

Wonder Stories

Level 5

REM 470

A TEACHING RESOURCE FROM...



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Introduction

Wonder Stories is a series of books designed to improve reading comprehension of older students whose reading abilities are below grade level.

Each factual article begins with a question about a topic that has prompted thoughts like, “I wonder how, I wonder why, I wonder what... .” Comprehension questions about the stories follow a standard pattern and address the following skills: main idea, finding a fact, locating an answer, inference, vocabulary, and word analysis.

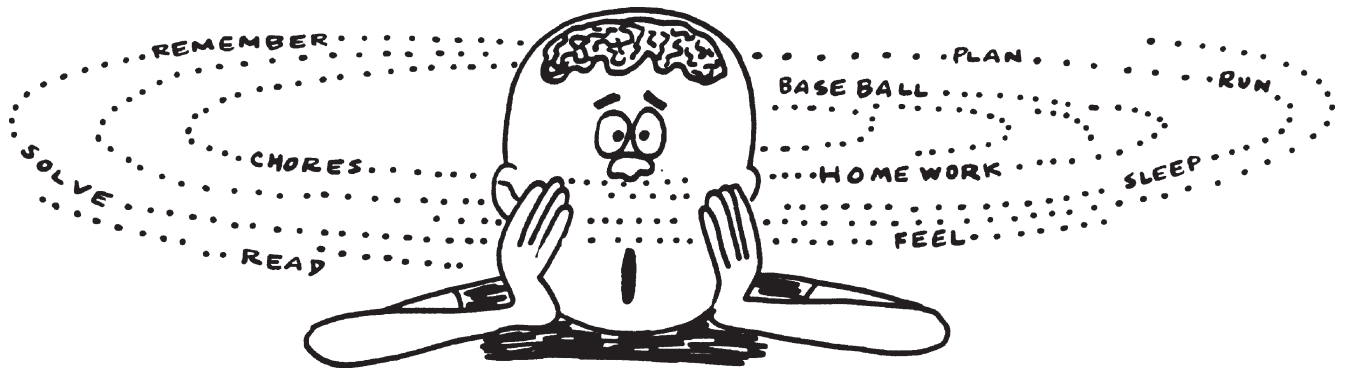
The high-interest stories in all four books appeal to all ages making it possible to tailor the appropriate book for individual students depending upon their reading abilities.

Readability for the series ranges from 2.0 to 5.5 grade level. This book is designed for readers in the 5.0 – 5.5 range.

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What does your brain do?



Your brain is the best and brightest computer that was ever made. Some computers are faster at solving problems. No man-made machine, however, has ever been able to perform all the jobs your brain does each day.

The biggest part of your brain is the thinking part. It is called the “cerebrum.” The cerebrum looks like a big, grey lump of clay with a lot of wrinkles. It helps you figure out the answers to problems. It also stores millions of bits of information. Perhaps you want to recall what you did yesterday. A quick “trip” to your cerebrum finds the information and brings it to your mind.

Your brain does many tasks in addition to thinking. It controls your heartbeat. It reminds you to breathe. It sends and receives messages to and from all parts of your body.

If your hand passes over a pot of boiling water, your brain receives a message that says, “hot.” This happens before your finger feels any pain. Because of your brain, you stay awake during the day and asleep at night. No one has yet discovered all the things that the human brain can do.

1. This story is about the part inside your head called the _____.
2. What is the cerebrum? _____
3. Which paragraph compares the brain to a computer? _____
4. How do you think a human brain is different from an animal brain?

5. What word in paragraph two means “remember”? _____

6. Write other forms of these words that are used in the story:

inform: _____ boil: _____

breath: _____ bright: _____

What are hiccups?



You may make a funny sound in your throat from time to time. It sounds like a squeak. You might giggle and know that you have the hiccups.

Your body has a big muscle called a diaphragm. The diaphragm pushes the proper amount of air in and out of your lungs. This allows you to breathe. The diaphragm is found in your chest, above your abdomen, or center part of your body.

Your brain tells your diaphragm to do its work at a steady pace. About once every four seconds, your brain sends a signal through your nerve cells. The signal reaches the diaphragm and tells it to perform.

For some reason, the signal gets confused once in awhile. It's like a traffic light that gets stuck in a blinking position. The signals may start to come too close together. This makes your diaphragm jerk up and down.

At the same time, the signal reaches the muscles in your windpipe. The muscles shut off for a moment. This makes the funny sound we know as hiccups.

1. This story is about a funny noise called _____.
2. What is a diaphragm? _____

3. Which paragraph tells where your diaphragm is located? _____
4. Why do people usually laugh when someone has the hiccups?

5. What word in paragraph four means "flickering on and off"? _____
6. Write words from the story that rhyme with these words:
teaches: _____ wiggle: _____

What is a fever?



When you become sick, you may get a fever. A fever happens when the temperature of your body rises above normal. In a healthy person, the body temperature is about 98.6 degrees. With a fever, it could reach 101 or 103 degrees.

A fever is not a sickness in itself. It is a sign that something else is wrong. When you are ill, the germs inside your body make poisons. These poisons get into the bloodstream and travel to your brain. Your brain has a thermostat to control your body's temperature. When the poisons reach this point, they heat your body. Then your forehead feels warm.

With a bad fever, you might shiver. A shiver makes your muscles work harder to keep you warm. Your heart might also beat faster, and your blood might race through your body. Since this isn't normal, you may feel weak or confused.

If your fever is too high, it can harm your brain cells. That can be dangerous. A doctor should be called. Once the poisons in your body die, the fever will leave and your temperature will return to normal.

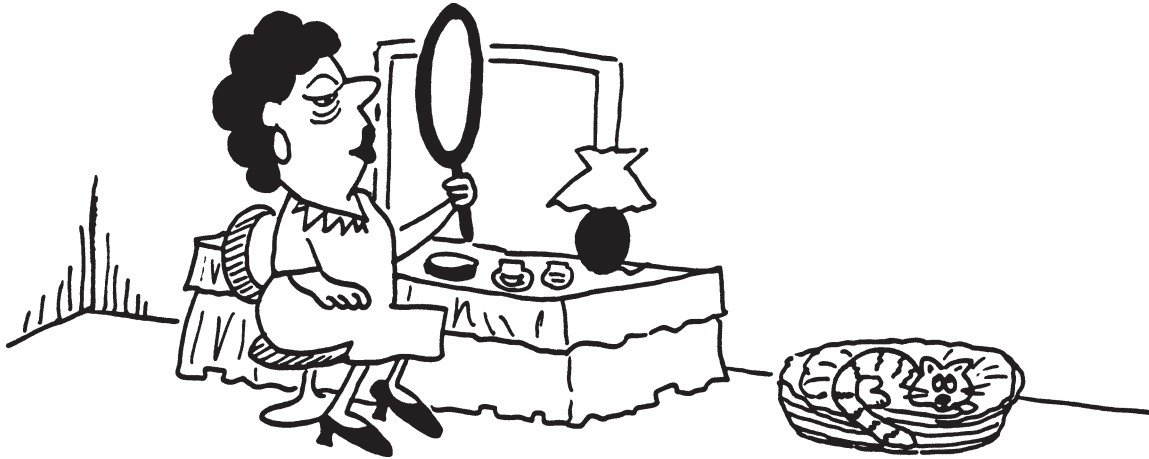
1. This story is about a sign of illness that is called a _____.
2. What does your brain's thermostat do? _____

3. Which paragraph tells about what a shiver does? _____
4. Besides in the brain, where else could you find a thermostat? _____

5. What word in paragraph one means "degree of hotness or coldness of something"?

6. There are six compound words in paragraph two. Write four of them.

Why do your eyes sometimes swell?



The skin under your eyes and on your eyelids is the thinnest skin on your body. It is a fraction of the thickness of the skin on your arms and legs.

Sometimes the water and fluids in your body collect in pockets under your skin. If this happens around your eyes, they appear swollen and puffy.

It may be that something in the air is disturbing your eyes. Then they swell shut to protect themselves. Allergies may give you swollen eyes. A sunburn will also produce this look.

Brown or blue eyes are handed down from parents to their children. In some cases, so are puffy eyes. They also can be a sign that you are sick. Your eyes sometimes swell from lying down too much.

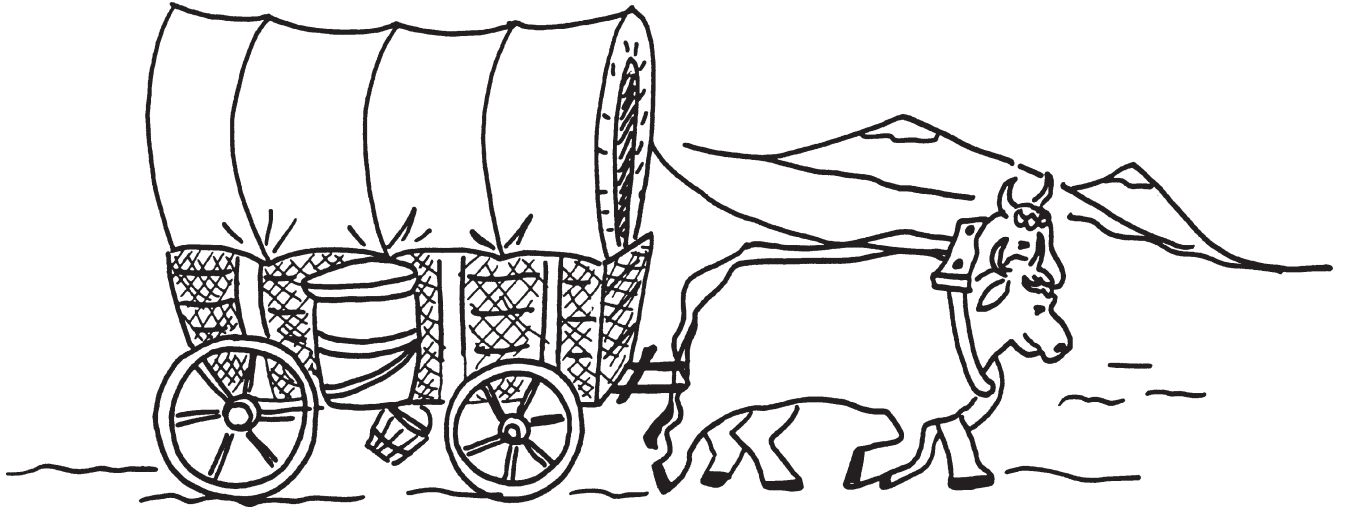
If your health is good but you have puffy eyes, try sleeping with two pillows. This will allow gravity to force the extra fluids away from your eyes.

1. This story is about reasons that your eyes sometimes _____.
2. How thick is the skin around your eyes? _____

3. Which paragraph suggests one way to get rid of puffy eyes? _____
4. What do you think would be another good idea if your eyes were very puffy? _____

5. What word in paragraph two means “liquids”? _____
6. Write other forms of these words that are used in the story:
puff: _____ thin: _____

How did the pioneers travel?



The pioneers who settled our land traveled for months at a time. All the things they needed had to be packed and carried with them.

Most of them moved west in some type of covered wagon. The Conestoga was one of the more common wagons. It got its name from a valley in Pennsylvania where it was first made.

Conestogas were large, heavy wagons built by hand. They were made from oak or hickory. Blacksmiths made the iron frames that kept them together. The wagons sagged slightly in the middle deliberately. If the goods shifted, they would move to the center rather than fall out.

The front of the wagon stood 11 feet above the ground. The rear wheels were six feet tall. A team of six horses pulled the loads, which could equal five tons of food and supplies. With the horses hitched, a single wagon and its team could be 60 feet long.

Conestoga wagon drivers sat on the left side of the wagon. They drove along the right side of the prairie “roads.” Cars of today follow this same pattern of movement.

1. This story is about traveling in _____ wagons.
2. What was used to make these wagons? _____

3. Which paragraph tells how these wagons got their names? _____
4. Why do you think goods would shift during a trip? _____

5. What word in paragraph three means “on purpose”? _____
6. Write a five-syllable word from paragraph two. _____