

Your Response

1. How would you have felt about having the Sakkaros as your neighbors? Explain.

Recalling

2. Name two events involving the Sakkaros that make the Wrights curious about them, even before the outing to Murphy's Park.
3. How do the Sakkaros show their nervousness about the weather on their trip?

Interpreting

4. Why does Mrs. Sakkaros fill the glass of water for Mrs. Wright so carefully?
5. What is unusual about what the Sakkaros eat at the park? Why do they refuse other food?
6. What does Mr. Sakkaros probably mean when he says he is a student of human nature?
7. Where do you think the Sakkaros are from? Find evidence to support your answer.
8. How is Mrs. Wright's statement at the end of the story truer than even she expects?

Applying

9. Mrs. Wright's last sentence describes people who are behaving almost too carefully. A similar common saying is, "He looks as if he is walking on eggs." What other expressions describe especially careful behavior?

A

ANALYZING LITERATURE

Understanding Plot

Plot is a sequence of events or related actions. Usually, a **conflict** or a problem, such as Mrs. Wright's desire to know about the Sakkaros, is presented. Next, the action builds up to the high point, or **climax**, of the story. Finally, the action moves to a **resolution**, or final outcome.

1. Name two events that move the plot toward the climax of the story.
2. What is the climax of the story?
3. How is the conflict resolved?

Closure and Extension

Recalling

2. Mrs. Wright notes the Sakkaros' seemingly excessive fear of rain and the overly cautious manner in which Mrs. Sakkaros handles a glass of water.
3. Mr. Sakkaros brings a pocket radio for monitoring weather forecasts. The son carries a barometer. The family warily inspects the sky for signs of clouds.

Interpreting

4. Mrs. Sakkaros is afraid of spilling water on herself, knowing how destructive water can be to her.
5. The Sakkaros eat only cotton candy, that is, sugar. Normal food and drink, which contain water, would dissolve them.
6. Answers will differ. Suggested Response: Mr. Sakkaros probably means that he himself is not human and must, therefore, observe human nature in order to act as if he were a human being.
7. Answers will differ. Suggested Response: The Sakkaros are definitely not from Arizona. They are probably alien creatures who have come to Earth to study human nature. Their financial independence, strange diet, and unearthly physical composition suggests extraterrestrial origins.
8. The Sakkaros are indeed composed entirely of sugar and do melt.

Understanding the Sequence of Events

Authors carefully plan the **sequence**, or order, of events in stories. Often they arrange events in **chronological order**, which shows how one event follows another in time. For example, Lillian first invites the Sakkaros to Murphy's Park; then the families go there.

On a piece of paper, write the numbers of the following events in chronological order:

1. The Wrights discuss their new neighbors.
2. The adults play games on the midway.
3. The Wrights and the Sakkaros go to the park.
4. The Sakkaros move to the neighborhood.
5. The Sakkaros race for their front door.

T

HINKING AND WRITING

Writing a Short Story

Sometimes a story starts by an author wondering "What if?" Use your imagination to complete this question: What if the people next door really were _____? Then imagine an outing with your neighbors. Write the first draft of a short story telling about the consequences of their true identity. Include dialogue between the characters. When you revise, be sure to start a new paragraph when you change speakers. Share your stories with your classmates when you are finished.

L

EARNING OPTION

Writing. Imagine that you are a member of the Wright family, and you have noticed that your new neighbors, the Sakkaros, are a little odd. You decide to record your observations of their habits and behavior in a journal. Write enough entries to cover a week's worth of activity. You may wish to follow the plot of "Rain, Rain, Go Away" closely in your journal or create your own story about the Sakkaros. When you are finished, share your journal entries with the class.

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Discussion How do the Wrights feel about the Sakkaros' reaction to the offer of a hamburger and an orange drink? Point out that they think it was odd, but not abnormal.

Discussion How does Mrs. Wright react to Mrs. Sakkaros' insistence that George drive faster?

Discussion How do you think Helen was going to finish the sentence?

Discussion Which character from *The Wizard of Oz* reminds you of this description? Discuss the scene where the Wicked Witch of the West shriveled up and died.

Discussion Is the story's conclusion expected or unexpected? Why?

Reader's Response Mr. Sakkaros calls himself a "student of human nature." What does "Rain, Rain, Go Away" tell you about human nature?

Thematic Response Curiosity impels many people to explore the unknown. Why do you think the Sakkaros, seemingly against their better judgment, agreed to go with the Wrights to the park?

3. The Sakkaros dissolve, and the Wrights finally understand the motivation underlying their neighbors' strange behavior.

ANSWERS TO CRITICAL THINKING AND READING

- 4, 1, 3, 2, 5

Challenge Explain that Asimov's story is a fantasy—that is, it deals with events that could not possibly happen in real life. Even though the story is fantastic, Asimov gives his characters logical motivation for their actions. Have students choose specific actions in the story and tell the motivation for each.

Applying

9. Answers will differ. Suggested Response: Another expression is "handle with kid gloves."

ANSWERS TO ANALYZING LITERATURE

1. The two most crucial events are the outing in the park and the hurried drive home as the rainstorm approaches.
2. The climax occurs when the rain begins.