

Skip sat up in bed. He had to get up. He had a big quiz in math and he did not want to miss the bus. He had not slept well. He felt sick and his skin was hot. He left his quilt on the bed and went to get his mom. Mom had a shock when Skip came in. He had a red rash on his neck. “Back to bed, Skip,” said Mom. Skip went back and got in bed. Mom came in to check his temp. He was hot!

“I did pack your lunch, but I can not let you get on that bus,” said Mom. “You will just have to miss the quiz.” Skip slept the rest of the day. Skip had to rest all **day**. He slept a long time. Mom kept him in bed. She had him drink lots of **water**. He did not get up to play. The next **day**, Skip felt the best he had felt in a long time. It was a **day** off, **too!** He was glad that there was no class. He had a plan to fill his **day** with fun.

He went out to get on the swing. When he sat on the swing he felt a sting on his leg. He let out a yell! He swung at the bug and fell off the swing. **Now**, there was a bump on his chin and his leg began to swell. He did not get up fast. He swept the dust off his legs. The bump on his chin felt big and his leg stung. He had to limp back in. “Mom, I think I **need** help,” he said. “That is a bad cut, Skip. I will get the stuff to put on it. Did you fall?” asked Mom. “Yes, I fell,” said Skip, “but I also got stung by a bug! I think I should get back in bed. I am not having much luck!”

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Beth had wanted a pet for a long time. When her mom and dad asked her what she wanted for a gift, she said, “A pet! The kind I want most is a small colt, but if I cannot have a colt, I want a dog or cat.”

Mom and Dad wanted to get a colt for **their** child, but they did not **know** where to find one. They also did not have a stall. A colt could not be kept in the den! Then, a man at Dad’s job told them he had one to sell. It could **stay** in his stall if Beth fed it **each day**. It was not at all wild and would be a fun pet for a child.

The man sold Mom and Dad the colt. The plan was to put it in the **backyard** and then bring it to the stall at the end of the **day**. Mom had a thick string on the colt so that it would not bolt off and get lost. When Beth got up, Mom and Dad put a blindfold on her and led her to the yard. When they got to the back, they took the blindfold off and said, “Here is your gift, Beth!” But, there was no colt - just a string! “Where is the colt? We must find it!” said Mom and Dad. The colt was lost.

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Mom and Dad were shocked that the colt was not where they had left him. They checked the **yard** and the shed. They even called the man who had sold them the colt to see if it had **gone** there. The man went out and checked the stalls but the colt was not in there.

Beth called the cops to tell them that the colt was missing. The cops felt that it was one of the oddest calls they got. They told Beth that no one had seen a small colt. Beth begged them to find the colt. The cops said they would do their best.

Beth felt sad. She had wished for a colt. Most wishes do not come **true**, but this one had. It is sad to have a wish come **true** and then bolt!

She had a pet colt but had not even met it yet. Beth hung her chin and **began** to sob. Then she felt **something** cold and wet on her neck. She sat up and there was her colt! She hugged him and he licked her hands. “Mom and Dad”, she yelled, “My colt has come back!”

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Hopscotch is lots of fun. It was invented a long, long time **ago**. It was not a fun game at that time. It was used to make the men in the British **army** stronger. There were lots of boxes in the old hopscotches. The hopscotch could be hundreds of **feet** long. The men had to hop in all the boxes with their splendid armor on. The strongest and fastest men finished first. The men who did not finish got upset. They knew they would be punished.

The British children wanted to mimic the men in the **army**. They made their **own** hopscotches.

Theirs were not as long as the ones the men used. They tossed small rocks onto the boxes and hopped to the end. When the children **played**, it was all for fun. Even **now**, there are children who think hopscotch is a blast!

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On a hot **day** in June it is fun to go to a baseball game. Many kids in Boston like the Red Sox. Lots of people go to the games. They yell when someone on the home **team** smacks a home run or strikes **out** the side. They **eat** hot dogs and popcorn and drink lots of tonic. The fans like it best when the home **team** wins the game, but sometimes that does not happen.

When the Red Sox are not winning many games, some people like to tell an old tale about Babe Ruth. Babe Ruth used to play baseball for the Red Sox from 1914-1919. He was one of the greatest hitters of all time. He once hit the ball more than six-hundred feet. He hit 714 homeruns in his lifetime. He was also a **great** pitcher. He could strike **out** lots of batters. All the fans **loved** the Babe, but the children **loved** him most of all. He would visit children who were not well. Babe knew how to make kids smile.

Babe went to **play** for the **Yankees** in 1920. The Red Sox did not trade him. They sold him for lots of cash. The fans were quite mad and many kids were very sad. Some fans said that selling Babe would bring the Red Sox bad luck. When the Red Sox do not win, some people think the tale is **true** even today.

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By second grade, you can **read** and spell lots of words. We use words all the time to **talk** and to write. There are all kinds of words. Some words are people, places or things, like baby, Boston and bench. Some words are words for things we do, like swim, jump and cry.

We are lucky to have lots of words we can use when we write. Some words are useful when we are trying to describe someone or something. These words are called adjectives. Adjectives are words like funny, silly, ugly, messy and chunky. These words tell us more **about** the people, places and things we talk and write **about**.

With adjectives we can let others know if our lunch was yummy or yucky. We can tell our friends if our **new** puppy is skinny or chubby or if our kitty is black or white. Adjectives come in handy when we want to describe things!

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Tory Osborn and Carmel Gomez are best friends even though they live very far away from **each** other. Tory lives on a farm in upstate New York and Carmel lives in New York City. They only get to be together **once** a **year** when their two **families** visit. Sometimes the Gomez family **goes** to upstate New York and sometimes the Osborns drive to the city.

Tory and Carmel try to write **each** other once a **week** and they chat on-line even more often. Lately, they have been thinking that they would like to change places. Tory thinks the city is so much fun. She loves riding the **subway** and **playing** with the kids from Carmel's apartment complex. There are so many people there that a kid can never get lonely. There is always a game of jacks, or jump rope, or basketball going on. Tory's farm is quite far from any of her friends so she is often **bored**. She also gets **tired** of all her chores.

Carmel thinks Tory is crazy to want to move away from the farm. She thinks the farm is the best place to be. She loves the big, grassy yard and the barn full of animals. She likes to chase the chickens and help milk the **cows**. There aren't many cars and buses so it is **nice** and quiet. She has been begging her mom and dad to visit more often.

Mrs. Gomez said she would call Mrs. Osborn to set up a time for the girls to visit. She did not think the girls would have much fun if they did change places because then they would not have **each** other. Mrs. Osborn said that she would be happy to have Carmel come and visit for a bit. Then Tory could go back and **stay** with Carmel for a while. Mr. Gomez and Mr. Osborn said they could share the driving. Carmel and Tory think this is the best plan ever!

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Mars is a small, rocky planet. It is cold and lifeless. It is one of the closest planets to Earth. It travels around the sun just like our planet Earth. It also has volcanos like Earth, but the volcanos on Mars are much bigger. They can be one hundred times as large as the volcanos on Earth. Mars also has very strong winds and bad dust storms that can last for months.

Spacecrafts have been sent to Mars to learn more about it. The first one landed on Mars in 1976. A **spacecraft** called the Mars Pathfinder landed there in 1997. There were no people on these **spacecrafts**. Mars is **too** cold for humans to survive there.

Mars is known as the red planet because of its reddish color and pink, hazy sky. The Romans were the first to call the planet Mars. Mars was the name of their god of War. Why do you think the Romans chose that name?

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Caitlin was in the third grade. She was in a **new school**. She was happy with the change. The kids in her class were lots of fun. She had made friends by the end of the first day. The next day, Mrs. Clark said they were going to learn to write in cursive. "Oh, no", thought Caitlin, "I like the way I print. I do not want to start making my letters a different way. I am afraid my papers will be messy. Mrs. Clark may not like messy papers. Maybe she will think that I am not a smart girl."

Caitlin remembered the way Mrs. Smith had helped her learn to print her letters when she was in first grade. There was a large grid on the wall of the class. The grid had lines on it to help the children learn to form the letters. The lines had names like the sky line, the grass line, and the plane line. Mrs. Smith used the lines to help kids learn to make **each** letter. She just told the kids to start at the sky line or the plane line and how to move their hands to the right places. Then, she told them all the steps for all of the letters. It was not hard to learn to print at all. Caitlin was starting to think she would like to return to first grade and be back in Mrs. Smith's class.

The next day, before class, Caitlin asked Mrs. Clark if she had to start cursive. She told her that her printing was great and that she was happy to print for the rest of her life. Mrs. Clark told her that all the kids had to begin cursive. She said it would not be hard at all. Caitlin said okay, but did not think it would be any fun. After lunch, Mrs. Clark said that it was time to begin cursive. Caitlin started to sink behind her desk. Then, Mrs. Clark hung some paper on the wall. When Caitlin saw the paper, she began to smile. It was the same grid Mrs. Smith had used when she was in first grade. "Stand up class", said Mrs. Clark. "Make your arms stiff and **point** to the grass line." Caitlin was very happy. Learning cursive would be a snap this way.

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It was a hot, steamy day. School was out for the summer. Most of the kids were thrilled, but Lee was not. He did not care for the heat. He did like to go for a swim with his friends, but he really missed the winter months. In the winter, Lee got to play hockey. He could skate all weekend and after school during the week. He had to be at the rink by five in the morning, but he did not mind at all. His dad drove him to the rink and they would eat donuts and have hot drinks on the way there.

Lee began to daydream about last season. His team had had a great year. They played well together and worked hard. They won most of their games and made the play-offs. Lee and his friend Pete were the key players on the team. They could both skate quite fast. It seemed that each time Lee passed the puck to Pete, Pete shot it in the net. One of the play-off games went into three overtimes. The next team to score would win the game. All the players felt weak. It is not easy to skate fast for a long time. Lee's team was short one player because Pete was in the penalty box. It seemed like the other team was going to win the game.

Lee stole the puck from the other team. He began to skate and picked up speed. He kept his eyes on the net. He snuck past three players from the other team. He shot the puck at the net and **saw** it fly into the top corner. Lee's team won the big game. Lee jumped into the air and landed on the ice. All of his teammates leaped on top of him. Lee would never forget this game-not even on hot, steamy summer days.

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Mr. and Mrs. Carlo wanted to have a surprise birthday party for their **daughter** Carly. She was turning seven years old. It would be easy to plan it while she was away on a week-long trip with her brother, Lee, and her grandparents. Carly's older brother, Jay, said he would enjoy helping to prepare for the party.

First, they sent notes in the mail to ask friends and family to join them. Jay helped to get these into the mail. He then gave Dad a hand setting up a tent so that rain could not spoil the party. The next step was to get snacks for the party. They went to the store and got plenty of hotdogs, hamburgers and tonic. They also picked up some chips and dip. They knew that kids could eat quite a bit. Mom ordered the cake from a bake shop that makes cakes that are rich and moist. She chose one with whipped cream frosting.

Mom checked with the other people in the apartment complex to see if they would mind a little **noise**. She told them the party would last until nine. All of the people said it was just fine. They did not mind a bit of **noise** and said they hoped the kids would enjoy themselves. They knew Carly and her friends were not the kind of kids who would destroy things or run around in the halls.

The only problem left was planning an activity for the kids' enjoyment. They had some games the kids could play and they got some videos and CDs. The problem was that it was likely to be quite hot and humid and there was nowhere to swim. At last, Mr. Carlo came up with a super **idea** - squirt guns! The kids would have a blast squirting each other and getting wet!

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Kelly was studying her math facts. She was good at most things in school but she was having a hard time remembering all these math facts. Her teacher, Mrs. Hurley, had said that they would have a speed quiz the next day. Kelly wanted to do well on the quiz so she kept working with her flashcards. She was trying to recall the answer to six times nine when she saw the first snowflake. "Mom," she yelled, "Did you know that it is snowing out?"

"Yes," her mother answered, "The man on TV said there will be a big snowstorm. We could get fifteen or sixteen inches of snow before morning! I am a bit upset because I wanted to go to the mall later today."

Kelly went over to the window. It was starting to snow harder and the wind was blowing the snow across the yard. She was trying to make up her mind. Should she finish her homework or just wait and finish it the next day? She was quite sure it would be a snow day. Just then, Kelly's father and her sisters, Katy and Kristin, came in the house. "BRRRRR!" he said, "It is freezing out. The roads are getting very slippery from all the snow. I think a lot of people will be calling to ask me to clean their driveways in the morning." Kelly's dad had a big truck that he used to clean the snow from driveways and parking lots.

Kelly got on her winter coat and put on her hat and mittens. "Where are you going, Kelly?" asked her father. "To play in the snow before it gets too dark," said Kelly. "I don't need to do my homework because we are going to have a snow day! Now we will not have our speed quiz in math until Thursday!"

"I think you should study just in case, Kelly," said Katy. "What if it stops snowing and there is no snow day? I made that mistake one time. I did not finish a book report because I thought there would be a day off, but the snow stopped and I had to tell my teacher that my report was not finished!" Kristin said, "Kelly, I know you want to get a good grade on that quiz and I know you want to play in the snow. Why don't you go play for a while and then later Katy and I will help you study your facts?"

"Thanks a bunch! You two are the best sisters in the world!" said Kelly with a big smile.

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“Thanks a bunch! You two are the best sisters in the world!” said Kelly with a big smile.

When Ross was in second grade he was having some problems with reading and spelling. He was working very hard and trying to do his best, but he thought the work was very hard. Sometimes he could not finish his papers or understand how to read or spell a word. He felt tired and drowsy much of the time.

Each day seemed to get harder and harder. When his mother asked him how his day went, Ross wanted to shout, "Lousy!" Many days he came home with a frown. His mother wanted to see his big smile again, so she asked his teacher what she could do to help. His teacher thought that if he could get some more help after school the work would not seem so hard. She knew Ross was a smart kid and did not want him to get further behind.

Ross's mother found a teacher who could help Ross after school. Her name was Robin. Robin and Ross hit it off right from the start. Ross would go to her house three times a week and work on reading and spelling. Robin showed Ross how to tap out the sounds to make reading and spelling easy!

It was not long before Ross became a whiz at reading and spelling. He learned the rules quickly and knew all of the sounds of the vowels. He did not mind working after school. He seemed to enjoy it. He always came with a smile and worked very hard; even if he had to miss part of his swim team. He never pouted or complained. He was happy to get the help.

Robin thinks Ross is an outstanding student and a great kid. As a matter of fact, he is one of the best students she has ever had. They have a fine time working together. Even with all of the hard work Ross does, they still find time to joke around and chat about sports. Before long, Ross will not need any help. He will do fine in school on his own. Robin will miss seeing Ross, but is glad that he is doing so well. She thinks she will always stay in touch.

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Mr. Stroub works on a rescue team on the coast. He has been working there for years. He enjoys the work and likes the other members of the group. They all know how important their work is. Back when he was a kid in school, Mr. Stroub had worked at his town pool. One day he had to save a child from drowning. From that point on, he was **hooked** on rescue work.

The crew does not go out on a rescue each day. Some days the job is even a bit dull. The crew is happy when this happens because it means that all of the boaters are safe. However, if a storm blows in, the crew knows they will be needed soon. It is their job to rescue boats that are stranded out in the sea and get everyone back safely to shore. They also teach classes on boat safety.

Many people on the coast have boats and enjoy fishing trips or just sailing on the clear, smooth blue waters. Most of the boaters are very careful. They remember to provide a life jacket for each person on their boat and they go slowly when there are other boats around. A few boaters are foolish. They scoot across the water at top speed and dart around the other boats. They crowd too many people on their boats and ignore the rules. They stay out in stormy seas and pile too much stuff on the boat.

One cloudy afternoon, Mr. Stroub told a group that they should not take their small boat out to sea. The news was reporting that a large storm was expected soon. The driver of the boat began to argue with Mr. Stroub. Mr. Stroub was trying to explain that the strong winds would make it hard to get back in, when the boat took off and sped out to sea. Mr. Stroub just shook his head. He wished people knew that he was not trying to spoil their fun. He just wanted to keep them safe.

Shortly after the boat left the dock, thunderclouds formed in the sky and the waves began to pound the shore. Mr. Stroub frowned and looked out the window. He was hoping to see the small boat returning but there were not boats around. He told his crew that they should prepare for a rescue.

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Do you ever wonder what happens to your socks when you put them in the laundry? It seems to me that I put many more socks in the laundry than I get back. I know that when I put a pair of dirty socks in the hamper or laundry basket that I put both of the socks in together. But, when I get my clean laundry back, very often only one sock returns.

I am not sure what causes this to happen. Perhaps my dryer is haunted.

Maybe there is some kind of a law that says only one sock can come back at a time. Maybe there is something in the dryer that grinds socks up into sawdust. All I know is that I get exhausted looking all over my house for my missing socks. Every time it happens my mother launches into a big long story about how I need to be more careful. I try to explain that it is not my fault, but she still gets mad at me. The funny thing is that many times the missing sock is later found back in my dresser **drawer**.

One day I was visiting my Aunt Dawn. I go over there all the time to play with my cousin Paul. It was raining so we were drawing and working on a jigsaw puzzle. Aunt Dawn was doing the laundry when I got there. All of a sudden, Aunt Dawn began to squawk at Paul. She was upset because she could not find all their socks. The kids said the last time they saw the socks they were in the laundry. I sort of crawled out of the way. There was no point in trying to help them find the socks. I was just glad that this time I was sure it was not my fault.

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Do you have an aunt or uncle who is very special to you? Sometimes kids have an aunt or uncle who lives close to them and spends lots of time with them. Other times an uncle or aunt may live far away but is still able to call, email, and send letters or gifts to the children who are special to them.

I know some kids who think their Aunt Barb and Uncle Ed are the best aunt and uncle in the world. Barb and Ed do not have kids of their own, so they like to spoil the children of their brothers and sisters. They have big jobs that keep them quite busy, but they still make time for the kids. They even giggle at the kids' silly jokes! The kids like the fact that Barb and Ed really **listen** to them. When the kids were **young** they would never grumble about how much **noise** they made or complain about the messes they made when they jumped in puddles. As a matter of fact, Ed sometimes jumped in the puddles too!

Spending time with Barb and Ed is a great treat. They live on the water so sometimes Uncle Ed takes the kids for a boat ride. Barb plays games like Scrabble with the kids or settles down with a good fable story or video with them. Best of all is playing with Barb and Ed's dog. The first dog they had was a beagle named Barney. He **died** a few years ago. The kids, and Barb and Ed miss him a lot. The new dog's name is Jackson. Jackson is lots of fun and is always happy to see the kids.

Now that the kids are older, they are busy and do not visit with Aunt Barb and Uncle Ed as much. Barb and Ed try to stay close to them and get to see them from time to time. Aunts and uncles can be very special parts of a family.

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