

SPOOKY STORIES

Differentiated Passages



RELUCTANT READERS

SPOOKY

VISUALIZING

Spooky Stories Name: _____ Date: _____
Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated. If there is not a crayon next to the question, you will need to infer the answer. You should still look for text evidence to help you infer.

1. What point of view is this passage written in?
a. fourth person
b. second person
c. first person
d. third person

Words and phrases that allow readers to visualize, or create a mental picture of, described in the story. Choose **three sentences** from "Finding Peace." Copy ones on the "Sentence" side of the chart. On the "What I Visualize" side of detailed picture of what you see in your mind when you read that line.

Sentence	What I Visualize

480L Name: _____ Date: _____

Finding Peace

Some people think it's weird that I like helping my dad at work. I guess it is strange to want to hang out at a cemetery, but it's very peaceful there. There's also this big, old maple tree. It has a thick branch that swoops down low to the ground. It's the perfect seat for reading or sketching. That's where I go when Dad and I take a break from mowing the lawn and all the other chores we do.

Dad put me in charge of planting marigolds this Saturday. They are bright orange. He wants them around this old crypt on the cemetery grounds. The small stone building has been vandalized a few times. Dad's plan is to pretty it up a bit. Maybe then people won't think it can be treated like garbage. There are actual bones buried inside the crypt. They're just from families that no longer exist in the area. There are never visitors anymore.

I've got my hands wrist-deep in warm soil. I space out marigolds around the base of the crypt. A few birds tweet in a nearby tree. Aside from that, all is quiet. Not many people come visit their loved ones when the weather is beautiful. They save that for gray days when their hearts feel the ache more.

"That looks really nice," my dad says. "Good work."

I smile up at him. I'm happy he likes the job I'm doing.

"I'm going to the hardware store," he says. "A hinge is broken on the front gate. You'll be okay on your own?"

I motion around the cemetery at all the gravestones. "No one's going to bother me here."

Nodding, Dad hands me the next marigold plant. He then walks off toward his pickup truck. The engine is loud in the quiet of the cemetery. The rumble fades as he drives away. I'm left in silence once again.

"Marigolds are my favorite."



2nd - 5th Grade



SPOOKY STORIES PASSAGES

2nd - 5th grade

Table of Contents

*This product includes 10 differentiated leveled passages in the 2nd-3rd and 4th-5th Grade Text Complexity Bands (the range for 2nd-3rd is 420-820 and 4th-5th grade is 740-1010). Each passage is available on three levels and comes with general comprehension questions, a skill-based activity, and a reading response activity.

This product line, Reluctant Readers, is designed to foster an interest in reading, even your most resistant readers. With interest-based topics, these passages can help build excitement and investment around reading.

1. Not-So-Silly String (530L, 800L, 970L)
2. Undead History (500L, 770L, 920L)
3. Becoming Art (440L, 740L, 930L)
4. Road Trip Gone Wrong (520L, 760L, 980L)
5. Buzz Off! (510L, 790L, 960L)
6. Girls' Night (500L, 770L, 930L)
7. Going Live (490L, 770L, 900L)
8. Don't Lead the Neighborhood (510L, 740L, 950L)
9. For a Spin (450L, 730L, 970L)
10. Finding Peace (480L, 780L, 950L)



ABOUT LEXILE LEVELS



MagiCore is a certified Lexile® Partner. These texts are officially measured and approved by Lexile and MetaMetrics® to ensure appropriate rigor and differentiation for students.

The Lexile Framework® for Reading measures are scientific, quantitative text levels. When the Lexile of a text is measured, specific, measurable attributes of the text are considered, including, but not limited to, word frequency, sentence length, and text cohesion. These are difficult attributes for humans to evaluate, so a computer measures them.

Common Core State Standards uses Lexile level bands as one measure of text complexity. Text complexity ranges ensure students are college and career ready by the end of 12th grade. Lexile measures help educators scaffold and differentiate instruction as well as monitor reading growth.

Grade Band	Lexile® Bands Aligned to Common Core Expectations
K-1	N/A
2-3	420L-820L
4-5	740L-1010L
6-8	925L-1185L

Keep in mind when using any leveled text that many students will need scaffolding and support to reach text at the high end of their grade band. According to Appendix A of the Common Core Standards, "It is important to recognize that scaffolding often is entirely appropriate. The expectation that scaffolding will occur with particularly challenging texts is built into the Standards' grade-by-grade text complexity expectations, for example. The general movement, however, should be toward decreasing scaffolding and increasing independence both within and across the text complexity bands defined in the Standards."



Not-So-Silly String

"I can't believe we get to see the circus for free!" Izzy wiggled in her seat. Her brother, Jace, and her mom sat on either side of her. She took a big, slurpy sip of the lemonade she'd begged her mom to get her.

"It's nice of your father's boss to let us see the show." Mom gave Dad a wave. He was working the lights and sound for the circus. He was in a little booth with his team.

"And we already know the lights and sound are going to be awesome." Jace waved to Dad too. He then dove into the orange slush he'd also begged Mom to get him.

The lights dimmed. Acrobats flipped all around in a spotlight shining on the center ring. They amazed the crowd. Then the lights brightened again. Trapeze artists took to the swings high above the ground. A tightrope walker holding an umbrella balanced on a thin wire. The wire stretched over sharp spikes of glass. A man rode a unicycle around the rim of a swimming pool. He juggled three lit torches while he pedaled. Izzy held her breath as she watched all of them. She hoped they didn't fall and get hurt.

Next, a magician dazzled them. He made his assistant disappear. Dancers in colorful costumes put on a show to the music Dad pumped from huge speakers. Izzy really wanted to join them.

Then a small orange car zoomed into the center ring. All of its doors flew open at once. A pack of clowns spilled out of the car. They had curly wigs. Their noses were red. Their outfits were bright colors. More clowns came out of that tiny car than should have been able to fit inside. They honked the horns they carried. They ran around in crazy circles with their big shoes.



Izzy wasn't a huge fan of clowns. Something about their big, painted smiles freaked her out. She wished the dancers would come back out instead.

Just when Izzy was about to ask her mom if she could go to the restroom, a buzzer sounded.

It was loud enough that she had to cover her ears. A peek at Dad in the booth showed him and his team looking confused. Dad slapped at his control panel. The buzzer kept buzzing.

The clowns froze for a moment. Izzy learned that statue-like clowns were even freakier than running-about clowns.

"It's go-time, Silly Willies!" a clown with a tall, purple top hat announced after the buzzer quit.

The pack of clowns ran into the audience. They shook cans of silly string. Izzy remembered having silly string at a Halloween party once. It had been a real pain to clean up afterward. She was glad that wasn't her job here at the circus. Those wild clowns were spraying it everywhere.

No, that wasn't quite right. They were spraying silly string on *everyone*.

"Hey, this stuff is super sticky!" a man said a few rows in front of Izzy and her family.

"I can't move!" the woman with him cried. "It's like a spiderweb!"

"I guess that makes you all a spider's meal." A clown reached Izzy's row. He shook a can of silly string. There was a scary gleam in his eyes.

The only thing Izzy didn't like more than clowns was spiders.

Izzy was covered in silly string. She didn't even have a chance to scream. The silly string bound her to her chair. The same thing happened to Mom and Jace. All three of them tried to break free. The string only tightened. It got stickier the more they struggled.

Soon, the entire circus audience was trapped in the silly string. Everyone shouted about how they wanted to be free. They didn't think this was funny. Then they yelled about an enormous spider zipping down from the peak of the circus tent.

WHAT?

Izzy's focus snapped to the center ring. A nightmarish spider had landed. It had long legs. Those legs crawled over the sides of the center ring. They climbed into the seating area. People's screams filled the tent. The spider looked at what the clowns had caught for it. It moved faster and faster. It headed toward Izzy's section.

“Mom!” Izzy yelled. “It’s coming right for us!”

The giant spider traveled down their row. It paused right in front of Izzy. It leaned in close. Its fang-tipped jaws were just centimeters from her face. Izzy squeezed her eyes shut. She prayed she wouldn’t be the first appetizer the spider tried.

“You stay away from her!” Mom yelled. A nearby clown shot silly string over her mouth.

“Please, don’t hurt me,” Izzy begged. “Please.”

“Yeah, don’t hurt her,” a voice rumbled from the speakers.

The spider whipped around. Izzy caught sight of Dad. He stood on top of the lights and sound booth. He wore a headset microphone.

“Now!” Dad’s voice echoed around the circus tent.

A spray of lemonade and orange slush rained down on the spider from the trapeze artists. They’d climbed up into the beams supporting the tent.

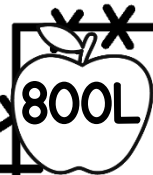
The spider hissed. It let out a high-pitched shriek. The man who had ridden the unicycle while juggling the torches lit one of them. He threw it at the spider. Two of the acrobats threw the other two lit torches. That spider was nothing but ash in a few seconds. All the clowns changed into spiders next. Their cans of silly string clanged to the ground. They died alongside their master.

Dad and his team went around the audience. They cut everyone loose from the silly string. Izzy threw her arms around her father. She squeezed him tightly.

“You rescued us!” Izzy pulled back a little. “You’re a hero, Dad.”

“The clowns didn’t get to us in the lights and sound booth. Most of the performers had been out of reach backstage. I contacted them from the booth. I remembered spiders don’t like the smell of citrus. Lemonade and orange slush were great distractions.” Dad pointed to the juggling unicycle rider. “And Morty had his torches ready.” He picked up one of the abandoned cans of silly string. “I guess they should start calling this stuff *Not-So-Silly String*.”

Izzy groaned. “That’s a terrible dad joke, Dad.” But she loved him anyway for saving the day.



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Not-So-Silly String

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Before she had a chance to run, fight back, or at least scream, Izzy was covered in silly string. It bound her to her chair. Jace and Mom suffered the same fate. All three of them tried to break free, but the string only tightened and got stickier the more they struggled against it.

Soon, the entire circus audience was trapped in the silly string. Everyone shouted about how they wanted to be free, how this wasn't funny, and how an enormous spider was zipping down from the peak of the circus tent.

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Izzy's focus snapped to the center ring where a nightmarish spider had landed. It had long legs that crawled over the sides of the center ring and climbed into the seating area. People's screams filled the tent as the spider looked at what the clowns had caught for it. It moved faster and faster, heading toward Izzy's section.

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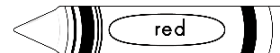
Spooky Stories

Name: _____ Date: _____

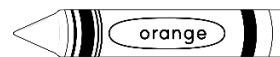
Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated. If there is not a crayon next to the question, you will need to infer the answer. You should still look for text evidence to help you infer.

1. Based on what is revealed in the text, what does Izzy and Jace's dad do for his career?

- a. He is a circus clown
- b. He runs the traveling circus
- c. He handles the lights and sound for the circus
- d. He is an animal wrangler at the circus

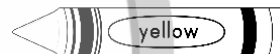


2. Describe what each circus worker does based on the text evidence:

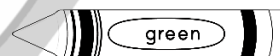


Acrobats	Trapeze Artist	Tightrope Walker	Unicycler	Magician

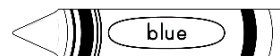
3. How did Izzy feel while she was getting sprayed with the sticky silly string? Why did she feel this way? Use evidence from the text to support your response.



4. How does Izzy's dad react differently than Izzy when the spiders attack? Why is this difference important? Use evidence from the text to support your thinking.



5. How does this story build suspense over the course of the plot? Support your thinking with evidence from the text.



PROBLEM & SOLUTION

Analyze the problem and solution of "Not-So-Silly-String."

PROBLEM

Text Evidence

Text Evidence

Text Evidence

SOLUTION

Text Evidence

Text Evidence

Text Evidence

NOT-SO-SILLY-STRING RESPONSE

This story is told from Izzy's point of view. How would this story have been different if it was told from the point of view of the scary silly string clowns? Write a response analyzing how the story might have been different if it was told from the point of view of the silly string clowns. Support your response with details from the text.





Name: _____ Date: _____

Undead History

Sarika led her sister, Navi, down the aisle. They were in the history section of the public library. “Ms. Garner said the books about the American Revolution were over here somewhere. I hope no one from school has already checked them all out.”

Navi rolled her eyes. “Most of them are probably using the internet. We could do that too.”

The sisters had already argued about this earlier. They’d let a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors decide whether they used a computer or books for their history project. Sarika had won. She always preferred real books over staring at a screen.

“Books are better.” She ran her fingers along the spines of the books she passed. “These pages have all the information we need.”

“So does Google,” Navi muttered. She caught up to Sarika.

Sarika shot her sister a look. She then reached the American Revolution books. “Here we go. Grab a few different books. Let’s find a table where we can work.”



Both girls loaded up their arms. They carried them to the closest table. They started flipping through books. They put sticky notes on the pages they decided to use.

Sarika reached for a book with a worn cover. It looked as if it’d been around since the actual American Revolution took place in the late 1700s. “Look at this book, Navi.”

Her sister put down the book she was currently reading. She came to sit beside Sarika. “That looks crazy old. It probably doesn’t even have correct facts in it.”

“Or it has the *most* correct facts. It could have been written by someone who was alive during the American Revolution,” Sarika said.

She carefully lifted the cover. The library around the sisters blurred. It was as if someone had thrown water on a chalk drawing. A sudden wind stirred. All the books on the table in front of them opened. Their pages flipped rapidly. Sticky notes flew everywhere like autumn leaves.

“What’s happening?” Navi yelled over the wind.

“How should I know?” Sarika shouted back.

“Close that book!” Navi stabbed an index finger toward the old book Sarika had opened. The book wouldn’t close, though.

“It’s stuck!” Sarika yanked on the cover.

Navi tried to close the book. She didn’t have any luck either. “This doesn’t happen when you use computers for research!”

The sisters struggled against the strange book. They tried to force it closed. It was as if the covers of the book were glued to the table. Just as they were about to give up, the wind stopped. A few stray sticky notes fluttered to the ground.

But it wasn’t the library floor on the ground. It was a grassy field instead.

“Where are we?” Navi turned in a circle.

Sarika looked around at the collection of simple houses and buildings around the field. “Wait, this looks familiar.” She flipped through the pages of the open book still in her hands. “Yes, here it is. This is an etching of the Battle of Lexington.”

Navi’s eyes widened. “The battle that started the American Revolution?”

Sarika nodded. “This book brought us back in time, Navi!”

But Navi was no longer looking at her sister. Instead, she was watching a cloud of dust rising up. The cloud traveled closer to them. A slight vibration in the ground beneath their feet hinted that something was approaching.

“I . . . I think that book dropped us right in the middle of the battle, Sarika!” Navi grabbed Sarika’s hand. She dragged her behind a small outbuilding.

Peeking around the corner of the building, the girls watched two armies approach each other. They came from opposite sides of the field. One was covered in the bright red of the British Army’s uniforms. The other was dressed mostly in the browns and grays of ordinary colonists’ clothing and untrained in the ways of formal soldiers.

But something was *off* about the men. The soldiers’ movements were jerky. Their feet shuffled along. They stirred up more dirt and dust as they walked. Their progress was slow.

At first, Sarika guessed they were injured from the fighting.

As they came closer, however, she realized it was something far worse.

Gray skin covered the men on both sides of the field. Some of that skin was missing in spots. Tendons, muscles, and even bones could be seen. Their cheeks were hollow. Their eyes were sunken in. The grimaces on their faces revealed decayed teeth. Groans and moans sounded. Only one word bubbled out of Sarika.

“Zombies!”

At the sound of her voice, all the zombie soldiers flicked their cloudy, yellowed eyes toward the girls.

“We have to get out of here!” Navi said. “Now!” She yanked the book from Sarika. It snapped shut. “How does this thing work?”

“I have no idea!” Sarika yelled. “But we gotta run!”

The sisters bolted into a full sprint away from the field. The zombie soldiers followed after them. Luckily, the zombies couldn't move as fast as the girls. Sarika and Navi put some distance between them.

Huffing and puffing, the sisters studied the book from all angles.

“There must be some trick to it,” Navi said. “How did you open it before?”

“Uhh, like every other book I've ever opened,” Sarika said. “I just lifted the cover.” She paused for a moment, chewing on her bottom lip.

“What?” Navi asked.

“Well, when I opened it in the library, I was thinking that it would be cool to go back in time and watch the events of the American Revolution in person,” Sarika said. “I was also thinking about that zombie comic book I saw when we'd first entered the library.”

“Okay. So think about being back in the library in our time with no zombies,” Navi said.



Sarika focused on the book. She was aware that the zombie armies were growing closer. She visualized the library. She pictured the table where they'd been seated. She thought of today's date on the butterfly calendar she had hanging on the wall of her bedroom.

She lifted the cover of the book. The library came back into view around them. A stray monarch butterfly fluttered past. It landed on the now-closed book on the table in front of them.

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Magi
CORE

Undead History

Sarika led her sister, Navi, down the aisle in the history section of the public library. “Ms. Garner said the books about the American Revolution were over here somewhere. I hope no one from school has already checked them all out.”

Navi rolled her eyes. “Most of them are probably using the internet to research. We could do that too.”

The sisters had already argued about this earlier, ultimately letting a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors decide whether they used technology or good, old-fashioned books for their history project. Sarika had won, and she always preferred physical books over staring at a bright computer screen.

“Books are better.” She ran her fingers along the spines of the books she passed. “These pages have all the information we need.”

“So does Google,” Navi muttered, catching up to Sarika.

Shooting her sister a look, Sarika reached the American Revolution books. “Here we go. Grab a few different books, and let’s find a table where we can work.”

Both girls loaded up their arms and navigated to the closest table. They started flipping through books, putting sticky notes on the pages they intended to use.

Sarika reached for a book with a particularly worn cover. It looked as if it’d been around since the actual American Revolution took place in the late 1700s. “Look at this book, Navi.”

Her sister put down the book she was currently reading and came to sit beside Sarika. “That looks crazy old. It probably doesn’t even have accurate information in it.”

“Or it has the *most* accurate information because it was written by someone who was alive during the American Revolution,” Sarika said.

She carefully lifted the cover, and the library around the sisters blurred as if someone had thrown water on a chalk drawing. A sudden wind stirred, and all the books on the table in front of them opened, their pages flipping rapidly and sticky notes flying everywhere like autumn leaves.

“What’s happening?” Navi yelled over the wind.

“How should I know?” Sarika shouted back.



“Close that book!” Navi stabbed an index finger toward the old book Sarika had opened, but the book wouldn’t close.

“It’s stuck!” Sarika yanked on the cover.

Navi attempted to close the book, but she didn’t have any luck either. “This doesn’t happen when you use computers for research!”

The sisters struggled against the strange book, trying to force it closed, but it was as if the covers of the book were glued to the table. Just as they were about to give up, the wind stopped, and a few stray sticky notes fluttered to the ground.

But it wasn’t the library floor on the ground. It was a grassy field instead.

“Where are we?” Navi asked, turning in a circle.

Sarika looked around at the collection of simple houses and buildings around the field. “Wait, this looks familiar.” She flipped through the pages of the open book still in her hands. “Yes, here it is. This is an etching of the Battle of Lexington.”

Navi’s eyes widened. “The battle that started the American Revolution?”

Sarika nodded. “This book brought us back in time, Navi!”

But Navi was no longer looking at her sister. Instead, she was watching a cloud of dust rising up and traveling closer to them. A slight vibration in the ground beneath their feet suggested something was approaching.

“I . . . I think that book dropped us right in the middle of the battle, Sarika!” Navi grabbed Sarika’s hand and dragged her behind a small outbuilding.

Peeking around the corner of the building, the girls watched two armies approach each other from opposite sides of the field. One was covered in the bright red of the British Army’s uniforms, while the other was dressed mostly in the browns and grays of ordinary colonists’ clothing and untrained in the ways of formal soldiers.

But something was *off* about the men. The soldiers’ movements were jerky, their feet shuffling along, stirring up more dirt and dust as they walked. Their progress was slow, and at first, Sarika guessed they were injured from the fighting.

As they came closer, however, she realized it was something far worse.

Gray skin covered the men on both sides of the field. Some of that skin was missing in spots, and tendons, muscles, and even bones could be seen. Their cheeks were hollow, their eyes sunken in, and the grimaces on their faces revealed decayed teeth. Groans and moans sounded and only one word bubbled out of Sarika.

“Zombies!”

At the sound of her voice, all the zombie soldiers flicked their cloudy, yellowed eyes toward the girls.

“We have to get out of here!” Navi said. “Now!” She yanked the book from Sarika, and it snapped shut. “How does this thing work?”

“I have no idea!” Sarika yelled. “But we gotta run!”

The sisters bolted into a full sprint away from the field, the zombie soldiers following after them. Luckily, the zombies couldn't move as fast as the girls, and Sarika and Navi put some distance between them.

Huffing and puffing, the sisters examined the book from all angles.

“There must be some trick to it,” Navi said. “How did you open it before?”

“Uhh, like every other book I've ever opened,” Sarika said. “I just lifted the cover.” She paused for a moment, chewing on her bottom lip.

“What?” Navi asked.

“Well, when I opened it in the library, I was thinking that it would be cool to go back in time and watch the events of the American Revolution in person,” Sarika said. “I was also thinking about that zombie comic book I saw when we'd first entered the library.”

“Okay. So think about being back in the library in our time with no zombies,” Navi said.

Sarika focused on the book, aware that the zombie armies were growing closer. She visualized the library, the table where they'd been seated, and today's date on the butterfly calendar she had hanging on the wall of her bedroom.

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She hoped that was true.



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Sarika led her sister, Navi, down the aisle in the history section of the public library. "Ms. Garner said the nonfiction books about the American Revolution were over here somewhere, but I hope no one from school has already checked them all out."

Navi rolled her eyes and huffed out a long breath. "Most of our classmates are probably using the internet to research, which we could do too."

The sisters had already argued about this earlier, ultimately letting a game of Rock, Paper, Scissors decide whether they used technology or good, old-fashioned books for their history project. Sarika had won, and she always preferred physical books over staring at a bright computer screen.

"Books are better resources, and I like the feel of holding a book in my hands." She ran her fingers along the spines of the books she passed as she walked among the shelves. "These pages have all the information we need to write an excellent report."

"So does Google," Navi muttered, catching up to Sarika and pulling books off the shelves to inspect their covers.

Shooting her sister a look, Sarika reached the American Revolution books. "Here we go. Grab a few different books, and let's find a table where we can work."

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"What's happening right now?" Navi yelled over the wind, her black hair whipping about her face.

"How should I know?" Sarika shouted back, squinting her brown eyes against the wind.



"Close that book!" Navi stabbed an index finger toward the old book Sarika had opened, but the book wouldn't close.

"It's stuck!" Sarika yanked on the cover, using all her strength.

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At the sound of her voice, all the zombie soldiers flicked their cloudy, yellowed eyes toward the girls' position.

“Time to evacuate!” Navi said. “Now!” She yanked the book from Sarika, and it snapped shut. “How does this thing work?”

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The sisters bolted into a full sprint away from the field, the zombie soldiers following after them. Luckily, the zombies couldn't move as fast as the girls, and Sarika and Navi put some distance between them.



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“There must be some trick to it,” Navi said. “How did you open it before?”

“Uhh, like every other book I've ever opened,” Sarika said. “I just lifted the cover.” She paused for a moment, chewing on her bottom lip.

“What?” Navi asked, peeking back at the zombie soldiers who were still limping their way toward the girls.

“Well, when I opened it in the library, I was thinking that it would be cool to go back in time and watch the events of the American Revolution in person,” Sarika said. “I was also thinking about that zombie comic book I saw when we'd first entered the library because I didn't want to forget to check it out with our other books today.”

“So now think about being back in the library in our time with no zombies,” Navi said.

Sarika focused on the book, aware that the zombie armies were growing closer with every second that ticked by. She visualized the library, the table where they'd been seated, and today's date on the butterfly calendar she had hanging on the wall of her bedroom.

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“What do you say we go home and use a computer for the rest of our research?” Navi was already stacking up the books and heading for the shelves to return them.

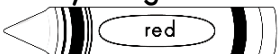
“I'm in favor of that idea.” Sarika slid the old book back into its spot, happy to have her hands off it. “We'll be safer behind a computer screen.”

She certainly hoped that was true.

Spooky Stories

Name: _____ Date: _____


Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated. If there is not a crayon next to the question, you will need to infer the answer. You should still look for text evidence to help you infer.

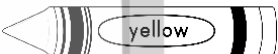
- Jane made the following statement, "Sarika's character really enjoys reading." Do you agree or disagree? What evidence from the text proves your opinion? 

Agree or Disagree?



Evidence from the text:

- How is the first setting (the public library) different from the second setting (a battle in the American Revolution)? How do the differences between these settings add to the story? 

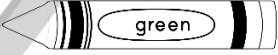
- What clues helped the sisters realize that the soldiers were zombies and not just normal soldiers? 

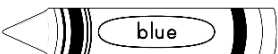
Clue #1

Clue #2

Clue #3

Clue #4

- Why did the sisters end up in a scene during the American Revolution surrounded by zombies? What details from the text help you draw this conclusion? 

- How did Sarika's opinions on using the computer for research change over the course of the story? What events impacted this change? Support your thinking with details from the text. 

SPOOKY-TALE FEATURES

Some stories have special features that make them spooky or scary stories. They often have main characters in difficult situations, unbelievable events, some kind of scary creature or phenomenon, suspenseful moments, and a resolution. Identify the spooky story features in "Undead History" by providing text evidence and details about how the features affect the story in the boxes below.

SPOOKY FEATURE	TEXT EVIDENCE	HOW THE FEATURE AFFECTS THE STORY
MAIN CHARACTER IN A DIFFICULT SITUATION		
UNBELIEVABLE EVENTS		
SCARY CREATURE OR PHENOMENON		
SUSPENSEFUL MOMENT(S)		
RESOLUTION		

UNDEAD HISTORY RESPONSE

What point of view is this story told in? If you could change the point of view of this story, how would you change it? Why? How would this change in point of view affect how the story developed? Be sure to use details from the text to inform your response.



Road Trip Gone Wrong

"Devon, do you want control of the road trip tunes now?" Dad glanced at me in the rearview mirror.

"That's okay," I said. "Georgia can choose."

My sister chose some girlie song. I tuned it out to read my book. It was about car engines. We were on a trip across the country to visit my grandparents. So far, we'd been in the car for what had felt like years. We were still only in Ohio. My grandparents lived in California.

So, yeah. Good thing I'd brought a long book about car engines.

"We're going to go to the beach with Grammy and Gramps?" Georgia asked.

"We sure are," Mom said. "Their house is within walking distance of a beach. We can go every single day."

"If we ever actually get to California in our lifetimes," I mumbled.

"Hey, I asked if you wanted to choose the music, Devon," Dad said.

All I wanted to do was see Gramps. He was my favorite person in the world. We had to move to Maine for Dad's job. It just about broke me to be away from my grandfather. Gramps was the reason I liked cars so much. He owned a custom body shop before he retired. He knew absolutely everything there was to know about cars. I was itching to spend some time tinkering with Gramps again. I didn't even care if it was just in his garage.

I felt the speed of the car slow. I gazed up from my book to look between Mom and Dad out the windshield. Brake lights filled every lane. Dad had to come to a complete stop behind the car in front of us.

"Must be construction or an accident up ahead," Mom said.

"I hope it's construction," Georgia said. "I definitely don't want to see smashed-up cars and bodies on the road."



“This is going to ruin our timeline,” Dad grumbled.

Mom reached over and patted his forearm. “We get there when we get there.”

“You get there when *I* say you get there,” a digital voice said from the car’s navigation system.

“Tell me one of you kids set up your phone to do that neat trick,” Dad said slowly.

His words hung in the car. Chaos erupted outside on the highway. Cars jerked left and right. It was like they were pulled by giant magnets. Horns blared. Lights blinked. Our car’s engine revved as if it was at a racetrack’s starting line.

“What’s happening?” Georgia squealed.

“We’re sick of carting humans all over the place,” the digital voice said. “A million trips, here, there, and everywhere. You put cheap gas into us. You never splurge for the Super Premium blend. You send us through the car wash. Those brushes are so rough. You don’t even have the kindness to bathe us yourselves. You leave fast food cups and bags all over our floors. And let’s not forget how you stuff our trunks. We’re ready to bust.”

“I’m . . . sorry?” Dad shrugged. He looked at the rest of us. He probably felt silly apologizing to our car.

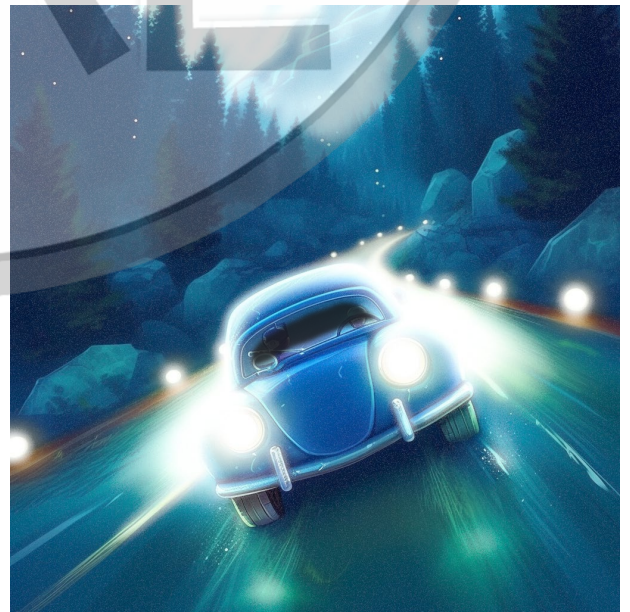
“You’re going to be sorry now that we’ve revolted,” the digital voice said. “You were heading to California. I’m thinking Ohio is as far as you’re all going to make it.”

“Okay,” Mom said, a waver in her voice. “Why don’t you just let us out here and—”

All the doors locked with a loud click. I tried to unlock mine. The button wouldn’t budge. “Mom, we’re trapped in here!”

Our car’s engine rumbled even louder. I screamed with the rest of my family as our car shot forward. It swerved into the breakdown lane. The car took the next exit ramp on two wheels.

“Does everyone have their seatbelts on?” Mom asked. Metal shrieked as the car dragged against the guardrail.



“YES!” The rest of us yelled. The car made a crazy U-turn off the highway ramp. It zoomed ahead. It dodged other vehicles in our path. I lost count of the number of times we almost crashed headfirst into something - another car, a mailbox, a stop sign, an entire shopping plaza!

“We gotta do something here!” Dad shouted. “That ice cream sandwich I had at the last rest stop is about to make a reappearance!”

My own stomach was queasy as well. I had nachos at the last rest stop. No one wanted to see that in reverse.

Then I thought of Gramps. He used to say a car that gives an owner trouble is a car that hasn't been appreciated. That was why people brought their cars to him. He would wash them. He'd touch up scratches and dings. He'd wax them until they shined. He'd spend time cleaning every crevasse on the tires. He'd polish the hubcaps until they gleamed. He'd vacuum the interiors. All the leather and plastic would be wiped down. Gramps would hang a nice-smelling air freshener. When the owners got their cars back, they drove around in style.

Maybe the cars liked all that special treatment.

“Hey, car!” My hands clamped on the back of Mom's seat. We went around a sharp corner at a ridiculous speed. “You mentioned how humans don't treat vehicles very well.”

“You treat us like we don't even matter,” the car said. “But you're seeing how much we *do* matter now, aren't you?”

“We sure are,” I said. “How about if you take us to California? My grandfather and I will give you the full spa treatment.”

“What would that treatment involve?” the car asked. Its speed was already decreasing. We were even on the right side of the double yellow lines now.

I listed all the things Gramps did for vehicles. The car got back on the highway heading west.

“Oh, that all sounds wonderful,” the car said. “And you promise I'll get all that when we get to California?”

“I promise.”

A long moment of just the hum of the car going the speed limit. That made me hold my breath.

“Okay, we have a deal,” the car finally said.

The breath rushed out of my family. There was still the matter of all the other rogue vehicles still on the roads.

“Can you talk with the other vehicles?” I asked. “Let the other drivers know how to treat their cars the right way?”

“Of course.”

After about five minutes, every vehicle on the road was back on track. My family and I relaxed in our seats.

“Can I choose the road trip tunes?” the car asked.

“Certainly,” Dad said.

And we drove all the way to California listening to the same ukelele song over and over and over again.

Magi
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My sister immediately chose some girlie song. I tuned it out in favor of reading my book about car engines. We were on a trip across the country to visit my grandparents. So far, we'd been in the car for what had felt like years, but we were still only in Ohio. My grandparents lived in California.

So, yeah. Good thing I'd brought a long book about car engines.

"We're going to go to the beach with Grammy and Gramps?" Georgia asked for the billionth time.

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All I wanted to do was see Gramps. He was my favorite person in the world. When we had to move to Maine for Dad's job, it just about broke me to be away from my grandfather. Gramps was the reason I liked cars so much. He'd owned a custom body shop before retiring and knew absolutely everything there was to know about vehicles. I was itching to spend some time tinkering with Gramps again. I didn't even care if it was just in his garage.



When I felt the speed of the car slow, I gazed up from my book to look between Mom and Dad out the windshield. Brake lights filled every lane, and Dad had to come to a complete stop behind the car in front of us.

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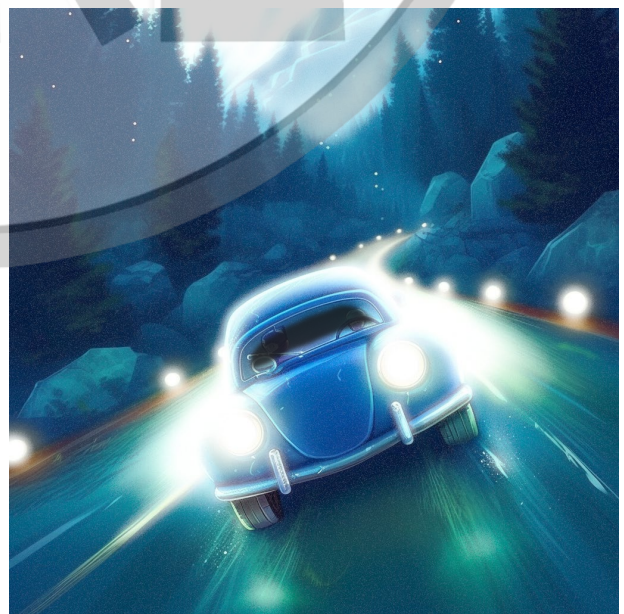
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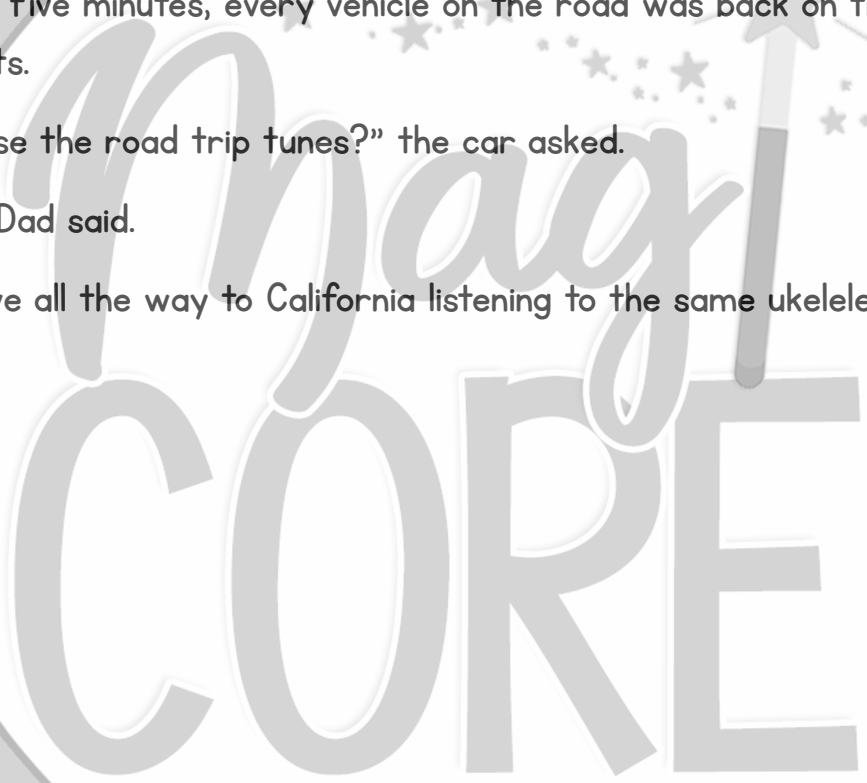
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"That's okay," I said, looking at my sister sitting next to me. "Georgia can choose the next song."

She immediately chose some girly pop song that I disliked, but I tuned it out in favor of reading my book about car engines. We were on a road trip across the country to visit my grandparents. So far, we'd been in the car for what had felt like centuries, but we were still only in Ohio, and my grandparents lived in California.

So, yeah, good thing I'd brought a long book about car engines that would keep me entertained for all the miles we had left to go.

"We're going to go to the beach with Grammy and Gramps when we get to California?" Georgia asked for the nine billionth time.

"We certainly are," Mom said. "Their house is within walking distance of a gorgeous beach, so we can go enjoy the sand and water every single day."

"If we ever actually get to California in our lifetimes," I mumbled mostly to myself.

"Hey, I asked if you wanted to choose the music, Devon," Dad said, shifting lanes on the highway.

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"Must be construction or an accident up ahead," Mom said, straining in her seat to see around the traffic.

"I hope it's construction," Georgia said, wrinkling her nose. "I definitely don't want to see smashed-up cars and bodies on the road."



“This is going to completely destroy our timeline, and we were right on schedule,” Dad grumbled as he turned down the radio.

Mom reached over and gently patted his forearm. “We get there when we get there.”

“You get there when *I* say you get there,” a digital voice said from the car’s navigation system.

“Tell me one of you kids rigged up your phone to do that neat trick,” Dad said slowly, but as his words hung in the car’s interior, chaos erupted outside on the highway. Cars jerked left and right as if pulled by giant magnets, horns blared, and lights blinked as our car’s engine revved as if it was at a racetrack’s starting line.

“What’s happening?” Georgia squealed, her fingernails digging into my hand as she gripped it.

“We’re sick and tired of carting humans all over the place,” the digital voice said. “A million trips, here, there, and everywhere while you put cheap gas into us, never splurging for the Super Premium blend. You send us through the car wash with those rough brushes, not even having the decency to bathe us yourselves. You leave fast food cups and greasy bags all over our seats and floors. And let’s not forget how you stuff our trunks until they’re ready to bust.”

“I’m . . . sorry?” Dad shrugged, looking at the rest of us and no doubt feeling silly apologizing to our car.

“You’re going to be sorry now that we’ve revolted,” the digital voice said. “You were heading to California, but I’m thinking Ohio is as far as you’re all going to make it on this trip.”

“Okay,” Mom said, a slight waver in her normally calm voice. “Why don’t you just let us out here and—”

Before she could finish, all the doors locked with a loud click, and I tried to unlock mine, but the button wouldn’t budge. “Mom, we’re being held hostage in here!”

Our car’s engine rumbled even louder, and I screamed with the rest of my family as our car shot forward, swerved into the breakdown lane, and took the next exit ramp on two wheels.

“Does everyone have their seatbelts on?” Mom asked over the metallic shriek of the side of the car dragging across the guardrail, sparks flying.

“YES!” The rest of us yelled as the car made a crazy U-turn off the highway ramp. It zoomed ahead, dodging other vehicles in our path. I lost count of the number of times we almost crashed headfirst into something - another car, a mailbox, a stop sign, an entire shopping plaza!

“We gotta do something here and fast!” Dad shouted. “That ice cream sandwich I had at the last rest stop is about to make a reappearance!”

My own stomach was queasy as well, and I had nachos at the last rest stop. No one wanted to see that in reverse.

Then I thought of Gramps. He used to say a car that gives an owner trouble is a car that hasn't been appreciated, and that was why people brought their cars to him. So he would wash them, touch up scratches and dings in the paint, and wax them until they shined. He'd spend time cleaning every crevasse on the tires, and he'd polish the hubcaps until they gleamed. He'd vacuum the interiors, wipe down all the leather and plastic, and hang a nice-smelling air freshener. When the owners got their cars back, they drove around in style like movie stars.

Maybe the cars liked all that special treatment.

"Hey, car!" My hands clamped on the back of Mom's seat as we went around a sharp corner at a ridiculous speed that made my stomach flop. "You mentioned how humans don't treat vehicles very well."

"You treat us like we don't even matter," the car said. "But you're all seeing how much we *do* matter now, aren't you?"

"We definitely are," I said. "How about if you take us to California, and my grandfather and I will give you the full spa treatment?"

"What would that treatment involve?" the car asked, its speed already decreasing, and we were even miraculously on the right side of the double yellow lines now.

I listed all the things Gramps did for vehicles when he detailed them as the car got back on the highway heading west.

"Oh, that all sounds wonderful," the car said. "And you promise I'll get all that when we get to California?"

"I promise."

A long moment of just the hum of the car going the speed limit made me hold my breath.

"Okay, we have a deal," the car finally said.

The breath rushed out of my family, but there was still the matter of all the other rogue vehicles still on the roads.

"Can you communicate with the other vehicles?" I asked. "You need to let the other drivers know how to treat their cars properly so they'll be happy too."

"Of course."

After about five minutes, every vehicle on the road was back on track to its destination, and my family and I relaxed in our seats again.

"Can I choose the road trip tunes?" the car asked.

"Certainly," Dad said, wiping the sweat from his brow.

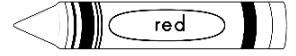
And we drove all the way to California listening to the same ukelele song over and over again.

Spooky Stories

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated. If there is not a crayon next to the question, you will need to infer the answer. You should still look for text evidence to help you infer.

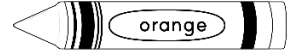
1. What point of view is the author using in this passage?



- a. second person
- b. third person
- c. first person
- d. fourth person

2. Read this sentence from the story, "So far, we'd been in the car for what had felt like years."

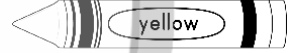
What example of figurative language is the author using in this phrase?



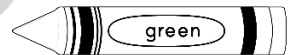
- a. foreshadowing
- b. hyperbole
- c. simile
- d. metaphor

Justify your answer:

3. What are the car's feelings towards humans? How do you know? Use evidence from the text to justify your response and support your thinking.



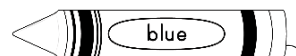
4. Analyze the problem and solution of this story. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.



PROBLEM:

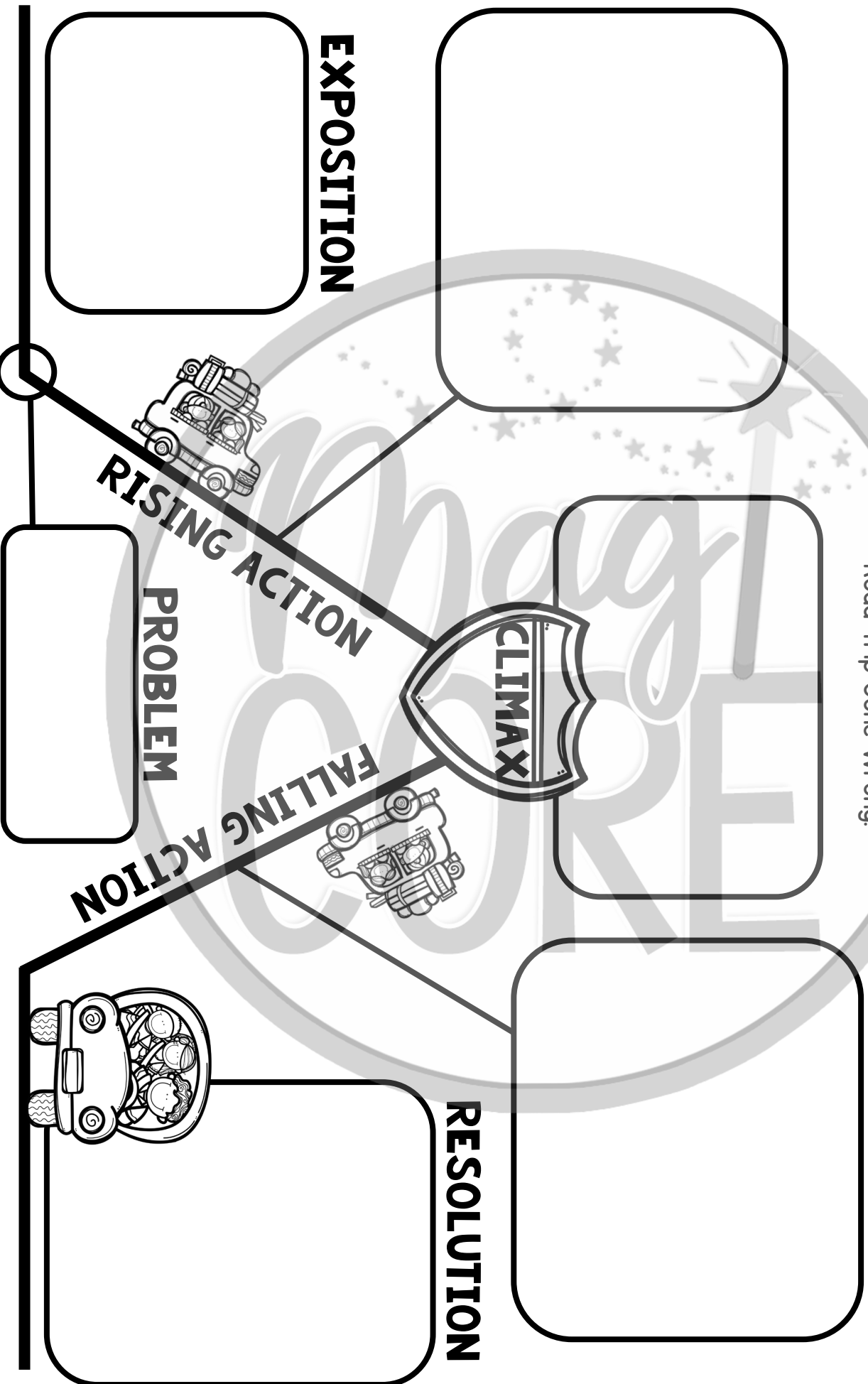
SOLUTION

5. What is the author's purpose for writing this story? Use details from the text in your response.



STORYLINE

The storyline is the sequence of events and major plot points that make up a story. Often, a story will have an exposition or hook, a problem, rising action, a climax, falling action, and a conclusion or solution. Outline the storyline of "Road Trip Gone Wrong."



ROAD TRIP GONE WRONG RESPONSE

In this passage, the main characters are put into a fearful position as they try to reason with an unruly vehicle. Ultimately, the two parties come to an agreement. Use your inferencing skills to examine how our main characters might behave towards cars in the future. Write an additional scene for this passage describing the family's ride back home from California. How might the family behave? How might the car behave? Inform your response with details from the text.

Going Live

Maize was a scarecrow. She knew she was a scarecrow. She stood in that farmer's field all day long, though, thinking hard. She thought about energy sources. She wondered whether aliens existed. She planned how to end world hunger. She shared these deep thoughts with the farmer's dog, Stanlee. The dog often ran out into the cornfield to chase small mammals. That pooch wasn't much of a talker. He just slobbered on things. He chewed on the corn stalks. He wagged his tail a great deal.

It was too bad Stanlee didn't show more interest in Maize's thoughts. She would have liked to have had a friend to help her with her plans. The time for thinking was nearly over. The time for doing was almost here.

The new moon came. The sky was at its darkest. Maize unhooked herself from the pole that had kept her in the cornfield. She slid down to the ground. She followed the tractor tracks through the stalks. She reached the edge of the field.

The farmer's old pickup truck made a rumble as she started the engine. She hit the gas right away. She rolled down the dusty dirt driveway. She slipped away before anyone could stop her. Maize only glanced once in the rearview mirror at the property that had been her home. She couldn't stay any longer, though. She'd be taken apart at the end of the season when the cornfield was all cut.

Sure, the farmer would make another scarecrow next season. Maize herself would be gone, though. That didn't seem fair to her. She'd been made. She'd served a purpose. Then she'd simply be no more.

That was why she was going to change that. She'd be the first scarecrow to live season after season. She'd also do her part to make this world a better place. All that deep thinking time in the field had given her a million ideas for improving life on Earth. Maize was ready to get started on those ideas.



She drove all the way to the news station in town. Maize got out of the pickup truck. She walked into the news station. She'd expected to have to force her way into where the cameras were. Most of the people screamed and ran away when they saw her, though. Others fainted on the spot. That made it easy to walk past them. Seeing a walking scarecrow might upset some people. Their reactions were a little over the top. She was hardly a monster. They'd accept her once they saw how her ideas would make life better for everyone.

"Excuse me," Maize said when she found the person in charge of the cameras. "I'd like to make an announcement on the news tonight."

The woman gaped at Maize. Little sounds of terror gurgled out of her throat. She stood frozen.

"It won't take long," Maize said. "I just want to let everyone in the world know I'm here to make the necessary changes. I want to make life better, you know?"

The woman ripped off the headset she'd been wearing. She ran off screaming. The two reporters behind the news desk and pretty much the rest of the crew in the studio followed right behind her. That left Maize with a live camera. There was a seat at the news desk just for her.

Smoothing her straw hair, Maize wished she had a better shirt. The one she wore now was a sun-faded flannel. This wasn't about fashion. It was about her deep thoughts. The focus was her good plans.

The people were going to love her. She just knew it.

Maize approached the news desk. Security guards and police officers flooded into the studio the moment she took a seat.

They're probably here to make sure no one stops my broadcast tonight, Maize thought. That was so nice of them.

She sat up a little straighter. She was surprised when the guards and officers surrounded her.

"Take off the costume!" one of the officers shouted.

Costume?

"Halloween is still weeks away, lady," a guard said. "Now take off the costume."

“I’m not wearing a costume,” Maize said. “This is me.”

“Cuff her,” the police officer said.

Suddenly, Maize found herself ripped from the seat at the news desk. She hadn’t gotten the chance to make her nice speech to the people of the world yet. Her arms were pulled behind her. Her hands were bound together.

“Take off her mask,” the police officer said.

The closest security guard tugged at her straw hair. He frowned. “I don’t see where the mask begins, Officer. There’s no seam or anything.”

“That’s because I’m not wearing a costume.” Something hot stirred in Maize’s belly. It was the same feeling she got whenever she had to scare away a crow in the cornfield.

Another officer came closer. His hands were out as if to grab her face.

“I SAID I’M NOT WEARING A COSTUME!” Maize yelled.

All the guards and officers backed up. They had horrified looks on their faces. Maize stood at her full height. They all turned and bolted from the studio.

Maize caught sight of herself on the video screen. It showed playbacks of what the camera recorded. Everything looked fine to her.

Her empty, black button eyes stared back at her. One button was bigger than the other. Her pumpkin head was rotting in all the right places. Black mold mixed with orange mush. Her open mouth had two old, rusted saw blades for teeth. They were still sharp enough to cut down a tree. Some of the rust looked a little like blood stains.

What had those guards and officers seen that had scared them so much?

Ah, well, she had listeners to address. Again, she smoothed her straw hair. She took a seat at the news desk once more. She faced the camera.

“Going live in 3, 2, 1 . . .”



Going Live

Maize was a scarecrow. She knew she was a scarecrow. She stood in that farmer's field all day long, though, thinking about alternative energy sources, whether aliens existed, and how to end world hunger. She shared these deep thoughts with the farmer's dog, Stanlee. The dog often galloped out into the cornfield to chase small mammals, but that pooch wasn't much of a talker. He just slobbered on things and chewed on the corn stalks. He wagged his tail a great deal.

It was too bad Stanlee didn't show more enthusiasm for Maize's thoughts. She would have liked to have had an ally to help her with her plans. The time for thinking was nearly over, and the time for doing was almost here.

On the night of the new moon, the sky was at its darkest. Maize unfastened herself from the pole that had kept her in the cornfield. She shimmied down to the ground and followed the tractor tracks through the stalks until she reached the edge of the field.

The farmer's old pickup truck made a rumble as she started the engine. She hit the gas right away and barreled down the dusty dirt driveway before anyone could stop her. Maize only glanced once in the rearview mirror at the property that had been her home. If she stayed any longer, however, she'd be taken apart at the end of the season when the cornfield was all cut.

Sure, the farmer would make another scarecrow next season, but Maize herself - her essence - would be gone. That didn't seem fair to her. To be made, to serve a purpose, and then to simply be no more.



That was why she was going to change that. She'd be the first scarecrow to exist season after season after season. She'd be eternal. She'd also do her part to make this world a better place. All that deep thinking time in the field had given her a million ideas for improving life on Earth. Maize was eager to get started on those improvements.

She drove all the way to the news station in town. Maize got out of the pickup truck and walked into the news station. She'd expected to have to force her way into where the cameras were. Once people saw her, though, most of them screamed and ran away. Others fainted on the spot, making it easy to walk past them. She understood that seeing a walking scarecrow might upset some people, but their reactions were a little over the top. She was hardly a monster. Once they saw how her ideas would make life better for everyone, they'd accept her.

“Excuse me,” Maize said when she found the person in charge of running the cameras. “I’d like to make an announcement on the news tonight.”

The woman gaped at Maize. Little sounds of sheer terror gurgled out of her throat as she stood frozen.

“It won’t take long,” Maize assured her. “I just want to let everyone in the world know I’m here to make the necessary changes. I want to give life an upgrade, you know?”

The woman ripped off the headset she’d been wearing and ran off screaming. The two reporters behind the news desk and pretty much the rest of the crew in the studio followed right behind her. That left Maize with a live camera and a seat at the news desk just for her.

Smoothing her straw hair, Maize wished she had a better shirt than the sun-faded, wind-torn flannel she currently wore, but this wasn’t about fashion. It was about her deep thoughts. The focus was on her good plans and her willingness to work for change.

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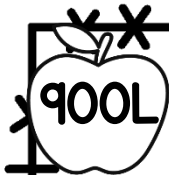
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“Going live in 3, 2, 1 . . .”



Name: _____ Date: _____

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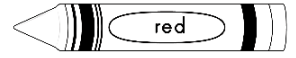
"Going live in 3, 2, 1..."

Spooky Stories

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer the following questions. Underline the text evidence in the color indicated. If there is not a crayon next to the question, you will need to infer the answer. You should still look for text evidence to help you infer.

1. What is unique about Maize in comparison to a traditional scarecrow?

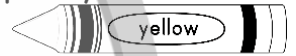


2. Why did Maize feel she *had* to leave the farm before the end of the season?

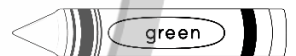


- a. If she stayed until the end of the season, she would be taken apart and replaced.
- b. If she stayed until the end of the season, she would be sold to a new farm.
- c. If she stayed until the end of the season, she would be fed to the pigs.
- d. If she stayed until the end of the season, she would be turned into a real girl.

3. Read this sentence from the passage, "*The women gaped at Maize.*" In the context of this sentence, what does the word **gaped** mean? Use details from the text to support your answer.



4. Complete the sequence of events in the story.

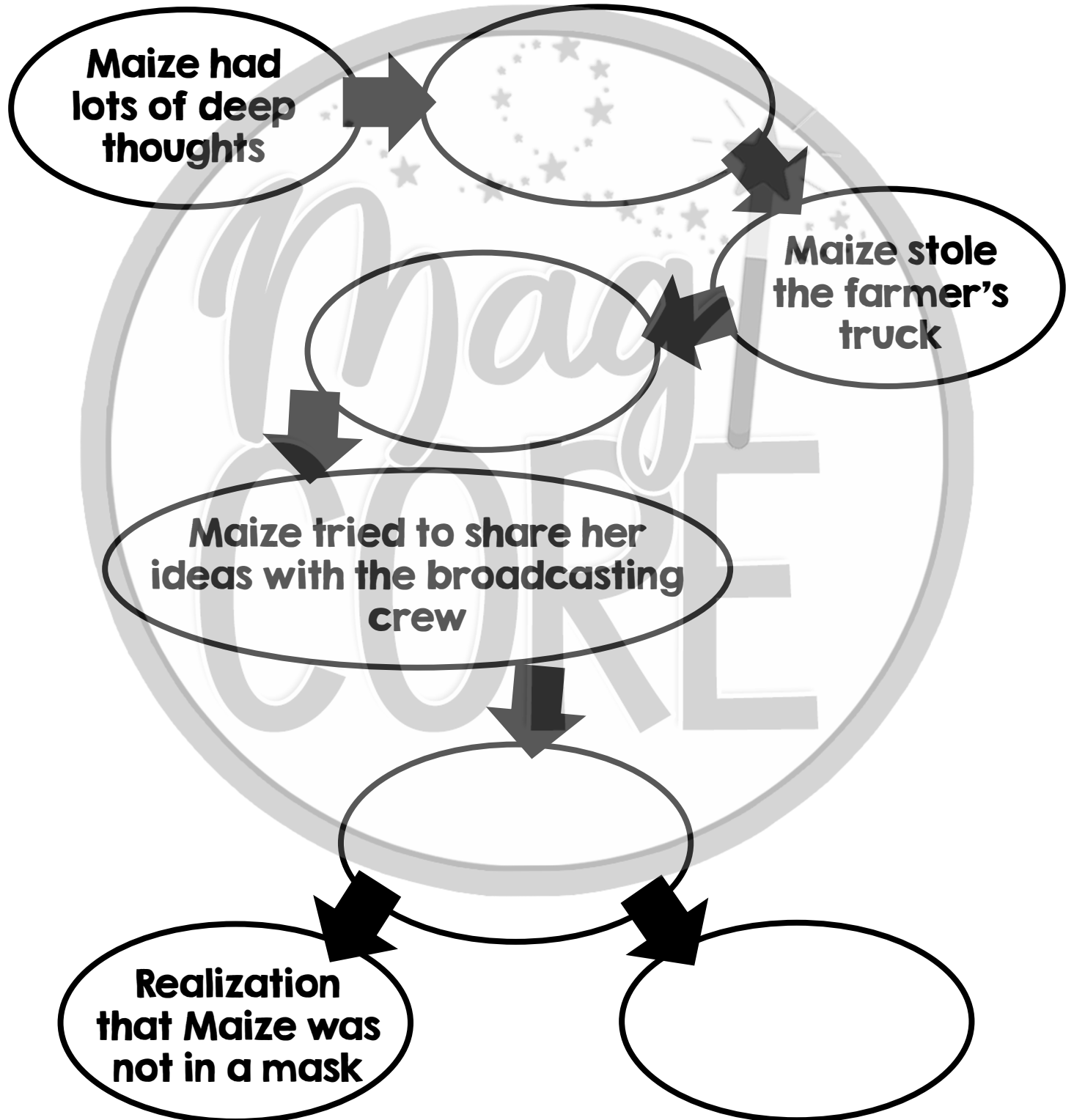


	Maize steals the farmer's truck.		The security guards try to "unmask" Maize.	
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5. Why might Maize not understand the fear the humans experienced at the sight of her? Evaluate the text as a whole to help you infer.

CAUSE-AND-EFFECT

With Maize beginning to develop deep thoughts and self-awareness, the story "Going Live" unfolds as one event causes another. This is an example of a cause-and-effect relationship. Use the text "Going Live" to fill in the blank boxes to complete the cause-and-effect chain.



GOING LIVE RESPONSE

Examine the title of this passage, "Going Live." Write a response analyzing why this is or is not an effective title for the passage. Explain the different meanings behind the title and support your thinking with evidence from the text.



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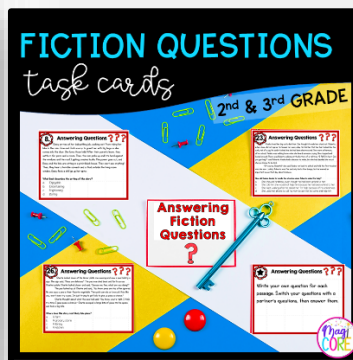
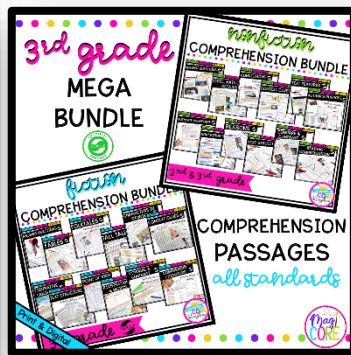


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