Name: _____ Date: _____

The Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

Circle group

Priya found a pigeon on the balcony after a rainy night. It was gray with a green shine on its neck. It was too tired to fly away. She put out water and some birdseed.

A thin plastic ring was on one leg. It had letters and numbers on it. "That's a band," said her brother Dev. "Racing pigeons wear them. Someone is missing this bird."

Priya wrote the code in her notebook. She looked online and found a club of pigeon racers in the next town. She sent them an email with the code. Then she waited. That was the hard part.

In the morning, the bird looked strong. A reply had come. The code was for Mr. Hollis, a retired mail carrier. He had let his flock fly on Saturday. A storm had scattered the birds. This one was missing for three days.

Mr. Hollis came at noon with a basket. The pigeon hopped in. "Even good fliers get blown off course," he said. "Thank you for writing the number." He asked Priya to see his loft on Sunday and watch the flock come home.

Questions

1. What did Priya find on the balcony?

_____

_____

2. What was on the plastic ring on the pigeon's leg?

_____

_____

3. How did Priya find the owner?

_____

_____

4. Who owned the pigeon?

_____

_____

5. Why was the pigeon on the balcony?

_____

_____

6. Why did Mr. Hollis thank Priya for the number?

_____

_____

Words to know

band: a small ring worn on a bird's leg to identify it
flock: a group of birds that stay together
scattered: forced to go in many different directions
loft: a house or room where pigeons are kept

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 Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

Triangle group

Priya found the pigeon on the balcony rail after a night of howling wind and heavy rain, and it was so exhausted that it did not fly away when she opened the door. The bird was gray with a green shimmer on its neck, and its feathers were still damp. She set out a dish of water and a handful of birdseed before she crouched down to look at it closely.

Around one of its legs was a thin plastic ring that had been stamped with letters and numbers. "That's a band," said her brother Dev. "Racing pigeons wear them, which means somebody out there is probably missing this one."

Priya copied the code into her notebook, and after supper she searched the internet until she found a club of pigeon racers in the next town. She wrote them an email that listed the code, the day, and the street where the pigeon had landed. Then she waited, which turned out to be the hardest part of the whole job.

By morning the bird looked considerably stronger, and a reply had already arrived. The code belonged to a retired mail carrier named Mr. Hollis, who had released his flock on Saturday morning. A storm had scattered the birds in every direction, and this particular one had been missing for three days.

He came at noon carrying a wooden basket, and the pigeon hopped inside as though it had always known the way. "She is a strong flier, but even strong fliers can be blown off course," he told Priya. "Thank you for taking the trouble to write that number down." Then he invited her to visit his loft on Sunday and watch the whole flock return.

Questions

1. What did Priya find on the balcony rail?

_____

_____

2. What was stamped on the plastic ring around the pigeon's leg?

_____

_____

3. How did Priya find the pigeon's owner?

_____

_____

4. Who owned the pigeon?

_____

_____

5. Why did the pigeon end up on the balcony?

_____

_____

6. Why did Mr. Hollis thank Priya for writing down the number?

_____

_____

Words to know

shimmer: a soft, shining light that seems to move
band: a small ring worn on a bird's leg to identify it
flock: a group of birds that stay together
scattered: forced to go in many different directions
loft: a house or room where pigeons are kept

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 Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

Square group

Priya discovered the pigeon perched on the balcony rail after a long night of howling wind and relentless rain, and the bird was so thoroughly exhausted that it made no attempt to escape when she quietly opened the door. Its gray feathers carried a green shimmer along the neck, although they were still damp, and she carefully set out a dish of water and a handful of birdseed before crouching down to examine it more closely.

Encircling one of its legs was a thin plastic ring stamped with an unfamiliar sequence of letters and numbers. "That's a band," explained her brother Dev. "Racing pigeons always wear them, which suggests that somebody out there is anxiously missing this particular bird."

Priya copied the entire code into her notebook, and after supper she searched the internet persistently until she located a club of pigeon racers in the neighboring town. She composed an email that listed the code, the day, and the street where the pigeon had landed, and then she waited, which turned out to be the most difficult part of the whole adventure.

By morning the bird looked considerably stronger, and a reply had already arrived. The code belonged to a retired mail carrier named Mr. Hollis, who had released his flock on Saturday morning, but a sudden storm had scattered the birds in every direction, and this one had been missing for three days.

He arrived at noon carrying a wooden basket, and the pigeon hopped inside without any hesitation, as though it had always known the way. "She is an extremely capable flier, but even capable fliers can be blown far off course," he told Priya. "Thank you for taking the trouble to write that number down." Then he invited her to visit his loft on Sunday and watch the entire flock return home together.

Questions

1. What did Priya discover on the balcony rail?

_____

_____

2. What was stamped on the plastic ring around the pigeon's leg?

_____

_____

3. How did Priya locate the pigeon's owner?

_____

_____

4. Who was the owner of the pigeon?

_____

_____

5. Why had the pigeon ended up on the balcony?

_____

_____

6. Why did Mr. Hollis thank Priya for writing down the number?

_____

_____

Words to know

shimmer: a soft, shining light that seems to move
band: a small ring worn on a bird's leg to identify it
flock: a group of birds that stay together
scattered: forced to go in many different directions
loft: a house or room where pigeons are kept

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 Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

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

Circle: The Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

Easier · 187 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.9

1. A tired gray pigeon.
2. Letters and numbers, which made a code.
3. She found a club of pigeon racers online and sent them the code.
4. Mr. Hollis, a retired mail carrier.
5. A storm scattered the flock and blew it off course.
6. The code helped the club find him so he could get his bird back.

Triangle: The Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

This passage · 286 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.2

1. A tired gray pigeon.
2. Letters and numbers, which made a code.
3. She found a club of pigeon racers online and emailed them the code.
4. Mr. Hollis, a retired mail carrier.
5. A storm scattered the flock and blew it off course.
6. The code let the club match the bird to him, so he could get her back.

Square: The Pigeon With a Code on Its Leg

Harder · 306 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 11.2

1. An exhausted gray pigeon.
2. A sequence of letters and numbers, which made a code.
3. She found a club of pigeon racers online and emailed them the code.
4. Mr. Hollis, a retired mail carrier.
5. A storm scattered the flock and blew it off course.
6. The code let the club connect the bird to him, so that he could bring her home.