

Computers vs. Books

by ReadWorks



Mia Murphy was tired when she got home from school last Friday. It had been a long week. She was working on a computer project and had stayed late at school to finish her work. After stepping off the bus and trudging home, she plopped onto her chair in the kitchen.

"What's up, Mia?" Mr. Murphy asked. He was making Mia her favorite after-school snack, a grilled cheese sandwich.

"This project is taking me forever!" Mia replied. "I have to design a website page for my computer class."

"Wow, fancy!" Mrs. Murphy shouted from the living room. "When we were in middle school, we didn't even know how to use computers." She walked into the kitchen and sat down next to Mia. She asked her daughter if she had anyone to help her with her project.

"We have partners-mine is named Ali," she explained. "Today we learned how to insert pictures into our page!"

Mr. and Mrs. Murphy looked at each other and smiled. Mia noticed their little exchange.

"What?" she asked, wondering what they were thinking.

"Well, we first met when we were working on a project together in high school," Mr. Murphy explained. "We were assigned to do a research project on American Indian history."

Mrs. Murphy chimed in. "But we didn't have computers back then, so we had to go to the library every day to do research!" She explained that they didn't have online search engines to help them with their work; they could only rely on books. They didn't have cell phones to text each other when they needed help. They had to work together at each other's houses.

"But that sounds so hard!" Mia said. "I can't imagine completing a project without the help of a computer."

Mr. Murphy chuckled. "I know. But I have that project to thank for meeting your mom! All those countless hours in the library. We had to spend a lot of time together," he said.

Now Mia was curious. She wondered what else was different when her parents were growing up. So she asked.

Mrs. Murphy started to list off things she didn't have as a child, like an mp3 player and a flat-screen television. "Also, since I had many brothers and sisters, we had to pitch in more. I helped my mom cook dinner, and we repaired our clothes ourselves when they tore," she said, tapping Mia on the nose. "How about you help me cook dinner tonight then?" Mrs. Murphy suggested, laughing.

"Sure!" Mia exclaimed. "How about something that you used to make as a kid?"

"Chicken noodle soup it is," Mrs. Murphy said with a smile.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Who is Mia?

- A. a girl in elementary school
- B. a girl in middle school
- C. a teacher at an elementary school
- D. a teacher at a middle school

2. What does Mia mainly learn about in the story?

- A. how her parents met
- B. how her mother's life differed from hers
- C. how to use computers to do homework
- D. how to work in pairs

3. Read the following section from the story:

"[Mia's mother] explained that they didn't have online search engines to help them with their work; they could only rely on books. They didn't have cell phones to text each other when they needed help—they had to work together at each other's houses.

"'But that sounds so hard!' Mia said. 'I can't imagine completing a project without the help of a computer.'"

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can be made?

- A. Mia thinks new technology makes homework easier.
- B. Mia's parents think that her homework is too easy.
- C. Mia thinks it would be more fun to work with a partner.
- D. Mia's parents think she should have a cell phone.

4. Read the following sentences: "Mr. Murphy chuckled. 'I know. But I have that project to thank for meeting your mom! All those countless hours in the library...we had to spend a lot of time together,' he said."

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can be made?

- A. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy grew annoyed with each other while working on their project.
- B. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy began to fall in love during their long hours in the library.
- C. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy were first introduced by a librarian.
- D. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy think Mia would more easily find a boyfriend in the library.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A. a conversation about generational differences
- B. a conversation about the evils of technology
- C. a conversation about how Mia's parents met
- D. a conversation about devices that are popular with teens

6. Read the following sentences: "Mrs. Murphy started to list off things she didn't have as a child, like an mp3 player and a flat-screen television. 'Also, since I had many brothers and sisters, we had to **pitch in** more. I helped my mom cook dinner, and we repaired our clothes ourselves when they tore,' she said, tapping Mia on the nose."

As used in the passage, what does the phrase "**pitch in**" mean?

- A. sacrifice
- B. help
- C. suffer
- D. cook

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Mia and her parents think that technology has made life easier for students today as they complete their homework. _____, thanks to the lack of modern technologies during their school days, Mia's parents were able to spend time together and fall in love.

- A. Obviously
- B. On the other hand
- C. Finally
- D. As a result

8. Why does Mia's mother think her computer class homework is "fancy"?

9. How does Mia agree to "pitch in" like her mother at the end of the story?

10. What is one way that Mia's life is different from her mother's? How do you know?
Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

Man and Girl and Beast

by ReadWorks

Have you ever seen a hyena in person and up close? Hyenas are mean animals. I'm not talking about *The Lion King*. Let me tell you something: a hyena is not silly. It is not a dopey creature. Hyenas don't stumble around elephant graveyards wagging their tongues. When a real hyena stands on its hind legs, it's as tall as a grown person, and it is solid muscle. When a hyena opens its mouth, its teeth are as long as your fingers.

It was in Nigeria that I saw hyenas up close and personal. When I say up close, I mean it-so close I could smell their breath, which was rotten. And this wasn't in a zoo, either.

I was in the country on a business trip. I work for a major Hollywood film studio-I won't say which one. I'll bet you didn't know that Nigeria produces more films every year than America. It's true. Only India produces more. First place is Bollywood (the nickname of India's film industry), then Nollywood (the nickname for Nigeria's film industry), then Hollywood.

I was staying in Lagos. It's the biggest city in Africa, way bigger than any city in America. It's right on the Gulf of Guinea, where it looks like the Atlantic Ocean took a bite out of the continent. The thing about business trips, when you work in the movie industry, is that you spend most of your time waiting around. You stay for a week and have two meetings. That's fine with me, because I like exploring. I like to see new things.

I spent my first few days in the heart of the city, seeing the sites, eating the food, and talking to the people. There was a lot to do and more to see. By the fourth day my explorations reached the outskirts, where the broken-down buildings had no glass in their windows, and people sold all sorts of food out of carts. Animals wandered around, and everything was dirty.

By day six I reached the slums, the worst parts of the city. I'd never seen anything like it. In one slum there was no garbage collection. The ground was completely covered in trash and sewage. People got around by walking on raised planks. Their houses were lean boards nailed together with thin sheets of iron on top.

On the dirt road to the next neighborhood I found the hyenas and their keepers, eight men cooking a meal by the side of the road. They also had four monkeys. One wore a T-shirt. The hyenas were yellow and brown with black spots. They looked almost like dogs, but they were bigger than any dog I'd ever seen. Large woven muzzles around their mouths kept them from biting or crying out. Steel chains with links as big as my fist kept them from roaming off. Their claws had been removed.

The men were all cousins or second cousins, or cousins once-removed. I couldn't exactly get it straight. They told me they make their living with the animals, traveling from shantytown to shantytown, entertaining crowds with magic tricks, songs, and plays.

If this story had been told to me, I probably would have thought, "Cool." But that's not how I felt. Maybe all the poverty had something to do with it, but seeing those hyenas made me sad. I didn't think these were bad men—they weren't cruel to the animals, and they were very kind to me. They shared their food, told me about their difficult lives, and let me travel with them for a while.

What I remember most clearly is this little girl, the daughter of one of the hyena men. I'd guess she was six or seven years old. She wore a red-and-white-checked dress, and her hair was braided. She was very shy. When she saw me arrive, she stopped playing with the chicken that was running around and hid behind her father's leg. But her father stepped forward to shake my hand, and she had to find a new hiding spot. She ducked behind the body of one of the hyenas that was laying in the sun, and put her arm around its neck. The hyena turned its muzzled head to look at her, hatred in its eyes.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Based on the text, what are hyenas like?

- A. mean and as tall as a grown person
- B. fast and very active
- C. scared and shy of people
- D. silly and playful

2. Where does the story take place?

- A. Nigeria
- B. India
- C. The United States of America
- D. Hollywood

3. Read these sentences from the text.

Steel chains with links as big as my fist kept [the hyenas] from roaming off. Their claws had been removed.

Based on this evidence from the text, what conclusion can be made?

- A. The hyenas would get lost without steel chains to keep them safe.
- B. The owners of the hyenas sold the hyenas' claws for money.
- C. The owners of the hyenas thought that hyenas were dangerous.
- D. The hyenas were too sick to perform for the crowds.

4. What view of hyenas does the narrator challenge?

- A. Hyenas are great attractions for tourists.
- B. Hyenas add lots of excitement to movies.
- C. Hyenas are dopey, silly animals.
- D. Hyenas cannot survive in the wild.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. The narrator forms an opinion of hyenas during an adventurous business trip to Nigeria.
- B. The narrator's favorite part of a business trip was talking to the people and eating their food.
- C. The narrator decides to make a movie with hyenas like *The Lion King* in India.
- D. The narrator travels with a group of people that owns hyenas, and enjoys their entertaining magic shows.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

Let me tell you something: a hyena is not silly. It is not a dopey creature. . . . When a real hyena stands on its hind legs, it's as tall as a grown person, and it is solid muscle. When a hyena opens its mouth, its teeth are as long as your fingers.

Why might the narrator have included these details about a hyena's looks and behavior?

- A. to suggest that hyenas actually make great pets
- B. to suggest that hyenas can eat a lot of food
- C. to suggest that hyenas mostly eat grown people
- D. to suggest that hyenas should be taken seriously

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

The narrator observed several things about hyenas while on the business trip. _____, the narrator saw one of the hyenas look at the little girl with hatred in its eyes.

- A. For example
- B. However
- C. Otherwise
- D. In contrast

8. When the narrator met the hyenas and their keepers, he or she noticed the hyenas were yellow and brown with black spots, and that they were bigger than dogs. Identify two more details that the narrator noticed about the hyenas.

9. What is the narrator's opinion of hyenas? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. How did the narrator's encounters with hyenas impact his or her opinion of hyenas? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer 5
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake. 10
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep, 15
And miles to go before I sleep.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Why does the speaker of the poem stop?

- A. to watch the woods fill up with snow
- B. to find food for his or her horse
- C. to say hello to the owner of the woods
- D. to go skating on a frozen lake

2. What is the setting of this poem?

- A. in the woods on a bright, snowy afternoon
- B. in a village on a dark, snowy evening
- C. by a frozen lake on a bright, snowy afternoon
- D. near the woods on a dark, snowy evening

3. Read the first stanza of the poem:

Whose woods these are I think I know.

His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.

What can you conclude based on this information?

- A. the woods are far away from the village
- B. the woods are near some houses
- C. the owner of the woods is friends with the speaker of the poem
- D. the speaker of the poem does not like the owner of the woods

4. What is one thing that pulls the speaker of the poem away from the woods?

- A. the freezing, harsh wind
- B. the cold, snowy weather
- C. the darkness of the evening
- D. promises the speaker needs to keep

5. What might be a main theme of this poem?

- A. the fear of staying too long on someone else's land
- B. the pull of sleeping in nature against the pull of sleeping at home
- C. the pull of being alone in nature against the pull of responsibility
- D. the ability of nature to make a person feel tired and sleepy

6. Read the last stanza of the poem:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

Why might the poet have repeated the line "and miles to go before I sleep"?

- A. to make the woods seem even more attractive and lovely
- B. to make the speaker seem forgetful and less smart than earlier in the poem
- C. to make readers pay special attention to the meaning of the line
- D. to make the speaker seem like he or she is already asleep

7. Read these lines from the poem:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

What is the effect of the word "but" in the second line?

- A. It makes it seem like the speaker does not actually like the woods much and wants to leave.
- B. It makes it seem like the speaker can still keep promises while staying by the woods.
- C. It makes it seem like the promises the speaker has to keep are lovely, dark, and deep.
- D. It makes it seem like the speaker has to choose between keeping promises and the lovely woods.

8. What does the speaker most likely do at the end of the poem? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

9. Read the last stanza of the poem:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

At the end of the poem, what does the speaker most likely WANT to do? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. Why might the speaker of the poem be so drawn to the woods? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
