Name: _____ Date: _____

The Whistle That Would Not Come

Circle group

Everyone in Mo's family could whistle. His dad whistled when he washed dishes. His big cousin could whistle a whole song. Mo was nine. He could only blow air that sounded like a leaky tire.

"Pucker your lips," his dad said. "Make a small circle, like you are sipping from a straw."

Mo tried in the kitchen. Air. He tried in the car. More air. He tried on the porch, in the garden, and once in the bathtub. Still air.

His cousin said to curl the tongue back. Mo curled it. He made a lot of spit and nothing else.

After two weeks, Mo felt grumpy. Whistling was like a club that would not let him in.

One morning he walked to school. He was thinking about a sandwich, not whistling. Without knowing it, he puckered his lips, curled his tongue, and blew out slowly.

Tweeeet.

Mo stopped on the sidewalk. He tried again. Tweeeet! A thin, clear note floated into the cold air.

He whistled all the way to school. By dinner, he could whistle two notes. He drove his family a little bit crazy.

Questions

1. What sound did Mo make at first?

_____

_____

2. What did Mo's dad say to do with his lips?

_____

_____

3. Where did Mo try whistling?

_____

_____

4. What did his cousin tell him?

_____

_____

5. Why did whistling feel like a club that would not let Mo in?

_____

_____

6. What was Mo doing when the first whistle came?

_____

_____

7. Why do you think it worked when he was not thinking about it?

_____

_____

Words to know

pucker: to squeeze your lips together into a small circle
curl: to bend into a rounded shape
grumpy: in a cranky mood
sidewalk: a path for walking beside a road

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Whistle That Would Not Come

Triangle group

Everyone in Mo's family could whistle. His dad whistled while he washed dishes. His big cousin could even whistle a whole song. Mo, who was nine, could only blow air that sounded like a leaky tire.

"Pucker your lips," his dad told him. "Make a small circle, like you are sipping from a straw."

Mo tried it in the kitchen. Air. He tried it in the car. More air. He tried it on the porch, in the garden, and once in the bathtub. Still air.

His cousin said to curl the tongue back a little. Mo curled it. Nothing happened except a lot of spit.

After two weeks, Mo felt grumpy. Whistling seemed like a club that would not let him in.

One morning, he was walking to school and not thinking about whistling at all. He was thinking about a sandwich. Without noticing, he puckered his lips into a tiny circle, curled his tongue, and let out a slow breath.

Tweeeet.

Mo stopped in the middle of the sidewalk. He tried again. Tweeeet! A thin, clear note floated out into the cold air.

He whistled all the way to the school gate. By dinner, he could whistle two notes, and he drove his whole family a little bit crazy.

Questions

1. What sound did Mo make when he first tried to whistle?

_____

_____

2. What did Mo's dad tell him to do with his lips?

_____

_____

3. Where did Mo try whistling before he succeeded?

_____

_____

4. What did his cousin suggest?

_____

_____

5. Why did Mo feel like whistling was a club that would not let him in?

_____

_____

6. What was Mo doing when the first whistle finally came?

_____

_____

7. Why do you think the whistle worked when he was not thinking about it?

_____

_____

Words to know

pucker: to squeeze your lips together into a small circle
curl: to bend into a rounded shape
grumpy: in a cranky mood
sidewalk: a path for walking beside a road

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Whistle That Would Not Come

Square group

Absolutely everyone in Mo's family could whistle. His father whistled cheerfully while washing the dishes, and his older cousin could even whistle an entire song from beginning to end. Mo, who was nine years old, could produce nothing but a stream of air that sounded like a leaky tire.

"Pucker your lips," his father coached him. "Shape them into a small circle, as though you were sipping through a straw."

Mo tried it in the kitchen. Air. He tried it in the car. More air. He tried it on the porch, in the garden, and once even in the bathtub. Still nothing but air.

His cousin recommended curling the tongue back slightly. Mo curled it, and the only result was a great deal of spit.

After two weeks of failure, Mo felt thoroughly grumpy. Whistling seemed like an exclusive club that refused to let him in.

One morning he was walking to school, and he was not thinking about whistling at all. He was thinking about a sandwich. Without realizing it, he puckered his lips into a tiny circle, curled his tongue, and released a slow, steady breath.

Tweeeet.

Mo froze in the middle of the sidewalk. He tried again. Tweeeet! A thin, clear note drifted out into the chilly air.

He whistled all the way to the school gate. By dinnertime he could manage two different notes, and he drove his entire family slightly crazy.

Questions

1. What sound could Mo produce when he first tried to whistle?

_____

_____

2. How did Mo's father tell him to shape his lips?

_____

_____

3. Where did Mo try whistling before he succeeded?

_____

_____

4. What did his cousin recommend?

_____

_____

5. Why did whistling seem like an exclusive club to Mo?

_____

_____

6. What was Mo doing when the first whistle finally came out?

_____

_____

7. Why might the whistle have worked when he was not thinking about it?

_____

_____

Words to know

pucker: to squeeze your lips together into a small circle
curl: to bend into a rounded shape
grumpy: in a cranky mood
sidewalk: a path for walking beside a road

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Whistle That Would Not Come

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Whistle That Would Not Come

Easier · 186 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.6

1. Air that sounded like a leaky tire.
2. Make a small circle, like sipping from a straw.
3. In the kitchen, the car, the porch, the garden and the bathtub.
4. To curl his tongue back.
5. Everyone else in his family could do it and he could not.
6. Walking to school and thinking about a sandwich.
7. He was relaxed, so his lips and breath did what he had practiced.

Triangle: The Whistle That Would Not Come

This passage · 210 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.5

1. Air that sounded like a leaky tire.
2. Make a small circle, as if sipping from a straw.
3. In the kitchen, the car, the porch, the garden and the bathtub.
4. Curling the tongue back a little.
5. Everyone else in his family could do it and he could not.
6. Walking to school and thinking about a sandwich.
7. He was relaxed, so his lips and breath did what they had practiced.

Square: The Whistle That Would Not Come

Harder · 236 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.3

1. A stream of air that sounded like a leaky tire.
2. Into a small circle, as if sipping through a straw.
3. In the kitchen, the car, the porch, the garden and the bathtub.
4. Curling the tongue back slightly.
5. Everyone else in his family could whistle and he could not.
6. Walking to school and thinking about a sandwich.
7. He was relaxed, so his lips and breath did what he had been practicing.