



**ELA**

***Grade 3  
Item Sampler  
2015–16***





**DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.**

## **Rory's Funny Story**

by Janice Graham



- 1       Everybody in Rory's class had a Funny-but-True story to tell. The teacher, Mrs. Evans, had the best Funny-but-True stories of all. On Monday she told about her cat playing the piano. On Tuesday she told how she found a nibbled-on piece of bologna in the toe of her red high-heeled shoe. On Wednesday she told about a mysterious truck dumping a mountain of rocks in her driveway. The neighborhood kids climbed and played on it until the truck came back to move the mountain to the right address.
- 2       Mrs. Evans had a million funny stories. But Rory couldn't think of even one to tell.
- 3       "It's time again for our Funny-but-True stories," announced Mrs. Evans on Thursday. "Who has one today?"
- 4       Rory slumped in his chair.
- 5       "I have a Funny-but-True!" cried Dana, waving wildly. "My big sister lost her new diamond engagement ring. She was really worried. My mom looked in all the places my sister had been. And there it was in a basket of laundry, sparkling in the dirty socks!"
- 6       The class smiled, and some people chuckled. Rory leaned forward and plopped his chin on his desk. Nothing funny ever happened to him.
- 7       Friday's Funny-but-True was the best one yet. Tad told how his sister had found a hairy black tarantula the size of her hand in the bathroom medicine chest. After she was through screaming her

head off, she decided to keep the spider for a pet. Rory sighed. The class would laugh about that one all through lunch recess. Somewhere in his life there had to be one Funny-but-True story. But Rory knew his weekend would be just the same old boring thing.

8        Rory's dad promised they would try out the new dome tent in the backyard Friday night. "Just my luck," thought Rory when a lightning storm blew up. He shuffled into the house to find his dad had turned it into a campground. The new tent filled up the living room like a big blue elephant. "What next?" thought Rory.

9        On Saturday, Rory's four-year-old sister decided to see if her baby bunny could swim. Just in time Rory saved the soggy bunny from a bucket of water. While Mom gently blow-dried the little rabbit, he explained to his sister that bunnies can't swim. "Silly kid," thought Rory.

10       On Sunday Rory and his family piled into the car and headed for Grandma's house. Passing drivers stared and pointed. When they got there, Rory discovered that their cat, Tiger, had ridden to Grandma's on the roof of the car. "Dumb cat," thought Rory.

11       "Time for Funny-but-Trues!" said Mrs. Evans on Monday. Rory looked around the room. He was sure Dana or Tad had another great story, but nobody spoke up.

12       "Rory, how about you?" asked Mrs. Evans.

13       Rory shook his head. "Nothing funny ever happens to me."

14       "Oh, I bet funny things happen all the time," said Mrs. Evans. "Tell us about your weekend."

15       Rory told about sleeping in a tent in the living room. The class looked surprised. He saw a few smiles. Next he told about the bunny's swimming lessons. A few people giggled. When he told about Tiger riding on the roof of the car all the way to Grandma's house, the class broke into roars of laughter.

16       Rory tried, but he couldn't stop laughing either.



Janice Graham, "Rory's Funny Story," *Highlights for Children, Inc.* 55, no.3 (March 2000).

1. Which sentence from the story would be the **best** caption for the illustration?
- Ⓐ "The teacher, Mrs. Evans, had the best Funny-but-True stories of all." (paragraph 1)
  - Ⓑ "But Rory couldn't even think of one to tell." (paragraph 2)
  - Ⓒ "'I have a Funny-but-True!' cried Dana, waving wildly." (paragraph 5)
  - Ⓓ "'Oh, I bet funny things happen to you all the time,' said Mrs. Evans." (paragraph 14)

2. Read this sentence from paragraph 8.

**The new tent filled up the living room like a big blue elephant.**

What does the author mean by the words, "like a big blue elephant"?

- Ⓐ The tent was big like an elephant.
- Ⓑ The tent was shaped like an elephant.
- Ⓒ The tent did not fit in the living room.
- Ⓓ The tent looked funny in the living room.

3. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

How does Rory feel when the other students are sharing stories?

- Ⓐ eager to tell his stories
- Ⓑ sad he had no funny stories
- Ⓒ happy to hear their funny family stories
- Ⓓ bored because his family had no funny stories

**Part B**

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ "But Rory couldn't think of even one to tell." (paragraph 2)
- Ⓑ "The class smiled, and some people chuckled." (paragraph 6)
- Ⓒ "Rory told about sleeping in a tent in the living room." (paragraph 15)
- Ⓓ "Rory tried, but he couldn't stop laughing either." (paragraph 16)

- 4.** Which sentence states the central message of the story?
- Ⓐ To find out if your stories are funny, you need to share them with others.
  - Ⓑ To find out if your stories are funny, you need to invite your family to read them first.
  - Ⓒ You need to use your imagination to create funny stories.
  - Ⓓ You need to use your friends' opinions to create funny stories.
- 5.** What happened when a truck dumped a pile of rocks in Mrs. Evans' driveway?
- Ⓐ She found a missing diamond ring in the pile.
  - Ⓑ Her cat jumped on the pile and played the piano.
  - Ⓒ Rory's family put their tent on the pile and camped in it.
  - Ⓓ Kids in the neighborhood climbed and played on the pile.
- 6.** In paragraph 5, what does the phrase "waving wildly" tell the reader about Dana?
- Ⓐ She wants to ask a question.
  - Ⓑ She wants to hear Rory's funny story.
  - Ⓒ She gets embarrassed about talking in class.
  - Ⓓ She is eager to share her story with the class.

7. The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What can you tell about Rory's family from this passage?

- Ⓐ They have a lot of children.
- Ⓑ They live in a big city.
- Ⓒ They have fun together.
- Ⓓ They scream at spiders.

**Part B**

What detail from the passage **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- Ⓐ A lightning storm blew up on Friday night.
- Ⓑ Rory's sister put a rabbit into a bucket of water.
- Ⓒ Rory said that nothing funny ever happened to him.
- Ⓓ Dad set up a big blue tent in the living room.



8. Choose a word for each blank to complete the sentences about how Rory changes.

At the beginning of the story, Rory felt 

<input type="radio"/> shy
<input type="radio"/> fierce
<input type="radio"/> hungry

 about sharing.

By the end, Rory was feeling 

<input type="radio"/> surprised
<input type="radio"/> puzzled
<input type="radio"/> upset

 that he could make

people 

<input type="radio"/> remember
<input type="radio"/> laugh
<input type="radio"/> cry

 .

9. What does “broke into roars of laughter” mean in paragraph 15?
- Ⓐ The children laughed as loudly as lions.
  - Ⓑ The children were as hungry as lions.
  - Ⓒ The children divided into small groups to tell jokes.
  - Ⓓ The children laughed so hard they broke their desks.

- 10.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What does soggy mean in paragraph 9?

- Ⓐ tiny
- Ⓑ strong
- Ⓒ soaking wet
- Ⓓ smelling bad

**Part B**

Which detail from the passage gives the **best** clue to the meaning in Part A?

- Ⓐ The rabbit is covered in long, white fur.
- Ⓑ Rory pulls the rabbit from a bucket of water.
- Ⓒ Rory's mom holds the bunny as if it were a baby.
- Ⓓ Rory's mother uses a blanket to make the rabbit warm.

- 11.** Choose the two **best** descriptions of Mrs. Evans and the reasons for them.
- Ⓐ She was tired because her days were long.
  - Ⓑ She was careless since she forgot about Rory.
  - Ⓒ She was fearful because she was afraid to tell her stories.
  - Ⓓ She was amusing because she told the funniest stories of all.
  - Ⓔ She was lazy since she made her students do all the work.
  - Ⓕ She was helpful because she encouraged Rory to share his stories.

**DIRECTIONS: Read the passage and then answer the questions that follow.**

## **Why I Sneeze, Shiver, Hiccup, and Yawn**

by Melvin Berger

- 1        A sneeze is a reflex. So is a hiccup. You don't have to think about making reflexes happen. They happen whether you want them to or not. They happen very fast, and it is hard to stop them. Shivering and yawning are also reflexes. All reflexes work through your nervous system.
- 2        Your nervous system is made up of two parts. One part is the nerves. The nerves look like long, thin threads. They reach all over your body.
- 3        The other part is the spinal cord and brain. The spinal cord is a thick bundle of nerves. It is inside your spine, or backbone. The brain is at the upper end of the spinal cord. It is made up of billions of tiny nerves.
- 4        Nerves are like telephone wires. They carry messages back and forth. The brain and spinal cord are like the main office of the telephone company. All the messages must go through here.
- 5        Suppose you put your finger on a hot stove. The nerves in your hand sense that the stove is hot. They send out a message.
- 6        The message speeds along nerves from your hand to your spinal cord. Here the message passes to a different nerve. This nerve controls the muscles that move your arm.
- 7        A signal flashes through the nerve. It tells your muscles to move your hand—and fast. Before you even know what hurts, your hand jerks away from the stove.
- 8        Pulling your hand off a hot stove is a reflex. It happens very quickly, and it is not completely under your control. It happens automatically, without your having to think about making it happen.

### **SNEEZE**

- 9        A sneeze is also a reflex, so you can't stop it even when you want to be extra quiet during a game of hide-and-seek. A bit of dust or dirt gets into your nose. The nerves sense that something is there that is not supposed to be. They shoot the message to the brain. The brain sends a message to the spinal cord.
- 10       In the spinal cord, the message passes to other nerves that go to your diaphragm and belly muscles. The muscles contract and

cause your lungs to send up a blast of air. KA-CHOO! You sneeze. The sneeze blows the dust or dirt out of your nose.

### **HICCUP**

- 11 No one knows exactly why hiccups happen. We do know how they work. A message races to your spinal cord. From there a nerve sends out a signal that makes you take in a big gulp of air. But at that moment your throat closes. The air bumps against your closed throat. It makes a sound—HIC! It is a hiccup. The sound gives the hiccup its name.
- 12 The hiccup is a reflex. A drink of water may make the hiccups go away.

### **SHIVER**

- 13 A shiver is a reflex just like sneezing and a hiccup. If you step out of a warm bath into a cool room, the nerves in your skin feel that it is cold in the room. They carry the message to nerves in your spinal cord.
- 14 From the spinal cord the message races through other nerves. All over your body, muscles quickly tighten and loosen, tighten and loosen. You are shivering. The moving muscles produce heat. The shivers warm you up.

### **YAWN**

- 15 Have you ever tried to hold back a yawn? It is very hard to do. A yawn is another reflex.
- 16 A yawn begins when the lungs have too little oxygen in them. Nerves signal the muscles around your jaw to pull apart. You yawn, and as you do, you take an extra-deep breath of air. With more oxygen in your lungs, you feel a little less sleepy.



Melvin Berger, *Why I Sneeze, Shiver, Hiccup, and Yawn*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1983.

**12.** Select the sentence from paragraph 1 that **best** shows the main idea of the passage.

- Ⓐ "A sneeze is a reflex."
- Ⓑ "You don't have to think about making reflexes happen."
- Ⓒ "They happen whether you want them to or not."
- Ⓓ "Shivering and yawning are also reflexes."
- Ⓔ "All reflexes work through your nervous system."

**13.** How are paragraphs 1–8 different from paragraphs 9–16?

- Ⓐ Paragraphs 1–8 are funny, but paragraphs 9–16 are serious.
- Ⓑ Paragraphs 1–8 explain reflexes, and paragraphs 9–16 give examples.
- Ⓒ Paragraphs 1–8 describe a problem, and paragraphs 9–16 show the solution.
- Ⓓ Paragraphs 1–8 describe steps in a process, and paragraphs 9–16 describe the result.

**14.** What are two ways the author helps you picture what nerves look like?

- Ⓐ He uses headings as examples.
- Ⓑ He describes them as long, thin threads.
- Ⓒ He explains that they look like hot stoves.
- Ⓓ He states that they are like telephone wires.
- Ⓔ He describes the nerves in different animals.

- 15.** The following question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

**Part A**

What does automatically mean in paragraph 8?

- Ⓐ through the skin
- Ⓑ with no control
- Ⓒ inside a nerve
- Ⓓ over a long time

**Part B**

Which phrase in paragraph 8 **best** helps you understand the meaning of automatically?

- Ⓐ “pulling your hand”
- Ⓑ “off a hot stove”
- Ⓒ “happens very quickly”
- Ⓓ “without your having to think”



- 16.** Choose a word or phrase for each blank to complete the sentence describing how paragraphs 5–8 fit into the rest of the passage.

These paragraphs describe the

<input type="radio"/> sequence
<input type="radio"/> comparison
<input type="radio"/> effect

of events that send

a

<input type="radio"/> message
<input type="radio"/> muscle
<input type="radio"/> jerk

to cause a

<input type="radio"/> reflex
<input type="radio"/> control
<input type="radio"/> flash

.

- 17.** Using information from the passage, for each cause in Column A, choose the effect in Column B.

Column A: Causes	Column B: Effects		
Getting a bit of dirt in your nose	<input type="radio"/> shiver	<input type="radio"/> sneeze	<input type="radio"/> yawn
Going from a warm place to a cold place	<input type="radio"/> shiver	<input type="radio"/> sneeze	<input type="radio"/> yawn
Having too little oxygen in your lungs	<input type="radio"/> shiver	<input type="radio"/> sneeze	<input type="radio"/> yawn

**18.** Scientists do not know the cause of one reflex that is described in the passage. Which reflex is it?

Ⓐ sneeze

Ⓑ hiccup

Ⓒ shiver

Ⓓ yawn

**19.** Choose a word for each blank to complete the sentence that explains the meaning of signal as it is used in paragraph 16.

When nerves signal muscles, they

☐ ask

☐ call

☐ tell

your muscles what

to do. They send a

☐ message

☐ question

☐ promise

to your muscles.

- 20.** Choose a word or phrase for each blank to complete the sentences explaining what happens when you sneeze.

The first step in a sneeze is breathing in a piece of

☐ paper

☐ oil

☐ dust

Next, the nerves in your

☐ hand

☐ mouth

☐ nose

send a message to

the

☐ backbone

☐ brain

☐ upper jaw

. Then the message passes to the belly

muscles. They make your lungs send out a blast of air.

- 21.** Match each detail from the passage with the heading of the section in the passage where it appears. Select the correct box for each.

	SNEEZE	HICCUP	SHIVER	YAWN
It is hard to hold one of these back.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Muscles tighten and loosen, tighten and loosen.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nerves sense something that should not be there.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A drink of water might cure this.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**22.** Read this sentence from paragraph 11.

**From there a nerve sends out a signal that makes you take in a big gulp of air.**

What word is closest in meaning to gulp?

- Ⓐ message
- Ⓑ swallow
- Ⓒ hiccup
- Ⓓ race

**23.** Which sentence **best** describes the author's point of view?

- Ⓐ He believes reflexes are not helpful.
- Ⓑ He does not know much about reflexes.
- Ⓒ He wants to learn how to control reflexes.
- Ⓓ He thinks it is important to know how reflexes work.

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