



3rd grade packet 1 ELA

Subject: English Language Arts

State: Ohio

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____

School Name: _____

Read the passage. Then, answer the questions.

A Once-in-a-Lifetime Experience

by Sandra Beswetherick

1. It was my idea to invite Derrick, the new kid in our neighborhood, on our annual father-and-son weekend trip. Derrick had never been camping or fishing.
2. "Great idea!" Dad said. "It'll be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for him, one he'll never forget."
3. Dad and I didn't realize how true that would turn out to be.
4. The car blew a tire on the way to our campsite. Not an impressive start.
5. "A minor setback, that's all," Dad said as Derrick and I tumbled out of the car to help.
6. It was dark by the time we reached the campsite, got the boat into the water, and set up the tent. There was a stiff, icy breeze blowing off the lake.
7. Derrick shivered as he examined the sky. "That isn't snow, is it?"
8. "Snow?" I said.
9. "It never snows in March!" Dad protested.
10. But those big flakes fell fast and heavy, blanketing the ground.
11. I burst out laughing. Derrick grinned. But Dad was horrified. He hustled us into the tent so we wouldn't catch pneumonia or something. But first he made sure we didn't track any snow into the tent with us.
12. "We need to keep the floor dry," Dad insisted. "There's nothing worse than sleeping in wet sleeping bags."
13. He passed out sandwiches after we settled in. "Minor setback," he assured Derrick. "The snow should be gone tomorrow." Dad reached for the large bottle of cola to pour us each a drink.
14. Maybe the cola was warm, or maybe it had been jostled too much, because when Dad opened it, that bottle erupted like Mount Vesuvius. Cola overflowed like lava. Dad dropped the bottle. It rolled across the tent floor spewing its contents, and we ended up perched on our sleeping bags like castaways adrift in a cola sea.

15. Derrick clapped both hands over his mouth. His face turned red, and his cheeks ballooned out as if he were about to explode, too. From behind his hands came the snuffling and snorting of trapped laughter.
16. I tried to keep a straight face, out of respect for Dad--not just because he'd insisted that we keep the tent floor dry, but because he'd wanted this trip to be perfect.
17. "Minor setback," Dad muttered as we soaked up cola with our towels.
18. The next morning dawned bright and beautiful, much to Dad's relief. Derrick stood at the water's edge, admiring the clear still lake, the tree-lined shore, and the cloudless sky.
19. "Wait until you catch your first fish, Derrick," Dad said as he got the boat ready. "That's an experience you won't forget." Dad turned to me. "Right, Steve?"
20. "Right, Dad," I answered.
21. "And wait until you taste some fried, freshly caught fish for breakfast," Dad said. "Right, Steve?"
22. "Right, Dad," I said, although I thought Dad was trying a little too hard.
23. But Derrick didn't catch his first fish. In fact, none of us felt even a nibble on our lines. This wasn't a minor setback for Dad. This was a major disaster.
24. The silence grew. The still air settled hot and heavy.
25. I leaned over the side of the boat. "Fishy," I sang into the depths of the lake. "Come on, I know you're down there." It sure beat sitting around in silence. And we weren't catching any fish anyway.
26. Derrick joined in. "Fishy," he crooned, looking down into the water. "Here, fish, fish." When he turned back to me, his eyes were bulged, his mouth was puckered, and he was gulping down air the way a fish gulps water. The perfect fish-face!
27. I let out a whoop and made a fish-face of my own, my open hands on either side of my head for gills. "Fishy!"
28. Derrick and I turned our fish-faces toward Dad. There sat Dad with the goggled eyes and downturned frown of his favorite fish, the largemouth bass. "Fishy, fishy, bite my hook," he chanted in a throaty voice, "so I can take you home to cook."
29. Derrick hooted with laughter and fell into the bottom of the boat. Dad's bass frown upturned into a grin.

30. Lucky that Dad's mood improved when it did, because it was about then that the boat started sinking.

31. "Mr. Adams," Derrick asked, "should there be this much water in your boat?"



32. "Holy mackerel!" Dad yelled. He reached for the motor. "You guys, bail!"

33. We barely reached shore, the boat sloshing with water.

34. That night, as we sat around the campfire toasting marshmallows, Derrick admitted he'd been worried about coming on the trip. "But it's been incredible," he said. "I'll never forget it. Thanks for inviting me."

35. "You're welcome," said Dad. "We're glad you came."

36. "I wonder what will happen next?" Derrick asked, putting another marshmallow on his stick.

37. "Yeah," I said. "I wonder."

38. As for Dad, he smiled a brave smile.



“A Once-in-a-Lifetime Experience” by Sandra Beswetherick from Highlights for Children’s Magazine’s March 2006 issue.

1

The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

Read paragraph 14 from the story.

Maybe the cola was warm, or maybe it had been jostled too much, because when Dad opened it, that bottle erupted like Mount Vesuvius. Cola overflowed like lava. Dad dropped the bottle. It rolled across the tent floor spewing its contents, and we ended up perched on our sleeping bags like castaways adrift in a cola sea.

What does **that bottle erupted like Mount Vesuvius** mean as used in the paragraph?

- (A) The cola bottle was open and floating in the water.
- (B) The cola was bubbling and spilling out.
- (C) The cola bottle was moving around.
- (D) The cola was hot.

2 Part B

Which detail from the paragraph supports the answer to Part A?

- (A) “. . . the cola was warm . . .”
- (B) “. . . jostled too much . . .”
- (C) “. . . overflowed like lava.”
- (D) “. . . perched on our sleeping bags . . .”

3

The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

Read the sentence from paragraph 15 of the story.

Derrick clapped both hands over his mouth.

Why does Derrick cover his mouth with his hands?

- (A) He does not want to show his feelings.
- (B) He is making an angry face.
- (C) He is covering a sneeze.
- (D) He does not feel well.

4 Part B

Which detail from paragraph 15 **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- (A) “His face turned red. . . .”
- (B) “. . . his cheeks ballooned out . . .”
- (C) “From behind his hands . . .”
- (D) “. . . snorting of trapped laughter.”

5 The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

Derrick and the narrator start to make fish faces. How does this affect what happens next in the story?

- (A) It helps Dad feel better, and he joins in.
- (B) It upsets Dad, and the boat almost sinks.
- (C) It surprises Dad, and he lets go of the motor.
- (D) It leads Dad to a solution, and they catch fish.

6 Part B

Choose **two** details from paragraphs 28 through 33 that support the answer to Part A.

- (A) “. . . his favorite fish, the largemouth bass.”
- (B) “‘Fishy, fishy, bite my hook,’ he chanted. . . .”
- (C) “Dad’s bass frown upturned into a grin.”
- (D) “. . . the boat started sinking.”
- (E) “. . . should there be this much water in your boat?”
- (F) “We barely reached shore. . . .”

7 The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

What is the central message of the story?

- (A) People may be surprised by the weather.
- (B) People can be happy even when things go wrong.
- (C) Sometimes it is easy to prepare for new things.
- (D) Something that is here today may be gone soon.

8 Part B

Which sentence from the story supports the answer to Part A?

- (A) “There was a stiff, icy breeze blowing off the lake.”
- (B) “The snow should be gone tomorrow.”
- (C) “We’re glad you came.”
- (D) “As for Dad, he smiled a brave smile.”

9 This story tells about Derrick’s first camping trip.

Write Derrick’s journal entry about this camping trip. Include information about how the characters responded to the events in the story as you write the journal entry.

10 From the options below, select the sentence that explains how the dad responds to **each** event during the camping trip.

Not every response will be used.

Events	How Dad Responds
Derrick asks if it is snowing.	
The boys make fish faces.	
Derrick asks if there should be water in the boat.	

- a. Dad feels sad that the trip was not a success.
- b. Dad gets everyone to work together to make it safely back to shore.
- c. Dad talks about how much fun it is to catch fish.
- d. Dad starts to feel happier.
- e. Dad hurries the boys into the tent.

11 The following question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

Derrick asks if there should be water in the boat. How does Dad respond to this event?

- (A) Dad starts to feel better.
- (B) Dad talks about how much fun it is to catch fish.
- (C) Dad is sad that the trip was not a success.
- (D) Dad gets everyone to work together to make it safely back to shore.

12 Part B

Which detail from the story supports the answer to Part A?

- (A) “And wait until you taste from fried, freshly caught fish....”
- (B) “You guys, bail!”
- (C) “...the boat sloshing with water.”
- (D) “Thanks for inviting me.”

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

A Few New Neighbors

by Kerry McGee

1. One afternoon, Jessie spotted a tiny bird fluttering around Mrs. Baxter's front door.
2. It's probably looking for somebody to fill the bird feeders, Jessie thought.
3. The bird perched on the edge of the Christmas wreath. Then it disappeared.
4. Disappeared? Jessie ran over to Mrs. Baxter's door. Where had it gone?
5. A jumble of sticks and grass stuck out from the middle of the wreath. Suddenly, Jessie understood. A nest! A bird's nest sat right in the middle of Mrs. Baxter's Christmas wreath. The bird poked its head out and looked at Jessie. Then it fluttered away.
6. Jessie crept up to the front door. Tucked inside the nest were four speckled blue eggs.
7. Jessie ran home to call Mrs. Baxter. "Guess who moved into your old wreath!" Jessie said. "A family of birds!"
8. Mrs. Baxter sounded just as excited as Jessie was. "Tell me what they look like. What color are the eggs?"
9. Jessie and Mrs. Baxter talked about the birds for a while. "They sound like house finches," Mrs. Baxter said. "Keep an eye on them for me, will you?"
10. "I will," Jessie said.
11. And she did. Jessie checked the nest whenever she could. Sometimes the mother finch was there. Other days, the red-headed papa was nearby. Jessie tried to notice everything so she could tell Mrs. Baxter.
12. One morning, Jessie saw a scraggly pink head poking out of the nest. Babies! Jessie strained her neck to get a better look.
13. Jessie told her dad about the baby birds at Mrs. Baxter's house.
14. "That reminds me," Dad said. "Mrs. Baxter has movers coming tomorrow to clear out the house. I told her I'd unlock the door for them "

15. "But what about the nest?"
16. "We can put the nest someplace else," said Dad.
17. "We can't move it," Jessie said. "If we do, the mama bird won't be able to find her babies."
18. Dad shook his head. "We'll just have to tell the movers to be careful."
19. Jessie thought about the moving men tromping in and out, squeezing heavy boxes and furniture past the tiny nest. She thought about the door swinging and slamming all day long. It seemed risky.
20. The next morning, Jessie watched the moving truck pull up in front of Mrs. Baxter's house. Two men climbed out.
21. Dad saw the truck, too, and came outside with the key.
22. Jessie jumped up. She ran ahead of the movers and Dad to Mrs. Baxter's front door. "Wait!" she shouted, spinning around to face them.
23. Behind her, the mama bird burst out of its nest. It landed in a tree. The movers looked at Jessie in surprise.
24. "You can't use this door," Jessie said, holding her arms out stiff.
25. "I'm sorry," one of the moving men said. "We have a job to do."
26. Jessie didn't move. Tears stung her eyes. "There's a nest in the wreath," Jessie explained. "If you open the door, it will fall."
27. The other man sighed. "Do you have any ideas?"
28. Jessie nodded. "I do have an idea. Dad, can I have the key?"
29. As carefully as she could, Jessie unlocked the front door and eased it open. When it was just wide enough to slip through, she ducked into Mrs. Baxter's house.
30. She'd been in there many times, so it didn't take her long to find the side door and unlock it from the inside.
31. "Got it!" Jessie called, running around to the front of the house. "The side door is open!"
32. One of the men was peering into the wreath. "Hey," he said. "There are babies in there." He grinned at Jessie. "I bet that mama bird is glad you're watching out for her babies."

33. "Hello, Mama Bird," the other man said, waving to the bird, still in the tree.
34. Jessie smiled as she and Dad thanked the men for their help. Then she ran and disappeared into her own house. She couldn't wait to call Mrs. Baxter.

13 This question has two parts. First, answer part A. Then answer part B.

Part A

Which sentence **best** describes the lesson of the passage?

- (A) Animals should be protected.
- (B) Birds should only nest in trees.
- (C) Movers should listen to children.
- (D) Children should stay away from birds.

14 Part B

Which sentence from the passage **best** supports your answers in part A?

- (A) “A bird’s nest sat right in the middle of Mrs. Baxter’s wreath.”
- (B) “Jessie and Mrs. Baxter talked about the birds for a while.”
- (C) “One morning, Jessie saw a pink head poking out of the next.”
- (D) “‘You can’t use this door’, Jesse said, holding her arms out stiff.”

15 Read the sentence from the passage.

A jumble of sticks and grass stuck out from the middle of the wreath.

What does the word jumble most likely mean?

- (A) a tall pile of items
- (B) a neat pile of items
- (C) a small group of items
- (D) a messy group of items

16 What inference can be made about the author's message about animals? Include information from the passage to support your answer.

17 Why is including dialogue important to understanding the passage? Pick **three** choices.

- (A) It helps the reader understand Jessie's actions.
- (B) It helps the reader imagine the sounds made by the birds.
- (C) It helps the reader know the reason why Mrs. Baxter moved.
- (D) It helps the reader know how the movers feel about the birds.
- (E) It helps the reader imagine what Jessie will do after the movers leave.
- (F) It helps the reader understand Mrs. Baxter and Jessie's interest in the birds.

18 Read the sentence from the passage.

As carefully as she could, Jessie unlocked the front door and eased it open.

What does the phrase “eased it open” tell the reader about Jessie?

- (A) Jessie is quiet and shy.
- (B) Jessie is able to unlock the door.
- (C) Jessie is nervous to enter the house.
- (D) Jessie is a gentle and thoughtful person.