Name: _____ Date: _____

Mr. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

Circle group

On Monday, the seventh graders in Room 12 learned that their teacher was out with a cold. The substitute was a tall man in a green vest. He wrote MR. PELL on the board. Then he turned and said, "Take a seat, find your feet, and we will start without a beat."

The class stared. Imani whispered to her friend, "Did he just rhyme?" Mr. Pell nodded. "I do, it is true, and I will all day through."

Mr. Pell had made a bet with his brother. For one week, every sentence he said at school had to rhyme. If he lost, he would wash his brother's car until spring.

At first the class loved it. Then came the problems. Mr. Pell said, "No mess, no stress, and later you get recess." Half the class heard only the words no recess. They groaned so loud that a pencil rolled off a desk. Then he said, "Pop quiz at ten, so look at your pen." Three students began to study their pens.

Imani had an idea. At lunch she made a chart with two columns. On the left she wrote each rhyme Mr. Pell had said. On the right she wrote what he really meant. "Please take a chair, and do not stare" meant "Sit down and get to work."

The next day she taped the chart to the board. Mr. Pell read it and bowed. "Imani, you are quick and sharp, you play the pen like a fine harp," he said. By Friday the class could translate him fast. Mr. Pell won his bet with a day to spare.

Questions

1. Why was there a substitute teacher in Room 12?

_____

_____

2. Why did Mr. Pell only speak in rhymes?

_____

_____

3. What would Mr. Pell have to do if he lost?

_____

_____

4. Why did the class groan at no mess, no stress?

_____

_____

5. What was Imani's idea?

_____

_____

6. How did the chart help Mr. Pell?

_____

_____

Words to know

substitute: a person who takes the place of the usual teacher
translate: to change into words that are easier to understand

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. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

Triangle group

On Monday morning, the seventh graders in Room 12 learned that their regular teacher was home recovering from a cold. Her substitute was a tall man in a green vest, who wrote his name on the board as MR. PELL and then turned around to address the class. "Take a seat, find your feet, and we will start without a beat," he announced.

The students stared in astonishment, and Imani leaned toward her friend to whisper that he had just rhymed. Mr. Pell overheard, nodded gravely, and replied, "I do, it is true, and I will all day through."

It turned out that Mr. Pell had made a bet with his brother, according to which every sentence he spoke at school for one entire week had to rhyme. If he failed, he would be washing his brother's car until spring.

At first the class adored the arrangement, but misunderstandings soon began to multiply. When Mr. Pell declared, "No mess, no stress, and later you get recess," half of the students heard only the words no recess, and they groaned so loudly that a pencil rolled off a desk. When he cautioned, "Pop quiz at ten, so look at your pen," three students panicked and started studying their pens.

During lunch, Imani drew up a chart with two columns. On the left she copied each rhyme that Mr. Pell had spoken, and on the right she explained what he genuinely meant, so that "Please take a chair, and do not stare" became "Sit down and get to work."

The next day she taped the chart to the board. Mr. Pell studied it carefully, bowed deeply, and proclaimed, "Imani, you are quick and sharp, you play the pen like a fine harp." By Friday the class could translate his rhymes almost instantly, and Mr. Pell won his bet with a full day to spare.

Questions

1. Why was there a substitute teacher in Room 12?

_____

_____

2. Why did Mr. Pell speak only in rhymes?

_____

_____

3. What would Mr. Pell have to do if he lost the bet?

_____

_____

4. Why did the class groan when Mr. Pell said no mess, no stress?

_____

_____

5. What was Imani's idea for fixing the confusion?

_____

_____

6. How did Imani's chart help Mr. Pell?

_____

_____

Words to know

substitute: a person who takes the place of the usual teacher
announced: said something clearly so everyone could hear
panicked: became suddenly very worried
translate: to change into words that are easier to understand
declared: said in a firm, serious way

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. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

Square group

On Monday morning, the seventh graders in Room 12 discovered that their regular teacher was at home recovering from a persistent cold. Her substitute, a tall gentleman in a green vest, inscribed his name on the board as MR. PELL and then turned around to address the class in an unexpectedly theatrical manner. "Take a seat, find your feet, and we will start without a beat," he announced.

The students stared in astonishment, and Imani leaned toward her friend to whisper that he had actually rhymed. Mr. Pell overheard her, nodded gravely, and responded, "I do, it is true, and I will all day through."

It turned out that Mr. Pell had made a wager with his brother, according to which every sentence he uttered at school for one entire week had to rhyme. If he failed to maintain the pattern, he would be obligated to wash his brother's car until spring.

Initially the class adored the arrangement, but misunderstandings soon began to multiply in alarming numbers. When Mr. Pell declared, "No mess, no stress, and later you get recess," half of the students heard only the words no recess, and they groaned so loudly that a pencil rolled off a desk. When he cautioned, "Pop quiz at ten, so look at your pen," three students panicked and began studying their pens with extraordinary concentration.

During lunch, Imani drew up a chart consisting of two columns. On the left she copied each rhyme that Mr. Pell had spoken, and on the right she explained what he genuinely intended, so that "Please take a chair, and do not stare" became "Sit down and get to work."

The following day she taped the chart to the board. Mr. Pell studied it carefully, bowed deeply, and proclaimed, "Imani, you are quick and sharp, you play the pen like a fine harp." By Friday the class could decipher his rhymes almost instantly, and Mr. Pell won his wager with a full day to spare.

Questions

1. Why was a substitute teacher in charge of Room 12?

_____

_____

2. Why did Mr. Pell speak only in rhymes?

_____

_____

3. What would Mr. Pell have to do if he lost the wager?

_____

_____

4. Why did the class groan so loudly at no mess, no stress?

_____

_____

5. What was Imani's idea for fixing the misunderstandings?

_____

_____

6. How did Imani's chart help Mr. Pell?

_____

_____

Words to know

substitute: a person who takes the place of the usual teacher
announced: said something clearly so everyone could hear
panicked: became suddenly very worried
declared: said in a firm, serious way

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. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

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

Circle: Mr. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

Easier · 268 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.4

1. The teacher was out with a cold.
2. He made a bet with his brother.
3. Wash his brother's car until spring.
4. Half of them heard only the words no recess.
5. She made a chart that matched each rhyme with its plain meaning.
6. The class could translate his rhymes, so he won his bet.

Triangle: Mr. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

This passage · 311 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.1

1. The regular teacher was out with a cold.
2. He had made a bet with his brother.
3. Wash his brother's car until spring.
4. Half of them heard only the words no recess.
5. She made a chart that matched each rhyme with its plain meaning.
6. The class could translate his rhymes, so he finished the week and won his bet.

Square: Mr. Pell, the Substitute Who Only Rhymed

Harder · 329 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9

1. The regular teacher was home recovering from a cold.
2. He had made a wager with his brother.
3. Wash his brother's car until spring.
4. Half the students heard only the words no recess.
5. She drew up a chart that paired each rhyme with its plain meaning.
6. The class could decode his rhymes, so he finished the week and won his wager.