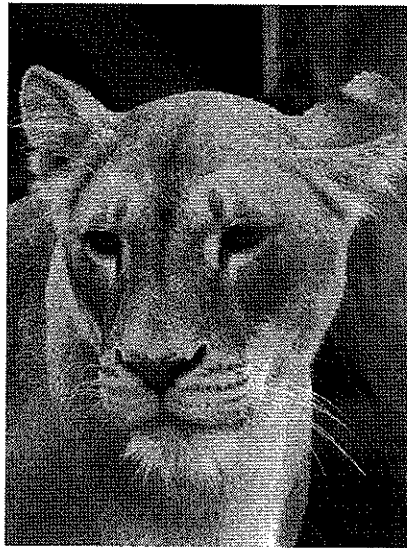


A Lion in the Bedroom



When James woke up, he found a lion sleeping on the floor next to his bed. Because he was five years old, he thought this was awesome.

“Hello, lion!” he yelled.

The lion, a female with a patchy coat, opened one eye and stared at him lazily. Then she turned over and fell back asleep.

James considered petting the lion or scratching its belly — Trixie, his old cat, loved belly scratches — but he was proud enough of his new pet that he wanted to tell his parents first. So, he jumped out of bed and walked into the kitchen. His father was eating breakfast.

“Do you want me to strip the bathroom moldings this weekend?” his father asked his mother. “Or can it wait a week?”

"It can wait," she said, frowning. "But you should really *want* to strip the moldings."

"I got a lion!" yelled James.

"That's nice, dear," said his mother.

"Well played, son," said his father. "Most five-year-olds go with something showier, like an ocelot or a puma. But you've gone the classic route."

"I'm naming it Trixie II: Return of Trixie," said James. "I want to ride her to school."

"Sure," his father said, "everyone wants to ride their lion to school. But where will you park it?"

"Bill," his mother said. "We've talked about your sarcasm."

"It's not sarcasm," his father. "I'm being fu—"

James's father didn't get to finish his sentence. It was interrupted by an ear-splitting roar, coming from James's bedroom.

For a few seconds, neither one of his parents said anything.

"Maybe I'll name her Tiger," said James. "To confuse people."

“James,” said his father quietly. “What was that?”

“That was Trixie II.”

“Oh dear me,” said his mother, crossing herself.

James’s father craned his head to peer down the hall towards James’s bedroom. After a moment, he knelt down in front of his son and put his hands on his shoulders.

“James,” he said. “I need you to be completely, 100% honest with me. No make-believe, no story-time? Can you do that?”

James nodded. “Sure I can.” He noticed a droplet of sweat dripping down his father’s forehead.

“OK, great,” said his father, in a strange, small voice. “James. Is there a lion...a real lion...in your bedroom?”

“Dad,” said James, patiently. “We’ve been over this.”

His father stared at him.

James sighed. “Of course there is, dad.”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” his mother screamed. “Ahhhhhhhhhhhhh!”

“Helen, stop it!” snapped his father. His father stood up. “This is ridiculous. I don’t know what that noise was, but there is not a lion in your bedroom.”

James’s father walked angrily to the broom closet. He opened the door, pulled out a mop with a long wooden handle and began marching towards the hallway.

“For gosh sake, Bill,” his mother said, grabbing him by the shoulder. “Let’s just get out of here and call the police. Or animal control. Or someone. *Please.*”

“And tell them what?” His father wheeled around to face her. “What? That we have a *lion* in the house? Oh, I’m sure they’ll send a car right out.”

“Tell them her name is Trixie II,” said James. “Someone might have met her before.”

“Bill...”

“I’m not calling *anyone*,” his father said. With that, he turned and stomped down the hallway. James and his mother looked down after him.

“Do you think dad and Trixie II will get along?” James asked his mother. “Dad is so moody these days and Trixie II is just kind of...mellow.”

“Quiet,” his mother hissed.

They watched his father approach the door. He reached for the handle and, holding the mop high in his other hand, gently swung the door open and poked his head around the corner.

James barely had time to be curious about his father's reaction before his father turned on his heels, slammed the door shut and went sprinting down the hallway towards James and his mother.

"Get out of the house right now!" his father hollered as he ran. *"Go! Run! Now! Move! Move! Move!"*

His father practically shoved James and his mother through the living room and out the front door. When they were outside, his father doubled over, panting for breath.

"Where in the world did you get a *lion*?" he yelled at James.

"You mean it's *real*?" his mother screamed, her eyes bugging. "Ahhhhhhhhhh!"

"They come from Africa, right?" said James.

By this time, neighbors had heard the commotion and begun gathering. Their next-door neighbors were the Horowitzes. Mr. Horowitz walked up to James's father.

"Bill, is something the matter?"

James's father turned and stared at Mr. Horowitz. "There's a lion in my son's bedroom."

Mr. Horowitz threw a quick, worried glance at his wife, who was standing on their front lawn. His wife shrugged.

"O.K.," said Mr. Horowitz, slowly. "Do you want us to call somebody?"

"Her name is Trixie II," explained James. "Or maybe Ms. Botticelli. I like how that name sounds."

"Call somebody!" his father yelled. "Call anybody! There's a lion in my son's bedroom."

"Helen," said Mr. Horowitz quietly. "Should we call somebody?"

"I don't even know," said James's mother, breaking down in sobs. "I never know."

By this time a dozen neighbors had gathered in front of James's house. All of them were yelling at each other, trying to figure out what had happened, when suddenly everyone froze. There, at the front door of James house, was a massive African lion. Everyone stared at it, completely silent.

For a few moments, the lion stared back. Finally, she let out a long sigh.

"Guys," the lion said, "I know I'm a guest and I don't mean to be a pain, but I had

a really late night last night and I have a client meeting at 10, so I was really hoping to sleep in. Do you think you guys could keep it down just a little bit? Thanks.”

And with that, the lion turned and walked back in the house.

“What about Rambo?” said James. “That’s a cool name. *Rambo*. Yeah, I like that.”

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What does James find in his bedroom?

- A a tiger
- B a lion
- C Trixie, his old cat

2. How do James's parents change in the story?

- A At first they don't believe there is a lion in their house. Then they become scared there might be a lion in their house.
- B At first they are scared there might be a lion in their house. Then they don't believe there is a lion in their house.
- C At first they don't want James to have a lion, and then they change their minds.

3. When James tells his parents that he has a lion, they do not believe him. Which details from the passage support this conclusion?

- A James's father grabs a mop and goes to look in James's room.
- B James's mother wants to call the police or animal control.
- C James's mother says, "That's nice," and his father makes jokes.

4. Read the following sentences:

"James," he said. "I need you to be completely, 100% honest with me. No make-believe, no story-time? Can you do that?"

"James nodded. 'Sure I can.' He noticed a droplet of sweat dripping down his father's forehead.

"OK, great," said his father, in a strange, small voice. "James. Is there a lion...a real lion...in your bedroom?"

How does James's father feel at this point in the story?

- A annoyed
- B frightened
- C happy

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A James finds a lion in his bedroom and tells his parents.
- B James misses his cat Trixie, so his parents buy him a lion named Trixie II.
- C James is scared of the lion in his bedroom, and his father hits it with a broom.

6. Read the following sentences: "It's not sarcasm," his father. "I'm being fu—" James's father didn't get to finish his sentence. It was **interrupted** by an ear-splitting roar, coming from James's bedroom."

In this sentence, what does "**interrupted**" most nearly mean?

- A became louder
- B kept going
- C stopped

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

James tells his parents that there is a lion in his bedroom _____ they do not believe him.

- A but
- B so
- C because

Answer in Complete Sentences.

8. How does James feel about the lion in his bedroom?

9. What does the lion do at the end of the passage?

10. What makes this story unrealistic, or unlike real life?

A Clean Park

Tyler ran into the kitchen.

"Mom, I'm going to the park!" he said.

"Wear your helmet!" his mom called back. The park was just down the street. Tyler grabbed his bike and rode there. It was pretty much his favorite place to go. The park looked pretty crowded. Some kids were playing. But other kids held garbage bags. They were picking up trash.

Tyler stopped his bike. One of the kids was Lauren, a girl from his school. She waved at Tyler.

"We're cleaning up the park today," she said. "Want to help?"

"No thanks," Tyler said. Today was Saturday, a day off. He came to the park to have fun, not to work!

Tyler rode his bike around the path. He passed the swings and slide. He passed the small pond. As he rode, he saw things he never noticed before. There was lots of garbage on the ground. He saw old soda bottles. He saw old food wrappers. It was pretty gross.

Tyler rode back to Lauren. He got off his bike.

"I'll help," he said. Lauren smiled.

"Here," she said. She gave him a bag. Tyler and the kids cleaned for about an hour. When they were done, the park looked great. Tyler rode his bike around the path again. There were no old soda bottles. There were no old food wrappers. Tyler smiled. Now the park was better than ever!

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following four questions based on the information in the passage. *Answer in complete sentences.*

1. Why were the kids cleaning the park?

2. Why did Tyler decide to help clean the park?

3. At first, why didn't Tyler want to help clean the park?

4. What is this passage mostly about?

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

One Saturday, Tyler and his friends decided to clean the park because there was so much garbage around it.

Who? Tyler and his friends

5. (did) What?

6. When?

7. Why?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

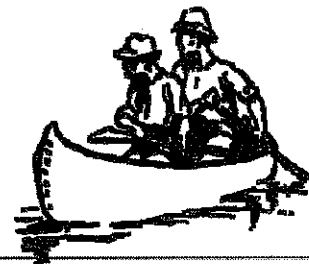
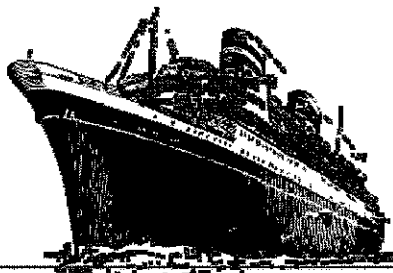
Tyler changes his mind about helping Lauren _____ he realizes how gross the park is.

- A but
- B because
- C so

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

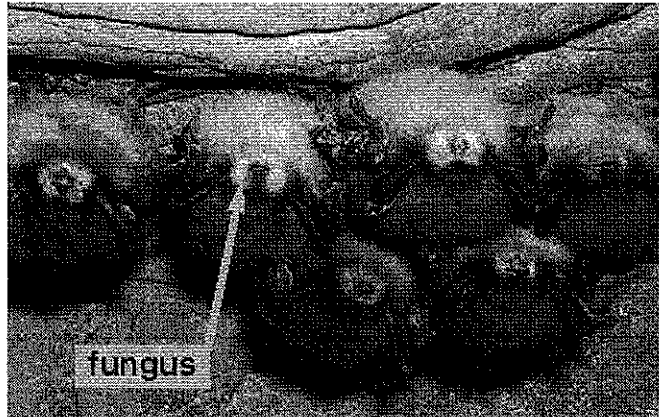
Vocabulary Word: **notice** (no · tice): to become aware of.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **notice**.
- a. When my mom finally noticed my hair, she screamed because I had dyed it blue!
 - b. I noticed that the flag was missing from our classroom and asked my teacher where it was.
 - c. When my cat noticed the dog in our yard, he ran into the house.
 - d. The bird noticed the worm and swooped down to catch it.
 - e. The sailor noticed a ship ahead so he changed the direction of his boat.
10. Which is easier to notice out in the ocean?



A Bat Mystery

Some bats are in trouble. They have an illness. Thousands of bats have died from it.

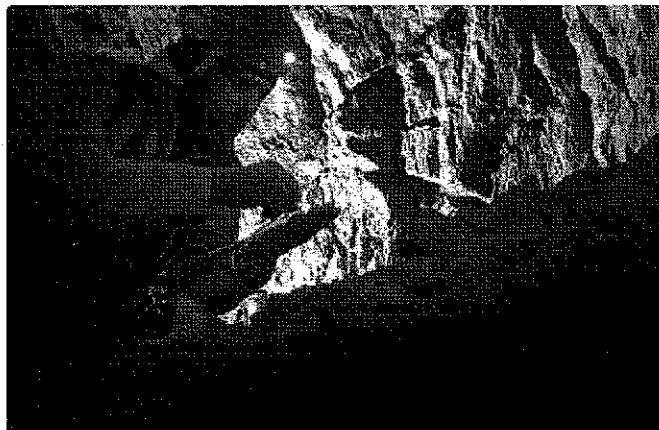


AP Images

The bats get a white **fungus** on their noses, ears, and wings. A fungus is a type of plant life that can make animals sick.

Scientists do not know why the bats are getting sick. They have been trying to solve the mystery for more than a year.

"We're trying to find out what this fungus is and where it came from," says scientist Susi von Oettingen. She works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "We're trying to figure out if we can make the bats healthy again," she says.



AP Images

Scientists want to find out why bats are getting sick.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Answer the following four questions based on the information in the passage. *Answer in complete sentences.*

1. Describe what is making the bats sick.

2. Why are the scientists trying to help the bats?

3. According to the article, thousands of bats have died from this fungus. What will most likely happen if scientists do not find a way to make bats healthy again?

4. What is this passage mostly about?

Directions: Please read the sentence below and then write the word or phrase that best answers the questions. The first answer has been provided for you.

Scientists have been trying to solve the bat mystery for more than a year by studying the bats and where they live.

Who? scientists

5. (have been) What?

6. When?

7. How?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Scientists are trying to figure out the cause of the fungus _____ they can figure out why the bats are getting sick.

- A but
- B because
- C so

Directions: Read the vocabulary word and definition below. Then answer questions 9 and 10.

Vocabulary Word: **mystery** (mys · ter · y): something that is difficult to understand or explain.

9. Read the sentences below and underline all forms of the word **mystery**.
- a. I love to read mystery stories that involve a crime that is hard to solve.
 - b. The boy did not understand why rain turned to snow in the winter so the process was a mystery to him.
 - c. The family tried to solve the mystery of their missing dog.
 - d. The police tried to solve the mystery of the missing car and looked for clues that might tell them where it went.
 - e. Over half of the students in the school were home sick at the same time and it was a mystery to the principal why they were all sick.

10. Which picture is of someone solving a mystery?



Explore Space

Our Solar System

Our solar system is made up of the sun and eight **planets**. A planet is a large ball made of rock or gas. Each planet **orbits**, or travels around, the sun. The sun is at the center of the solar system.



NASA

The planets in our solar system are all different sizes.

The **sun** is a star. It is a ball of hot gas. It gives off light and heat. Why does the sun look different from other stars? The sun is the star closest to Earth.

Mercury is the closest planet to the sun. It is also the smallest. It has mountains and **craters**. Craters are holes in the ground that were made when space rocks crashed into it.

Venus is the hottest planet. It is hot enough to melt a rocket ship. Venus is about the same size as Earth.

Earth is our home. It is also the only planet with oceans. In fact, Earth is covered mostly with water. That is why it is called the Blue Planet.

Mars is called the Red Planet. It has reddish dirt. It also has mountains, volcanoes, ice caps, and **canyons**. A canyon is a deep, narrow valley with steep sides.

Jupiter is the largest planet. It is made of thick gases. Very strong winds blow on this planet.

Saturn is the second-largest planet. It has rings around it. The rings are made of rock, dust, and ice.

Uranus was the first planet to be discovered using a telescope. It is cold and windy here.

Neptune is the coldest planet because it is farthest from the sun. The planet is made of gases.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a planet?

- A a large ball made of rock or gas
- B a large ball made of only rock
- C a ball of hot gas that gives off light

2. The author provides a list of what in the passage?

- A stars in our solar system
- B planets in our solar system
- C moons in our solar system

3. The sun is at the center of our solar system. What evidence from the passage best supports this statement?

- A The sun is the star that is closest to Earth.
- B A star is a ball of gas that gives off heat and light.
- C The planets in our solar system orbit the sun.

4. Read the following sentence: "**Uranus** was the first planet to be discovered using a telescope."

Based on this information, what conclusion can you make about Uranus?

- A Uranus is too far away to see with the naked eye.
- B Uranus is the planet that is farthest from the sun.
- C Uranus is blocked by Saturn so it is hard to see.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A the sun and the planets in our solar system
- B why the Earth is called the Blue Planet
- C what the rings around Saturn are made of

6. Read the following sentences: "Mars is called the Red Planet. It has **reddish** dirt."

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**reddish**" mean?

- A mostly brown in color
- B moist and fertile
- C slightly red in color

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Neptune is the farthest planet from the sun, ____ it is the coldest planet.

- A so
- B but
- C because

Answer in complete sentences.

8. What is at the center of our solar system?

9. Why is Earth called the Blue Planet?

10. Compare Venus and Earth by explaining how they are similar and how they are different.
