and a red line. He said that a blue line is a high pressure area that usually brings dry weather. A red line is a low pressure area that usually brings wet weather. When blue and red lines meet, there usually is stormy weather on the way.

On the worksheet there was a box to fill in with the expected high temperature for the next day. There were other boxes to check if it was expected to rain, or to be cloudy, or to be windy.

Anthony watched the weather report and filled in the worksheet each night. He noticed that the next day was usually a lot like the report said it would be. One day's weather map showed a blue line right next to a red line, and the next day there was a rainstorm. Anthony decided that he liked this kind of homework assignment.

1. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
  - A. Anthony's teacher is Mr. Rivera.
  - B. Anthony's homework was to watch the weather report for a week.
  - C. Anthony likes to watch the weather report on television.
  
2. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
  - A. Mr. Rivera told the students what to watch for on the weather report.
  - B. Mr. Rivera said the blue lines usually brings dry weather.
  - C. Mr. Rivera said to look at the weather map behind the reporter.
  
3. What is the main idea of the third paragraph?
  - A. The worksheet had a box to fill in with the expected high temperature for the next day.
  - B. The worksheet had a box to check if it was going to rain.
  - C. Mr. Rivera gave the students a worksheet to fill in.
  
4. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?
  - A. Anthony liked the homework assignment.
  - B. One day after Anthony watched the report there was a rainstorm.
  - C. Anthony noticed that the weather report was usually right.
  
5. Write the number 1 through 4 in the boxes beside the events to show the sequence of what happened, from *first to last*.

1-4?

Mr. Rivera told the students what to watch for on the weather report.	
Anthony's homework was to watch the weather report.	
Mr. Rivera gave the students a worksheet to fill in.	
Anthony noticed that the weather report was usually right.	

~~~~~

6. What would be a good title for this whole story?



## Answer Key

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. C
5. 2, 1, 3, 4
6. Accept any reasonable response, such as “A Different Kind of Homework Assignment.”



# Sequencing

## Reading Comprehension Worksheet

### Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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**Sequencing** is putting things in order, *from first to last*.  
 ~~~~~

Here are some examples. Write the number 1 in the box beside what happened *first*. Write the number 2 in the box beside what happens *second*. Write the number 3 in the box beside what happens *third*. Write the number 4 in the box beside what happens *last*.

1. What happened *first, second, third, and fourth*? 1-4?

|                                                                |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| The birds wanted Magpie to teach them how to build a nest.     |  |
| None of the birds stayed the whole time, and Magpie was angry. |  |
| Next, Magpie added some twigs to the nest.                     |  |
| Magpie made a mud pancake.                                     |  |

2. What happened *first, second, third, and fourth*? 1-4?

|                                                                  |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Hans traded his gold coins for a horse.                          |  |
| Hans took his bag of gold coins and set out to visit his mother. |  |
| Hans traded his goose for an ordinary stone.                     |  |
| Hans traded his horse for a cow, and his cow for a goose.        |  |

3. What happened *first, second, third, and fourth*? 1-4?

|                                                               |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Camel reached over low wall, and Pig went through a low gate. |  |
| Next, Pig heard Camel, and said that being short is best.     |  |
| First, Camel said that being tall is best.                    |  |
| Camel and Pig decided that both tall and short can be best.   |  |

4. What happened *first, second, third, and fourth*? 1-4?

|                                                                |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Bear decided never to share the field with Fox again.          |  |
| The next year, Fox had the turnips and Bear had only the tops. |  |
| The first year, Fox had the corn and Bear had only the roots.  |  |
| Fox and Bear decided to share the crops in the field.          |  |

5. What happened *first, second, third, and fourth*? 1-4?

|                                                                                          |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Finally, the Mother Crab saw that she had been foolish to tell her son to walk straight. |  |
| Then the Mother Crab tried and tried, but she could not walk straight forward.           |  |
| The Mother Crab told her son that he should walk straight forward.                       |  |
| So the Young Crab asked his mother to show him how to walk straight forward.             |  |

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6. What clues can you use to understand the **sequence** of events in a story?

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Answer Key

1. 1, 4, 3, 2

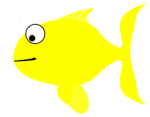
2. 2, 1, 4, 3

3. 3, 2, 1, 4

4. 4, 3, 2, 1

5. 4, 1, 3, 2

6. Accept any reasonable response, such as, look for words like “first,” “next,” “then,” and “finally.”



## Story elements

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### Reading Comprehension Worksheet

#### Practice

A parent or tutor should read along with the student, helping as needed.

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Stories have a beginning, a middle, and an ending.

The beginning of a story tells you *who* the story is mostly about, and *where* the story mostly takes place.

The **characters** are *who* the story is mostly about.

The **setting** is *where* the story mostly takes place.

The middle of a story tells you the *things that happen* in the story.

The **events** are the *things that happen* in the story.

The **plot** is *all of the events* in the story. The plot usually includes some kind of *problem*.

The ending of a story tells *how the problem is solved*.

The **problem solution** is *how the problem is solved*.

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Think about these **story elements** as you listen to this story.

#### The Golden Fish Keeps a Promise

By L. M. Gask

Upon a certain island in the middle of the sea lived a fisherman and his wife. They were so poor they often went without bread when the fishing did not go well.

One day when the man had been fishing for many hours without any luck, he hooked a small golden fish with eyes as bright as diamonds.

“Let me go, kind fisherman,” the little creature cried. “I would not even make a single mouthful for your dinner.”

The man was so moved by the beauty of the golden fish that he let him go. Before he swam away, the fish promised that he would come back if the fisherman ever needed help.

The fisherman laughed, for he could not think how a little fish could help him, other than providing a bit of food. He went home and told his wife about his adventure.

“What!” she cried. “You let him go? We have not a scrap of food in the house, and I suppose that now we must starve.”

The fisherman’s wife continued to fuss at him until, finally, he decided to go and put the little fish to the test. He hurried down to the seashore, and stood at the edge of the waves.

“Golden Fish, Golden Fish! Come and help me, please,” he called. The last word was not out of his mouth when the little fish popped its head up out of the water.

“You see I have kept my promise,” said the fish. “How can I help you, my friend?” And when the fisherman made his request, the fish simply said, “Don’t worry about that. There will be plenty of food when you get home.”

And strangely enough, when the fisherman arrived home, there was a basket of bread on the table, and cheese and fruit as well.

Now let’s think about the **story elements**.

1. **Characters:** *Who* is this story mostly about?

- A. a little golden fish
- B. a fisherman, his wife, and a little golden fish
- C. a fisherman’s wife and a little golden fish

2. **Setting:** *Where* does this story mostly take place?

- A. in a small cabin
- B. on a beach
- C. on an island

3. **Problem:** What *problem* does one or more of the story characters have?

- A. The fisherman and his wife do not have much food to eat.
- B. The fisherman does not want to let the golden fish go free.
- C. The golden fish does not keep his promise to help the fisherman.

4. **Event 1:** Which event happens *first* in this story?
- A. The fisherman's wife fusses at him for letting the fish go free.
  - B. The fisherman catches a small golden fish.
  - C. The fisherman calls for the golden fish to come and help him.
5. **Event 2:** Which event happens *second* in this story?
- A. The fisherman's wife fusses at him for letting the fish go free.
  - B. The fisherman catches a small golden fish.
  - C. The fisherman calls for the golden fish to come and help him.
6. **Event 3:** Which event happens *third* in this story?
- A. The fisherman's wife fusses at him for letting the fish go free.
  - B. The fisherman catches a small golden fish.
  - C. The fisherman calls for the golden fish to come and help him.
7. **Problem Solution:** How is one of the characters' problem *solved*?
- A. The fisherman catches the golden fish again.
  - B. The fisherman asks the golden fish for help, and food appears on the table.
  - C. The fisherman's wife asks the golden fish for help.

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8. How does thinking about **story elements** help you to understand the story better?

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## Answer Key

1. B
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. Accept any reasonable answers. For example, paying attention to the setting, the characters, the problem, and the events in the story can help you picture what is happening. This helps you understand and remember what is most important in the story.



young planks photographs  
attic ladder insulation

## A House of Memories

Eddie does not like cleaning, but over the past few days, he has had to stuff his old toys into garbage bags and the new ones into boxes. He tossed out old, dried-up Silly Putty, puzzles he once glued together, plush animals and more.

Eddie's family is about to move to a new house, and they need their home clean for the next family who will live in it.

"Won't they want our stuff?" Eddie asked his mother. "Who wouldn't want toys?"

"They'll bring their own toys," she answered. "Come on, Eddie. We're nearly done. All that's left to clean is the attic."



Eddie looked around his home. Without any furniture, the house looked big, empty and strange. It made Eddie feel a little sad. He liked this house and his friends, and he did not really want to move.

Eddie followed his mother to the foot of the rickety ladder that led to the attic. Eddie's father was already up there, looking through boxes of old photographs.

"One step at a time, please. This ladder is older than me," Eddie's mother warned.

Eddie carefully climbed up the ladder. At the top, Eddie was surprised to find a big, dark and dusty room. The ceiling was slanted, and the floor was made of rows of wooden planks with strange pink fluff in between the planks.

"You'll have to walk on the wooden beams," Eddie's father said from deep in the room.

"The pink stuff between the beams is called insulation. If you step on that, you'll fall through the floor and wind up in the kitchen!"

With the help of his mother, Eddie balanced on a wooden beam and slowly walked through the attic. He reached his father, who handed Eddie a small and dusty picture. It did not have much color left, but showed a young boy playing baseball in his backyard.

"Is this me when I was younger?" Eddie asked.



“That is me, Eddie, when I was your age,” his father replied.  
“I found it in one of these old boxes.”

“Look, here’s one of me,” Eddie’s mother said, handing Eddie another photograph.

This picture showed a young girl playing hopscotch on a sidewalk. Eddie put the two pictures side by side on the wooden beam he was balanced on.

“You guys were kids?” Eddie asked.

“We weren’t born this old,” Eddie’s mother said, laughing.

Eddie looked at the pictures some more. He had never seen his dad or mom playing baseball or hopscotch or other games. They were always working, cooking, cleaning, driving and doing other adult things. It was hard to imagine them as kids playing in their backyards.



Eddie followed his mother to the corner of their attic where a dusty window was notched into the wall. Looking out, Eddie could see his back yard with a swing set, a tiny tricycle and a machine that made giant bubbles. Eddie had been playing with those toys for as long as he could remember.

“Soon, a new family is going to make this house their own,” Eddie’s mother whispered from over Eddie’s shoulder. “And we’re going to have a new yard to make our own, too.”

Eddie looked back out the dusty window. He liked the swing set, and he did have a lot of fun in that back yard, but he was not a little kid anymore. At the new house, he would be going to a new school. He wanted to try out for the school soccer team and maybe join the drama club. Maybe it was a good time to move after all.

Eddie and his parents finished cleaning the attic and climbed down the old ladder, into their now almost-empty house. Eddie picked up their camera, took it to his parents and said, “Mom, Dad, could you take a picture of me playing in our back yard?”



## A House of Memories (exercises)

### 1. Pick the correct answer.

Eddie is helping clean out his (basement / attic).

Eddie is shown pictures of his (grandparents / parents) while they were younger.

Eddie's family is moving to (a new house / Australia).

The picture of Eddie's father shows him playing (soccer / baseball) when he was younger.

### 2. Write 1, 2, 3 and 4 to put the story events in order.

\_\_\_\_\_ Eddie looks at his old back yard.

\_\_\_\_\_ Eddie's father explains what insulation is in their attic.

\_\_\_\_\_ Eddie follows his mother up the ladder to their attic.

\_\_\_\_\_ Eddie sees what his home looks like without any furniture.

**3. Answer in sentences.**

a. At the start of the story, how does Eddie feel about moving?

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b. Why is Eddie surprised to see the pictures of his parents?

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c. What is Eddie looking forward to doing after he moves?

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**4. If you moved, what sorts of things would you fill a new back yard with? Write your answers below.**

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# A House of Memories (answers)

## 1. Pick the correct answer:

Eddie is helping clean out his (basement / attic).

Eddie is shown pictures of his (grandparents / parents) while they were younger.

Eddie's family is moving to (a new house / Australia).

The picture of Eddie's father shows him playing (soccer / baseball) when he was younger.

## 2. Write 1, 2, 3 and 4 to put the story events in order.

- 4 Eddie looks at his old back yard.
- 3 Eddie's father explains what insulation is in their attic.
- 2 Eddie follows his mother up the ladder to their attic.
- 1 Eddie sees what his home looks like without any furniture.

## 3. Answer in sentences:

- a. Eddie felt a little sad.
- b. Because he saw his parents as kids.
- c. He wanted to try out for the school soccer team and maybe join the drama club.

## 4. Answers may vary.

yeast    directions    ingredients  
recipe    croutons    measuring

## A Loaf of Croutons

Mimi and her little sister Claire are each baking a loaf of bread to go with their family's dinner.

"I'm following Grandma's old bread recipe," Claire announces. She has lined up all sorts of measuring cups and measuring spoons in front of her. Behind them are bags of flour, sugar, salt and yeast. In the middle of her workspace, Claire has a wrinkled piece of paper which has her grandmother's recipe written on it.

Clair follows the directions. "It says to put a pinch of yeast into four cups of warm water, and then add five cups of flour," Claire reads out loud, while measuring the precise amount of flour she needs and dumping it into her bowl.



"Well, I'm going to make my own special bread. I have the recipe right up here," Mimi says, pointing to her head.



Mimi starts dumping ingredients into her bowl without measuring them. A handful of flour goes in, followed by a large spoonful of sugar, a small spoonful of salt, a tiny bit of yeast and a coffee mug of water. Mimi starts kneading these ingredients together, but they are not sticking together very well.

“I don’t think bread works like that,” Claire says. Claire adds exactly one teaspoon of sugar and one-half a teaspoon of salt to her bowl, and then she starts working the mixture into a round ball of sticky dough.



“Well, this is how my bread works,” Mimi says, still struggling with the mess in her bowl. “It’s supposed to be dry and gloppy like this, and then it all comes together perfectly in the end.”

“Whatever you say, Mimi.”

Claire shapes her dough into a perfect ball, then coats it with olive oil, just like the recipe says. She places a kitchen towel over her bowl and sets it by the window.

“It’s not going to bake by the window, Claire. The sun isn’t hot enough,” Mimi points out to her sister in her best grown-up voice.

"I'm not baking it yet. The recipe says you have to wait half an hour," Claire answers. "Grandma says the yeast needs time to make the dough rise. It's supposed to double in size before you bake it."

"My dough's perfect just like it is," Mimi declares. The ingredients in her bowl are barely clinging together, but Mimi plops them onto a baking tray, and into the oven they go. She turns around and smiles at Claire, quite satisfied with her efforts.

"We'll see, Mimi. None of that looked right to me," Claire says.

An hour later, the sisters compare their loaves of bread. Claire's dough has risen beautifully in the oven and has gained a fine and golden crust. Mimi's dough, on the other hand, has turned into something dense and hard. Her bread looks like a short, sand-colored brick.



“You should have just followed the recipe and waited for the yeast to rise,” Claire says. She shrugs her shoulders and rests her perfect loaf on the kitchen table.

Mimi tries to cut her bread, but it is too hard. It breaks into small pieces.

“Be careful, you might break the knife,” Claire says, laughing.

“I think next time I’ll follow a recipe,” Mimi says, sighing.

Just then, the girls’ mother walks in and winks at Claire.

“Did someone make croutons?” their mother asks. “We need them for the salad.”

Mimi lifts up the baking tray with her dense and hefty bread.

“Fresh croutons, right here!” she answers.

“Oh, it was you, Mimi,” her mother exclaims, looking surprised. “I never knew you could bake! These croutons are perfect!”



# A Loaf of Croutons (exercises)

1. Look back through the story. List three different ingredients that either Mimi or Claire used to bake their bread.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

2. True (T) or False (F)? Circle the right answer.

|                                                             |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|
| Mimi waited for her dough to rise before baking it.         | T | F |
| The recipe Claire followed was for her grandmother's bread. | T | F |
| It helps to follow recipes closely when you bake.           | T | F |

- 3. Do you think Mimi's mom really wanted croutons for dinner? Why did she say the croutons were perfect?**

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## A Loaf of Croutons (answers)

1. Look back through the story. List three different ingredients that either Mimi or Claire used to bake their bread. (Answers may vary)

(yeast, water, flour, sugar, salt...)

2. True (T) or False (F)? Circle the right answer.

|                                                             |                                    |                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mimi waited for her dough to rise before baking it.         | T                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> F |
| The recipe Claire followed was for her grandmother's bread. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> T | F                                  |
| It helps to follow recipes closely when you bake.           | <input checked="" type="radio"/> T | F                                  |

3. Do you think Mimi's mom really wanted croutons for dinner? Why did she say the croutons were perfect?

Answers may vary.

prank      squeaky      shampoo  
ladle      raisins      alphabet

## May the Best Prankster Win

When Perla found out she would be spending a few days at her grandparents' house, she squealed with excitement. Her grandpa was a real prankster. For several years, they had been in an intense prank war.



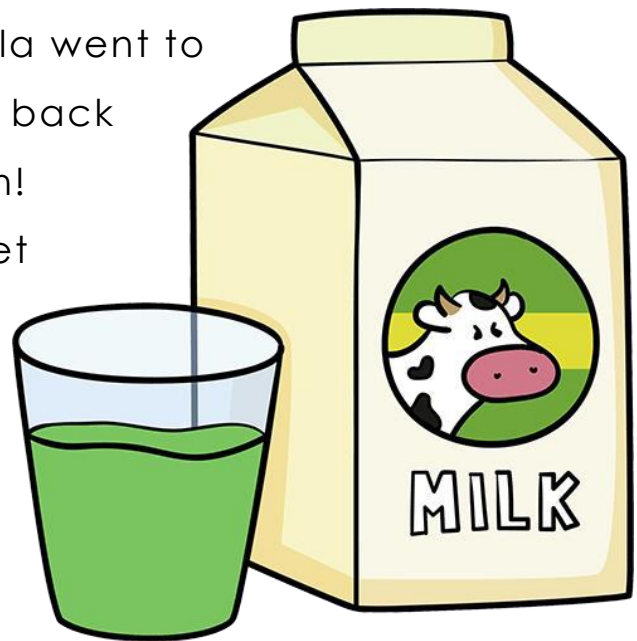
As soon as she arrived, Perla began plotting her first prank. The next morning, Grandpa sat down to eat his breakfast of Raisin Bran and orange juice as usual. When he went to take a bite, however, he noticed that his regular spoon had been replaced by a giant ladle! Even worse, all the raisins had disappeared from his cereal.

“Who took my raisins?!” Grandpa bellowed. He looked around and saw Perla hiding a few feet away. Pretending to be upset, he began to chase her around the house. After he caught her, he held her upside down over the table as she giggled. He pried the raisins from her fingers one by one until her palms were empty and the bowl was full. Then he sat down and ate his cereal using the big ladle.

Later that night, Perla found her favorite doll wrapped in toilet paper. It was sitting on her bed next to a sign that read, "I want my Mummy."

The next morning, Grandpa found plastic ants in his shampoo when he went to wash his hair.

That same day, after dinner, Perla went to pour a glass of milk and jumped back in shock when it came out green! Grandpa stood smiling a few feet away. He was holding a box of food coloring in his hand.



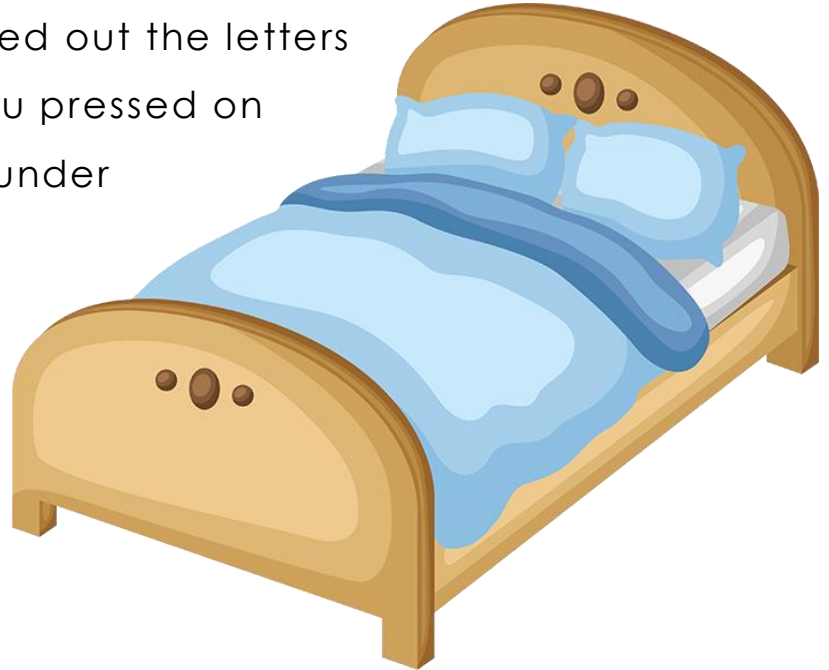
Several hours later, Perla woke up in the middle of the night to a loud squeal. She looked around, startled by the noise. Her heart was pounding hard. After a moment, though, she realized what had happened. Grandpa had placed a squeaky dog toy under her pillow.

Perla spent the next day trying to think of the perfect final prank. She would be leaving the next morning and needed something good. Finally, she had an idea.



She went to the closet where her old toys were kept and began digging. She pulled out several dolls and dress-up clothes before she found what she was looking for. It was a toy keyboard that sounded out the letters of the alphabet when you pressed on them. Smiling, she put it under Grandpa's pillow.

The next morning at breakfast, she asked Grandpa how he had slept. She smiled innocently.



Grandpa scowled, pretending to pout. He continued to eat his Raisin Bran, full of raisins this time, in silence.

Anxious to hear if her prank had worked, Perla turned to her grandmother. "Grandma, how did he sleep?"

"Oh, you wouldn't believe it!" Grandma hollered from the other side of the room. "He woke up at 2:00 am singing the ABC's!"

# May the Best Prankster Win (exercises)

## 1. Short Answer.

a. What did Perla put in Grandpa's shampoo?

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b. What color did Grandpa dye Perla's milk?

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c. What did the sign say on Perla's doll?

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d. What kind of cereal was Grandpa eating?

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**2. True (T) or False (F)? Circle the right answer. If the story does not say the answer, circle (X).**

|                                                       |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Grandpa wrapped Perla's doll in toilet paper.         | T | F | X |
| Perla cried whenever Grandpa played a prank on her.   | T | F | X |
| Perla arrived at her grandparents' house on a Friday. | T | F | X |
| Grandpa pretended to be mad about Perla's pranks.     | T | F | X |

**3. Multiple Choice.**

What was Grandpa doing when he woke up at 2 am?

- a. Dancing the Macarena
- b. Singing the Star-Spangled Banner
- c. Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance
- d. Singing the ABCs

What did Grandpa put under Perla's pillow?

- a. A bowl of cereal.
- b. A dog.
- c. A squeaky dog toy.
- d. A toy keyboard.

What kind of juice did Grandpa drink with his cereal?

- a. Apple
- b. Orange
- c. Cranberry
- d. Prune

- 4. If you were going to play a prank on a family member, what would you do? (Remember that you do not want anyone to get hurt!)**

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# May the Best Prankster Win (answers)

## 1. Short Answer.

- a. Plastic ants
- b. Green
- c. "I want my mummy"
- d. Raisin bran

## 2. True (T) or False (F)? Circle the right answer. If the story doesn't say the answer, circle (X).

|                                                       |                                    |                                    |                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Grandpa wrapped Perla's doll in toilet paper.         | <input checked="" type="radio"/> T | <input type="radio"/> F            | <input type="radio"/> X            |
| Perla cried whenever Grandpa played a prank on her.   | <input type="radio"/> T            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> F | <input type="radio"/> X            |
| Perla arrived at her grandparents' house on a Friday. | <input type="radio"/> T            | <input type="radio"/> F            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> X |
| Grandpa pretended to be mad about Perla's pranks.     | <input checked="" type="radio"/> T | <input type="radio"/> F            | <input type="radio"/> X            |

## 3. Multiple choice.

What was Grandpa doing when he woke up at 2 am?

- d. Singing the ABCs

What did Grandpa put under Perla's pillow?

- c. A squeaky dog toy

What kind of juice did Grandpa drink with his cereal?

- b. Orange

## 4. Answers will vary.

scientist    agricultural    discrimination  
slavery    productive    circumstances

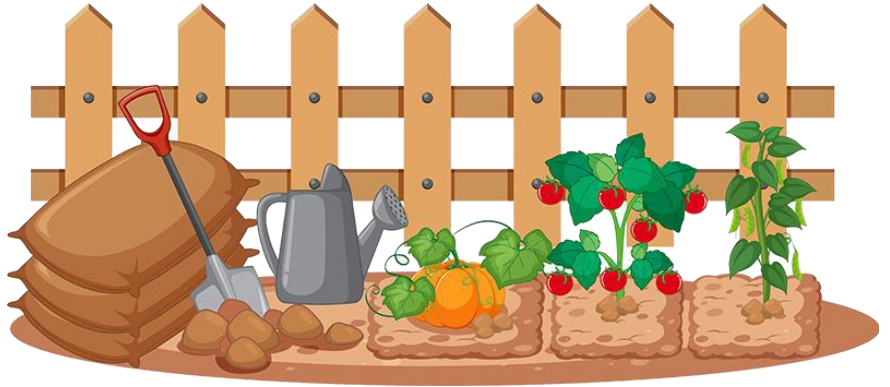
## The Plant Doctor

George Washington Carver was an agricultural scientist who became one of America's most well-known inventors. His accomplishments are even more remarkable when we learn how his life began.

George certainly did not have an easy start to life. He was born into slavery just one year before it was made illegal in America. As a child, he lived with his mother's previous owners, the Carvers, who owned a farm in Missouri. There, Mrs. Carver taught him how to read and write and how to work the land.



From a young age, George was naturally curious. He loved art, music, and science. He was especially interested in farming



and enjoyed experimenting with soil and plants. He had a knack for understanding how to protect crops from pests and diseases. He became so skilled that neighboring farmers recruited him to help them with their orchards and farms. George soon became known in the area as the “Plant Doctor.”

Though he was already quite an expert at a young age, Carver was hungry to learn more. “I wanted to know the name of everything,” he said. “Every stone and flower and insect and bird and beast. I wanted to know where it got its color, where it got its life. But there was no one to tell me.”

At age eleven, Carver left the farm to seek his education elsewhere. For the next ten years, Carver attended various schools across the Midwest, working to support himself financially. He faced a lot of discrimination in these years, and he was often turned away from educational opportunities because of his skin color.

Eventually, he was accepted at Iowa State College. There, he became the first African American to earn his master's degree in Agriculture. George then left Iowa to teach at a school for black students in Alabama. He wanted to help students rise out of their difficult circumstances. Education, he believed, was "the key to unlock the golden door of freedom."

In Alabama, he taught farmers a thing or two as well. Carver saw that the southern soil had been worn out from growing cotton year after year. He believed it could be made healthier by growing other crops during certain seasons. He encouraged farmers to grow peanuts, soybeans, and sweet potatoes.

His plan worked perfectly. By rotating crops, the soil became more productive. The Plant Doctor was alive and well. The local farmers were ecstatic. Not only were their cotton crops better than ever, but they now had a surplus of potatoes and peanuts!





Carver also used his creative genius to invent over 150 uses for sweet potatoes, including flour, vinegar, paint, and ink. Carver is best known today for also inventing over 300 uses for peanuts. These included milk, oil, paper, and makeup.

George's lasting reputation, though, did not come easily. As an African American living at a time when slavery had just ended, he faced many unjust obstacles and dangers. However, through education and hard work, Carver achieved his goals. His passion for plants and people led him from slavery to success.



*George Washington Carver (1864 - 1943)*

# The Plant Doctor (exercises)

## 1. Multiple Choice.

Which of the following is NOT one of the crops George encouraged farmers to grow in Alabama?

- a. soybeans
- b. sweet potatoes
- c. peanuts
- d. broccoli

Based on what you know about George, which of the following was probably his favorite school subject?

- a. English
- b. science
- c. history
- d. recess

Which of the following was George sometimes called during his lifetime?

- a. The Tree Hugger
- b. The Plant Doctor
- c. The Flower Child
- d. The Nutcracker

2. True (T) or False (F)? Circle the right answer. If the story does not say the answer, circle (X).

|                                                                                                          |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Today, George is best known for what he did with sweet potatoes.                                         | T | F | X |
| George's plan for farming in Alabama worked, and the soil and the cotton crops were healthier than ever. | T | F | X |
| George liked farming in Alabama better than in Iowa.                                                     | T | F | X |
| George did not really enjoy learning, and he often slacked off in school.                                | T | F | X |

# The Plant Doctor (answers)

## 1. Multiple Choice.

- d. broccoli
- b. science
- b. The Plant Doctor

## 2. True (T) or False (F)? Circle the right answer. If the story does not say the answer, circle (X).

|                                                                                                          |                                    |                                    |                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Today, George is best known for what he did with sweet potatoes.                                         | T                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> F | X                                  |
| George's plan for farming in Alabama worked, and the soil and the cotton crops were healthier than ever. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> T | F                                  | X                                  |
| George liked farming in Alabama better than in Iowa.                                                     | T                                  | F                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> X |
| George did not really enjoy learning, and he often slacked off in school.                                | T                                  | <input checked="" type="radio"/> F | X                                  |

## 3. In the fourth paragraph of the story, there is a quotation from George Carver. Write out the quotation below.

"I wanted to know the name of everything. Every stone and flower and insect and bird and beast. I wanted to know where it got its color, where it got its life. But there was no one to tell me."

## 4. Is there something you would like to learn about as much as George wanted to learn about plants and nature?

Answers will vary.

- 3. In the fourth paragraph of the story, there is a quotation from George Carver. Write out the quotation below.**

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- 4. Is there something you would like to learn about as much as George wanted to learn about plants and nature?**

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gust      hoists      harness  
lead      pulse      course

## Ada Falls

Today, on the final day of summer camp, Ada and Lilly stand below The Bear Crawl, the camp's highest, hardest rope course. They watch the rope ladder, with its wooden rungs and rope sides, sway in the wind between two tall pines.

Ada's pulse is racing, and her hands feel clammy, but she is relieved to hear Lilly volunteer to go first. Pauline, the camp counselor who always wears a purple jacket, purple hat and purple pants, nods and helps Lilly get ready.

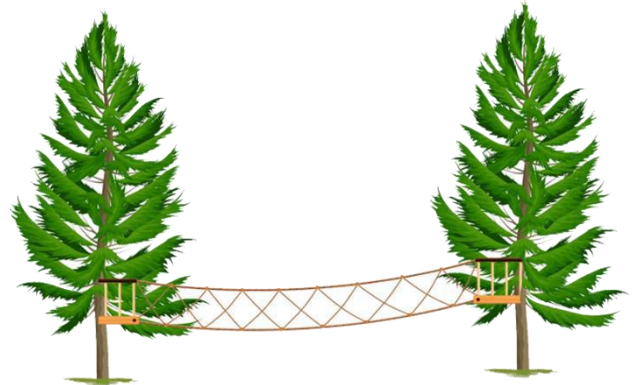
Pauline tugs on Lilly's harness and makes sure her helmet is snug. The safety cable runs from Lilly's harness up to a pulley and then back down to Pauline's purple harness.



Ada watches Lilly grow smaller and smaller as Pauline hoists her up to the wooden platform at one end of the Bear Crawl. Then, hands before feet, Lilly begins her frightening crawl across the rope ladder. The wind blows Lilly's ponytail back and forth and the ladder sways, but Lilly grips tight.

"Go, Lilly, go! You're a champion. You've got this!" Ada cheers from below. When Lilly makes it all the way across, completing the challenge, Ada feels relieved for her friend but also nervous: it is her turn now. Pauline checks Ada's helmet and harness, and she hoists Ada up to the platform.

On the platform, Ada surveys the whole camp. Lilly and Pauline look so tiny down below! Ada stretches her arms out to the first rung on the rope ladder. Her arms feel shaky as she feels the ladder twist a little under her weight. She carefully walks her hands forward to the next rung.



About halfway across the Bear Crawl, Ada is starting to feel a little more confident. She can hear the wind whistling down into the valley and over the lake. The delicate hairs at the nape of her neck rustle in the strong breeze, tickling her. With every rung, she is getting closer to the opposite platform. She can do this!

Ada purposefully reaches out for the next rung with her left hand, just as a stronger gust of breeze makes the rope ladder sway. Ada's hand does not grasp the wood rung. Instead, her hand hits only air and continues downward, followed by her arm, her shoulder and the rest of her body!

Almost immediately, the harness catches her. Pauline slowly lowers Ada to the ground, letting the rope out bit by bit. Ada can see all the other kids staring up at her. Ada's face burns from embarrassment; she feels like a red traffic light dangling above an intersection with everyone's eyes on her. When she finally reaches the ground, she looks at her sneakers and the ground around them.

"Can I try again?" Ada whispers, laboring to hold in hot tears.

Pauline glances at her watch. "I'm sorry, Ada, we don't have time."

On the bus home, Ada rests her forehead against the window watching trees flash by as the bus leaves camp. Her body feels slow and heavy, like lead. Beside her, Lilly sits silent and thoughtful.





“Hey Ada?” Lilly says. “I couldn’t have made it across the ladder without you. I got so terrified in the middle, but then you shouted my name and I kept going.”

“You got scared?”

Lilly nods vigorously, her eyes widening. “Super scared. I’m surprised I didn’t faint or throw up on everybody below.”

Ada smiled a little.

“You were just unlucky such a big wind came up. It felt like a hurricane or something. I thought all the trees were going to fall over and squish us like pancakes,” continued Lilly. “Can you imagine what a Pauline pancake would look like?”

Ada giggled.

“Pauline the purple pancake,” Lilly said softly

Ada burst out laughing. She knew her friend was just trying to cheer her up, but suddenly falling off the ladder did not seem so important anymore. Having good friends was more important.



# Ada Falls (exercises)

## 1. Multiple Choice.

Why does Ada fall?

- a. A knot forms in her throat.
- b. She tries to swat a fly and misses.
- c. Lilly pushes her.
- d. Her hand misses the rung of the ladder.

How does Lilly cheer Ada up?

- a. She convinces Pauline to let her try again.
- b. She watches the trees flash by the bus window.
- c. She starts a food fight at lunch.
- d. She makes her laugh.

Where are Ada and Lilly when they try The Bear Crawl?

- a. On a field trip
- b. At a family reunion
- c. At summer camp
- d. Lost in the woods

**2. True or False.**

|                                                  |      |       |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| Lilly and Ada sit together on the bus ride home. | True | False |
| Pauline is the bus driver.                       | True | False |
| Lilly is kind and thoughtful to her friend.      | True | False |

**3. An old expression is that “laughter is the best medicine.” What do you think that means?**

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# Ada Falls (answers)

## 1. Multiple Choice.

Why does Ada fall?

d. Her hand misses the rung of the ladder.

How does Lilly cheer Ada up?

d. She makes her laugh.

Where are Ada and Lilly when they try The Bear Crawl?

c. At summer camp

## 2. True or False.

|                                                  |                                       |                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Lilly and Ada sit together on the bus ride home. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> True | <input type="radio"/> False            |
| Pauline is the bus driver.                       | <input type="radio"/> True            | <input checked="" type="radio"/> False |
| Lilly is kind and thoughtful to her friend.      | <input checked="" type="radio"/> True | <input type="radio"/> False            |

## 3. An old expression is that “Laughter is the best medicine”. What do you think that means?

Answers may vary.