

The Smile Cure

1 “#1: The more you take, the more you leave behind. #2: Give it food, and it will live; give it water, and it will die. #3: It is lighter than a feather, yet the strongest man can’t hold it for much more than a minute. #4: What can you catch but can’t throw? #5: As I walked along the path, I saw something with four fingers and one thumb, but it was not flesh, fish, bone, or bird.”

2 The students in Mr. Nakamura’s class stared at their teacher in stunned silence. His strange behavior was so shocking that they were speechless. He usually started the day’s lesson with a review of math facts. He didn’t spout nonsense! The only reason the students weren’t completely terrified was because of the expression on his face. He was grinning from ear to ear.

3 Mr. Nakamura soon explained. “We smile when we are happy, but there’s more to a smile than showing happiness. Smiling can help cure unhappiness, because it makes us feel happier! If we force a smile, we will be happier and want to smile! Through studies, scientists have found that when we smile, our brains respond in a certain way. Smiling — even if it’s forced — makes us feel better. It can even make us feel less pain! Tests showed that people who were smiling felt less pain. People who were frowning felt more pain!”

4 “Now that scientists have proved the worth of smiling,” Mr. Nakamura said, “I’ve come to the conclusion that we must smile more. We will force ourselves to smile even when we are doing something that is new and novel. We will smile even when things are difficult and challenging. I decided that to kick off our first day of smiling more, I would entertain you with some riddles. So even if you don’t know the answers to my riddles, smile!”

5 The students couldn’t help but smile in relief, because they were no longer worried that their teacher had lost his mind. What they thought was nonsense were riddles! After talking among themselves, they told Mr. Nakamura that the answers to the riddles were footsteps, fire, your breath, a cold, and a glove. When told that their answers were correct, the children smiled. “No need to force smiles over this assignment,” they said.

Your Name: _____ Partner: _____

The Smile Cure (cont.)

First

Silently read "The Smile Cure." You might see words you do not know and read parts you do not understand. Keep reading! Determine what the story is mainly about.

Then

Sum up the story. Write the main idea and most important information. If someone reads your summary, that person should know it is this story that you are writing about, not a different story!

**After
That**

Read the story again. Use a pencil to circle or mark words you don't know. Note places that confuse you. Underline the main action or idea of each paragraph.

Next

Meet with your partner. Help each other find these new words in the text.

stunned spout cure novel relief

Read the sentences around the words. Think about how they fit in the whole story. Then match the words to their synonyms. Tell which part of the story help you and your partner know you are right.

a. The word _____ means "new." We know this because

b. The word _____ means "gush." We know this because

c. The word _____ means "astonished." We know this because

d. The word _____ means "treatment." We know this because

e. The word _____ means "comfort." We know this because

Your Name: _____

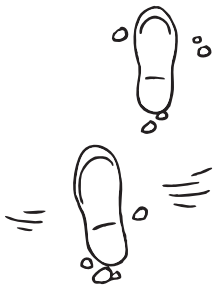
The Smile Cure (cont.)

Now

Answer the story questions below.

1. How does Mr. Nakamura's class usually start? Use a complete sentence.

2. Look at the pictures. For each, rewrite the riddle that Mr. Nakamura uses to describe them?





3. Near the end of paragraph 4, Mr. Nakamura says that he has decided "to kick off" the day. What is meant by this expression the way it is used here?

Which parts of the story helped you know?

4. Why might it help to smile if you get a shot? Use evidence from the story in your answer.

Your Name: _____

The Smile Cure (cont.)

Then

Reread the entire story one last time. As you read, think about how the first paragraph relates to the rest of the passage.

5. In the second paragraph, you are told that the students think that Mr. Nakamura is spouting nonsense. Did you think the first paragraph was nonsense the first time you read it? Were you confused like the students? Tell why or why not. Use a line or two from the paragraph to prove your point.

6. How did your understanding of paragraph 1 change by the end of the story?

What was your favorite riddle? Why?

7. What might Mr. Nakamura say to you if you are unhappy with these questions? Defend your answer with information from the story.

Learn
More

Think up or find five riddles. Write them on the back of this paper, and then try to stump the class with them. Remember to smile as you do this task and also when you try to solve your schoolmates' riddles!

2. She wanted to be sure he wasn't simply repeating what he was hearing.
3. He means that the child may be very valuable and of great worth; he says the child's power is so valuable, he is invaluable.
4. No, she can't. She listened to the report about the boy five times and watched it, and she thought that reading was a superpower.
5. Her Majesty listens to the report and watches the performance; everyone has earbuds attached, because it is the only way they communicate.

"Bridge Standing on End" (pages 64–67)

Summary: A man bought a narrow lot and needed an architect to figure out a new way to support a narrow building. New York's first skyscraper was built on this lot.

Vocabulary: a. T, b. T or F, depending on school; c. F; d. F; e. F

1. It was not easy; although the idea came to him "like a flash," he "wrestled with the problem for months" beforehand.
2. He dropped it in the middle of a huge storm so he could prove the building wouldn't fall down; it showed that the building wasn't moving, even though there were huge gusts of winds.
3. It means he thought in a new, nontraditional way; instead of thick walls, he used an internal skeleton like a bridge standing on its end to support the building.
4. Yes, you are told in the paragraph 1 that Stearns would be left with less than eight feet of space after the wall, elevator, and stair footage was subtracted.
5. *Problem:* Stearns only had a narrow lot, which would have left him with less than eight feet of floor space; *Solution:* The architect designed a steel framework on which the exterior walls rested like curtains on the beams.
6. paragraph 5; it isn't a modern problem at all, so the story wouldn't make sense and you wouldn't understand how important and new Gilbert's idea was.

"Stranger than Fiction" (pages 68–71)

Summary: A teacher has her students decide which of three events is true. The story tells us more about the true events and explains why the other one is false.

Vocabulary: *veracity* = "truth"; *studiously* = "thoughtfully, quietly studying"; *staggering* = "amazing, deeply shocking"; *extinct* = "dead, all gone"; *previously* = "happening before"

1. It flattened a three-story fire station, wooden houses, cars, and wagons.
2. There are some kinds of frogs that can survive being frozen for several months, as well as reindeer herders finding bodies of mammoths in melting ice.
3. No, because lots of cats and dogs would not likely be picked up in the way that fish "swimming close to the surface" would be.
4. It took months. Molasses is sticky, and then as it dries, it gets hard. Also, it doesn't evaporate the way water does.
5. Paragraph 1 acts as the introduction and 5 as the conclusion. The other paragraphs are the body, each focusing on one event.
6. No. She said, "which or all are true events."

"Stuck in Limbo" (pages 72–75)

Summary: A man from Iran became stranded in a Paris airport for 17 years. His documents were stolen, and if he left, he would be arrested. He was always clean and courteous. He was allowed to go free in 2006 when he needed to be hospitalized.

Vocabulary: a. expelled; b. awry; c. limbo; d. stranded; e. threshold

1. He landed in London but was sent back to Paris because he didn't have papers.
2. They liked him. One employee said, "He's like a part of the airport. Everyone knows him"; the story tells us that he was "polite and courteous."

3. It means that you're facing two very difficult and unpleasant choices; before this expression, the story shows that every option Mehran has will lead to his arrest.
4. Diary entries might include: shaving, washing clothes, reading, studying, writing, taking breaths when doors open, receiving things from airport workers.
5. *Who:* Alfred Mehran; *What:* stuck in limbo; *Where:* inside; *When:* date unsure, but 17 years; *Why:* could not leave
6. *Who:* Alfred Mehran; *What:* stuck in French airport due to legal nightmare; *Where:* Charles de Gaulle Airport, Paris; *When:* 1988 to 2006; *Why:* lost papers

"Summer Reading" (pages 76–79)

Summary: A babysitter tells two kids she will make the Sun disappear if they don't read. There is a total solar eclipse, and the kids think she did it, so they want to read.

Vocabulary: *stubborn* = "not willing to do something"; *reacted* = "responded to something"; *scorn* = "making fun of something"; *sneered* = "to made a nasty face at, made fun of"; *suspicion* = "not sure of, having doubt"

1. Jack and Jill needed to practice reading. They wouldn't read to her, and she was hoping they would read to Sophia.
2. They sensed that something was wrong; squirrels: hid in their nests; birds: didn't sing a note as they perched uneasily on branches and wires.
3. It means that she has lost her patience. She doesn't know what to do anymore; no matter what she says, she can't get Jack and Jill to read.
4. She probably wouldn't say she could make the Sun disappear if she didn't know there was going to be an eclipse; also, she had the page ready for them to read.
5. Sophia makes a threat, and it seems as if it is coming true; the author uses words like *terrifying*, *dark*, and *eerie*.

"The Fifth Time" (pages 80–83)

Summary: Diana Nyad made five attempts to swim from Cuba to Florida. Even though her last attempt was challenging, it was successful because of her team of helpers.

1. She had a team of "shark divers" who had special "zappers" that swam with her; she chose not to swim in a protective shark cage.
2. She saw the Seven Dwarfs marching down the yellow brick road; it was helpful, because Nyad was able to follow the dwarves for over three hours.
3. It means that the third time you do something, it works out; in the story, it says that this time it wasn't true, because she failed on her third attempt.
4. *Problems:* excruciating pain, sting on tongue almost caused suffocation; *Solutions:* wore full head mask and body suit, had people clear the area
5. You only know that she succeeded at something on her fifth attempt. It is not until the first line of the second paragraph that we learn what she accomplished.
6. "The Fifth Time" could refer to anything that was done five times; it does not tell you in any way that it is about swimming or adventure.

"The Smile Cure" (pages 84–87)

Summary: A teacher asks his students lots of riddles instead of reviewing math facts. He says that smiling makes one feel better. His riddles make everyone smile more.

Vocabulary: a. novel; b. spout; c. stunned; d. cure; e. relief

1. He usually starts class with a review of math facts.
2. *footsteps:* "The more you take, the more you leave behind."; *fire:* "Give it food and it will live; give it water and it will die."
3. "to start something"; he is using riddles to start off the week of smiling more.
4. You would feel less pain. Evens a forced smile would help one will feel less pain.