Name: _____ Date: _____

Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

Circle group

At the top of the village green stood an old clock tower. Once a year, a few children could climb its narrow stairs to see the big gears. Ines was one of them. She had a small notebook because she liked to count things.

She counted aloud as she climbed. There was a landing after twelve steps. There was another landing after twelve more. There was a third landing after twelve again. At the top, she counted the steps going down. She got thirty-seven, not thirty-six. The extra step bothered her all the way down.

"I must have made a mistake," she told the caretaker, Mr. Voss.

"Or maybe not," he said, and his eyes twinkled. "Climb again. This time keep one hand on the wall."

Ines went up slowly. Her fingers brushed the rough plaster. Near the second landing, her hand found a short wooden stair in a small nook. It was so low and narrow that shadows hid it. It led nowhere. It was no bigger than a footstool.

"The builder made it for his daughter," Mr. Voss said. "She was too short to see out the little window. So he built her a step."

Ines wrote in her notebook, "Thirty-six stairs for the town, and one for a girl who wanted to see out." Then she stood on it. She rose on her toes and looked at the pond.

Questions

1. How many steps were between the landings?

_____

_____

2. What number did Ines count going down?

_____

_____

3. What did Mr. Voss tell her to do?

_____

_____

4. Where was the extra stair?

_____

_____

5. Why did the builder make the extra stair?

_____

_____

6. How did Ines feel about the answer?

_____

_____

Words to know

landing: a flat part of a staircase where the steps turn or pause
caretaker: a person who looks after a building
plaster: a smooth coating that covers a wall
footstool: a low stool for resting or standing on

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: _____

Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

Triangle group

At the top of the village green stood an old clock tower, and once a year the town allowed a few children to climb its narrow stairs and look at the enormous gears inside. Ines was one of the lucky ones, and she carried a small notebook because she enjoyed counting things.

She counted the steps aloud as she climbed. There was one landing after twelve steps, another after twelve more, and a third landing after twelve again. When she reached the top and counted the steps while descending, however, she arrived at thirty-seven instead of thirty-six, and the extra step bothered her all the way to the bottom.

"There must be a mistake in my counting," she told the caretaker, Mr. Voss.

"Or perhaps there is not," he said, his eyes twinkling. "Climb again, but this time keep one hand on the wall."

Ines went up slowly, trailing her fingers along the rough plaster. Near the second landing her hand brushed a short wooden stair that was tucked into a shallow alcove, so low and narrow that the shadows had hidden it from view. It led nowhere at all, and it was no larger than a footstool.

"The builder added it for his daughter," Mr. Voss explained. "She was too short to reach the little window, so he made her a step, and the family lived beside the tower for many years."

Ines wrote in her notebook: "Thirty-six stairs for the town, and one for a girl who wanted to see out." Then she stood on it herself and, rising on her toes, looked across the green toward the pond.

Questions

1. How many steps did Ines count between landings?

_____

_____

2. What number did Ines count on the way down?

_____

_____

3. What advice did Mr. Voss give her?

_____

_____

4. Where was the extra stair hidden?

_____

_____

5. Why was the extra stair built?

_____

_____

6. What does Ines's note show about how she felt about the mystery?

_____

_____

Words to know

landing: a flat part of a staircase where the steps turn or pause
caretaker: a person who looks after a building
plaster: a smooth coating that covers a wall
alcove: a small space set back into a wall
footstool: a low stool for resting or standing on

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: _____

Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

Square group

At the top of the village green stood an old clock tower, and once a year the town permitted a few children to climb its narrow stairs and observe the enormous gears inside. Ines was among the fortunate ones, and she carried a small notebook because she took great pleasure in counting things.

She counted the steps aloud as she climbed. There was one landing after twelve steps, another after twelve more, and a third landing after twelve again. When she reached the top and counted the steps while descending, however, she arrived at thirty-seven instead of thirty-six, and the extra step troubled her all the way to the bottom.

"There must be a mistake in my counting," she told the caretaker, Mr. Voss.

"Or perhaps there is not," he replied, his eyes twinkling. "Climb once more, but this time keep one hand against the wall."

Ines went up slowly, trailing her fingers along the rough plaster. Near the second landing her hand brushed a short wooden stair that was tucked into a shallow alcove, so low and narrow that the shadows had concealed it from every casual visitor. It led nowhere at all, and it was no larger than a footstool.

"The builder added it for his daughter," Mr. Voss explained. "She was too short to reach the little window, so he made her a step, and the family lived beside the tower for many years."

Ines wrote in her notebook: "Thirty-six stairs for the town, and one for a girl who wanted to see out." Then she stood on it herself and, rising on her toes, gazed across the green toward the pond.

Questions

1. How many steps lay between each pair of landings?

_____

_____

2. What number did Ines reach when she counted on the way down?

_____

_____

3. What suggestion did Mr. Voss give her?

_____

_____

4. Where was the extra stair hidden?

_____

_____

5. Why had the builder constructed the extra stair?

_____

_____

6. What does Ines's note reveal about her feelings?

_____

_____

Words to know

landing: a flat part of a staircase where the steps turn or pause
caretaker: a person who looks after a building
plaster: a smooth coating that covers a wall
alcove: a small space set back into a wall
footstool: a low stool for resting or standing on

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: Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

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

Circle: Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

Easier · 235 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2

1. Twelve steps between each landing.
2. Thirty-seven, one more than she expected.
3. Climb again and keep one hand on the wall.
4. In a small nook near the second landing, hidden by shadows.
5. His daughter was too short to see out the little window.
6. She felt happy, because her counting was right and the stair had a kind purpose.

Triangle: Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

This passage · 274 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.9

1. Twelve steps between each landing.
2. Thirty-seven, one more than she expected.
3. To climb again and put her hand on the wall.
4. In a shallow alcove near the second landing, where shadows hid it.
5. The builder's daughter was too short to reach the little window.
6. She felt satisfied and a little touched, because her counting was right and the stair had a kind purpose.

Square: Twelve Steps Up the Clock Tower Stairs

Harder · 278 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.4

1. Twelve steps between each landing.
2. Thirty-seven, which was one more than she expected.
3. To climb the stairs again with one hand against the wall.
4. In a shallow alcove near the second landing, concealed by shadows.
5. His daughter was too short to reach the little window.
6. She felt satisfied and touched, because her counting was correct and the stair had a kind purpose.