Name: _____ Date: _____

The Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

Circle group

Every morning, Marlow Finch went up the stairs of Gull Point Lighthouse. He stood on the balcony and shouted, "Good morning, cliffs!" Every morning, the cliffs across the bay shouted it right back. Marlow liked that. It was the only talk he had before breakfast that never turned into an argument.

Then one Tuesday, the echo changed. Marlow called, "Good morning, cliffs!" The cliffs answered, "Good morning, Marlow! You forgot the tea again!"

Marlow nearly dropped his binoculars. An echo should only repeat your words. He asked, "Is anyone there?" The cliffs said, "Anyone there! Anyone there!" Then they said, "Hurry up!" That was rude.

That afternoon, Marlow rowed across the bay with a flashlight. He found a small cave in the cliff. At the back sat a gray parrot with one crooked tail feather. The bird squawked, "Good morning, Marlow!"

Now Marlow knew. The parrot was named Admiral. He had belonged to a fishing captain who moved away. Admiral had lived in the cave since then. For years he had listened to the keeper shout, and he had learned every word.

Marlow laughed so hard that the boat rocked. He did not want to leave a talking bird in a damp cave. He took Admiral home in a basket. Now the parrot sits by the kettle each morning and reminds Marlow about the tea. Marlow likes the arguments better than the echo.

Questions

1. What did Marlow shout from the balcony every morning?

_____

_____

2. What did the echo say on Tuesday that was new?

_____

_____

3. Where did Marlow find the voice?

_____

_____

4. Who was really answering Marlow?

_____

_____

5. How did the parrot know so many words?

_____

_____

6. Why did Marlow like the echo at first?

_____

_____

7. Why did Marlow take Admiral home?

_____

_____

Words to know

echo: a sound that bounces back after hitting a surface
binoculars: a pair of tubes you look through to see far away
squawked: made a loud, harsh cry

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 Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

Triangle group

Every morning, Marlow Finch climbed the spiral stairs of Gull Point Lighthouse, stepped onto the balcony, and shouted, "Good morning, cliffs!" Every morning, the cliffs across the bay shouted the same thing right back. Marlow liked this very much. It was the only conversation he had before breakfast that never turned into an argument.

Then, one Tuesday, the echo changed. Marlow called, "Good morning, cliffs!" and the cliffs answered, "Good morning, Marlow! You forgot the tea again!"

Marlow nearly dropped his binoculars. An echo is supposed to repeat what you say, not add opinions. He tried again with a simple question. "Is anyone there?" The cliffs replied, "Anyone there! Anyone there!" and then, rather rudely, "Hurry up!"

That afternoon, Marlow rowed across the bay with a flashlight and a plan. He found a shallow cave in the cliff, and at the back of it sat a gray parrot with one crooked tail feather. The bird tilted his head, squinted at the flashlight, and squawked, "Good morning, Marlow!"

The mystery was solved. The parrot, whose name turned out to be Admiral, had once belonged to a fishing captain who moved inland. Admiral had lived in the cave ever since, and he had spent years listening to the keeper's shouts. He had learned every word.

Marlow laughed so hard that the little boat rocked. He could not leave a talkative bird alone in a damp cave, so he carried Admiral home in a basket. Now the parrot sits beside the kettle each morning and reminds Marlow about the tea, and Marlow has to admit that the arguments are better than the echo ever was.

Questions

1. What did Marlow shout from the balcony every morning?

_____

_____

2. What did the echo say on Tuesday that was different?

_____

_____

3. Where did Marlow find the source of the voice?

_____

_____

4. Who had really been answering Marlow?

_____

_____

5. How did the parrot know so many of Marlow's words?

_____

_____

6. Why did Marlow like the echo before it changed?

_____

_____

7. Why did Marlow bring Admiral back to the lighthouse?

_____

_____

Words to know

spiral: winding around and around like a coil
echo: a sound that bounces back after hitting a surface
binoculars: a pair of tubes you look through to see far away
shallow: not very deep
squawked: made a loud, harsh cry

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 Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

Square group

Every morning without fail, Marlow Finch climbed the spiral staircase of Gull Point Lighthouse, stepped onto the windswept balcony, and bellowed, "Good morning, cliffs!" Every morning, the cliffs on the far side of the bay bellowed the identical greeting right back. Marlow treasured this ritual. It was the only conversation he had before breakfast that had never deteriorated into an argument.

Then, on a drizzly Tuesday, the echo changed its habits. Marlow called, "Good morning, cliffs!" and the cliffs replied, "Good morning, Marlow! You forgot the tea again!"

Marlow nearly dropped his binoculars into the surf. An echo is supposed to repeat what you say, not offer opinions about your breakfast routine. He tried again with a simple question. "Is anyone there?" The cliffs returned, "Anyone there! Anyone there!" and then, with considerable rudeness, "Hurry up!"

That afternoon, Marlow rowed across the bay armed with a flashlight and a plan. He discovered a shallow cave carved into the cliff, and at the very back of it perched a gray parrot with one crooked tail feather. The bird tilted his head, squinted into the beam, and squawked, "Good morning, Marlow!"

The mystery dissolved at once. The parrot, whose name turned out to be Admiral, had once belonged to a fishing captain who had retired inland. Admiral had lived in the cave ever since, and over the years he had listened carefully to the keeper's daily shouts until he had memorized every word.

Marlow laughed so hard that the little boat rocked from side to side. He could not bring himself to abandon such a talkative bird in a damp cave, so he carried Admiral home in a wicker basket. Now the parrot sits beside the kettle every morning and reminds Marlow about the tea, and Marlow has to admit that the arguments are far better than the echo ever was.

Questions

1. What greeting did Marlow bellow from the balcony every morning?

_____

_____

2. What new thing did the echo say on Tuesday?

_____

_____

3. Where did Marlow discover the source of the voice?

_____

_____

4. Who had really been answering Marlow all along?

_____

_____

5. How did the parrot come to know so many of Marlow's words?

_____

_____

6. Why had Marlow treasured the echo before it changed?

_____

_____

7. Why did Marlow carry Admiral back to the lighthouse?

_____

_____

Words to know

spiral: winding around and around like a coil
echo: a sound that bounces back after hitting a surface
binoculars: a pair of tubes you look through to see far away
shallow: not very deep
squawked: made a loud, harsh cry

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 Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

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

Circle: The Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

Easier · 233 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.4

1. He shouted, Good morning, cliffs!
2. It said Marlow forgot the tea again.
3. In a small cave in the cliff across the bay.
4. A gray parrot named Admiral.
5. He had listened to the keeper shout for years.
6. It never turned into an argument.
7. He did not want to leave a talking bird in a damp cave.

Triangle: The Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

This passage · 272 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.7

1. He shouted, Good morning, cliffs!
2. It added that Marlow had forgotten the tea again.
3. In a shallow cave in the cliff across the bay.
4. A gray parrot named Admiral.
5. He had listened to the keeper shout for years and learned them.
6. It never turned into an argument.
7. He could not leave a talkative bird alone in a damp cave.

Square: The Echo That Talked Back at Gull Point

Harder · 309 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.6

1. He bellowed, Good morning, cliffs!
2. It added that Marlow had forgotten the tea again.
3. In a shallow cave carved into the cliff across the bay.
4. A gray parrot named Admiral.
5. He had listened carefully to the keeper's daily shouts for years and memorized them.
6. It was the one conversation of his morning that never became an argument.
7. He could not bring himself to abandon a talkative bird in a damp cave.