

Hummingbirds: Small and Special



Kelly Hunt/Photos by MK

Hummingbirds are very special for many reasons. For one, they are very, very small. The smallest kind of hummingbird weighs less than 2 grams. That's less than half the weight of a sheet of paper!

Hummingbirds are also special for the way they fly. They are the only birds that can hover. That means they can stay in one place while flying. Plus, they can fly backwards and even upside down!

All of that flying is supported by a hummingbird's wings. These birds normally beat their wings up to 70 times per second. They can beat their wings much faster when they dive quickly.

How does a hummingbird get all the energy it needs to beat its wings and fly? It gets energy from the food it eats! Hummingbirds get a lot of their food from flowers. They drink nectar from flowers using their long, thin beaks and

tube-like tongues.

When hummingbirds get their food from a flower, they also help the flower. How? By pollinating it! When hummingbirds put their beak into a tube-like flower, some of the flower's pollen can get on them. Then, when they go to sip nectar from another flower, they move the pollen to that new flower. If the pollen lands in the right place in the flower, the plant will grow new seeds. So hummingbirds help lots of plants survive and grow. These birds are truly special!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. How much do hummingbirds weigh?

- A. more than twice the weight of a sheet of paper
- B. less than half the weight of a sheet of paper
- C. more than twice the weight of a baseball

2. The text lists reasons why hummingbirds are special. What is one of these reasons?

- A. They have beautiful feathers and wings.
- B. They can hover, fly backwards, and even fly upside down.
- C. They have babies that they raise.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"All of that flying is supported by a hummingbird's wings. These birds normally beat their wings up to 70 times per second. They can beat their wings much faster when they dive quickly."

Based on this information, what can we conclude about hummingbirds?

- A. They don't need a lot of energy.
- B. They are lazy birds.
- C. They need a lot of energy.

4. How do hummingbirds help lots of plants survive and grow?

- A. Hummingbirds drink nectar from flowers using their long, thin beaks and tube-like tongues.
- B. Hummingbirds fly to different flowers to get the food they need so they have a lot of energy.
- C. Hummingbirds move pollen from one flower to another flower which helps the plants make new seeds.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Hummingbirds are small special birds that can fly in different ways and help plants make new seeds.
- B. Hummingbirds can beat their wings much faster than 70 times per second when they dive quickly.
- C. When hummingbirds put their beak into a tube-like flower, some of the flower's pollen can get on them.

Afternoon on a Hill

by Edna St. Vincent Millay



Courtesy of karenii via Pixabay

hilltops

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

5

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

10

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does the speaker look at in this poem?

- A. the sun and moon
- B. cliffs and clouds
- C. bugs in the grass

2. Which of these phrases from the poem describes part of the setting?

- A. "which must be mine"
- B. "with quiet eyes"
- C. "a hundred flowers"

3. The speaker of the poem wants to enjoy nature without hurting it in any way.

Which evidence from the poem best supports this conclusion?

- A. I will touch a hundred flowers / And not pick one.
- B. I will mark which must be mine, / And then start down!
- C. I will be the gladdest thing / Under the sun!

4. Where is the speaker of the poem spending an afternoon?

- A. on a hill
- B. in a forest
- C. in a town

5. What is this poem mostly about?

- A. enjoying nature without leaving a mark on it
- B. the effects of wind on grass, cliffs, and clouds
- C. travelling from a hill down to a town

6. Read these lines from the poem:

I will look at cliffs and clouds

With quiet eyes,

Watch the wind bow down the grass,

And the grass rise.

Why might the poet have described the speaker's eyes as "quiet" in the second line of the stanza?

- A. to hint that the speaker cannot hear or speak at all
- B. to show that the speaker was not making any noise
- C. to suggest that the speaker's mouth was not staying quiet

7. Read this stanza from the poem:

I will look at cliffs and clouds

With quiet eyes,

Watch the wind bow down the grass,

And the grass rise.

Which of these lines means the same thing as the last line in this stanza?

- A. And the grass rises quietly.
- B. And the grass might rise.
- C. And watch the grass rise.

8. What are three things the speaker will see during the afternoon on the hill?

9. What are two things the speaker will do while spending time on the hill?

10. Based on this poem, how does the speaker feel about spending time in nature? Use evidence from the poem to support your answer.

Building a Better Bicycle

by Linda Ruggieri



Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes.

One of the first bicycles was called the hobby horse. It was made of wood! People rode by pushing their feet along on the ground.

Later, a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented. It was not comfortable. It was called the boneshaker. Inventors kept working to make bicycles more comfortable

Next, the high wheeler was developed. It had a very big wheel in the front. This bicycle was not easy to ride, because the rider sat high up on the bike. The rider could be badly hurt in a fall.

Then bicycles began to have two wheels that were the same size. Those

bikes looked more like bicycles today.

More than one hundred years ago, bicycles began to have rubber tires filled with air. That was a solution to the problem of a bumpy ride. The new tires made riding smoother.

Today, children's bicycles and racing bikes are popular. People ride bikes to get exercise. Bicycling is safer, too. Now people wear helmets, and bikes have reflectors on them.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What was developed more than two hundred years ago?

- A. the first bicycle
- B. the first bike with pedals
- C. the first high wheeler

2. One problem with early bicycles was that they were bumpy to ride. What was used as the solution to this problem?

- A. bikes with rubber tires filled with air
- B. wooden bikes without pedals
- C. bikes with metal tires and pedals

3. Early bicycles were very different from today's bicycles.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
- B. People today ride bicycles to get exercise, and wear helmets as they ride.
- C. The hobby horse was made of wood, and people rode it by pushing their feet on the ground.

4. The bicycle with pedals and metal tires was called the boneshaker. What can you infer about the bicycle based on this name?

- A. It was smooth to ride, but the seat made people's bones hurt.
- B. People liked riding this bicycle more than earlier bicycles.
- C. It was bumpy, shaky, and not comfortable to ride.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. Rubber tires are very important to bicycles today because they make riding smoother.
- B. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago.
- C. Bicycles have changed and gotten better in many ways since they were first developed.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes."

What does the word "developed" most nearly mean here?

- A. created
- B. found
- C. broken apart

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The high wheeler was developed _____ a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented.

- A. then
- B. after
- C. before

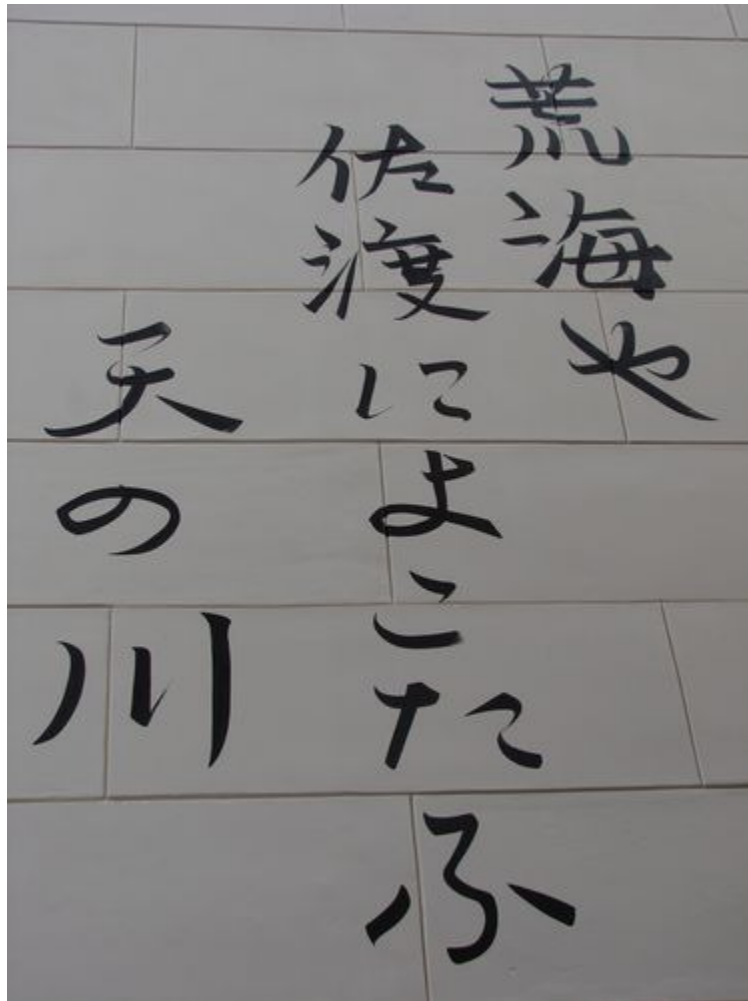
8. What was one problem with the bicycle called the boneshaker?

9. Why isn't the high wheeler bicycle used by many people today? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. This article is called "Building a Better Bicycle." How have today's bicycles solved the problems of earlier bicycles? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Haiku

by Justin Moy



Go outside. What do you see? Many poets write about what they see in nature. Long ago, some Japanese poets looked at nature and then wrote short poems. These short poems are called haiku.

A haiku has three lines. Usually the first line has five syllables. The second line has seven syllables, and the third has five. A haiku expresses a lot by using few words. The picture above is a haiku in Japanese. Here's a translation of it:

seas are wild tonight

stretching over Sado Isle

silent clouds of stars

This haiku was written by a very famous Japanese haiku poet. His name was Matsuo Basho. He lived in the 17th century. Since the 17th century, haiku has been the most popular kind of poetry from Japan.

Today, people all over the world write haiku. There are even haiku contests. What do people write about? These days, haiku can be about anything, but nature continues to be a popular topic.

people write haiku

expressing all that they see

few words say a lot

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a haiku?

- A. a short poem with six lines that is usually about Japan
- B. a short poem with three lines that is usually about nature
- C. a short poem with three lines that is usually about Japan

2. What does the text describe?

- A. haiku poems
- B. different haiku poets
- C. different scenes in nature discussed in haiku poems

3. Please read these sentences from the text:

"Long ago, some Japanese poets looked at nature and then wrote short poems. These short poems are called haiku...Today, people all over the world write haiku. There are even haiku contests. What do people write about? These days, haiku can be about anything, but nature continues to be a popular topic."

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can you draw about the difference between haikus written today and long ago?

- A. Haikus written today are mainly written about nature. They are mainly written by Japanese poets.
- B. Haikus written today are longer as people like to write these poems with more and more lines.
- C. Haikus written today can be about different topics, not just nature. They are also written by people from different places, not just Japan.

4. How can the two haikus provided in the text best be compared?

- A. They are both about nature, but they have different numbers of lines.
- B. They both have the same number of lines and syllables, but one is about nature while the other is about writing haikus.
- C. They both have different numbers of syllables, but they are both about nature.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Today, people all over the world write haiku. These days, haiku can be about anything, but nature continues to be a popular topic.
- B. A very famous Japanese haiku poet named Matsuo Basho lived in the 17th century. One of his haikus is about the seas stretching over Sado Isle.
- C. Haikus are short poems with three lines that express a lot using just a few words. Nature is a popular topic in haikus.

Seeds Need to Move

by Rachelle Kreisman



Alex Valavanis (CC BY-SA 2.0)

A plant starts life as a seed. When that seed grows into a plant, that plant makes new seeds. Those seeds, too, can grow and turn into more new plants.

But did you know that not every seed grows into a plant? To become a plant, a seed has to travel. That is because seeds need room to grow. A seed has to be far enough away from other plants so that it gets the sunlight and water it needs. If a seed falls to the ground too close to its parent plant, it may not grow.

Of course, wind can spread the seeds for many plants. But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds. Those seeds are called hitchhiker seeds. They travel on something else that moves!

Many hitchhiker seeds are prickly. They have tiny rows of hooks. The hooks can stick to fur or feathers. Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body. Then they fall off or are removed. If they fall in a place that is good for growing, the seeds will grow into plants, too!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What do seeds need to do to become a plant?

- A. stay near other plants
- B. make new seeds
- C. travel away from other plants

2. What kind of seed does this passage describe in detail?

- A. sunflower seed
- B. hitchhiker seed
- C. an animal's seed

3. Some plant seeds are made a certain way so that they will be able to travel.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. If a seed falls to the ground too close to its parent plant, it may not grow.
- B. Not every seed grows into a plant, because a seed needs to travel to become a plant.
- C. Hitchhiker seeds have tiny hooks so they can stick to animal fur or bird feathers.

4. Why might a seed not grow if it falls to the ground too close to its parent plant?

- A. The parent plant might take up all the sunlight and water that the seed needs to grow.
- B. The seed might not get pushed into the soil if it falls too close to the parent plant.
- C. The parent plant might give the seed all of its water, which is not good for the seed.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. A seed has to move far away enough from other plants to become a plant because seeds need room to grow.
- B. Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body, then fall off and grow into a plant.
- C. All seeds grow into plants, but only some plants are able to make new seeds.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds. Those seeds are called hitchhiker seeds. They travel on something else that moves!"

What does the phrase "depend on" most nearly mean in these sentences?

- A. move
- B. need
- C. hold

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"Of course, wind can spread the seeds for many plants. But some plants depend on animals to move their seeds."

What does the word "their" refer to?

- A. some plants
- B. animals
- C. the wind

8. What are hitchhiker seeds?

9. Why do seeds need room in order to grow?

10. Read these sentences from the text.

"Hitchhiker seeds can travel for miles on an animal's body. Then they fall off or are removed. If they fall in a place that is good for growing, the seeds will grow into plants, too!"

What would a place that is good for the hitchhiker seed to grow be like? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

How Not to Save a Sand Castle

by Linda Ruggieri



Gavin and Lily were working hard on their sand castle. They decorated it with shells. They built towers and doors. Their castle was gigantic!

Lily built a high wall to protect the sand castle from the wind. Gavin said he thought the wall would stop people from accidentally stepping on the castle and smashing it.

People walked by and said nice things about the sand castle. Lily and Gavin's mom took a photograph of it. Then she said it was time for lunch. Lily and Gavin ran with their mom to the snack bar. "We will finish our castle when we get back," they said.

After lunch, the children went back to the beach. But where was the sand castle? Did the wind blow it down? Did someone step on it?

Lily and Gavin's mom explained what had happened. The ocean waves had moved up the beach. The rise and fall of the big waves had pushed water farther up onto the shore and the sand. The water must have washed away their castle.

"Some of our shells are scattered around here," said Lily. "We should build another sand castle."

"Okay," Gavin agreed. "Let's get started!"

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What are Gavin and Lily doing at the beginning of the story?

- A. They are swimming in the ocean.
- B. They are taking a photograph.
- C. They are working on a sand castle.

2. Where does this story take place?

- A. at the beach
- B. at a park
- C. at a skating rink

3. Read this sentence from the story.

"Gavin and Lily were working hard on their sand castle."

What evidence from the story supports the idea that Gavin and Lily were working hard?

- A. They could not find their sand castle when they came back after lunch.
- B. Their sand castle was gigantic.
- C. Their sand castle was washed away by the ocean waves.

4. How do Gavin and Lily feel when they learn that their sand castle has been washed away?

- A. Gavin and Lily are upset and never want to build a sand castle again.
- B. Gavin and Lily are eager to build another sand castle.
- C. Gavin and Lily are surprised that the ocean was strong enough to wash away their sand castle.

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. Gavin and Lily build a big sandcastle, but the waves wash it away.
- B. Lily, Gavin, and their mom go to a snack bar for lunch.
- C. The people who walk by Gavin and Lily's sand castle say nice things about it.

6. Read this paragraph from the story.

"After lunch, the children went back to the beach. But where was the sand castle? Did the wind blow it down? Did someone step on it?"

Why does the author start writing questions in this paragraph?

- A. to show that none of the characters know what has happened to the castle
- B. to show readers what the children are thinking
- C. to show that even authors sometimes do not know what is happening in a story

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

The big ocean waves moved up the beach, _____ they washed away the sand castle.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. Why does Lily build a wall?

9. What does Gavin think the wall that Lily builds will stop people from doing?

10. Do Lily and Gavin do a good job of protecting their sand castle? Why or why not? Support your answer with evidence from the story.

How the Little Frog Got So Loud

by Gabrielle Reyes



United States Department of Agriculture

The coquí is a frog from Puerto Rico.

A tiny type of frog lives on the island of Puerto Rico. It's called the coquí (Ko-KEE), and it spends a lot of time in trees. The coquí is only about an inch long. But you would never know that from its big sound! When the sun goes down, coquí males start singing: Ko-kee, ko-kee, ko-kee! They call out very loudly till the sun comes up.

The original people of Puerto Rico are called the Taíno. Long ago, they were fascinated by these teeny frogs. The Taíno told many stories to explain why the coquí sings so loudly.

Here's one of those stories:

Long ago, a goddess came to the island. She fell in love with the son of a local Taíno chief. His name was Coquí. This goddess took good care of Coquí. She helped him catch fish. She protected him from harm. One night, the goddess and Coquí made plans to be together. But then a terrible hurricane blew in. When the storm passed, the goddess searched everywhere but could not find Coquí! He was lost, forever.

To remember her beloved, the goddess taught the frogs to call his name. She is hoping that one day he will answer. That's why every night across Puerto Rico, frogs chirp, "Coquí, Coquí."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kind of animal is a coquí?

- A. a huge lizard
- B. a tiny frog
- C. a tiny fish

2. What does this text describe?

- A. the different animals that live in Puerto Rico and their diets
- B. the biggest mountain in Puerto Rico and the people who climbed it
- C. the coquí's and one story that the Taino people told about them

3. Read these sentences from the passage.

"Here's one of those stories: Long ago, a goddess came to the island. She fell in love with the son of a local Taíno chief. His name was Coquí."

What can you conclude about the Taíno's stories based on this information?

- A. Their stories were only about animals.
- B. Normal people had relationships with gods in their stories.
- C. Gods were always mean to humans in their stories.

4. How did the Taíno's story explain the coquí's loud voice?

- A. It said that a goddess taught the frogs to sing the name of her lost love.
- B. It said that a wicked witch put a curse on the frog for being rude to her.
- C. It said that a goddess got turned into a frog because she angered her father.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Long ago, the Taíno told stories about the coquí to explain its loud voice.
- B. The coquí is a small frog that lives on Puerto Rico.
- C. A goddess once fell in love with Coquí, a Taíno chief's son.

My Bean Plant

by Rachelle Kreisman



My grandfather loves to grow plants. He raises vegetables and fruits, and he takes great care of all of them. Last week, Grandpa gave me some green bean seeds. Now I can grow my own green bean plant.

I brought my seeds home and showed my mom. She helped me get my green bean project ready. First, we put some soil in a pot. Then we planted a few seeds. I remembered that Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow. So I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water.

I checked on my plant every day. When the soil felt dry, I added more water. Today, I saw a tiny stem. The plant is growing! Over the next few weeks, more stems and leaves will grow. Then flowers will grow, too.

What am I most excited about? I cannot wait to eat the beans! I think they will taste even better because I grew them myself.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What did Grandpa give to the main character?

- A. some green beans
- B. green bean seeds
- C. a fully-grown bean plant

2. The main character planted the seeds, put the pot in a sunny spot, and added water. What was the effect of these actions?

- A. The soil got dry right away.
- B. A tiny stem grew after some time.
- C. The seeds quickly turned into green beans.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water.

"I checked on my plant every day. When the soil felt dry, I added more water. Today, I saw a tiny stem. The plant is growing!"

What conclusion can you draw from this evidence?

- A. The main character has taken care of many different plants in the past.
- B. The main character is doing a good job of taking care of the bean plant.
- C. The main character doesn't really care about the bean plant.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"I cannot wait to eat the beans! I think they will taste even better because I grew them myself."

Why might the main character think the beans will taste even better because he or she grew them?

- A. because the main character normally hates the taste of green beans
- B. because the main character is way better at growing plants than Grandpa
- C. because the main character put work into taking care of the beans

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. The main character takes care of a green bean seed and helps it start growing into a plant.
- B. The main character's grandfather loves to grow vegetables, and he takes great care of all his plants.
- C. The main character is excited to eat green beans because they are a tasty vegetable.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"I remembered that Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow. So I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water.

"I checked on my plant every day. When the soil felt dry, I added more water. Today, I saw a tiny stem. The plant is growing!"

Based on this text, what does the phrase "depend on" most closely mean?

- A. need
- B. like
- C. change

7. Read these sentences from the text.

"I remembered that Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow. So I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water."

Now read this sentence about the same information. Then, choose the answer that completes the sentence without changing the meaning from the story.

I put the pot in a sunny spot by the window, and I added some water _____
Grandpa told me that plants depend on water and sunlight to grow.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. What do plants need so they can grow?

9. What are two things the main character did to the bean plant to help it grow?

10. What would happen to the bean plant if the main character forgot to give it water?
Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Playgrounds for Everyone

by Linda Ruggieri



Playgrounds are places built to let kids have fun. The best playgrounds are set up so that children can play safely while getting exercise. Lots of playgrounds include swings, slides, climbers, and other things.

Playgrounds were not always fun for all kids, however. Children in wheelchairs and kids with vision or hearing problems found it difficult to get around a playground. Some could not walk up or down steps. Others could not sit on the swings. The playgrounds were not safe places for them.

A few years ago, some people wanted to fix that problem. They found a solution. They raised money to build playgrounds where all kids can play together.

New playgrounds were built with low steps or ramps. Those changes have made it easier for some children. The new equipment also has handrails for kids to grab and pull themselves up.

Other changes have made playgrounds more fun for all children. Some playgrounds now have drums, chimes, and other instruments to play. Kids can turn a rain wheel and listen to the sound of rain.

These new playgrounds help everyone get in on the fun!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What are places built for kids to have fun in?

- A. playgrounds
- B. steps
- C. ramps

2. Playgrounds were not safe for some children. What was the solution to this problem?

- A. People raised money to build playgrounds where all kids can play.
- B. Children in wheelchairs found it difficult to get around a playground.
- C. Lots of playgrounds include swings, slides, and climbers.

3. Playgrounds were not always fun for all kids.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. "Some playgrounds now have drums, chimes, and other instruments to play. Kids can turn a rain wheel and listen to the sound of rain."
- B. "Children in wheelchairs and kids with vision or hearing problems found it difficult to get around a playground."
- C. "Lots of playgrounds include swings, slides, climbers, and other things."

4. Read this paragraph from the article.

"New playgrounds were built with low steps or ramps. Those changes have made it easier for some children. The new equipment also has handrails for kids to grab and pull themselves up."

Based on this paragraph, what have changes to playgrounds made it easier for children to do?

- A. The changes have made it easier for children to play on swings at playgrounds.
- B. The changes have made it easier for children to get around playgrounds.
- C. The changes have made it easier for children to see and hear at playgrounds.

5. What is the main idea of this article?

- A. Kids can have fun and get exercise by playing on climbers and swings.
- B. New playgrounds have been built that allow all children to have fun.
- C. New playgrounds have been built with low steps, ramps, and handrails.

6. Read these paragraphs from the article.

"Other changes have made playgrounds more fun for all children. Some playgrounds now have drums, chimes, and other instruments to play. Kids can turn a rain wheel and listen to the sound of rain.

"These new playgrounds help everyone get in on the fun!"

What does the phrase "get in on" mean here?

- A. join in
- B. go away from
- C. stand next to

7. Choose the answer that best completes this sentence.

Some kids found it difficult to get around a playground _____ they could not walk up or down steps.

- A. so
- B. because
- C. but

8. What children were playgrounds not safe places for?

9. Name three changes made to new playgrounds.

10. Choose one change made to playgrounds, and explain how it has made playgrounds safer. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

A Lion in the Bedroom

by ReadWorks



When James woke up, he found a lion sleeping on the floor next to his bed. Because he was five years old, he thought this was awesome.

"Hello, lion!" he yelled.

The lion, a female with a patchy coat, opened one eye and stared at him lazily. Then she turned over and fell back asleep.

James considered petting the lion or scratching its belly - Trixie, his old cat, loved belly scratches - but he was proud enough of his new pet that he wanted to tell his parents first. So, he jumped out of bed and walked into the kitchen. His father was eating breakfast.

"Do you want me to strip the bathroom moldings this weekend?" his father asked his mother. "Or can it wait a week?"

"It can wait," she said, frowning. "But you should really *want* to strip the moldings."

"I got a lion!" yelled James.

"That's nice, dear," said his mother.

"Well played, son," said his father. "Most five-year-olds go with something showier, like an ocelot or a puma. But you've gone the classic route."

"I'm naming it Trixie II: Return of Trixie," said James. "I want to ride her to school."

"Sure," his father said, "everyone wants to ride their lion to school. But where will you park it?"

"Bill," his mother said. "We've talked about your sarcasm."

"It's not sarcasm," his father. "I'm being fu-"

James's father didn't get to finish his sentence. It was interrupted by an ear-splitting roar, coming from James's bedroom.

For a few seconds, neither one of his parents said anything.

"Maybe I'll name her Tiger," said James. "To confuse people."

"James," said his father quietly. "What was that?"

"That was Trixie II."

"Oh dear me," said his mother, crossing herself.

James's father craned his head to peer down the hall towards James's bedroom. After a moment, he knelt down in front of his son and put his hands on his shoulders.

"James," he said. "I need you to be completely, 100% honest with me. No make-believe, no story-time? Can you do that?"

James nodded. "Sure I can." He noticed a droplet of sweat dripping down his father's forehead.

"OK, great," said his father, in a strange, small voice. "James. Is there a lion... a real lion... in your bedroom?"

"Dad," said James, patiently. "We've been over this."

His father stared at him.

James sighed. "Of course there is, dad."

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!" his mother screamed. "Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Helen, stop it!" snapped his father. His father stood up. "This is ridiculous. I don't know what that noise was, but there is not a lion in your bedroom."

James's father walked angrily to the broom closet. He opened the door, pulled out a mop with a long wooden handle and began marching towards the hallway.

"For gosh sake, Bill," his mother said, grabbing him by the shoulder. "Let's just get out of here and call the police. Or animal control. Or someone. *Please*."

"And tell them what?" His father wheeled around to face her. "What? That we have a *lion* in the house? Oh, I'm sure they'll send a car right out."

"Tell them her name is Trixie II," said James. "Someone might have met her before."

"Bill..."

"I'm not calling *anyone*," his father said. With that, he turned and stomped down the hallway. James and his mother looked down after him.

"Do you think dad and Trixie II will get along?" James asked his mother. "Dad is so moody these days and Trixie II is just kind of...mellow."

"Quiet," his mother hissed.

They watched his father approach the door. He reached for the handle and, holding the mop high in his other hand, gently swung the door open and poked his head around the corner.

James barely had time to be curious about his father's reaction before his father turned on his heels, slammed the door shut and went sprinting down the hallway towards James and his mother.

"*Get out of the house right now!*" his father hollered as he ran. "*Go! Run! Now! Move! Move! Move!*"

His father practically shoved James and his mother through the living room and out the front door. When they were outside, his father doubled over, panting for breath.

"Where in the world did you get a *lion*?" he yelled at James.

"You mean it's *real*?" his mother screamed, her eyes bugging. "Ahhhhhhhhhh!"

"They come from Africa, right?" said James.

By this time, neighbors had heard the commotion and begun gathering. Their next-door neighbors were the Horowitzes. Mr. Horowitz walked up to James's father.

"Bill, is something the matter?"

James's father turned and stared at Mr. Horowitz. "There's a lion in my son's bedroom."

Mr. Horowitz threw a quick, worried glance at his wife, who was standing on their front lawn. His wife shrugged.

"O.K.," said Mr. Horowitz, slowly. "Do you want us to call somebody?"

"Her name is Trixie II," explained James. "Or maybe Ms. Botticelli. I like how that name sounds."

"Call somebody!" his father yelled. "Call anybody! There's a lion in my son's bedroom."

"Helen," said Mr. Horowitz quietly. "Should we call somebody?"

"I don't even know," said James's mother, breaking down in sobs. "I never know."

By this time a dozen neighbors had gathered in front of James's house. All of them were yelling at each other, trying to figure out what had happened, when suddenly everyone froze. There, at the front door of James house, was a massive African lion. Everyone stared at it, completely silent.

For a few moments, the lion stared back. Finally, she let out a long sigh.

"Guys," the lion said, "I know I'm a guest and I don't mean to be a pain, but I had a really late night last night and I have a client meeting at 10, so I was really hoping to sleep in. Do you think you guys could keep it down just a little bit? Thanks."

And with that, the lion turned and walked back in the house.

"What about Rambo?" said James. "That's a cool name. *Rambo*. Yeah, I like that."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does James find in his bedroom?

- A. a tiger
- B. a lion
- C. Trixie, his old cat

2. How do James's parents change in the story?

- A. At first they don't believe there is a lion in their house. Then they become scared that there might be a lion in their house.
- B. At first they are scared that there might be a lion in their house. Then they don't believe there is a lion in their house.
- C. At first they don't want James to have a lion, and then they change their minds.

3. When James tells his parents that he has a lion, they do not believe him. Which details from the passage support this conclusion?

- A. James's father grabs a mop and goes to look in James's room.
- B. James's mother wants to call the police or animal control.
- C. James's mother says, "That's nice," and his father makes jokes.

4. Read the following sentences:

"James,' he said. 'I need you to be completely, 100% honest with me. No make-believe, no story-time? Can you do that?'

'James nodded. 'Sure I can.' He noticed a droplet of sweat dripping down his father's forehead.

"OK, great,' said his father, in a strange, small voice. 'James. Is there a lion...a real lion...in your bedroom?'"

How does James's father feel at this point in the story?

- A. annoyed
- B. frightened
- C. happy

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. James finds a lion in his bedroom and tells his parents.
- B. James misses his cat Trixie, so his parents buy him a lion named Trixie II.
- C. James is scared of the lion in his bedroom, and his father hits it with a broom.

6. Read the following sentences: "'It's not sarcasm,' his father said. 'I'm being funn-'
James's father didn't get to finish his sentence. It was **interrupted** by an ear-splitting
roar, coming from James's bedroom."

In this sentence, what does "**interrupted**" most nearly mean?

- A. became louder
- B. kept going
- C. stopped

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

James tells his parents that there is a lion in his bedroom, _____ they do not believe him.

- A. but
- B. so
- C. because

8. How does James feel about the lion in his bedroom?

9. What does the lion do at the end of the passage?

10. What makes this story unrealistic, or unlike real life?
