

**THEME****47****Stage 3: Comprehension**

**Directions:** Read these two fables by Aesop. Then answer the questions on the next page.

## **The Ant and the Grasshopper**

One summer day, Grasshopper was hopping along in the field. She was chirping and singing to her heart's content. Ant passed by, carrying a large ear of corn to the nest. Grasshopper watched Ant laboring to carry his load and said to him, "Come chat with me. We can sing and dance, instead of working the day away."

"I am helping to collect food for the winter," Ant said, "and I recommend you do the same. You will be sorry when the snow falls and you have no food."

"Why worry about winter?" Grasshopper replied. "It is so far away, and now is the time to enjoy the good weather. There is plenty of food around." Ant continued on his way, just the same.

Then, winter came. There was no more food to collect, and snow covered the ground. Grasshopper was hungry, and no matter how hard she looked, she couldn't find anything to eat. She thought about Ant and his friends, who would have plenty of food to get them through the winter. She knew she had made a mistake.

## **The Shipwrecked Chimpanzee**

There was once a circus chimpanzee that survived a shipwreck. For days, he clung to a ship's oar. Finally, a dolphin found him and offered to give him a ride back to shore.

The chimpanzee didn't want the dolphin to know he was just a circus animal, so he began telling the dolphin stories to impress him. He even told the dolphin that he had been to college!

Then the dolphin swam into a large bay. The dolphin assumed that the chimpanzee knew geography. He said, "So I guess you know Herring Roads?"

The chimpanzee replied, "Why, yes, of course! Herring Roads was my best friend in college!"

The dolphin became disgusted at the chimpanzee's snobbery and lies, since Herring Roads was the name of the bay, not a person. So the dolphin soared up into the air and dove down into the depths of the bay. The chimpanzee was left to swim alone with his lies.

**THEME****47****Stage 3: Comprehension (continued)**

**Directions:** Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. What is the theme of "The Ant and the Grasshopper?"

- Ⓐ "Don't count on something before it happens."
- Ⓑ "A liar won't be believed even when he tells the truth."
- Ⓒ "All work and no play can make anyone dull."
- Ⓓ "It is important to be prepared."

2. Give a detail from the story that supports this idea.

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3. What is the theme of "The Shipwrecked Chimpanzee?"

- Ⓐ "If you tell enough lies, sooner or later you will get caught."
- Ⓑ "You can never have too much education."
- Ⓒ "A friend in need is a friend indeed."
- Ⓓ "The end justifies the means."

4. Give a detail from the story that supports this idea.

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**THEME****60****Stage 4: Comprehension**

**Directions:** Read the passage. Then answer the questions on the next page.

## A'Lelia

How I loved passing by A'Lelia Walker's home when I was a girl back in the day! She lived on West 136th Street in twin brownstones. Big, gleaming cars would pull up to the curb, and beautifully dressed people would get out. Mama said that A'Lelia loved parties, and I believed it. I never saw the inside of her house, but people in Harlem loved to talk about it. The hall was marble, and the wallpaper was gold.

I often saw A'Lelia herself. She would stride out of her house wearing a turban covered with jewels and carrying a riding crop. She had lots of money that she had inherited from her mother, Madame C. J. Walker. The first Mrs. Walker had set up a chain of beauty salons for black women, and the salons were very successful. When Madame Walker died, she left all the salons and a million dollars to A'Lelia.

One Saturday, I was feeling pretty blue. My father was always busy at his dental office, and my mother spent more time painting that year than talking to me. I was on my way home from the library, where I'd been searching for inspiration. I didn't think I could be a dentist, and I knew I didn't have the talent to paint. I wanted a goal and some excitement, but girls in stories were always quiet and polite. Worse yet, they all seemed to have blond hair and blue eyes.

As I made my way up West 136th, a limousine pulled up in front of A'Lelia's house, and the driver ran around and opened the door. Out she came, followed by people carrying packages. She was telling everyone what to do, and did they listen! People scurried here and there to follow her orders and make sure everything got done the way she wanted it.

Then A'Lelia noticed me. I must have looked very forlorn, because she came over and spoke to me. "It's all right, little girl. Don't let them get you down. My mother taught me that you can do anything if you have the courage to go after it." Then she swirled away into her house in a cloud of perfume, and I felt a whole lot better. I'd found an idea to hold onto after all.

**THEME****60****Stage 4: Comprehension (continued)**

**Directions:** Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. Which saying best expresses a theme of this story?

- Ⓐ A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- Ⓑ Save your money for a rainy day.
- Ⓒ If you work hard enough, you can accomplish anything.
- Ⓓ A penny saved is a penny earned.

2. What event in the passage best illustrates this theme?

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3. Why do you think the narrator of this passage liked to pass by A'Lelia Walker's home when she was a girl?

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4. Which sentence best expresses a lesson that the narrator learned from her experience?

- Ⓐ Find someone you admire and try to be like her.
- Ⓑ Follow your own dreams.
- Ⓒ Don't burn bridges behind you.
- Ⓓ Keep moving forward because someone might catch up to you.

5. How does this lesson apply to the narrator's situation?

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