

Jake's Jar

Jake loves to read everything in sight! This is why he joined the school's reading club. Jake reads when he first wakes up in the morning. He reads a little at lunchtime. He reads right before he goes to sleep at night.

One day, Jake asked Mom how many books he had read so far. He and Mom forgot to count them. Mom found an old jar in the kitchen. Every time Jake finished a book, they put a dime into the jar. This would help them know how many books Jake had read.

When the jar was full, Jake wanted to buy a book to give to his reading club. Jake's mom cheered and said that was a wonderful idea!



What does Jake love to do?



How can the dimes in the jar help Jake tell how many books he has read?

Cactus Plants

Cactus plants grow in the desert. They come in all shapes. Some are big. Others are small. How do they live in this dry place?

They can store water in their stem. The stem is thick. It has a waxy coat. That keeps the water inside. Cactus plants have no leaves. They have spines or scales. The spines and scales can store water. The spines keep animals away, too. How? They are sharp!

How do their roots help them live? Their roots do not grow down. They grow out to the side. They are near the top of the soil. So a little bit of rain can help. The roots soak up the water. All these things keep this plant alive.



How does a cactus store water?



How do the roots of a cactus help it live in the dry desert?

Animal Watch

Jason and Pete decide to take a walk in the forest. They know that the animals come to the forest pond to drink. If the boys are very quiet, they will be able to watch the animals.



The boys hide behind some tall bushes. When they look over the bushes, they can see the pond clearly.

Soon the boys hear a sound coming closer and closer. It sounds like a deer or perhaps a family of skunks.

Suddenly Pete gets a funny feeling in his chest. "Hic," says Pete. "Hic, hic, hic. I've got the hiccups!"

The boys hear the sound quickly moving away.

"I'm sorry," says Pete. "I just can't be quiet when I have the hiccups. Maybe we'll have better luck next time."

-  Why do the boys go to the forest?
-  What makes the animals move away?

A Special Gift

Rachel wanted to give Michelle a special birthday gift. But she had no money.

One afternoon Rachel noticed that Mrs. Will next door was giving away old furniture. Old chairs and tables were stacked on the sidewalk. Rachel asked Mrs. Will if she could take one of the wooden chairs.

"Sure," said Mrs. Will.

The chair was covered with cuts and marks, but it looked strong. Rachel found cans of old paint in her garage. There were lots of different colors. Carefully she painted a bright sky and lots of flowers on the chair.

Rachel took the chair to Michelle's birthday party. She hid it behind a bush until it was time to open presents.

"I love it!" screamed Michelle when she saw the chair. What a special gift the chair made!



What did Rachel give Michelle for her birthday?



What made the gift special?

Plants and Animals

Are there ways in which grass, birds, and people are all alike? Here are two. Grass, birds, and people are all living things. And all living things need to have food.

Plants and animals get food different ways. Most plants cannot move around, so they need to make their own food. They use energy from the sun along with water, air, and parts of the soil to create their food.

Animals cannot make their own food, but they can move around to find it. Animals chase after their food, fly across the sky to catch it, or figure out other ways to get their meals.

How do you move around to get the different things you eat?

- ✔ What is the passage mostly about?
- ✔ How do animals and plants get their food in different ways?

Watch Out for Flying Foxes

Birds and insects can fly, but can foxes fly, too? The bat is the only flying mammal. Fruit bats, the largest of all bats, are sometimes called *flying foxes*.

There are almost 200 kinds of fruit bats. They are called fruit bats because they survive on fruits. Some fruit bats only drink the juice from fruit. Others eat whole fruits, seeds and all.

Most fruit bats have long noses, large eyes, pointy ears, and furry bodies. Some kinds have wings as long as six feet across. Fruit bats can be brown, gray, or black. They live in thick forests or swamps. Fruit bats are often found in trees in big groups called *camps*. Some camps have more than a thousand bats in them.

The next time you hear noise in the trees, look up. It might be a camp of fruit bats!



What is this article mostly about?



Why are fruit bats called *flying foxes*?

The Fox and the Crow

Long ago, there lived a crow. One day, the crow was looking for food. He found a piece of cheese in the grass. "I am so lucky!" he said.



"This cheese will make a good meal."

He picked up the cheese with his beak. Then he flew up to a branch.

At the same time, a fox was walking by. The fox wanted the cheese. So he came up with a plan. He said nice things to the crow. "I have heard you have a good voice!" said the fox. "Will you sing for me? I love a good song!"

The crow wanted to show off his fine voice. So he began to sing. When he did, the cheese fell down.

"I fooled you!" said the fox. Then he ran off with the cheese.

-  What did the fox want from the crow?
-  How did the fox trick the crow?

A Walk on the Ceiling

House flies can be real pests. They can also carry germs. But they can be very interesting to just watch.

Did you ever see a house fly walk on the ceiling? Did you wonder how house flies could do that? Like other insects, all flies have six legs. Each leg ends in a claw. The claw helps all kinds of flies hold on to walls and ceilings.

But a house fly has something else. Each of its claws has a little pad. When the house fly walks on something smooth, the pads become flat. The pads also give off a sticky liquid. This liquid acts like a glue. It holds the house fly to the ceiling.

Would you like to be like a house fly?
Would you like to walk on the ceiling, too?



What helps house flies walk on ceilings?



Why should you never let flies walk on your food?

The White House

The White House is the home of the President of the United States. It is indeed a big, white house. A painter would need 570 gallons of white paint to cover all the outside walls!

The White House has six floors, 132 rooms, and 32 bathrooms. Some rooms are for the president's family and friends. Other rooms are used as offices or for meetings. Parties and other celebrations are held in some rooms. The biggest room is the East Room. It is used for balls and parties. The president has small dinners in the Blue Room. Big dinners, on the other hand, take place in the State Dining Room.

You would enjoy a visit to the White House. The tour takes you to five of the rooms. You might even meet the president!



What is this passage about?



Tell what two of the rooms in the White House are used for.

Carla's New Bike

Carla looked at her beautiful new bicycle and grinned. She had worked hard for seven months to get this bike, and now it was hers! Carla thought back to last September when she had asked Mom and Dad for a new bike. They told her that she would have to help out and earn some of the money herself. Carla accepted their decision and got to work.

In the past seven months, she had done many different jobs to earn money. She had delivered newspapers, run errands, and walked the neighborhood dogs. Carla had saved quite a bit of money, and her parents had given her the rest. That morning, they had purchased her new bicycle.

"We are very proud of you," said Mom and Dad. And Carla was feeling very proud of herself!

- ✔ What did Carla have to do in order to get a new bike?
- ✔ How did Carla and her parents feel at the end of the story?

Electing a President

Every four years, the American people vote for the person they want to be president. The vote takes place on the first Tuesday in November. That day is called Election Day. In order to vote, you must be an American citizen. You also must be at least eighteen years old.

People who are running for president are called "candidates." Each candidate has a running mate. The running mate becomes vice president if the candidate is elected.

Months before Election Day, the candidates travel around the country. They talk about the country's problems and how they will solve them. For example, they might discuss topics such as jobs, taxes, and education. The candidates also have televised debates to answer questions about these topics. Then the American people vote for the person who they think will be the best choice.



- ✔ How old must you be in order to vote?
- ✔ What do the candidates do before Election Day?

Hard-Working Insects

Ants are fun to watch. They are always busy! These insects work hard. Ants live in groups called *colonies*. Some colonies are very large. They have millions of ants.

There are different types of ants in a colony. Each kind of ant has a job to do. There is one queen ant. A queen ant lays the eggs. She is bigger than the other ants. Worker ants build the nest. They look for food. They take care of baby ants, too. Whose job is it to protect the ants? That is the role of the soldier ants.

Ants are found all over the Earth. They vary in color. But most of them are red or black. Many stories have been told and many tales have been written about ants. Why? They are interesting insects!

-  Name two types of ants in a colony.
-  Which ants build the nest and look for food?

Grandma Nell

Grandma Nell moved in with us last month. She wanted to be closer to her family. Her son, my dad, would be in the same house. Her daughters, Aunt Peg and Aunt Tracy, live ten minutes away with their families. I love spending time with Grandma, even if she does not say much. She jokes that she leaves the talking to her son!

When I came home from school the other day, Grandma was in the kitchen. Something smelled really delicious! But I did not check what it was. I needed to get homework done, so I went straight upstairs. At dinner, I found out the cause of that great smell. Grandma had surprised us! She'd made a chicken dinner with vegetables and biscuits. As I put some chicken on my plate, I smiled at Grandma. She smiled right back at me.

Today Grandma and I are making biscuits together. Grandma Nell is a good cook and an even better teacher. I cannot wait until my family comes home for dinner!

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- ✔ Why did Grandma Nell move in with the narrator?
- ✔ What did Grandma Nell cook for the family?

A Job for Karla

Karla watched the actors on stage. They looked as if they were having so much fun. How could they do it while she could not? Whenever Karla got on stage, she felt awful. She would feel dizzy and then forget all her lines.

Still Karla did enjoy watching the play. Mitch was so good at saying his lines, and Ann looked like a real queen. On the way home from school, Karla wondered how she could join her friends in the play. Surely there was a job for her, even if she was very shy.

The next day Karla saw a poster on the stage door. She read it. Karla just knew it was the perfect job for her.

That afternoon, Karla learned how to run a spotlight. Karla could watch the play and be part of the action. And she never had to step on stage!



What is the story mostly about?



What probably was written on the poster Karla read?

Simon the Squirrel

Simon was a cheerful squirrel that lived in an enormous tree in the Franklins' backyard. He had created a comfortable home where he had hoped to spend the rest of his years. However, one morning, something happened that changed everything for Simon. The Franklins brought home a large, annoying dog!

After that, Simon became an extremely unhappy squirrel. Whenever he ran down the tree, the dog barked and chased him around the backyard.

So Simon sat down to figure out how to solve the problem. After giving the matter much thought, he decided that he had to move! Simon was already packing when he heard loud noises below. When he looked down, he saw a tremendous moving van. The Franklins were moving, so now Simon could stay! He hoped that whoever moved in would not have a dog. Simon's wish came true—the new family had a house cat!



What was Simon's problem?



How was Simon's problem solved?



Rainbows

Whenever people see a rainbow, they usually stop to admire it. However, most people do not know what a rainbow actually is.

A rainbow is composed of sunlight. Although you might think sunlight is colorless, it is actually made up of seven colors. The colors are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

The colors in sunlight are always there, but we only see them at specific times. When sunlight passes through raindrops, the light is bent, or refracted. That breaks the sunlight into the seven bands of colored light that form a rainbow. Sometimes you cannot see all seven colors because some of the colors blend.

When can you see a rainbow? When the sun is shining and it is raining at the same time. Stand with your back to the sun and look in front of you. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to see a beautiful rainbow!

-  What is a rainbow made of?
-  When can you see a rainbow?