Name: _____ Date: _____

The Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

Circle group

A wind-up heron stood by Marsh Pond. Its metal feathers were the color of old spoons. If you whispered into its beak, it carried your message across the water. It walked to the far bank and whispered it out.

A boy named Dev used it every day. He sent notes to his cousin on the other side. "Do you want to catch frogs?" he whispered one morning.

But the heron was slow. Its key had not been turned far enough. It stopped in the middle of the pond with the message still inside.

Dev waded out through the cattails. He found the big brass key on the heron's back. He turned it ten times. The gears clicked, and the heron walked on.

At the cottage, his cousin heard the whisper and waved. Dev learned that even a magic messenger needs some care.

Questions

1. What did the heron do with the messages it was given?

_____

_____

2. Who did Dev send his notes to?

_____

_____

3. Why did the heron stop in the middle of the pond?

_____

_____

4. What did Dev do to get the heron moving again?

_____

_____

5. What did Dev learn at the end of the story?

_____

_____

6. What was Dev's message that morning?

_____

_____

Words to know

heron: a tall bird with long legs that wades in water
cattails: tall pond plants with brown fuzzy tops
messenger: someone or something that carries news

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 Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

Triangle group

A wind-up heron stood on one leg beside Marsh Pond. Its metal feathers were the color of old spoons. Anyone who whispered into its beak could send a message to a friend across the water, and the heron would walk to the far bank and whisper it back out.

A boy named Dev used it every day. He sent notes to his cousin, who lived in the cottage on the other side. "Do you want to catch frogs?" he whispered one morning.

But the heron had slowed down. Its key had turned only half as far as usual, and its legs creaked. It reached the middle of the pond and stopped, with the message still inside.

Dev waded out through the cattails. He found the large brass key on the heron's back and gave it ten careful turns. Gears clicked, and the heron stepped forward again.

When it reached the cottage, his cousin heard the whisper and waved. Dev had learned something. A messenger, even a magical one, needs a little care to keep working.

Questions

1. What did the heron do with the messages it was given?

_____

_____

2. Who did Dev send his notes to?

_____

_____

3. Why did the heron stop in the middle of the pond?

_____

_____

4. What did Dev do to get the heron moving again?

_____

_____

5. What did Dev learn at the end of the story?

_____

_____

6. What was Dev's message that morning?

_____

_____

Words to know

heron: a tall bird with long legs that wades in water
creaked: made a squeaky sound, like an old door
cattails: tall pond plants with brown fuzzy tops
messenger: someone or something that carries news

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 Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

Square group

A wind-up heron stood balanced on one leg beside Marsh Pond, its metal feathers the color of old spoons. Anyone who whispered into its beak could send a message to a friend across the water, for the heron would stride to the far bank and whisper the words back out.

A boy named Dev relied on it every day, sending notes to his cousin, who lived in the cottage on the opposite shore. "Do you want to catch frogs?" he whispered one bright morning.

But the heron had grown sluggish. Its key had been turned only half as far as usual, and its legs creaked with every step. It reached the middle of the pond and halted, the message still locked inside.

Dev waded out through the cattails. He located the large brass key on the heron's back and gave it ten careful turns. Gears clicked into motion, and the heron strode forward once again.

When it arrived at the cottage, his cousin heard the whisper and waved enthusiastically. Dev had learned something valuable: a messenger, even a magical one, needs a little care to keep working.

Questions

1. What did the heron do with the messages it was given?

_____

_____

2. Who did Dev send his notes to?

_____

_____

3. Why did the heron halt in the middle of the pond?

_____

_____

4. What did Dev do to get the heron moving again?

_____

_____

5. What did Dev learn at the end of the story?

_____

_____

6. What was Dev's message that morning?

_____

_____

Words to know

heron: a tall bird with long legs that wades in water
creaked: made a squeaky sound, like an old door
cattails: tall pond plants with brown fuzzy tops
messenger: someone or something that carries news

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 Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

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

Circle: The Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

Easier · 143 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.4

1. It walked to the far bank and whispered them out.
2. His cousin.
3. Its key had not been turned far enough.
4. He turned the brass key on its back ten times.
5. Even a magic messenger needs some care.
6. He asked if his cousin wanted to catch frogs.

Triangle: The Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

This passage · 176 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.9

1. It walked to the far bank and whispered them out.
2. His cousin.
3. Its key had not been turned far enough, so it ran down.
4. He turned the brass key on its back ten times.
5. Even a magical messenger needs a little care to keep working.
6. He asked if his cousin wanted to catch frogs.

Square: The Wind-Up Heron Who Carried Whispers

Harder · 188 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.7

1. It strode to the far bank and whispered the words back out.
2. His cousin, who lived in the cottage on the opposite shore.
3. Its key had been turned only half as far as usual, so it ran down.
4. He gave the brass key on its back ten careful turns.
5. A messenger, even a magical one, needs a little care to keep working.
6. He asked whether his cousin wanted to catch frogs.