Name: _____ Date: _____

Leif and the Poem About the Owl

Circle group

Mr. Pruitt's class had a spring recital. Every student had to say a poem from memory. Leif got a poem about an owl who watches the sleepy fields at night. It had four verses. Leif's heart sank.

He read it twenty times. He covered it with his hand and tried to say it. By the third line, his mind went blank, as if a chalkboard had been wiped clean.

His grandmother saw him sigh at the table. "My teacher taught me a trick," she said. "Learn one line at a time. Walk while you say it. Your feet remember what your head forgets."

So Leif marched around the backyard, one line for each step. He said each line three times before he added the next. He pictured the owl in the branches, then the moon, then the mice asleep in the grass. Soon each line brought a picture, and each picture brought the next line.

On the day of the recital, Leif stood in front of the class. The first verse flowed out. Then, at the start of the third verse, he froze. The room went quiet.

He closed his eyes and pictured the backyard walk. His foot seemed to move on its own. The words came back one by one, as if they had been waiting in the grass.

When he finished, Mr. Pruitt clapped first. Leif's knees shook, but he was grinning.

Questions

1. What kind of assignment did Mr. Pruitt's class have?

_____

_____

2. What was Leif's poem about?

_____

_____

3. What trick did Leif's grandmother teach him?

_____

_____

4. What did Leif picture as he practiced?

_____

_____

5. Why did the pictures help Leif remember the lines?

_____

_____

6. How did Leif get going again when he froze at the third verse?

_____

_____

Words to know

recital: a show where people perform for an audience
verse: a group of lines in a poem
memory: the ability to remember things
blank: empty, with nothing in it

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: _____

Leif and the Poem About the Owl

Triangle group

Mr. Pruitt's class had a spring recital, and every student had to say a poem from memory. Leif drew a poem about an owl who watches the sleepy fields at night. It had four verses, and Leif's heart sank.

He read the poem twenty times, and then he covered it with his hand and tried to say it, but by the third line his mind went blank, as if someone had wiped a chalkboard clean.

His grandmother noticed him sighing at the table. "My teacher taught me a trick," she said. "Learn one line at a time, and walk while you say it. Your feet remember what your head forgets."

So Leif marched around the backyard, taking one step for each line and repeating every line three times before he added the next. He pictured the owl in the branches, then the moon, then the mice sleeping in the grass, and soon each line brought a picture, and each picture brought the next line.

On the day of the recital, Leif stood in front of the class. The first verse flowed out. Then, at the start of the third verse, he froze. The room went quiet.

He closed his eyes and imagined walking across the backyard. His foot seemed to move on its own. The words returned, one after another, as if they had been waiting in the grass.

When he finished, Mr. Pruitt clapped first. Leif's knees were shaking, but he was grinning too.

Questions

1. What kind of assignment did Mr. Pruitt's class have?

_____

_____

2. What was Leif's poem about?

_____

_____

3. What trick did Leif's grandmother teach him?

_____

_____

4. What did Leif picture as he practiced?

_____

_____

5. Why did the pictures help Leif remember the lines?

_____

_____

6. How did Leif recover when he froze at the third verse?

_____

_____

Words to know

recital: a show where people perform for an audience
verse: a group of lines in a poem
memory: the ability to remember things
blank: empty, with nothing in it

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: _____

Leif and the Poem About the Owl

Square group

Mr. Pruitt's class was preparing for a spring recital, and every student was expected to recite a poem from memory. Leif drew a poem about an owl who watches over the sleepy fields at night. It had four long verses, and his heart sank the moment he saw it.

He read the poem twenty times. Then he covered it with his hand and tried to say it aloud. By the third line, his mind went completely blank, as though someone had wiped a chalkboard clean.

His grandmother noticed him sighing at the dinner table. "My teacher taught me a trick," she said. "Learn one line at a time, and walk while you say it. Your feet remember what your head forgets."

So Leif marched around the backyard, taking one step for each line. He repeated every line three times before adding the next. He pictured the owl perched in the branches, then the moon, then the mice sleeping in the grass. Before long, each line summoned a picture, and each picture summoned the next line.

On the day of the recital, Leif stood in front of the class. The first verse flowed out easily. Then, at the beginning of the third verse, he froze, and the whole room fell silent.

He closed his eyes and imagined walking across his backyard. His foot seemed to move on its own. The words returned one after another, as if they had been waiting patiently in the grass.

When he finished, Mr. Pruitt clapped first. Leif's knees were still shaking, but he was grinning from ear to ear.

Questions

1. What kind of assignment did Mr. Pruitt's class have?

_____

_____

2. What was Leif's poem about?

_____

_____

3. What trick did Leif's grandmother teach him?

_____

_____

4. What did Leif picture as he practiced?

_____

_____

5. Why did the pictures help Leif remember the lines?

_____

_____

6. How did Leif recover when he froze at the third verse?

_____

_____

Words to know

recital: a show where people perform for an audience
verse: a group of lines in a poem
memory: the ability to remember things
blank: empty, with nothing in it

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: Leif and the Poem About the Owl

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

Circle: Leif and the Poem About the Owl

Easier · 234 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.8

1. Each student had to say a poem from memory.
2. An owl that watches the sleepy fields at night.
3. Learn one line at a time while walking and saying it.
4. The owl, the moon, and the mice asleep in the grass.
5. Each picture reminded him of the next line.
6. He closed his eyes and pictured walking in his backyard.

Triangle: Leif and the Poem About the Owl

This passage · 245 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.1

1. Each student had to say a poem from memory at a recital.
2. An owl that watches the sleepy fields at night.
3. Learn one line at a time while walking and saying it.
4. The owl, the moon, and the mice sleeping in the grass.
5. Each picture reminded him of the next line.
6. He closed his eyes and imagined walking across his backyard.

Square: Leif and the Poem About the Owl

Harder · 264 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.6

1. Each student had to recite a poem from memory at a recital.
2. An owl that watches over the sleepy fields at night.
3. Learn one line at a time while walking and saying it.
4. The owl in the branches, the moon, and mice sleeping in the grass.
5. Each picture summoned the next line.
6. He closed his eyes and imagined walking across his backyard.