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Literary Text

Focus Lesson

When you take a test, you might be asked to read a story and answer questions about it. Sometimes what you read is **nonfiction**—a story that is true. Other times, it is **fiction**—a made-up story. A literary story is one kind of made-up story. It has characters in it who speak to each other. It has a beginning, middle, and end.

There are many different kinds of literary stories. **Realistic fiction** is a made-up story that could happen in real life. **Traditional stories** teach a lesson. These include fables, fairy tales, and folktales. **Fables**, such as “The Tortoise and the Hare,” are short stories that often have animals that act like humans. They usually teach a lesson about how people behave. **Fairy tales** have elements of magic. They often include creatures like giants, wicked witches, and elves. **Folktales** are stories about ordinary people that teach a lesson about how people behave. **Tall tales** wildly exaggerate the skills or strengths of the hero. The hero is usually a character from America’s past like Paul Bunyan, a giant lumberjack.

Characters, plot, and setting all make up a good story. The **characters** are the people in the story, and the way they think, feel, and act help move along the plot. The **plot** is the order of events in a story. It is the **conflict**, or problem, that makes the story exciting. The **setting** is when and where the story takes place. It helps shape the characters and determines what they do. A story may be realistic fiction, a fairy tale, folktale, or even told as a poem, but it will always include characters, plot, and setting.



Read this story and answer the questions that follow.

Butterflies

by Maria Malvone



1 Ella was dressed in her costume and ready to leave her house, but she was nervous. The play would start in just an hour. It was her first time on stage! Even though her best friend, Julie, and Julie’s twin brother, Jake, would be on the stage with her, something could go wrong. She could flub her lines and ruin the play. She could bump Jake hard instead of the pretend bump they had practiced. People might not laugh in the right places.

2 But it was time to go. When they arrived at school, Mom and Dad walked Ella backstage and wished her good luck.

Julie rushed over to Ella as soon as she saw her. “Guess what?” she said excitedly. “My Uncle Jim is here! He directs plays in New York, and he’s looking for kids to be in *Oliver Twist!*”

3 “Oh, that’s great!” Ella said, but she didn’t really mean it. It only gave her more butterflies in her stomach. She asked Julie about the plays her uncle had done, but she wasn’t really listening to the answer. She was thinking about her lines and the roomful of people who would be watching.

4 Finally, it was time for Ella to make her entrance. She rushed across the stage and pretended to bump into Jake, just as they had practiced. She couldn’t really see the people in the audience, but she could hear them laughing—in all the right places. She forgot about the butterflies. She was having fun!

5 Later, she found her parents in the hallway, and they made plans with Julie and Jake’s family to go out for ice cream. “You were very good,” said Uncle Jim. “I hope I’ll get to see you on stage again.”

6 “I hope so, too,” said Ella, smiling. And she really meant it.

A **narrator** is the person telling the story. The narrator may be a character or a person outside the story. A **first-person narrator** tells the story from his or her point of view using the words *I* and *we*. A **third-person narrator** uses characters’ names or *he*, *she*, or *they*.

What type of narrator does this story have?

Dialogue is what characters say to each other. It is placed in quotation marks so you can tell who is speaking.

What is an example of dialogue in this story?

The **theme** of a story is its message. Characters, setting, dialogue, and plot help you figure out a story’s theme.

What is this story’s theme?



1 Part A

What type of story is *Butterflies*?

Butterflies is a story about a young girl who is nervous to perform in a play. It is a realistic fiction story.

Part B

What clues from the story help you answer Part A?

The characters—Ella, her parents, her friend Julie, Julie’s brother Jake, and her uncle Jim—all sound like real people. The setting takes place at a school, and the plot involves Ella acting in a play for the first time. These are all clues that show the story could be real. Something similar may have even happened to you. So *Butterflies* is a realistic fiction story.



Guided Practice

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Adapted from *What Katy Did*

by Susan Coolidge

See page 6
Focus Lesson:
Literary Text

- 1 Many of the students lived too far from school to go home at noon. They brought their lunches in baskets. Katy and Clover brought lunches to Mrs. Knight's school.
- 2 At noon, after eating, someone had the idea to play a game inside the classroom. Katy had the bad luck to invent a new game, which she called the Game of Rivers.
- 3 The rules of the game were simple. Each girl took the name of a river and chose a path through the classroom between the desks. The girls made low, roaring sounds like water. Cecy was the Platte River; Marianne Brooks, a tall girl, the Mississippi; Alice Blair, the Ohio; Clover, the Penobscot; and so on. Katy told them to run into each other once in a while because, as Katy said, "rivers do."
- 4 Katy was Father Ocean. She growled horribly and raged up and down the front of the classroom. Every now and then, when the others were at the far end of the room, Katy would yell, "Now for a meeting of the waters!" All the rivers were bouncing and screaming. They turned and ran toward Father Ocean, while he roared loudest of all. Father Ocean bounced and moved like the waves on a beach.
- 5 The noisy game was loud and surprising to the neighbors. The yelling, banging of furniture, and scraping of many feet made plenty of noise. People going by stopped and stared. An old lady asked why someone didn't run for a policeman.



1 Part A

How does paragraph 2 give you a hint about what happens in paragraph 6?

Reread paragraphs 2 and 6. What do the characters do and say in each paragraph? How do the events connect to each other?

In paragraph 2, the story says Katy had the “bad luck” of making up the Game of Rivers. This hints that the game will lead to trouble. In paragraph 6, Mrs. Knight returns from lunch to see a classroom mess.

Part B

Based on the answer to Part A, who is the leader of the Game of Rivers?

Who is Father Ocean? This is the character who comes up with the idea for the game.

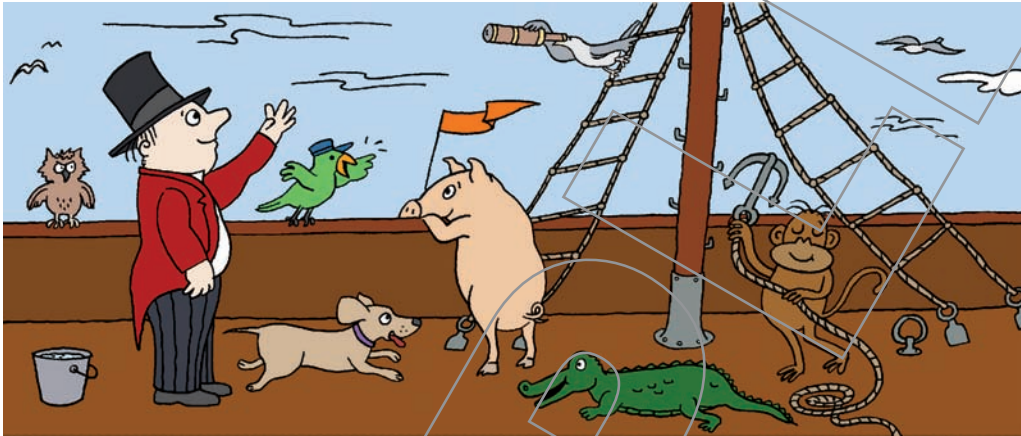
Katy is the leader of the Game of Rivers.



Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Adapted from *The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle*

by Hugh Lofting



- 1 Miranda, the Purple Bird-of-Paradise, was right when she predicted good weather. For three weeks, the good ship *Curlew* plowed her way through smiling seas before a steady, powerful wind.
- 2 As we got farther South and farther West, the face of the sea seemed different every day. To me, all the little things that a sailor would have ignored were very interesting.
- 3 We did not pass many ships. When we did see one, the Doctor would get out his telescope, and we would all take a look at it. Sometimes he would signal to it, asking for news, by raising little colored flags on the mast. The ship would answer back to us in the same way. The meaning of all the signals was printed in a book that the Doctor kept in the cabin. He told me it was the language of the sea. All sailors from any country could understand the messages.
- 4 Our greatest happening during those first weeks was passing a large block of floating ice. When the sun shone on it, the light burst into a hundred colors. The ice sparkled like a jeweled palace in a fairy story. We saw a mother polar bear with a cub sitting on it. They were watching us. The Doctor recognized her



1 Part A

Read this sentence from the passage.

“For three weeks, the good ship *Curlew* plowed her way through smiling seas before a steady, powerful wind.”

The phrase “smiling seas” tells you that the journey was

- A** easy
- B** fun
- C** long
- D** scary

Part B

Think about your answer to Part A. How did this affect the speaker?

- A** It gave him time to study.
- B** It made him want to go home.
- C** It made him look for things to do.
- D** It gave him the chance to make friends.

