



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## SPARROWS

House sparrows are often seen in a neighborhood in the city. They like to live where there are a lot of people. They do not like to live in the country.

The female looks like she is wearing a brown cap on her head. Black streaks run down her brown back.

Male house sparrows look like they are wearing gray caps on their heads. They have a black bib under their chin, just like a baby. They have a rusty brown body. Black streaks run down the back of the male house sparrow.

Vacant lots which have dried plants or tree limbs are the perfect place for house sparrows. They love to build their nests in old trees or in empty corners. House sparrows nibble seeds that they find in the weeds or grass.

They may make nests with string or paper. These little birds pull and tear the paper. They weave it in with sticks. They love to stop and eat food out of bird feeders that hang on balconies. House sparrows will also take baths in birdbaths that people put out in front of their apartments or buildings.

Keep your eyes peeled if you live in the city. Chances are, you might see a house sparrow parading past!

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main idea of this passage?
  - a. to teach you how house sparrows eat
  - b. to teach you the life span of a house sparrow
  - c. to teach you to identify a sparrow in the city
  - d. to teach you how to keep house like a sparrow
2. Where do house sparrows **NOT** live?
 

a. in vacant lots	c. in nests made in dried plants
b. in the city	d. in the country
3. The author's purpose for this passage is . . .
 

a. to inform.	c. to entertain.
b. to persuade.	d. to make you sad.
4. In the text above, "keep your eyes peeled" means . . .
  - a. watch carefully.
  - b. make sure you wear make-up on your eyes.
  - c. use a potato peeler.
  - d. pay attention on rainy days.



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## THREE LITTLE ANTS

One day, three little ants—Frank, Albert, and Tommy—set out to seek their fortune. They waved goodbye to their mother and set off down the road with suitcases under their arms.

Frank, the oldest, found a nice place on a hillside to build his home. He built his out of pieces of straw he found lying on the ground. His house went up quickly, in just one day. Frank settled in and was happy.

Albert was the second oldest. He wanted to make a house that was a little sturdier than his brother's house. He gathered sticks, tied them all together with strong ropes, and cut windows and doors. He also made an oven out of mud, rocks, and dirt. It took him about three days to build his house, and he was happy.

The youngest brother was Tommy. Tommy was very wise and careful. He collected strong pieces of wood, cut each one carefully, and fitted the pieces together perfectly. He bought tiles for the roof and poured a cement floor. His house was the talk of the neighborhood, and he finished in two months.

One morning, Billy, the anteater, was walking around the neighborhood. He noticed the three new houses. Billy smelled ants, so he stopped to see if he could get a few to snack on. Frank's house was easy to push over; it was made of straw. Unfortunately for Billy, Frank ran out the back door to Albert's. Albert's house was a little tougher to knock over, but Billy succeeded. Albert and Frank escaped again, and Billy got sticks in his nose. Finally, he came to the last house. He sucked as hard as he could, but the three ants would not come out the front door. Instead, he got a nose full of hot sauce!

That Tommy! Billy's nose was burning. He ran away and never bothered the brothers again.

### STORY QUESTIONS

- Which words describe Tommy?
  - mean, ugly, patient
  - quick, hasty, lucky
  - reckless, careless, sloppy
  - careful, patient, smart
- How were Albert and Frank unlike Tommy?
  - They were both careless and lazy. Tommy was hardworking.
  - They were both hardworking. Tommy was lazy.
  - They were both sleepy. Tommy was wide awake.
  - They were both interested in fireplaces. Tommy was interested in drawing.
- In the passage, *sturdier* means . . .
  - dirtier.
  - stronger.
  - weaker.
  - cleaner
- This fairy tale is most like . . .
  - "Cinderella."
  - "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs."
  - "The Three Little Pigs."
  - "Jack and the Beanstalk."



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## WRITE ON

"I hate writing!" wailed Anthony, as the substitute teacher entered the room. "It stinks, and I refuse to like it! Can't we do math instead?"

"Sorry," she said with a grin. "Your teacher says to work on writing, so writing it is."

The sub pulled a magnifying glass, a small notebook, and a trench coat out of her bag. We started to watch her intently. This didn't look like a normal lesson. What did this strange new sub with short, spiky hair have up her sleeve?

"How many of you have ever wanted to be a detective?" she asked. Everybody, even Anthony raised his hand.

"Well, being a good writer is just like being a good detective. You have to start with the right equipment. Cindy, what equipment would a good detective need to solve a mystery?"

"I think he would need to have a magnifying glass, a notebook, and a pen."

"That is a very good start! Tell me more . . ."

As the class period moved along, we all became absorbed in the lesson. She reviewed things that were really important for successful writers. She talked about topic sentences, transition words, main ideas, details, and conclusions. At the same time, she kept going back to the detective equipment. It kept our attention, and before long we were coming up with great ideas and strong sentences. It was amazing! We were all feeling confident.

Bzzzz. The bell rang, signaling the end of the day. We were all caught by surprise. Where had the time gone? What spell had she cast over us so that we wanted to learn about writing? What if she was right, that writing was like being a detective? Could we really be successful writers, and like it too?

At that moment, Anthony interrupted my thoughts. "Hey, Miss A., do you think you could ask our teacher if you could come back another day? I think I might like to learn more about this writing stuff!" I smirked to myself. If she had Anthony on her side, anything was possible.

## STORY QUESTIONS

- According to the passage, what equipment will help a detective?
 

a. carrots, batteries, and a tape recorder	c. cars, boats, and planes
b. camera, pen, and bottle of soda	d. magnifying glass, notebook, and pen
- The opposite of *interrupted* is . . .
 

a. bothering.	c. not bothering.
b. not working.	d. unusable.
- According to the passage, good writing includes . . .
 

a. topic sentences, main ideas, details, transitions, and concluding sentences.
b. topic sentences, main ideas, concluding sentences, and lots of adjectives.
c. topic sentences, transitions, concluding sentences, and nouns.
d. nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
- A **synonym** for *absorbed* could be . . .
 

a. uninterested.	c. interested.
b. bored.	d. happy.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## JOHNNY APPLESEED

Have you ever planted a seed and watched it grow? A man known as Johnny Appleseed planted millions of seeds. Apple trees across the United States trace their roots to Johnny Appleseed.

Johnny "Appleseed" was born John Chapman. He was well known because of his love for planting apple trees. He was also known for his stories. By the time he was 25, he became a nurseryman. He took care of plants and trees. Johnny planted entire orchards of apples in New York and Pennsylvania.

This gentle man walked through the wilderness. He carried a bag of apple seeds on his back. When he found a spot he felt was just right to plant, he stopped. In the clearings, he planted apple seeds in neat rows. When the planting was finished, he built a fence to keep away wild animals.

The seeds sprouted, and Appleseed sold the plants to settlers in the area. They enjoyed the fruit of these trees for years and years. Appleseed received money for the saplings, and sometimes he traded for clothes or supplies.

Appleseed always worked alone. But he made many friends along his routes. Many families welcomed him for overnight stays.

Johnny Appleseed was a simple man. He did not care about things like fancy clothes or money. He rarely wore shoes. His feet had big bumps on both sides. They looked as hard and tough as leather.

He was rough, but children loved his gentle ways. His cheerful attitude made settlers happy. Johnny left apples wherever he went. He called them his "joy" that he left behind.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. What was Johnny Appleseed's real name?
  - a. John Childress
  - b. John Chapman
  - c. Ohio River
  - d. Nicholas Sparks
2. In this passage, Johnny Appleseed is best known for his . . .
  - a. way with animals.
  - b. worn out clothes.
  - c. nursery skills and sadness.
  - d. apple trees and gentle ways.
3. The author's purpose for this passage is to . . .
  - a. persuade the reader to learn more about Johnny Appleseed.
  - b. entertain the reader with Johnny Appleseed stories.
  - c. inform the reader about the positive way Johnny Appleseed influenced America.
  - d. convince children to eat apples.
4. What conclusion could you draw about Johnny Appleseed?
  - a. He had a dream, and he worked hard to make it come true.
  - b. He loved to wear new clothes.
  - c. Big houses and cars were important to him.
  - d. He disliked people and nature a great deal.



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## MY DAY AS A PANCAKE

Mallory rolled out of bed on the morning of the first day of school. She was feeling excited. Her new school outfit hung in her closet; the new shoes were by the door. Her fancy hair ribbons were sitting on her desk.

The sight that greeted her eyes in the mirror horrified her. She blinked and looked a second time.

"Mom!" she called. "Please come here immediately!"

"Just a moment, honey. I'm frying the bacon."

"Mom, it's an emergency!"

"What could be such an emergency this morning?" asked Mom as she climbed up the stairs.

Suddenly, she stopped. "Mallory, is that you under there?"

"Yes, Mom, it's me. Something must have happened in the middle of the night! Do I look like a puffy pancake to you?"

"What did you eat? Did you drink something unusual?"

"Well, I did drink a chocolate shake that a stranger at the store gave me yesterday."

"Mallory, you know what we've said about taking things from strangers!"

"I know, Mom, but what can we do about it now? I've already turned into a pancake, and I don't know how to change back. What am I going to do? It's the first day of school!"

Mallory tried to get out of her pajamas but could barely wiggle her toes. She was stuck. Her mom called the doctor, and she said to come immediately.

"So much for wearing my new outfit and my new shoes," grumbled Mallory. She had been so excited about the first day of school. Now, though, she was glad that she didn't have to go to school looking the way she did. No matter how fantastic her clothes were, they couldn't hide the way she looked today!

### STORY QUESTIONS

- What discovery did Mallory make when she got out of bed?
  - Her new outfit for school didn't fit.
  - She had become an apple.
  - She had become a pancake.
  - A stranger was sitting in her room.
- A **synonym** for the word *wiggle* would be . . .
  - touch.
  - take off.
  - move.
  - sit.
- What unwise choice had Mallory made the day before?
  - She had crossed the street without looking both ways.
  - She didn't brush her teeth before bed.
  - She had taken something from a stranger.
  - She hadn't put on her seatbelt.
- Why didn't Mallory put on her new clothes for school?
  - She was stuck in her pajamas and couldn't get them off.
  - She didn't like the new clothes and didn't want to put them on.
  - She was hungry and she wanted to eat breakfast first.
  - She had gotten them dirty the day before.



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## MISSING KEY

"Don't forget to take the key to school with you today, Nolan. Remember it's the day I stay late at work."

"Okay, Dad," I said. "I will put it in a safe place."

Dad and I lived alone in a two-bedroom apartment. He had to work late on Wednesday nights, so I always had to let myself in and eat leftovers for dinner. Mrs. Robbins, the neighbor, always kept an eye on me so Dad didn't have to worry. She loved it if I came to visit, and she would even feed me snacks. Her kitchen always smelled of fresh cookies, so I didn't mind too much.

As I left for school, I placed the key in the usual spot, under the plant by the door. I then headed down the street to school.

Christian, the class bully, was waiting for me at the corner for the morning torture time. "Headed to school are you, daddy's boy?"

I just wanted to haul off and hit him, but Dad said violence never solved a thing. "Just keep walking," I told myself.

Christian taunted me for a few more minutes, and finally left me alone. It was useless to talk back. He would just keep being his regular bully self.

After school, I cut across the vacant lot so I would avoid getting tortured. Usually, it took about 10 minutes to get home. Today, it took five. My breathing was short, and I just wanted to get in the house. "Quick, get the key, and get in the house," I thought.

I reached for the key under the plant. It was gone . . .

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. Why did Nolan have to remember the house key?
  - a. so he could let himself in when Dad worked late
  - b. so he could go home any time during the day
  - c. so he could have friends over
  - d. so he could take his dad to lunch
2. Nolan didn't mind visiting with Mrs. Robbins because . . .
  - a. she grew flowers and plants in her garden.
  - b. she wouldn't talk to him.
  - c. she wrote letters to her children.
  - d. she made him cookies.
3. A **synonym** for the word *taunted* could be . . .
 

a. laughed.	c. smiled.
b. teased.	d. helped.
4. Why didn't Nolan hit Christian?
  - a. He knew Christian could hurt him if he tried.
  - b. His dad told him violence never solves anything.
  - c. He didn't want to get in trouble at school.
  - d. He wanted to wait until he found a friend who could help him.



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## PLANTS

It is important for scientists to sort animals into groups. It is just as important to sort plants. Scientists sort them by how they make another plant like themselves. This is called reproduction. Scientists have decided to sort plants into three groups.

The first group of plants reproduces with spores. Spores are parts of the plant that break away and travel in the wind. Each one grows into a new plant if it lands on soil that is wet and rich. Ferns and mosses are plants that make a copy of themselves with spores.

Other plants reproduce with seeds. They are the second group. Seeds fall from the trees. They become part of the soil and grow into new plants. Evergreens, pine trees, and fir trees are plants that reproduce with seeds.

The third group is the plant that reproduces by flowering. Before seeds can form, the pollen inside the flower needs to move from one part of the flower to another. The seeds form inside the flower. Birds and insects help this by moving the pollen when they land on the flower. Some of the flowering plants grow into fruits to eat. The seeds are hidden inside the fruit. Apples, oranges, cherries, daisies, and roses are plants that have flowers.

### STORY QUESTIONS

1. Which group of words mean the same as the word *reproduction*?
  - a. make a copy of itself
  - b. helps us understand
  - c. plants the flowers
  - d. flowering and pollen
2. Scientists have broken plants into three different groups:
  - a. colors, sizes, and shapes.
  - b. spores, flowers, and seeds.
  - c. vertebrates, invertebrates, and seeds.
  - d. cherries, grapes, and oranges.
3. How do the plants that have spores reproduce?
  - a. by seeds falling on the ground
  - b. by floating in the wind from place to place
  - c. by bees moving the pollen inside the flowers
  - d. by pushing their roots into the ground
4. Which type of plant group needs help from birds or insects?
  - a. plants that reproduce with spores
  - b. plants that reproduce with flowers
  - c. plants that reproduce with leaves
  - d. plants that reproduce with sunlight