Name: _____ Date: _____

The Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

Circle group

Under the old hay barn lived a ferret named Quill. She loved numbers. She counted her steps, the stones in the walls, and the tunnels in the maze under the barn. She counted forty-one.

Her family was proud, but a little tired of the counting. "Quill," said her father, "please help us gather food before the cold comes."

"One moment," said Quill. "I have not counted the new tunnel by the well."

Day after day, she made marks on the walls while the others filled the pantry. When the first frost came, the family's store was only half full. Quill's pile was empty.

Her sister Fern did not scold. She pushed over a heap of seeds. "Take some. But tomorrow, will you do something with me?"

The next morning, Fern showed her a tunnel that had caved in near the pantry. Quill's map was the only record of every passage. Using it, the family dug a new way in one afternoon and saved the food.

Quill felt warm inside. "My counting helped," she said, "but only when I used it for all of us."

After that, she kept her marks, and she kept her turn at the pantry too.

Questions

1. What did Quill love more than anything?

_____

_____

2. How many tunnels did Quill count under the barn?

_____

_____

3. What was in Quill's pile when the first frost came?

_____

_____

4. How did Fern respond when Quill had no food?

_____

_____

5. How did Quill's map help the family?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

maze: a confusing set of paths with many turns
pantry: a place where food is stored
frost: a thin layer of ice that forms when it is very cold

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 Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

Triangle group

Under the old hay barn lived a ferret named Quill, who loved numbers more than anything else. She counted her steps, the stones in the walls. And the tunnels in the maze beneath the barn, and by her count there were forty-one. Her family was proud of her but also a little tired of the counting. And her father asked her to help gather food before the cold arrived. Quill replied that she needed one more moment to count the new tunnel near the well.

Day after day, she scribbled marks on the dirt walls while the rest of the family filled the pantry. When the first frost came, their store of seeds and dried berries was barely half full, and Quill's pile was completely empty.

Her sister Fern did not scold her. Instead, she pushed over a heap of seeds and asked whether Quill would do something with her the next day. In the morning, Fern showed her that a tunnel had collapsed near the pantry. And Quill's careful map turned out to be the only record of every passage. Using it, the family dug a new route in a single afternoon and carried the remaining food to safety. Quill felt something warm in her chest, and she said that her counting had helped only because she had finally used it for all of them. After that, she kept her marks. And she also kept her turn at the pantry.

Questions

1. What did Quill love to do more than anything?

_____

_____

2. How many tunnels did Quill count under the barn?

_____

_____

3. What was in Quill's pile when the first frost came?

_____

_____

4. How did Fern respond when Quill had no food?

_____

_____

5. How did Quill's map help the family?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach?

_____

_____

Words to know

maze: a confusing set of paths with many turns
scribbled: wrote or drew quickly and messily
pantry: a place where food is stored
frost: a thin layer of ice that forms when it is very cold
collapsed: fell down or caved in

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 Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

Square group

Beneath the crumbling old hay barn lived a ferret named Quill, who adored numbers above everything else in the world. She counted her footsteps, the stones set into the walls, and the tunnels that wound through the maze beneath the barn. And by her careful reckoning there were forty-one. Her family was proud of her but had grown somewhat weary of all the counting, and her father urged her to help gather food before the cold arrived. Quill responded that she could not possibly begin until she had counted the new tunnel near the well.

Day after day, she scribbled tidy marks on the dirt walls while the rest of the family filled the pantry. When the first frost arrived, their store of seeds and dried berries was barely half full. And Quill's own pile was completely empty.

Her sister Fern did not scold her. She simply pushed over a generous heap of seeds and asked whether Quill would join her on an errand the following day. The next morning, Fern led her to a tunnel that had collapsed beside the pantry, and Quill's meticulous map proved to be the only record of every passage in the burrow. Using it, the family dug a new route in a single afternoon and carried the remaining food to safety. Quill felt a warm glow in her chest. And she acknowledged that her counting had been valuable only once she had put it to use for the benefit of everyone. From then on, she kept her marks, and she also kept her turn at the pantry.

Questions

1. What did Quill adore more than anything else?

_____

_____

2. How many tunnels did Quill count beneath the barn?

_____

_____

3. What was in Quill's pile when the first frost arrived?

_____

_____

4. How did Fern respond when she saw that Quill had no food?

_____

_____

5. How did Quill's meticulous map help the family?

_____

_____

6. What lesson does the story teach about skills?

_____

_____

Words to know

maze: a confusing set of paths with many turns
scribbled: wrote or drew quickly and messily
pantry: a place where food is stored
frost: a thin layer of ice that forms when it is very cold
collapsed: fell down or caved in

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 Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

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

Circle: The Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

Easier · 200 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.9

1. Numbers and counting things, such as steps, stones, and tunnels.
2. Forty-one.
3. It was empty.
4. She did not scold and pushed over a heap of seeds.
5. It showed every passage, so they could dig a new way around the tunnel that had caved in.
6. A skill is most useful when you use it to help others and do your share.

Triangle: The Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

This passage · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.7

1. Count numbers, such as her steps, the stones, and the tunnels.
2. Forty-one.
3. It was empty.
4. She did not scold and pushed over a heap of seeds to share.
5. It showed every passage, so they could dig a new route around the collapsed tunnel quickly.
6. A skill is most valuable when it is also used to help others and do your share.

Square: The Ferret Who Counted Every Tunnel

Harder · 264 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.5

1. Numbers and counting, including her footsteps, the stones, and the tunnels.
2. Forty-one.
3. It was completely empty.
4. She did not scold her and pushed over a generous heap of seeds.
5. It recorded every passage, so they could quickly dig a new route around the collapsed tunnel.
6. A skill is most valuable when it is used to benefit others and you still do your share.