

1 Wigs for Dogs

A woman makes wigs for dogs whose owners dress the dogs up. She weaves strands of long blonde hair through a thin piece of lace. Then she curls the hair into bouncing ringlets. Finally, she can strap the wig to a dog's head with an elastic band under his chin.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the woman uses long hair? Why not short hair?

Why do you think she *straps* the wig to the dog's head?

Do you think dogs like wearing wigs? Why or why not?

The woman sells these wigs for hundreds of dollars. Do you think she sells many wigs? Why or why not?

2 A 102-Year-Old Paperboy

A 102-year-old man brings the newspaper to his neighbors each day. Early in the morning, he takes slow steps to the front of his building. He loads stacks of papers into a small cart. Then he pushes the cart through his building, stopping at each door to drop off a paper.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the man brings the papers to his neighbors?

Why do you think he takes slow steps? Why not go quickly?

Do you think it is difficult for him to deliver the papers? Why or why not?

Why do you think he loads the stacks of papers into a cart?

Why not carry them?

26 The Underwater Hunter

A spearfisher hunts in the blue sea. Holding his spear gun, he takes a deep breath and dives fifty feet down. He hides in a thick kelp forest and spots a large school of bright blue fish swimming by. He shoots his spear into the school, piercing one fish as the other fish quickly scatter. The spearfisher stuffs the dead fish into a bag hanging from his waist and swims up for air.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the spearfisher hides in the kelp forest?

Why do you think the spearfisher shoots his spear into a *school* of fish? Why not just at one fish?

Why do you think the spearfisher stuffs the dead fish in the bag hanging from his waist?

Do you think spearfishing is easy? Why or why not?

Why do you think the spearfisher uses a spear *gun* and not just a simple spear?

27 The Patras Carnival

Each year the Greek town of Patras throws a big party that lasts for weeks. Each day of the party, a band stands on a street corner and plays music. People dressed in bright costumes dance in the street. On one day, a large crowd gathers to watch a grand parade. Huge floats shaped like pigs, dragons, and clowns roll down the street. People stand on high balconies and throw confetti on the parade below. On the last night of the party, fireworks explode in the sky above the town.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think the party lasts for weeks?

Why do you think people stand on balconies to throw the confetti? Why not stand on the ground?

Why do you think the town only has a grand parade on one day? Why not every day of the party?

Why do you think the town has fireworks on the last night?

39 Hiccups for Weeks

A girl had the hiccups for more than a month. In class, she hiccupped loudly while the teacher was talking. The girl stayed home from school and tried many ways to get rid of her hiccups. She did a headstand and gulped water upside-down. She ate big globs of peanut butter and even drank pickle juice, but the hiccups did not stop. At night, she tossed and turned in her bed as the hiccups kept her awake. After five long weeks, the girl's hiccups stopped at last.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Do you think it was a problem that the girl hiccupped while the teacher was talking? Why or why not?

Why do you think the girl stayed home from school?

Why do you think the girl wanted to get rid of the hiccups?

Why do you think the hiccups kept her awake?

How do you think the girl felt when the hiccups stopped?

40 Cardboard Boat Race

Each summer in New York, people enter a cardboard boat race. When the race begins, they try to row across a small lake in canoes made of cardboard and tape. Sometimes a man rows his boat with a cardboard tube. But after a few strokes, the tube gets soggy and falls apart. The man leans over the side of the boat and paddles with his hands instead. Soon his boat also gets soggy and starts to leak. It sinks in the middle of the lake, and the man has to swim to shore.

From what you pictured...

What is the main idea of this story?

Why do you think people try to race cardboard boats?

Do you think the race is very long? Why or why not?

What could you do to keep a cardboard boat from sinking?

Do you think the man was mad that his boat sunk? Why or why not?

Do you think the people make their boats or buy them from a store? Explain.

52 The First Bungee Jumpers

Each spring, the natives on one island perform a risky ritual called land diving. A man jumps headfirst off a high platform with fresh green vines tied to his ankles. The other ends of the vines are tied to the top of the tower. The vines are long enough that they catch the man's fall just as his head thumps the ground. Sometimes the vines are too long or they snap, which can hurt or kill the diver.

The natives build the tower around a tall tree trunk. First they chop off all the branches of the tree. Around the trunk, they build the tower by tying the branches together with vines. A ladder runs up one side of the tower to the platform at the top. At the base of the tower, the men jab sticks into the soil to soften it. Then they tightly tie green vines gathered from the jungle to the platform. The vines dangle down the tower, swaying only a few feet above the soft dirt.

Before a man dives, the whole village gathers to celebrate. One woman brushes paint onto the diver's body. Next she places a necklace made of boar teeth around his neck, and the man climbs up the tower's ladder. Other women sing and dance, stomping the ground with their feet. Men chant and join the dance. When the singing stops, the diver speaks to the crowd from atop the platform. The crowd below listens quietly while the diver speaks, because they know it might be the last thing he ever says.

When the diver is finished speaking, he prepares to jump. He ties the end of one vine around each ankle and stands on the edge of the platform. Folding his arms across his chest, he leans over and begins to fall. He drops headfirst toward the ground. Just as the diver's head hits the soft dirt below, the vines pull tight and jerk him back up safely. The crowd cheers for him. They believe the land dive blesses the soil, and brings the village a full harvest.