



Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Grade 3

Answer Key

The Squirrel's Bargain

Nutmeg the squirrel hated gathering acorns. Every autumn, while the other squirrels spent their days climbing and digging and burying food for winter, Nutmeg complained about how tiring it all was. "There must be an easier way," she muttered, watching her neighbor Pepper bury her twentieth acorn of the morning.

One day, Nutmeg had an idea. She found a family of chipmunks and offered them a bargain: she would tell them the best hiding spots in the forest, the ones with the softest dirt and the least competition from other animals, if they would gather twice as many acorns and give half to her. The chipmunks, eager for good hiding spots, agreed immediately.

For a few weeks, the plan worked beautifully. Nutmeg barely lifted a paw and still ended up with a respectable pile of acorns. She bragged to Pepper about how clever she had been, working smarter instead of harder. Pepper only shook her head and kept digging.

Then winter arrived early and hit hard. The chipmunks, it turned out, had been so busy following Nutmeg's directions to good hiding spots that they had forgotten to actually remember where they buried their own half of the acorns. When they went looking for their stores, they found only a few, scattered and half frozen in the snow. Panicked, they came to Nutmeg asking for help finding her half of the pile.

But Nutmeg had never learned the forest floor the way the other squirrels had. She had spent her time arranging bargains instead of paying attention to the landmarks, the fallen logs, the split oak, the mossy stone, that squirrels like Pepper used to remember their own hiding spots. Nutmeg searched for days and found barely enough to last a week. That winter, she finally understood something Pepper had known all along: shortcuts

might save you effort in the moment, but they rarely teach you anything worth knowing when you truly need it.

Circle the Correct Answer

1. Why did Nutmeg dislike gathering acorns?

Answer: a) She thought it was too tiring and wanted an easier way

2. What bargain did Nutmeg make with the chipmunks?

Answer: b) She would tell them good hiding spots if they gathered extra acorns and gave her half

3. What went wrong with the chipmunks' acorns?

Answer: b) The chipmunks forgot where they had buried their own share

4. Why couldn't Nutmeg find her own hidden acorns when winter came?

Answer: a) She had never learned the forest floor's landmarks the way other squirrels had

True or False

5. Pepper spent her time gathering and burying acorns the traditional way.

Answer: True

6. Nutmeg's bargain worked perfectly all winter long, with no problems.

Answer: False

7. Nutmeg easily found plenty of acorns once winter arrived.

Answer: False

Fill in the Blank

8. Nutmeg bragged to Pepper about working smarter instead of _____.

Answer: harder

9. The chipmunks found only a few acorns, scattered and half _____ in the snow.

Answer: frozen

Think and Explain

10. What is the moral, or lesson, of this fable? Explain it in one or two sentences, using details from the story to support your answer.

Sample answer: Accept reasonable answers noting that the fable teaches that shortcuts can save effort in the short term but often mean missing out on skills or knowledge you need later, supported by Nutmeg never learning the forest landmarks and struggling when she truly needed that knowledge.