Name: _____ Date: _____

Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

Circle group

Our teacher had the flu. A substitute named Mr. Wick came on Monday. He wore a neat bow tie and had a serious face. He also had one odd habit. He thought every sentence meant exactly what it said.

"Class," he said, "please hit the books."

No one moved. Then Rosa lifted her math book and gave it a gentle pat. Mr. Wick nodded. "Excellent hitting."

Later Jamal said the homework was a piece of cake. Mr. Wick looked puzzled. "I see no cake," he said. He checked the shelf. Priya told him to hold his horses. He looked around for horses. There were none. Then she said it was raining cats and dogs. He ran to the window. "Where? I must see this!" He was sad to see only gray sky.

By lunch the class could not stop giggling. Nina wanted to help. After lunch she drew a chart on the board. One column had the sayings. The other had what they really meant.

"Hit the books means to study," she said. "Piece of cake means easy."

Mr. Wick read the chart twice. Then he laughed so hard that his bow tie wobbled. "I confused you all day," he said. "I will keep an eye on my words." Nina grinned. "Please keep both eyes in your head."

Questions

1. Why did a substitute come?

_____

_____

2. What was Mr. Wick's odd habit?

_____

_____

3. What did Rosa do when told to hit the books?

_____

_____

4. Why did Mr. Wick run to the window?

_____

_____

5. How did Nina help Mr. Wick?

_____

_____

6. Why was Nina's last joke funny?

_____

_____

Words to know

substitute: a person who takes another person's place for a day
sayings: short, well-known phrases with a special meaning
puzzled: confused and unsure
giggling: laughing in a silly, soft way
wobbled: moved unsteadily from side to side

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: _____

Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

Triangle group

When our regular teacher came down with the flu, a substitute named Mr. Wick arrived on Monday morning wearing a neat bow tie and a very serious expression. He also had one strange habit. He believed that every sentence meant exactly what it said, even the sentences that were only jokes or sayings.

"Class," he began, "please hit the books."

Nobody moved at first. Then Rosa slowly lifted her math book and gave it a gentle pat, and Mr. Wick nodded happily. "Excellent hitting."

Later, Jamal remarked that the homework was a piece of cake. Mr. Wick looked puzzled and began searching the shelf, because he could not understand where the cake might possibly be hiding. When Priya told him to hold his horses, he looked around the room for horses and found none. When she said it was raining cats and dogs, he ran to the window and shouted, "Where? I must see this!" He seemed sad to find only a gray sky.

By lunchtime, the class could not stop giggling, but Nina decided to help. After lunch, she carefully drew a big chart on the board with two separate columns. In one column she wrote the sayings, and in the other she wrote what they really meant.

"Hit the books means to study, and piece of cake means that something is easy," she explained patiently.

Mr. Wick read the chart twice. Then he threw back his head and laughed so hard his bow tie wobbled. "I have been confusing all of you since this morning," he said, "and I will keep an eye on my words from now on." Nina grinned. "Please do not take that one out of your head, either."

Questions

1. Why did a substitute come to the class?

_____

_____

2. What was Mr. Wick's strange habit?

_____

_____

3. What did Rosa do when told to hit the books?

_____

_____

4. Why did Mr. Wick run to the window when he heard it was raining cats and dogs?

_____

_____

5. How did Nina help Mr. Wick?

_____

_____

6. Why did Nina's last joke make sense?

_____

_____

Words to know

substitute: a person who takes another person's place for a day
sayings: short, well-known phrases with a special meaning
puzzled: confused and unsure
giggling: laughing in a silly, soft way
wobbled: moved unsteadily from side to side

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: _____

Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

Square group

When our regular teacher came down with a dreadful case of the flu, a substitute named Mr. Wick arrived on Monday morning wearing a neat bow tie and an extremely serious expression. He also possessed one peculiar habit, which was that he believed every sentence meant precisely what it said, even the sentences that were only sayings.

"Class," he began, "please hit the books."

Nobody moved at first, but then Rosa slowly lifted her math book and gave it a gentle pat, and Mr. Wick nodded with great satisfaction. "Excellent hitting."

Later, Jamal remarked that the homework was a piece of cake. Mr. Wick looked utterly bewildered and began searching the shelf, since he could not imagine where the cake might be hiding. When Priya told him to hold his horses, he scanned the classroom for horses and found none, and when she mentioned that it was raining cats and dogs, he rushed to the window and exclaimed, "Where? I must see this!" He seemed genuinely disappointed to find nothing but a gray sky.

By lunchtime the class could not stop giggling, but Nina decided that somebody ought to help. After lunch she carefully drew a large chart on the board with two separate columns, writing the sayings in one column and what they really meant in the other.

"Hit the books means to study, and piece of cake means that something is very easy," she explained patiently.

Mr. Wick read the chart twice. Then he threw back his head and laughed so hard that his bow tie wobbled. "I have been confusing all of you since this morning," he admitted, "and I will keep an eye on my words from now on." Nina grinned. "Please do not take that one out of your head, either."

Questions

1. Why did a substitute teacher come to the class?

_____

_____

2. What peculiar habit did Mr. Wick have?

_____

_____

3. How did Rosa react when told to hit the books?

_____

_____

4. Why did Mr. Wick rush to the window when he heard it was raining cats and dogs?

_____

_____

5. How did Nina help Mr. Wick understand?

_____

_____

6. What makes Nina's closing joke work?

_____

_____

Words to know

substitute: a person who takes another person's place for a day
sayings: short, well-known phrases with a special meaning
giggling: laughing in a silly, soft way
wobbled: moved unsteadily from side to side

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: Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

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

Circle: Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

Easier · 218 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.8

1. The regular teacher had the flu.
2. He thought every sentence meant exactly what it said.
3. She gave her math book a gentle pat.
4. He thought real cats and dogs were falling.
5. She made a chart of sayings and what they mean.
6. She teased him about keeping an eye on his words.

Triangle: Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

This passage · 284 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.8

1. The regular teacher had the flu.
2. He believed every sentence meant exactly what it said.
3. She gave her math book a gentle pat.
4. He thought real cats and dogs were falling from the sky.
5. She made a chart that showed each saying and what it really meant.
6. Taking out an eye would be silly, and she was teasing him about keeping an eye on his words.

Square: Mr. Wick Takes Every Word Literally

Harder · 296 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7

1. The regular teacher had come down with the flu.
2. He believed every sentence meant precisely what it said.
3. She gave her math book a gentle pat.
4. He thought real cats and dogs were falling from the sky.
5. She drew a chart showing each saying and what it really meant.
6. She teased him about keeping an eye on his words, which taken literally would be silly.