

Four children are in the school gym waiting for class to begin. Read the selection to find out what each child worries about and answer the questions that follow.

Choosing Sides for Basketball

by Kathryn Schultz Miller

Characters:

DANNY (9)

REGGIE (9)

MELINDA (9)

AND GEORGIE (9)

(Danny and Melinda will enter from one side and Georgie and Reggie will enter from the other. Danny blows the whistle and all come running down the aisles, calling to each other, as if they are playing before gym class begins.)

DANNY: Hi ya, Reggie!

REGGIE: *(Calling from across the room, as he enters the playing area.)* Hey, Danny, throw me the ball!

(Both arrive on the stage and throw the ball back and forth to each other. They have just been let out of class and are full of energy.)

MELINDA: Hey, you guys, I want to play too! Over here. Reggie, throw it to me!

(They start to play. The boys are not altogether happy to have Melinda join them. Georgie has entered slightly behind the rest and has taken her place on the center cube. She is doing simple exercises, sometimes taking notice of the others around her. She is trying hard to look occupied even though she feels left out. Others continue to play until Reggie begins showing off doing tricks with the ball.)

DANNY: *(Taking the ball away from Reggie.)* Hey, look what I can do. My cousin taught me. *(He tries to balance the ball on his forefinger but it keeps falling off.)* Don't laugh. I'll get it, just wait a minute.

REGGIE: *(Taking the ball from Danny, acting cocky.)* Danny, I don't know why you even bother. Here let me show you how. *(He balances the ball perfectly on his finger.)*

MELINDA: Oh, Reggie, you're always showing off.

REGGIE: See, Danny, now that's how it's done. *(Still balancing ball.)*

DANNY: *(His pride is hurt.)* Why do you act so smart, Reggie? You failed gym class last report card.

REGGIE: *(Embarrassed.)* So what. *(He bounces the ball hard in Danny's direction and walks away.)*

MELINDA: *(Taking ball from Danny.)* Come on guys, let me try.

- REGGIE: (*Noticing Georgie.*) Hey, why don't you play, Georgie?
- MELINDA: (*Taunting.*) Oh, she won't play. (*Walking over to Reggie and giggling.*) Georgie, Porgie, puddin' an' pie! (*She and Reggie laugh.*)
- DANNY: (*Noticing Georgie's discomfort.*) Cut it out, Melinda. Hey, Reggie, let's play keep away from Melinda. (*They throw the ball back and forth, over Melinda's head so that she can't reach it. They are calling "Keep away, Keep away, Keep away." The boys are laughing and Melinda is running back and forth, getting out of breath.*)
- MELINDA: You guys! Come on! I don't like this! Quit!
- (*Georgie watches as they play keep away. Finally Melinda makes a jump for it, loses her balance and falls into Danny. They both fall to the ground. Melinda laughs out loud because she has stopped their taunting. While on the ground Danny blows the whistle; the audience should not see him do this.*)
- MELINDA: I told you class was going to start. Get in line!
- (*Georgie puts the cube upstage next to the banner and runs to her place in line, on top of the ladder. The others are lined up on the sides of her, looking out into the distance.*)
- REGGIE: I hate it when they make us choose sides for basketball.
- MELINDA: Who is it this time?
- (*All look to see who has been designated "captain." All actors' eyes focus on one place, some squint.*)
- GEORGIE: (*To Danny.*) Who are the captains?
- DANNY: He's new. He's from the 6th grade class. He's so bad they held him back last year. But he sure is good at basketball. He must be seven feet tall.
- REGGIE: Now he's in our gym class.
- MELINDA: His name is Benjamin Schwartz.
- DANNY: But they call him "Benny Bingo." Because he always says "bingo" when he shoots a basket.
- REGGIE: Yeah, and he does that a lot.
- MELINDA: (*Pointing.*) And that's Allison Bronson. She's the other captain. Boy, she's tough, too.
- GEORGIE: They'll never pick me. I'll be sitting here till the very last and they'll never pick me.
- REGGIE: (*Crossing his fingers.*) I hope they pick me.
- GEORGIE: I wish I were invisible.

- REGGIE: I hope. I hope.
- MELINDA: Oh, don't worry, Reggie, you're good. Benny Bingo will pick you for sure.
- REGGIE: I failed gym class last report card.
- MELINDA: How did you fail?
- REGGIE: The teacher said I didn't concentrate enough, whatever that means.
- MELINDA: What did your Mom and Dad say?
- REGGIE: (*Walking out from his place in line.*) It wasn't very nice.

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| <p>1. In this selection, what is the purpose of the information in parentheses?</p> <p>A It tells the actors how to say their lines.</p> <p>B It explains what happened earlier.</p> <p>C It tells about the setting of the play.</p> <p>D It describes the action of the play.</p> | <p>2. At the beginning of the selection, why is Reggie embarrassed?</p> <p>A because he is afraid he will not be picked for a team</p> <p>B because he cannot balance the ball on his finger</p> <p>C because he failed gym class earlier in the year</p> <p>D because Melinda stole the ball away from him</p> |
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3. In this selection, which character seems to be uncomfortable with the other children?
- A Danny
 - B Georgie
 - C Melinda
 - D Reggie
4. Melinda is taunting Georgie. What does *taunting* mean?
- A making fun of
 - B playing with
 - C talking to
 - D yelling at
5. How are Melinda and Georgie different?
- A Georgie is more interested in playing with her classmates than Melinda.
 - B Georgie is more confident than Melinda.
 - C Melinda is more shy than Georgie.
 - D Melinda likes playing basketball more than Georgie.
6. How are Georgie's and Reggie's feelings at the end of this selection similar?
- A They are both happy that the basketball game is about to start.
 - B They are both excited because good players are captains of the teams.
 - C They are both worried that they will not be chosen for a team.
 - D They are both afraid that they might fail gym class again.
7. What will ***most likely*** happen later in the play?
- A Reggie will tell what his parents said to him.
 - B Georgie will be chosen first for the team.
 - C Melinda will explain what "concentrate" means.
 - D Danny will become friends with Benjamin.

End of Set

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*Answers to
Grade 4 Reading Comprehension Sample Items*

| Passage Title | Question Number | Correct Answer | Category | Thinking Skill | Objective Number |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 1 | D | Cognition | Knowledge | 2.02 |
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 2 | C | Cognition | Knowledge | 2.04 |
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 3 | B | Interpretation | Analyzing | 3.01 |
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 4 | A | Cognition | Analyzing | 1.03 |
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 5 | D | Critical Stance | Analyzing | 2.05 |
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 6 | C | Critical Stance | Analyzing | 2.05 |
| Choosing Sides for Basketball | 7 | A | Interpretation | Generating | 2.02 |