Name: _____ Date: _____

The Word Theo Said at the Window

Circle group

Everyone in Beatrice's house was waiting for the baby to speak. Her mother kept a notebook called FIRST WORDS on the kitchen counter. Her dad filmed Theo at dinner each night. Beatrice was twelve, the oldest. She secretly hoped his first word would be her name.

On a rainy Wednesday, Theo pointed at the window, bounced in his high chair, and said a clear, round sound: "Buh!"

"Bus!" said Dad.

"Ball!" said Mom, writing it down.

"Boat?" said Grandpa, who had come for lunch.

Beatrice said nothing. She felt silly for being sad. Nobody knew what the sound meant. For the next few days she listened anyway. Theo said "Buh" when the mail truck came. He said it when the cat jumped on the sofa. He said it when Dad lifted him out of the bath.

On Saturday, Beatrice came home from soccer with her cleats in her hand. Theo was in the playpen by the window. When he saw her, he kicked his feet, held up his arms, and shouted, "Buh! Buh! Buh!"

He had not said it like that for the truck or the cat or the bath. He said it with his whole body, and only to her.

"Bea," her mother said softly. "He means Bea."

Beatrice picked him up and laughed so hard that her cleats fell on the floor.

Questions

1. What did Beatrice's mother keep on the counter?

_____

_____

2. What sound did Theo make at the window?

_____

_____

3. Name two things the family thought the sound meant.

_____

_____

4. How old was Beatrice?

_____

_____

5. Why did Beatrice feel silly about being sad?

_____

_____

6. How did they know Theo meant Bea?

_____

_____

Words to know

secretly: in a way that you do not tell other people

playpen: a small safe space where a baby can play

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 Word Theo Said at the Window

Triangle group

Everyone in Beatrice's house was impatiently waiting for the baby to speak. Her mother kept a notebook labeled FIRST WORDS on the kitchen counter, her father filmed Theo at dinner every night, and Beatrice, who was twelve and the oldest, secretly hoped that his first word would be her name.

On a rainy Wednesday, Theo pointed at the window, bounced in his high chair, and produced a clear, round sound: "Buh!" Dad immediately announced that it meant bus, Mom wrote down ball, and Grandpa, who had come over for lunch, suggested that it might be boat. Beatrice said nothing. She felt foolish for being disappointed, because nobody could possibly know what the sound meant.

For the next few days she paid close attention anyway. Theo said "Buh" when the mail truck rumbled past, when the cat leaped onto the sofa, and when Dad lifted him out of the bath. It seemed to be an all-purpose word that he used for almost everything.

On Saturday, Beatrice came home from soccer practice with her cleats dangling from one hand. Theo was sitting in the playpen by the window. The instant he spotted her, he kicked his feet, lifted both arms, and shouted, "Buh! Buh! Buh!" He had never said it that way for the truck or the cat or the bath. He said it with his whole body, and only to her.

"Bea," her mother said softly. "He means Bea."

Beatrice scooped him up and laughed so hard that her cleats clattered to the floor.

Questions

1. What did Beatrice's mother keep on the kitchen counter?

_____

_____

2. What sound did Theo make at the window?

_____

_____

3. What were two things the family thought Theo's sound meant?

_____

_____

4. How old was Beatrice?

_____

_____

5. Why did Beatrice feel foolish about being disappointed?

_____

_____

6. How did Beatrice and her mother know Theo meant Bea?

_____

_____

Words to know

labeled: marked with a name or short title
secretly: in a way that you do not tell other people
disappointed: sad because something did not happen as you hoped
playpen: a small safe space where a baby can play
scooped: picked up in a quick, smooth motion

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 Word Theo Said at the Window

Square group

Everyone in Beatrice's house was impatiently waiting for the baby to speak. Her mother kept a notebook labeled FIRST WORDS on the kitchen counter, her father filmed Theo at dinner every single night, and Beatrice, who was twelve and the oldest of the children, secretly hoped that his first word would turn out to be her own name.

On a rainy Wednesday afternoon, Theo pointed at the window, bounced enthusiastically in his high chair, and produced a clear, round sound: "Buh!" Dad immediately announced that it meant bus, Mom wrote down ball in the notebook, and Grandpa, who had come over for lunch, suggested that it might possibly be boat. Beatrice said nothing. She felt foolish for being disappointed, because nobody could possibly know what the sound was supposed to mean.

For the next few days she paid close attention anyway. Theo said "Buh" when the mail truck rumbled past, when the cat leaped onto the sofa, and when Dad lifted him dripping out of the bath. It seemed to be an all-purpose word that he applied to almost everything in the universe.

On Saturday, Beatrice came home from soccer practice with her cleats dangling from one hand. Theo was sitting in the playpen beside the window. The instant he spotted her, he kicked his feet, lifted both arms, and shouted, "Buh! Buh! Buh!" He had never said it that way for the truck or the cat or the bath. He said it with his whole body, and only to her.

"Bea," her mother said softly. "He means Bea."

Beatrice scooped him up and laughed so hard that her cleats clattered to the floor.

Questions

1. What did Beatrice's mother keep on the kitchen counter?

_____

_____

2. What sound did Theo make when he pointed at the window?

_____

_____

3. Name two things that the family guessed the sound meant.

_____

_____

4. How old was Beatrice?

_____

_____

5. Why did Beatrice feel foolish about being disappointed?

_____

_____

6. How did Beatrice and her mother realize that Theo meant Bea?

_____

_____

Words to know

labeled: marked with a name or short title
secretly: in a way that you do not tell other people
disappointed: sad because something did not happen as you hoped
playpen: a small safe space where a baby can play
scooped: picked up in a quick, smooth motion

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 Word Theo Said at the Window

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

Circle: The Word Theo Said at the Window

Easier · 224 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.2

1. A notebook called FIRST WORDS.
2. Buh.
3. Any two of bus, ball, or boat.
4. Twelve.
5. Nobody knew what the sound meant yet.
6. He said it with his whole body, and only to her.

Triangle: The Word Theo Said at the Window

This passage · 254 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.5

1. A notebook labeled FIRST WORDS.
2. Buh.
3. Any two of bus, ball, or boat.
4. Twelve.
5. No one could tell what the sound meant yet, so she had no real reason to be upset.
6. He said it with his whole body, and only to her, when she came in.

Square: The Word Theo Said at the Window

Harder · 275 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.5

1. A notebook labeled FIRST WORDS.
2. Buh.
3. Any two of bus, ball, or boat.
4. Twelve.
5. No one could tell yet what the sound meant, so she had no real reason to be upset.
6. He said it with his whole body, and only to her, when she came in.