Name: _____ Date: _____

The Night the Power Went Out

Circle group

At seven o'clock, the lights in the apartment building blinked and went out. The fridge stopped humming. Maya's laptop went black. She was in the middle of her math homework.

"Great," she groaned. "Now I can't finish. It's due tomorrow."

Her little brother, Theo, was at the window. "Maya, look! The whole street is dark!" All over the city, the bright windows had gone dark. Above the buildings, Maya saw more stars than she had ever seen.

Mom lit two candles and set them on the kitchen table. Then someone knocked. It was Mrs. Alvarez from the next floor. She had a flashlight and a pot of soup. "My stove is electric, but yours is gas," she said. "Can I use your burner? I don't want the soup to spoil."

In an hour, the apartment was full of neighbors. Mr. Kim from downstairs brought a deck of cards. A teen from the fourth floor came with a guitar. Someone shared a loaf of bread. Someone else passed around cups of warm soup. Maya had lived in the building for a whole year. But she had never talked to half of these people.

By nine, they were all singing by the candles. Theo was asleep on the rug. The lights came back on at ten. No one cheered right away. For a second, they all just blinked at the bright light.

"Well," Mrs. Alvarez said with a laugh, "we should do this again. Maybe with the lights on."

Maya smiled. Her homework could wait until morning.

Questions

1. What was Maya doing when the lights went out?

_____

_____

2. Why did Mrs. Alvarez knock on the door?

_____

_____

3. What did the neighbors bring?

_____

_____

4. How did Maya feel at the start of the night? How did she feel at the end?

_____

_____

5. Why does Mrs. Alvarez say, "Maybe with the lights on"?

_____

_____

Words to know

groan: to make a low sound because you are annoyed or in pain
spoil: to go bad so it cannot be eaten
burner: the part of a stove that makes heat for cooking

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 Night the Power Went Out

Triangle group

At exactly seven o'clock, the lights in the apartment building blinked once and went out, and the refrigerator stopped humming. Maya's laptop screen went black in the middle of her mathematics homework.

"Great," she groaned. "Now I cannot finish, and it is due tomorrow."

Her little brother, Theo, was already pressed against the window. "Maya, look! The whole street is dark!" Across the city, windows that were usually glowing had gone quiet, and above the buildings there were more stars than Maya had ever noticed before.

Their mother lit two candles and set them on the kitchen table. Then there was a knock at the door. It was Mrs. Alvarez from the next floor, holding a flashlight and a pot of soup. "My stove is electric, but yours is gas," she explained. "Could I borrow your burner? I did not want the soup to spoil."

Within an hour the apartment was full of neighbors. Mr. Kim from downstairs brought a deck of cards, and a teenager from the fourth floor arrived with a guitar. Someone shared a loaf of bread, and someone else passed around cups of warm soup. Maya realized that she had not spoken to half of these people during the entire year her family had lived in the building.

By nine o'clock, everyone was singing together in the glow of the candles, and Theo had fallen asleep on the rug. When the lights came back on at ten, nobody cheered right away. For a second they all just blinked at the unfamiliar brightness.

"Well," Mrs. Alvarez said with a laugh, "we should do this again sometime. Maybe with the lights on."

Maya smiled. Her homework could wait until morning.

Questions

1. What was Maya doing when the power went out?

_____

_____

2. Why did Mrs. Alvarez come to Maya's apartment?

_____

_____

3. What did the neighbors bring to share?

_____

_____

4. How did Maya's feelings change over the evening?

_____

_____

5. What does Mrs. Alvarez mean by "Maybe with the lights on"?

_____

_____

Words to know

groan: to make a low sound because you are annoyed or in pain
spoil: to go bad so it cannot be eaten
glow: a soft, steady light
burner: the part of a stove that makes heat for cooking

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 Night the Power Went Out

Square group

At precisely seven o'clock, the lights throughout the apartment building flickered once and died, and the refrigerator's steady hum fell abruptly silent. Maya's laptop screen went black in the middle of her mathematics homework, swallowing an unfinished equation along with it.

"Wonderful," she groaned, slumping against the back of her chair. "Now I cannot possibly finish, and the assignment is due tomorrow morning."

Her younger brother, Theo, had already pressed his nose against the window. "Maya, look! The entire street is dark!" Across the city, windows that ordinarily glowed had gone quiet, and above the silhouetted rooftops, more stars were visible than Maya had ever noticed before.

Their mother lit two candles and positioned them on the kitchen table, and moments later there was a knock at the door. Mrs. Alvarez from the next floor stood in the hallway, balancing a flashlight and a pot of soup. "My stove is electric, but yours operates on gas," she explained apologetically. "Would you mind terribly if I borrowed a burner? I could not bear to let the soup spoil."

Within an hour, the apartment had filled with neighbors. Mr. Kim from downstairs arrived with a deck of cards, and a teenager from the fourth floor appeared carrying a guitar. Someone contributed a loaf of bread, someone else circulated cups of warm soup, and Maya realized, with a twinge of embarrassment, that during the entire year her family had lived in the building, she had never exchanged a word with half of these people.

By nine o'clock, everyone was singing together in the wavering candlelight, and Theo had drifted off to sleep on the rug. When the electricity was finally restored at ten, nobody cheered immediately; for a long moment, they simply blinked at the unfamiliar brightness, as though awakening from an unexpectedly pleasant dream.

"Well," Mrs. Alvarez remarked with a laugh, "we really ought to do this again sometime. Preferably with the lights on."

Maya smiled. Her homework, she decided, could certainly wait until morning.

Questions

1. What was Maya working on at the moment the electricity failed?

_____

_____

2. What prompted Mrs. Alvarez to visit Maya's apartment?

_____

_____

3. What did the various neighbors contribute to the evening?

_____

_____

4. Trace how Maya's attitude shifts over the course of the evening.

_____

_____

5. What is the humor in Mrs. Alvarez's remark, "Preferably with the lights on"?

_____

_____

Words to know

groan: to make a low sound because you are annoyed or in pain
spoil: to go bad so it cannot be eaten
glow: a soft, steady light
burner: the part of a stove that makes heat for cooking

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 Night the Power Went Out

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

Circle: The Night the Power Went Out

Easier · 255 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2

1. Her math homework on her laptop.
2. Her stove was electric and did not work, so she wanted to use their gas burner to heat her soup.
3. Soup, a flashlight, a deck of cards, a guitar, and bread.
4. At first she was upset about her homework. By the end she was happy and enjoyed being with her neighbors.
5. She is joking. She means the neighbors should get together again without needing the power to go out.

Triangle: The Night the Power Went Out

This passage · 282 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.1

1. Her math homework on her laptop.
2. She needed a gas burner to heat her soup, because her stove was electric and would not work.
3. Soup, a flashlight, a deck of cards, a guitar, and bread.
4. She started annoyed about her homework, then enjoyed meeting and spending time with her neighbors.
5. She is joking that the neighbors should get together again, but without needing a power cut as the reason.

Square: The Night the Power Went Out

Harder · 333 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9

1. Her mathematics homework on her laptop.
2. Her electric stove would not work during the outage, so she asked to borrow their gas burner to keep her soup from spoiling.
3. Soup, a flashlight, a deck of cards, a guitar, and a loaf of bread.
4. She begins frustrated about her unfinished homework, then grows to enjoy the gathering and realizes how little she had known her neighbors.
5. She is suggesting the neighbors gather again on purpose, without needing a power outage as the excuse.