Name: _____ Date: _____

Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

Circle group

Lucio wanted to make a ten-second film about a clay squirrel. The plan sounded simple. Move the squirrel a tiny bit. Take a photo. Move it again. Do this over and over. Played fast, the photos would make the squirrel look as if it walked across a log.

The trouble began the first evening. After two hundred photos, Lucio played them back and groaned. The squirrel shook across the screen like a startled toy. The background went bright, then dim. He had worked beside a window, and the daylight had kept changing.

He deleted everything and started over. This time he closed the curtains and used one desk lamp. The flicker was gone. But the squirrel's tail kept drooping between photos. It was made of wire wrapped in clay. Lucio fixed it with a paper clip hidden underneath. Then he saw that he moved the legs too far each time. The walk looked like hopping.

Over two weeks, he took nine hundred photos and deleted about half. He learned to nudge each leg by only the width of a grain of rice. His sister, Marisol, watched from the bed and made unhelpful jokes. "He looks like he's stepping on hot sand," she said once. Lucio nearly threw a pencil at her.

On a Sunday morning, he pressed play on the final film. The squirrel walked smoothly along the log. It paused, flicked its tail, and vanished behind a paper tree. Marisol was quiet for a moment.

"Do it again," she said. "But longer."

Questions

1. What was Lucio's film about?

_____

_____

2. Why did the background flicker at first?

_____

_____

3. How did Lucio fix the drooping tail?

_____

_____

4. How far did Lucio move each leg in the end?

_____

_____

5. Why did he delete about half of his photos?

_____

_____

6. What does Marisol's last comment show?

_____

_____

Words to know

flicker: to shine unsteadily, going bright and dim
droop: to hang or sag downward
nudge: to push very gently

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: _____

Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

Triangle group

Lucio wanted to make a ten-second film starring a clay squirrel. The plan sounded simple: move the squirrel a tiny bit, take a photograph, move it again, and repeat until the pictures, played quickly together, made it look as if the animal were walking across a log.

The trouble began on the very first evening. After two hundred photographs, Lucio played the sequence back and groaned. The squirrel jittered across the screen like a startled toy, and the background flickered between bright and dim. He realized he had worked beside a window, and the afternoon light had been changing the whole time.

He deleted everything and started again. This time he drew the curtains and used a single desk lamp. The flicker disappeared, but a new problem emerged: the squirrel's tail, made of a wire wrapped in clay, kept drooping between frames. Lucio fixed it with a paper clip hidden underneath, and then discovered that he had been moving the legs too far each time. The walk looked less like walking and more like hopping.

Over two weeks, he took nine hundred photographs, deleted about half, and learned to nudge each limb by only the width of a grain of rice. His sister, Marisol, often watched from the bed and offered unhelpful commentary. "He looks like he's stepping on hot sand," she said once, and Lucio nearly threw a pencil at her.

On a Sunday morning, he pressed play on the final version. The squirrel padded smoothly along the log, paused, flicked its tail, and vanished behind a paper tree. Marisol was quiet for a moment.

"Do it again," she said. "But longer."

Questions

1. What was Lucio's film supposed to show?

_____

_____

2. What caused the background to flicker in his first attempt?

_____

_____

3. How did Lucio fix the drooping tail?

_____

_____

4. How far did Lucio learn to move each limb?

_____

_____

5. Why did he delete about half of his photographs?

_____

_____

6. What does Marisol's last comment suggest about her opinion?

_____

_____

Words to know

sequence: a set of things that follow one another in order
jitter: to move in small, quick, shaky jerks
flicker: to shine unsteadily, going bright and dim
droop: to hang or sag downward
nudge: to push very gently

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: _____

Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

Square group

Lucio wanted to produce a ten-second film starring a clay squirrel. The plan sounded deceptively simple: shift the squirrel a tiny distance, photograph it, shift it again, and repeat until the images, played rapidly in succession, created the illusion that the animal was walking across a log.

The trouble began on the very first evening. After two hundred photographs, Lucio played the sequence back and groaned. The squirrel jittered across the screen like a startled toy, and the background flickered erratically between bright and dim. He realized that he had been working beside a window, and the afternoon light had been changing the entire time.

He deleted everything and began afresh. This time he drew the curtains and relied on a single desk lamp. The flicker vanished, but a new difficulty emerged: the squirrel's tail, constructed from wire wrapped in clay, kept drooping between frames. Lucio repaired it with a paper clip concealed underneath, and then discovered that he had been moving the legs too far on each frame. The walk resembled hopping far more than walking.

Over the course of two weeks, he took nine hundred photographs, deleted roughly half of them, and trained himself to nudge each limb by only the width of a grain of rice. His sister, Marisol, frequently observed from the bed and contributed unhelpful commentary. "He looks like he's stepping on hot sand," she remarked once, and Lucio nearly hurled a pencil at her.

On a Sunday morning, he pressed play on the finished version. The squirrel padded smoothly along the log, paused, flicked its tail, and disappeared behind a paper tree. Marisol was silent for a moment.

"Do it again," she said. "But longer."

Questions

1. What was Lucio's film intended to show?

_____

_____

2. What caused the background to flicker in his first attempt?

_____

_____

3. How did Lucio repair the drooping tail?

_____

_____

4. How far did Lucio eventually learn to move each limb?

_____

_____

5. Why did he discard about half of his photographs?

_____

_____

6. What does Marisol's final remark reveal about her opinion?

_____

_____

Words to know

sequence: a set of things that follow one another in order
jitter: to move in small, quick, shaky jerks
flicker: to shine unsteadily, going bright and dim
droop: to hang or sag downward
nudge: to push very gently

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: Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

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

Circle: Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

Easier · 254 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.1

1. A clay squirrel walking across a log.
2. He worked by a window and the daylight kept changing.
3. He hid a paper clip underneath it.
4. Only the width of a grain of rice.
5. Many were spoiled by problems like jerky moves, so he retook them.
6. She was impressed and wanted to see more.

Triangle: Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

This passage · 274 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.6

1. A clay squirrel walking across a log.
2. He worked beside a window and the daylight kept changing.
3. He hid a paper clip underneath it.
4. Only the width of a grain of rice.
5. Many were spoiled by problems like jerky movement, so he had to retake them.
6. She was impressed and wanted to see more of the film.

Square: Nine Hundred Photographs of a Walking Squirrel

Harder · 282 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.9

1. A clay squirrel walking across a log.
2. He worked beside a window and the daylight kept changing.
3. He concealed a paper clip underneath it.
4. Only the width of a grain of rice.
5. Many were ruined by problems such as jerky movement, so they had to be retaken.
6. She was impressed and eager to see a longer film.