

# CUBED



Decoding. Language. Reading.

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THIRD EDITION

## BENCHMARK STUDENT STIMULUS BOOK



**Orthographic Mapping (OM)  
Decoding Inventory (DI)**



**Reading (Grades 1-8)**

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Closed Syllables

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min sal jom vun quim whav

fap deg gib les pag rud tus baf shil het

wan kex zick chom thuz vill cass noff

Vowel-Consonant-E

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naze gude mepe sule wonkide atane

jime tebe goke fene vome rame sove

Basic Affixes

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hezes pafed senest bruful temness premiv

foting unron repog miver dutless giply

Advanced Affixes

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mubtion discla gobic mavible gopture gepous

bimog trizom nonplut zikable misdut transbub uniquin virupt

Vowel Teams

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feep naig touv keat heag goupaiik

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Vowel-R-Controlled

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Complex Vowels

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vind	nild	zough	keigh	glaught	kighdost
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vost    grolld    figh    pight    wought    pough    klaugh

Advanced Word Forms

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wecent	smink	lomb	glistle	ohong	grombacent
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brism    grunk    mank    ghosl    futle

## Multisyllabic Words in Context

David made a new game. He called it Tembog. It used a lot of new words.

David played the game with a stick that he called a stodrun.

The game also used a big block with a hole in it that he called a goupai.

A player throws the stick through the hole in the block. If they miss, it is called a lirparg.

If you get the stick through the hole, that is called a kighdost. They get one point.

There are other people in the game called ungobers. They try to take the block away.

If they take the block away, then they get a second block called a bimudgeic.

If they take the block away again, then they get a golden block called a poughnigild.

If they take the block away a third time, then they get a glowing block called a grombacent.

Once anyone has a glowing block, they can exchange, or ponerate it for a very large block.

Each player on the team wears lirmarves to protect them, which are made out of foam.



Kam was on a rug with some little toys. A boy saw her toys and grabbed all of them. The boy did not hand them back, so Kam was sad. Kam sat on the rug and made a plan to get the toys. She was going to get them back. Kam decided to get help from her teacher, who was distracted by other kids. She asked her teacher, “Can you please help me get my stolen blocks returned to me?” Her teacher calmly replied, “When I’m done teaching, I’ll speak with your classmate and tell him he needs to share so that you can play together.” After Kam sat back down, the boy started sharing because the teacher talked to him. Kam and the boy expertly fabricated a mansion that was expansive. Since it was a very big house with lots of rooms, she had to stand on her tiptoes to put the last block on. She was very pleased because they had collaborated together using the blocks which came from two big, deep tubs.

Last week, Jen sat on the grass with a rose bush that her mom got at a shop. Jen's mom told her to plant the bush, but it began to make her itch. Then her face started to get red, and she had to rub her nose a lot. Although she had quickly dropped the rose, her eyes started watering too. She was upset because the itching wouldn't cease. She immediately went inside because she was miserable. Jen decided to tell her mom, who was in the kitchen. She frantically said, "Mom, my eyes and nose really itch, and I need your help." Jen's mom helpfully said, "You have allergies, which I know all about. Allergies can be caused by plants and can make you itch. I have some eye drops to help." When they went inside, her mom gently put the calming drops in her irritated eyes. Jen was pleased because her red eyes, that were swollen, stopped itching. After Jen got help, they finished planting the gorgeous rose bush together.

One day, Jack was in his room. He was getting ready to go swim in his big pool. When Jack was ready to go, his mom, who was strict, stopped him. She said he could not swim because he had not picked up his toys yet. Jack was upset. It was a beautiful, warm morning. He wanted to practice swimming with his new kickboard. A kickboard is a small, foam board which helps you float. You hold on to it so that you can practice kicking. But he had to tidy up his messy bedroom. He decided to get to work. Since he really wanted to swim, he worked hard. After Jack spent almost three hours cleaning, he urgently found his mom. He said, “Can I swim now because I completely finished the tasks that you gave me?” Jack’s mom proudly replied, “You cleaned your room so well. It is stunning!” His mom was perfectly satisfied. Jack felt happy. He ate lunch, then he eagerly swam in the refreshing pool while his mom closely watched him.

One day, Ron was with his dad at a fun park. He wanted to go on all the fun rides. He stopped at a tall ride that was fast and spun a lot. He went on it. But at the end of the ride, he started to feel sick. He was scared because his stomach suddenly felt uneasy. Ron decided to find his dad, who was nearby. He urgently said, “I went on a ride that rapidly rotated and I might throw up!” Ron’s dad replied, “Since you feel sick, it sounds like you have motion sickness. Let’s find a calm, relaxing place so that you can rest.” Ron’s dad told him about motion sickness. He explained it happens when you stop moving but the fluid in your ears doesn’t and it can make you nauseous. His dad quickly found a nearby bench, and had Ron sit down. After several minutes, Ron felt relieved because he didn’t feel sick anymore. Then he blissfully rode calmer carnival rides, which didn’t spin, for the rest of the day.

One day, Owen was out playing in the rain. After he jumped in a big puddle, Owen got water in his new shoes. His shoes were not very tall, so they got wet. Owen was sad because his feet were very wet and cold. He knew he needed to get help. Owen ran to his mom, who was standing outside their apartment. He said, “Can you help me? These shoes that I thought were waterproof are totally freezing my feet.” When Owen’s mom saw him, she pulled him under her umbrella since he was completely drenched. She kindly said, “I think we have a raincoat and some old galoshes. Galoshes are really tall boots that are made of waterproof rubber. They should fit you.” After she quickly found them, Owen’s mom took off his soaking wet shoes and dumped out the water so that they wouldn’t get ruined. Even though she struggled getting the galoshes on Owen’s feet, she eventually succeeded. Owen was relieved because he was able to frolic in the puddles without getting wet.

Last week, Ben was at his dad's house. It was late and he was watching TV. His dad told him it was time to brush his teeth and go to bed. Ben was upset because he did not want to go to bed. After Ben brushed his teeth, he made a plan. Ben quickly pulled a book off the shelf. When his dad tucked him in, Ben timidly asked, "Will you please read this story to me?" Ben's dad, who studied the cover, said, "This book, again? OK, but just a few pages since it's so late." It was a funny chapter book. Chapter books, which are long stories that are divided into smaller parts, usually don't have colorful drawings. His dad began dramatically reading the book using different voices. Ben's vivid imagination ran wild. He clearly pictured what was happening in the story! Although Ben was happy because he got to stay up late, he was getting tired. When his dad finished reading, he snuggled under the covers so that he could go to sleep.

Yesterday, Marta and her mom were shopping at a store. She needed to get a gift for her friend. She was upset because she didn't have much time. Marta was thinking about getting a game. Her friend had a new computer with lots of RAM, which helps it run fast and open many things all at the same time. She dug through the bin of games and finally found a great game. But sadly, she didn't have the money to buy it. Marta felt bad because she still didn't have a gift. After she put the game back, she decided to ask her artistic mom, who was very creative, for guidance. She urgently said, "What should I give my best friend?" Marta's mom said, "Make her something at home. It will be more meaningful." Although Marta didn't have a lot of time, she was able to make the perfect gift. When her friend eagerly opened the present, she loved the beautiful, personalized gift. Marta was extremely happy because she got to give her friend something that she cherished.

Last week, Cora was exploring a theme park. She wanted to go on all the big rides, but she was not able to because she was too short. Even though Cora was upset, she hoped to find other rides that were fun. After she looked for a while, Cora found a thrilling ride that was shaped like a giant snake, and it went really fast. But when she tried to get on it, a man, who wore a uniform, sadly told Cora she was too short. The man explained he had to enforce the strict safety regulations, which were rules that must be obeyed so that people don't get hurt. Cora felt disappointed because it seemed like she would never find a suitable ride. She decided to ask the man for help. Cora optimistically said, "Can you show me a fun ride I'm tall enough for?" He said, "Yes! The Ferris wheel should be perfect!" When she saw it, Cora quickly got on ride. After the exhilarating ride was finished, Cora was happy because she finally discovered a perfect, fun ride.



One day, Daniel was in his art class making a small clay pot. When he was done, he went to pick up the pot, but it was stuck to the table, which made him nervous. Daniel decided to try to gently lift it off the table so that he wouldn't ruin it. But Daniel's pot was really stuck. Daniel was sad and put his head on the table. Finally, Daniel decided to get help. Daniel said to his teacher "My pot is stuck!" Daniel's teacher kindly said, "Before I work with clay, I put canvas down because canvas is a thick cloth that is made from cotton. The clay won't adhere to it. Since your pot is already stuck, I'll remove it using a special technique." Then she quickly illustrated how to get it unstuck. Daniel closely observed the teacher, who had solved this problem many times, take some thin wire and deftly slide it under the pot. When he saw it easily come right off the table, Daniel immediately felt relieved because he wouldn't have to construct a new pot.

On Sunday, Fiona, a very shy girl, was in the car with her family. They slowly pulled into her grandpa's big driveway. She saw lots of cars parked at her grandpa's house. Fiona was upset because she didn't know there would be so many people visiting her grandpa. Fiona decided to stick close to her outgoing, older brother. She held his hand so that she would feel better. But Fiona still felt uneasy. Even though she loved her grandpa, she didn't like big crowds. She decided to quietly talk to her brother, who always took care of her. Fiona said, "Please help me find a quiet place." Her brother kindly answered, "There are lots of people, which can feel overwhelming. Let's go to grandpa's den." His den was a small, extra room that was packed with books. After Fiona went to the room, she quickly found a book and snuggled up on her favorite, cozy chair. Fiona immediately felt relieved because it was nice and quiet. When it was time to leave, Fiona sweetly said goodbye to her grandpa.

On Saturday, Jacob, who loved the outdoors, was fishing with his grandpa at a nearby river delta. The triangle-shaped piece of land, which formed when the fresh water of the river flowed into the salty water of the ocean, was their favorite place to fish. Jacob tried to cast the line into the brackish water, but his line snagged in a tree behind him. Jacob panicked and thought he could just pull the line free. But when Jacob whipped the line hard, it got caught even worse! Jacob was frustrated. He hesitated to ask his grandpa, an expert fisherman, for help because he was obviously having a great time. Jacob nervously asked, “Grandpa, can you help me?” His grandpa said, “Happy to help! That’s quite the snag!” After his grandpa expertly untangled the badly twisted line from the tree, Jacob moved so that his line wouldn’t get caught again and excitedly cast out into the water. Jacob almost immediately caught a big, beautiful fish! He felt elated because he had never caught a fish that big before.

Last week, Luiz went outside to feed his pet goats. His goats, which are called Fainting goats, are very friendly. However, when they get scared, their legs get stiff and they fall over. When Luiz poured some grain into their feeder, he noticed there was only one goat in the pen. The other goat had escaped and was eating some thick, overgrown bushes in the backyard. Luiz felt worried because he didn't know how he would catch the goat that always ran from him. He decided to slowly approach the cagey goat so that he could capture it. But every time he got close, it quickly bounded away. Luiz was frustrated. He decided to ask his dad, who knew about goats, for advice. Luiz said, "Do you have any tips for catching my goat?" His dad replied, "Grab a handful of grain. Since goats can't resist food, it should follow you." After Luiz held out his hand with some grain, he was relieved because the goat eagerly followed him into the pen. Then Luiz made sure the gate was tightly shut.

Last week, Carla, who loved dressing up, was painting her nails at the new kitchen counter. She had some glittery, pink nail polish. When she inadvertently knocked over the small bottle, she was worried because she didn't want to stain the counter. It was quickly spilling everywhere, so she swiftly picked up the messy bottle. She decided to get a rag. Although Carla tried to clean it up, the rag didn't work. The bright, sparkly liquid smeared all over. She felt panicked. She needed her mom's help since she couldn't clean up the nail polish. So she decided to show her mom the counter. Carla said, "I accidentally spilled nail polish. I need your help so that I can clean it." Carla's mom said, "These new countertops are granite which is a porous rock that absorbs liquids. That's why you couldn't scrub the stain off the counter. You need something to help extract the nail polish. Nail polish remover will probably work." After her mom easily removed the stain, Carla was relieved because the mess was gone. Then Carla and her mom painted their nails together.

Last spring, Molly drove with her family to a park that had beautiful, rolling hills. After they arrived, they unloaded their bikes so that they could go trail riding. Molly's bike, which was usually in pristine condition, started making a horrible, grinding sound. She looked down and saw that the chain had fallen off, likely because her bike had been neglected all winter. Even though Molly was worried, she decided to try riding without the chain. She pedaled hard, but her bike wouldn't move! Molly felt frustrated because her bike seemed useless. She wondered if her dad, who was an avid bike-rider, would be able to help. Molly walked her bike over to him and said, "Could you help fix my bike?" Molly's dad patiently replied, "You simply need your chain tightened. Without a functioning bike chain, your bike can't get energy from the pedals to move the wheels." Fortunately, her dad always came prepared with bike tools. After he tightened the chain, Molly began riding again. She was happy because her bike worked perfectly! Molly easily traversed the park trails all day with her family.

Yesterday morning, Jen quietly walked into the kitchen. She got up early so that she could make breakfast for her mom. When Jen saw her dad in the kitchen, she asked him to help her make breakfast. But sadly, her dad was in a hurry. Jen was disappointed because she needed some help. She wanted to make fresh, delicious popovers, which are her mom's favorite breakfast. Popovers are fluffy rolls that are baked in muffin tins. They are made with lots of eggs and butter. Jen decided to try to bake the popovers independently. She found the recipe. But she quickly grew frustrated because she couldn't understand the convoluted instructions. She decided to wake up her sister, who was a fabulous cook. Jen hesitantly woke her sister up. She whispered, "Will you please help me make mom's special breakfast?" Although Jen's sister was very fatigued, she immediately said, "I forgot what day it is. I'll be right there to help you." After Jen and her sister cooked the breakfast, she was happy since she got to prepare her mom a special breakfast. Her mom loved it.

Yesterday, Cody was at home getting ready for school. He was looking for his homework, which was an elaborate report on glaciers. He had spent hours writing about how glaciers are valleys of ice that slowly move across the land because they are thousands of feet thick. But he couldn't find it in his backpack. Cody desperately needed it so that he could get it to his teacher, who was very stern. When Cody couldn't find his report anywhere in the house, he was devastated since it had taken him so long to write it. He finally realized he had probably left it in the car, which was usually very messy. Cody looked in the car, but it had just been cleaned. He was hysterical because he really needed that report. He decided to talk to his mom. He urgently said, "I can't find my report! Do you have it?" Cody's mom uneasily said, "I might have thrown it away." Then Cody searched through the grimy trash and recovered it. After he found his report, Cody was relieved and vowed to always put his homework away.



Once, Jake, a brave boy, was eating lunch at his friend's house since they didn't have school that day. His friend challenged him to eat a red chili pepper. Red chili peppers are a hot type of pepper which start out green but turn red as they ripen. When Jake bit into it, the fiery, spicy pepper burned his mouth. It was painful. He was worried because it wouldn't stop burning. Jake decided to drink some water to cool off his mouth. He quickly guzzled a glass of water. Although it helped some, Jake couldn't stop the burning. He felt panicked. Jake desperately turned to his friend, who loves eating spicy food, thinking he could help. He frantically said, "My mouth is still burning. What should I do?" Jake's friend calmly said, "You need to slowly drink some milk so that your mouth will stop burning." After Jake deliberately sipped some milk that his friend quickly gave him, which took him a long time, he felt relieved because the intolerable, intense pain was finally gone. Jake never ate another one of those scorching peppers again.

Saturday, Megan was in her room, counting her allowance. She wanted to spend the money she had been saving on a fun, new camera. But Megan's mom wasn't home to drive her to the store. She was unhappy. Megan impatiently decided to find her older brother, who just got his license. Although she found him, he couldn't drive her because his vehicle, an old, worn-out truck, was out of commission. Megan was annoyed since she couldn't find a ride. Then Megan decided to call her mom to see if she could help. She said, "Can you take me shopping so I can buy an instant camera? They are so cool! The film that you put in the camera has special chemicals, which develop pictures in seconds!" Megan's mom said, "I'll be home soon. Make sure your room is clean – then I will gladly take you." After Megan's mom got home and inspected her room, she willingly gave her a ride. Megan was ecstatic because she finally got to purchase the camera she'd been desperately waiting to buy. She quickly took a picture of her mom to thank her.

On Monday, Brody was in the school cafeteria with his friends. While he was eating, he noticed that there was a boy sitting by himself at another table. Brody felt sad for the boy. Without a moment's thought, Brody, who was a kind, considerate boy, decided that he would try to befriend the other boy by bringing his friends over to meet him. However, when Brody and his friends tried to introduce themselves, the boy wouldn't talk to them and remained mute, even though Brody and his friends kept trying to start a conversation. Brody felt disappointed because he still wanted to become friends with the boy. He wasn't sure what to try next, so he decided to ask for advice from his teacher, who was extremely wise. "My friends and I are trying to be friends with the boy who is sitting alone, but he's as quiet as a mouse. What are we doing wrong?" Brody's teacher said, "You should probably try talking to him one-on-one, which is a more personal way to introduce yourself individually. Plus, meeting lots of people at once could be overwhelming for him, especially if he is an introvert. He may be more willing to talk with just you at first." The teacher explained to him that an introvert is a person that doesn't enjoy crowds. She explained that introverts often like to have a small, close group of friends and sometimes prefer to simply enjoy the peace and quiet of being alone. "That makes sense!" Brody said after he thought it over. "I'll give it a try." The next day at lunch, Brody approached the boy alone and introduced himself. This time, the shy boy engaged in conversation with him. Eventually, the boy came out of his shell enough that the two of them were able to become well acquainted. Brody was thrilled that he had made a new friend.

Last week, Drake was sitting in his house watching his hamster race around in an exercise ball. After a while, Drake decided to go to the kitchen that was downstairs to grab a scrumptious snack because he was hungry. When he returned, the exercise ball, which had the lid off, was lying empty on the floor. The hamster was gone! The hamster was gone. Drake panicked. He decided to look everywhere for the rodent. He desperately called the hamster's name. He began to search fervently. He looked in every nook and cranny but he couldn't find the hamster. He was worried because his hamster could have hidden anywhere. He decided to ask his brother for help. "Would you help me find my hamster?" Drake asked. "He disappeared into thin air!" His brother, who was stern, said, "Having a pet is fun; however, you need to be responsible. You have to take care of them because they can't do it themselves. If you're not careful, your pet could potentially get hurt because it is in an unfamiliar environment." Drake exclaimed, "I promise that I will never let the hamster out of my sight again, but will you please help me find him before something happens?" Drake's brother agreed to help him and the two brothers searched for the elusive, little escape artist. They decided to look in the dimly lit laundry room where the hamster may have found some lint to sleep in because hamsters are nocturnal animals. They sleep during the day and like warm, dark places where they can build nests. When Drake entered the laundry room, he looked behind the machines and spotted the tiny animal that was happily burrowing behind the dryer where it was creating a nest from lost socks. Drake was happy because he found his furry friend. He never left his hamster alone outside of his cage ever again.

On Sunday night, Bowen was diligently working on a school project in the kitchen. He was building an intricate bridge out of tiny popsicle sticks. However, Bowen realized that he needed more glue to complete the bridge. In a panic, he decided to look in the kitchen drawer for more glue. Although he searched the drawer that was full of lots of things, he couldn't find any glue, and his heart sank. He was concerned that he wouldn't be able to finish his bridge. Then Bowen remembered that his mom, who loved to do crafts, had special personal supplies upstairs in a locked cabinet. Bowen tracked down his mom and asked, "Do you have any glue in your craft supplies that I can use? I ran out and my bridge is so close to being finished." His mom kindly replied, "I don't have any more craft glue, but I have some epoxy that should work!" When Bowen looked confused, his mom explained that epoxy is a strong, long-lasting glue. It's an adhesive that comes in two parts. As you mix the ingredients together, a chemical reaction happens, and the liquid turns into a glue. Because Bowen had never used epoxy before and was worried it wouldn't work, his mom patiently explained, "We have to use the epoxy because we don't have any other kind of glue and it is getting late. Plus, it will certainly be potent enough to keep your bridge together. When it dries, it will be even better than glue." Once Bowen agreed to give it a try, he and his mom used the epoxy that she had offered him for his project. It worked like a charm, and the bridge came together quickly. Bowen was relieved that he was able to finish the project with his mom's help.

Last Friday, Corbin was in the library looking for books to use for a school project. Even though he wasn't allowed to have food or drink in the library, Corbin snuck in a juice box. While he was distractedly walking down the aisle, he tripped and spilled the bright red juice all over the book that he was holding! Corbin was horrified because this had never happened before. He quickly decided to clean up the sticky liquid. Even though he tried to wipe up the mess that he made, it was too late because the book's pages were already saturated with the liquid. They were covered in juice! Corbin was scared, but he knew that he had to confess; he decided to tell the librarian who was working. He said, "I accidentally spilled juice on this book. I promise it won't happen again." The strict, intimidating librarian snapped, "There is no way to get the stains out, so this book is toast! You will certainly need to compensate for your mistake by paying a fine." The librarian explained that a fine is a sum of money that a person pays when they are caught breaking a rule. The amount of money depends on the severity of the violation and fines are given so people will stick to the rules. Corbin told the librarian that he thought it was unfair because it was an accident. The librarian said, "You can't bring food or drinks in the library. You knew that the juice box wasn't allowed, but you disobeyed. Because you ruined the book, you have to pay the replacement fine." After listening to the librarian, Corbin knew she was right. Fortunately, he had extra money left over from lunch which he used to pay the fine. Corbin felt relieved that he did the right thing and resolved to never break the rules again.

On Friday, Cleo, who was a very curious girl, stood outside her sister's bedroom. Although Cleo knew entering her sibling's room alone was prohibited, she snuck in to look at her sister's beautiful jewelry collection which was on the dresser. When she held up one of her sister's tiny, delicate rings that was as brilliant as fire, it slipped suddenly through her clumsy fingers. It hit the floor, rolled away, and disappeared into the fluffy rug! Cleo felt panicked. She knew she had to locate it before her sister returned, as she would be mad about the lost ring. She decided to search carefully, sweeping her hands across the floor. Cleo felt distressed because she couldn't find it. She decided to go to her sister, who cared a lot about her collection, to confess that she had lost the special, treasured ring. Cleo said, "I am so sorry. I went into your room and lost a ring. Will you help me look for it?" Her sister was angry that she lost the ring because it was one of a kind. It had semi-precious gemstones, such as rubies and topaz, which are materials that are difficult to find. However, her sister swallowed her anger and replied, "I wish you would stop playing with my rings. Let's go up to my room and search for it." They went up the stairs and combed through the room. After searching carefully, they found the beloved ring. Cleo was relieved to return it to the jewelry collection. Cleo commented to her sister, "If you gave me some rings, I wouldn't be so tempted to play with yours. My ring collection would be beautiful, like yours. You could give me the old ones you never wear." Her sister relented and gave her three less valuable rings. Cleo took the rings, gave her sister a hug, and happily promised to never play with her sister's rings again.

On Friday, Theresa was playing at the beach with her family. She had just finished building a beautiful sandcastle that had taken hours to complete. Suddenly, without warning, an ocean wave came crashing onto the beach, forcefully knocking over her castle. Theresa was infuriated. She decided to construct a wall that would be sturdy enough to protect her castle. Theresa formed a wall of sand and then built her castle again. However, when another furious, giant wave came crashing in, it completely knocked down the wall and lay waste to the sandcastle. Theresa, who was beside herself with frustration, realized she had to get some help. Theresa tearfully talked to her brother, who asked her, “Why don’t you surround your castle with a moat?” Since Theresa had never heard of a moat before, she replied, “Can you show me what you are talking about?” Theresa’s brother excitedly retrieved information about a moat using his phone. He read aloud that “a moat is a deep, broad ditch filled with water which surrounds a castle. Moats were used historically to fortify castles against enemies. In some cases, moats were even built around entire towns.” Theresa wasn’t sure a moat would work, but her brother was relentless. He explained that a sandcastle with a moat would look amazing and that if a moat worked with real castles, then it should work with sandcastles, too. He told her that as long as the moat is deep enough, the castle would stay safe. He also told her he would help her dig the moat. Theresa was finally convinced it was good idea. They quickly dug a deep moat and then rebuilt her sandcastle. When a giant wave came crashing onto the shore, the moat filled with water, just like her brother had said it would, but the castle remained intact. Theresa was delighted because her sandcastle was protected from the waves and was even bigger and better than before.



On Saturday, Jeff was in the kitchen working on his science fair project. He had created a volcano, but he was disappointed because it was not erupting. After doing some research, Jeff decided to mix ketchup with baking soda so that the lava would be more reactive. However, when Jeff mixed the simple, household ingredients, the lava still was not bubbling up over the top. It was slower than molasses! Needless to say, Jeff was not impressed. Determined to make a successful volcano, he decided to see if his dad, who loved science, could help. He asked, “Dad, will you help me fix my volcano? The lava won’t bubble up, even though I mixed it just right.” Jeff’s dad looked at the volcano’s pathetic lava and said, “The good news is, we don’t have to go back to the drawing board. You have nearly all the ingredients. If we add vinegar, that will probably fix it.” Jeff was not convinced. He wondered how including vinegar would make a difference. His dad expounded, “These ingredients will be the perfect combination to make your volcano work. I’ve done this before. Vinegar increases the amount of acid in the mixture which will cause a reaction that should make the lava pour out of the volcano in an authentic manner.” Jeff’s dad went on to explain that acid is a chemical that is found in vinegar. When acid mixes with a substance like baking soda, a reaction occurs that creates air bubbles, which makes the ketchup mixture foam up. Jeff decided to take his dad’s advice and add vinegar to his lava. After the volcano had been modified, it erupted perfectly, oozing its sticky, red contents everywhere. Jeff was pleased because his volcano looked exactly as he wanted. He could now confidently present it at the science fair.

Last Spring, Ada was in her room making a handmade gift using dried flowers to send to her aunt. She was also writing an appreciative letter to go in the envelope. Ada's aunt, who was a generous person, was a humanitarian volunteer helping people internationally. However, a few days after she had excitedly mailed the gift, it arrived back at her house. When Ada realized it was unsuccessfully delivered, she was confused. She figured that she had not put enough stamps on the envelope since it was heavier than the last one. So, she added a few more and mailed it again. After several days, the envelope came back again. She felt frustrated because she didn't know why the envelope was returned. She decided to ask her mom for help. "Mom, my special present that I sent overseas to my aunt came back in the mail. Can you help me?" Her mom, who looked at the envelope, said, "This was sent back when it arrived at customs. Customs is the department that regularly checks that packages don't contain illegal items. Each country has individual, specific rules for packages it receives. The country where your aunt is located probably doesn't allow flowers." Ada looked doubtful. She didn't understand why flowers would not be allowed. Her mom explained, "You probably can't send flowers because they don't want the seeds to get into the country. If you send an invasive plant to another country, it might spread everywhere and replace the plants which grow naturally." Ada's mom told her to make her aunt another gift. Ada thanked her helpful mom. In a moment of inspiration, Ada made a drawing of her aunt's favorite flowers. Later, she got a message from her aunt who loved the thoughtful gift. Ada was happy everything arrived safely, and she was over the moon as she read the thank-you note from her aunt.

Yesterday, Jonah was working in the yard with his dad. His dad asked him to fetch the big, sturdy trash bags from inside the house. When Jonah was headed back outside with the bags, he locked the door out of habit and pulled it shut. He immediately regretted doing so because he realized that the keys to the door were still inside the house. Jonah desperately hoped that the back door was unlocked, so he ran to the back, but found that it was also secured. Jonah felt a wave of panic because he had no idea how they were going to get inside the house. He wondered if his dad, who was one of the most resourceful people he knew, would have a solution. Jonah apprehensively walked up to his dad and quietly said, “After I got the bags, I accidentally locked the front door, and the back door is locked, too.” His dad said, “I have been locked out of this house several times. Do you see that trellis up against the wall? I can climb up it, open a window, and unlock the front door for us!” Jonah looked at the trellis, which was a metal framework that resembled several ladders going up the wall. Their trellis was used to support all the climbing plants in the garden. Jonah thought his dad was joking about climbing the trellis, because it seemed impossible. His dad exclaimed, “If little boys and girls do it, then they might get hurt. But because this is an emergency, and I am an adult, I know how to climb it without getting hurt.” Nimble as a cat, Jonah’s dad climbed the trellis, made it inside the house, and unlocked the door. Jonah felt relieved when his dad came outside with the keys to the house. After that, Jonah always made sure he had the keys to the house every time he locked the door.

Last summer, Chanda was visiting her grandpa who lived in a house with a huge, grassy yard. Chanda wanted to play in the luxurious grass. Her grandpa warned her that if she went out without proper shoes, she would probably injure her foot. However, Chanda blatantly ignored him and bolted outside like a cheetah. As she ran through the grass, she stepped on an old, wooden board and felt a sudden pain pierce her foot. She sat down and saw that she had a thin sliver of wood that was as sharp as a needle stuck in her big toe where she had stepped on the board. Chanda was worried. She knew she had to get the sliver out so that her toe would stop throbbing with pain. She tried to pull it out, but the little piece of wood was still firmly lodged in her toe. She felt panicked and reluctantly decided to ask her grandpa for help. Chanda asked her grandpa, “Can you help me? I got a sliver stuck in my foot!” Her grandpa replied with exasperation, “I told you not to run outside barefoot! I’m pretty frustrated because you didn’t listen to me. I’ll need to extract the sliver with my tweezers.” Chanda shook her head because the pointy tweezers looked frightening. Her grandpa said, “You need to let me remove the sliver so your foot will heal. If you don’t, it might get infected.” He knew that infections are caused by bacteria, which can breach your skin through cuts. An infection can cause pain, redness, and swelling if it isn’t treated. Chanda decided to let her grandpa remove the sliver. She squeezed her eyes shut and he quickly pulled it out. She was relieved because the pain went away immediately. After that, Chanda always wore her shoes outside.

Last spring, Lany was in her bedroom practicing for the school play. Even though she loved acting, she was struggling because she couldn't remember her lines. To try to learn her lengthy, sophisticated lines, Lany decided to read her script out loud in front of a mirror. However, even after she tried this strategy, she realized that the lines wouldn't stick in her head. Since the date of the play was coming up quickly, Lany felt panicked because she was unprepared, and she knew that her role was an important part of the play. She decided to ask for help from her grandmother, who was a seasoned performer. Lany anxiously asked her grandmother, "I'm struggling to learn my script that is long. Can you help me?" After her grandmother thought about how she memorized her lines, she advised Lany to go through the script in pieces, so she could perfect each section before moving on to the next. Once she heard her grandmother's advice, Lany dissented because she thought it wouldn't work. "That'll take forever! I don't have enough time to learn it bit by bit!" Her grandmother kindly responded, "Going through each section slowly is definitely a better way to learn your lines. It will help you identify the hardest parts so that you can work on them. Trust me, you will be able to memorize your monologues if you do them in pieces." Her grandmother explained that a monologue is a long, wordy speech which is performed by a single actor. Monologues express the character's thoughts and emotions out loud. They are generally difficult to learn, which is why breaking them down can be helpful. Lany agreed to give it a try. After she practiced her lines in sections for a week, Lany knew them like the back of her hand. She felt proud because she was ready to perform.

Last Monday, Enzo was picking at his lunch in the cafeteria. He was feeling nervous because he had to give a presentation in his class that started in about 20 minutes. Although his friends were telling their usual amusing stories, he couldn't focus. His stomach was in knots. When it was time to go to class, Enzo began to panic. He was a shy and reserved boy, and the thought of speaking in front of the entire class made him even more tense. He hoped that taking a sip of water from his water bottle would calm his anxiety; however, it only made things worse. When Enzo took a drink of water, he was trembling so much it spilled down the front of his shirt. As Enzo looked up, he saw his teacher waiting at the entrance to the classroom and his panic skyrocketed. He decided to ask her for help. Enzo said unsteadily, "Can you please help me calm down? I'm so nervous because I have to do my presentation in class today." Enzo's experienced teacher, who had worked with hundreds of students, replied, "Make sure to take slow, deep breaths before you start. Focusing on your breathing will calm you down and help you think clearly." She also cautioned him about hyperventilating, which can happen if someone breathes too quickly when they feel nervous or stressed. Their body can't get enough air, and they may feel dizzy or lightheaded. Enzo was skeptical, but at this point he was definitely willing to try anything. He said, "Thank you, I'll try to breathe more slowly." Enzo decided to take his caring teacher's advice. He regulated his breathing and when it was time to give his presentation, his words eloquently flowed out. After his presentation was over, Enzo was proud of himself because he was able to calm down and deliver a great speech.

On Saturday, Cam was in the kitchen baking a huge batch of thick, gooey chocolate chip cookies. She was preparing for the school's bake sale. To her dismay, when Cam took the pan out of the oven, she found that the cookies had melted into one giant mass, which was not at all what she had expected. Cam, who was alarmed by the inedible concoction, realized she must have missed a key ingredient in the recipe, because she had been distracted. Although they wouldn't be perfect, Cam decided to try and recover the cookies by cutting them into little squares because she didn't want to start over completely. She took the spatula and forcefully tried to pry the squares off the cookie sheet. Yet, the small, unconventional cookie squares stuck like glue. They wouldn't come off the baking sheet neatly. After doing her best to salvage the cookies for the school bake sale, Cam, who was feeling quite discouraged, decided to get assistance. She said to her sister, who was a good cook, "My cookies are ruined! No one will want to buy them. I don't know how to fix them! You have to help me!" Her sister replied, "I can't help you right now; I'm too busy - maybe I can help you later when I am done with my homework." Cam grabbed the pan of cookies that were ruined and said, "Look at this! I really need your help. I promised to bring cookies to the bake sale tonight. This bake sale is an important school event because we will be helping to raise money for my field trip. Plus, if you help me now, I promise to help you with your chores after the bake sale tonight." Cam's sister sighed and looked at the recipe. They discovered that the eggs had been left out. Eggs are a leavening agent. They are needed so that the dough will be fluffy. Without them, the dough will spread everywhere. After following the recipe to a T, Cam was excited because the cookies were perfectly formed and delicious. Even though she needed her sister's help, she was happy with the end product, and she learned how to make delectable cookies.

Last year, Hank was carefully painting a mural on a wall in the school hallway because his art design had won a competition. Hank had been working extremely hard for several days on his intricate, expansive mural that extended the length of the hallway. He wanted the end result to be awe inspiring. After Hank finally finished the focal point of the painting, which was in the center of the design, he stepped back to proudly admire his work. Although he had painstakingly crafted the piece, he was distraught because the main part of his painting did not turn out like he had envisioned. Beyond upset, Hank seriously considered taking some white paint to the whole thing and starting over. Instead, he decided to review his design once again. He sat down and carefully examined the original design. He scrupulously tried once again to recreate the crowning piece of his entire art portfolio. Nonetheless, Hank was still not content with his painting! In his opinion, it looked terrible. He finally decided to talk to his art teacher, who was an accomplished painter. With considerable embarrassment, he said, “I’m ready to give up. I can’t seem to paint my design at a larger scale.” His very talented, experienced teacher replied, “Failure is the spice that gives success its flavor. Hank, give yourself some time away from the project so that you can come back with a clear mind. Looking at the mural with new eyes will give you a fresh start. When I feel like I have hit a roadblock, I go and do something very different to take my mind off of a project.” Hank, who was clearly at his wits end, agreed. He walked away and headed for the gym. When he came back to the painting an hour later, Hank had a bout of inspiration and was not only able to finish his masterpiece, but he was able to make it look even better than the original design. Hank was very proud of his work, and when all the students saw it on Monday, they had only praise to offer. Hank’s mural was so good, it was used on the cover of the yearbook.



One Monday morning, Bianca was in her room quickly getting ready for school. Bianca found herself in a predicament because she had slept in, and she had a class that started in less than 30 minutes. Bianca suddenly realized that she needed a ride to school because she had already missed the bus. She was flustered and anxious. Bianca flew downstairs to ask her dad for a ride, but he was nowhere to be seen. She looked out the window and saw that his car was not in the driveway. Bianca began to panic because she knew that being late for class could mean missing important material. Desperate for a solution, she decided to ask her mother for a ride. She rushed to her mother's room, the urgency of her situation evident in her voice as she pleaded, "Mom, I need a ride to school! Dad has already left for work. Can you please drive me?" Her mother, a successful executive with a prestigious position in her company, responded calmly, "I'm sorry, but I have an important meeting this morning." She went on to explain the gravity of her role in the company, noting her involvement in making significant decisions and managing a team of people with a wide range of responsibilities. Bianca's mom pointed out that she had another option at her disposal: her trusty bicycle. Sensing her daughter's lingering apprehension, she offered further encouragement. "If you ride your bike to school," she suggested, "you can probably make it on time. Dad just fixed your flat tire. Biking is faster than walking, and you can even take your secret shortcut through the park which will save time." With her backpack securely fastened and her helmet gleaming in the morning light, Bianca set off on her bike, pedaling with the determination of someone who knew she had a mission to accomplish. She rode with the speed and agility of a seasoned cyclist, adeptly navigating the twists and turns of the park shortcut. As she approached the school, Bianca's nerves began to dissipate. She parked her bike and made her way to class with a sense of relief and satisfaction, arriving precisely on time and ready to tackle the day's challenges.