

SPECTRUM[®]

Reading

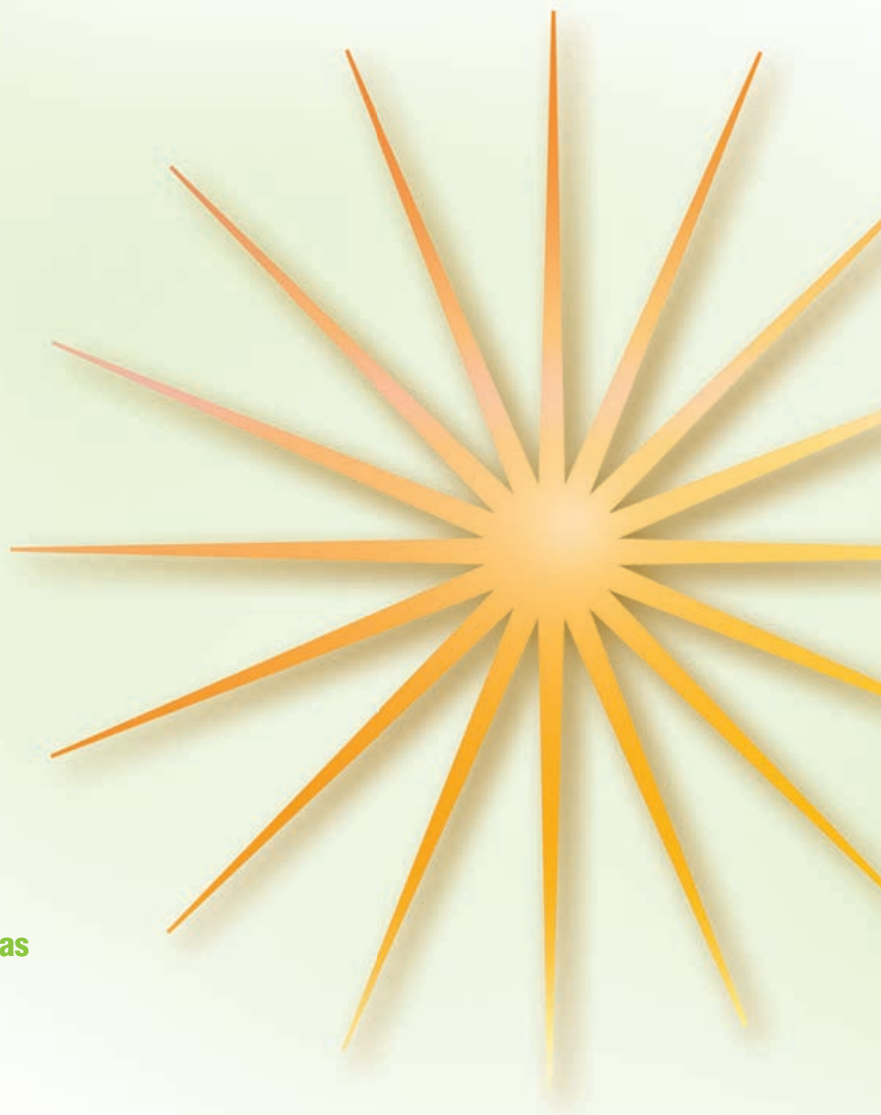
GRADE

3



Focused Practice for Reading Comprehension

- Fiction and non-fiction passages
- Main idea and story structure
- Integration of knowledge and ideas
- Key ideas and details
- Answer key



Two Boys, Big Plans

Read to see what Sam and Kent are planning.

¹ “Okay, I’m going to ask my parents right now. Are you?” Sam waited for Kent’s reply over the phone.

² “I think so,” said Kent after a moment. “My dad just got home a little while ago. Are you bringing crackers?”

³ Sam laughed. Kent was always hungry. “Yes, I’ll bring the crackers,” he said. “And be sure to tell them that we’ll turn the lights out by 9:30. Okay?”

⁴ “Nine-thirty. Right,” Kent agreed. “Okay, I’m going to go ask. I’ll talk to you in a little bit.”

⁵ “Okay,” answered Sam, and he hung up. *Now, if only we can talk our parents into letting us do this,* he thought to himself. He put on a big smile and entered the family room.

⁶ “Dad?” said Sam quietly so he wouldn’t make his father jump. “I cleaned up those grass clippings for you.”

⁷ “Oh, good,” nodded Mr. Hume. “Thanks, Sam.”

⁸ “Mom? Dad?” started Sam again. Both his parents looked over their newspapers. The words rushed out of Sam. “Kent and I were wondering if we could sleep out in the tent tonight. We’d be warm enough in our sleeping bags, and we won’t eat too much, and it’ll be lights out at 9:30, we promise.”

⁹ Mr. and Mrs. Hume blinked, then looked at each other. *How do they talk to each other without saying anything?* wondered Sam.

¹⁰ “Did Kent’s parents say it was okay?” asked Mrs. Hume.

¹¹ “He’s asking right now.” Sam shifted from one foot to the other. Another look passed between his parents.

¹² Mr. Hume nodded. “If Kent’s parents say it’s okay, it’s okay with us.”

¹³ “Thanks, Dad! Thanks, Mom!” called Sam as he dashed for the phone. He dialed and held his breath. Then, he heard Kent’s voice.

¹⁴ “Okay?” asked Sam.

¹⁵ “Okay!” said Kent.



1. This story is mostly about
_____ a sleepover.
_____ Sam's parents.
_____ two boys' plans.
2. At the beginning, when Sam and Kent are talking on the phone, what did you think they might be talking about?

3. In the story, when did you find out what the boys are planning?

4. Why do you think Sam told his dad about the grass clippings?

5. Why does Sam mention being warm enough and when the lights will be turned out?

6. Now that the boys have permission, what do you think they will do next?

7. In paragraph 5, why are the words *Now, if we can only talk our parents into letting us do this* in italics?

8. What is the author's purpose in writing this selection?

9. Have you ever been worried about asking your parents to do something? What was it, and how did you ask them?

One Tent, Lots of Stuff

What do the boys need for their night in the tent?

1 "Lantern?"

2 "Got it."

3 "Sleeping bags?"

4 "Got it—both of them."

5 "Pillows?"

6 "Two fat ones."

7 "Crackers?"

8 "Three kinds."

9 "Three kinds? Great!"

10 Sam and Kent had made a list of all the things they needed for sleeping out in the tent. Now, they were sitting cross-legged in the tent, checking things off the list.

11 "Are you going to bring a bathrobe and slippers?" Kent asked Sam.

12 "Oh, no! We're camping. Those are just for in the house," answered Sam, looking as if he knew all about camping.



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13 "Oh, right," said Kent, who had never been camping before. He didn't think Sam had been camping before either. Still, it was Sam's dad's tent, so he must know.

14 "Oh, I almost forgot. Can you bring your baseball glove?" Sam looked very serious.

15 Kent couldn't figure this one out. "My baseball glove? What do we need that for?"

16 "Well, we just might. You never know," said Sam with mystery and authority.

17 "Okay," shrugged Kent, "I'll bring it when I come after supper. What time do you think you'll be able to come out?"

18 Sam thought for a moment. "We usually eat at 5:45. Then, I have to clear the table. I should be done by 6:30. What about you?"

19 "My dad doesn't get home until six o'clock," said Kent, regretfully. "Maybe if I offer to help Mom with supper, things will go quickly."

20 Sam shrugged. "It's worth a try. Come out as soon as you can." Sam looked around the tent. "Okay, I think everything's ready. I'll see you later."

21 "See you later," said Kent, and the boys both ran home.

1. One of the boys usually has the ideas. The other one seems to go along with those ideas. Which boy is the "leader"?

2. What details from the story helped you answer question 1?

3. Kent says he might help his mom with supper. What does that tell you about Kent?

4. Based on what you know about camping, how do you feel about all the stuff the boys have in their tent? List what you think they need and what they don't need.

What They Need

What They Don't Need

5. In some stories, the author tells you what is happening. In this story, the author uses mostly dialogue, what the characters say, to let you know what is going on. Choose one line of dialogue and write what it helps you know about the character.

Dialogue: _____

6. Why does Kent think that Sam knows more about camping?

7. How do you think the boys feel about camping out together? Explain your answer.

How to Pitch a Tent

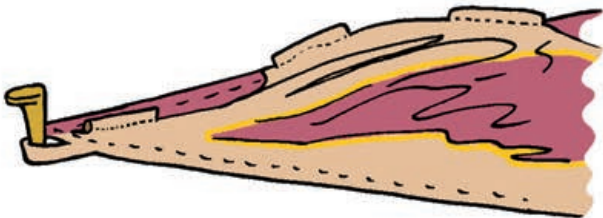
Follow these instructions to learn how to pitch a tent.

These general instructions should allow anyone to pitch any size or style of tent. Keep in mind that pitching a tent alone, even if you have experience, is difficult.

1. Choose a flat area on which to pitch your tent. Remove any stones or rocks that might poke through the tent's floor.
2. Take the tent and all equipment out of the storage bag. Lay everything on the ground neatly.
3. Spread a groundcloth over the chosen spot. Then, lay the tent floor over the groundcloth. Fold the edges of the groundcloth under, so they do not stick out from the edges of the tent.



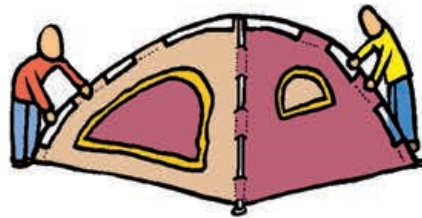
4. Make sure the tent door is zipped shut. Then, pound a stake through each loop, pulling snugly as you go so the floor gets stretched to its full size.



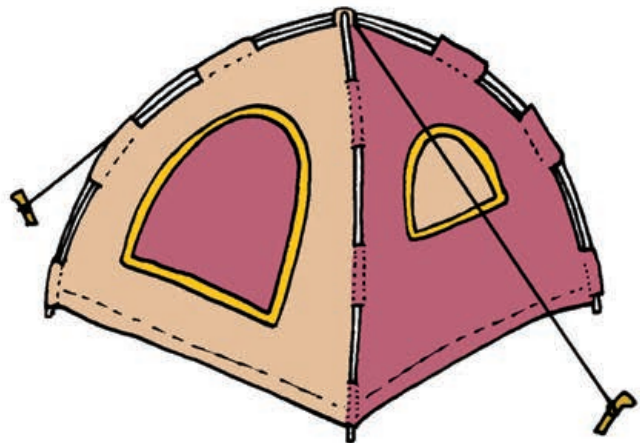
5. Put together the tent poles, if necessary. Thread each one through its loops or channels. Do not step or walk on the tent to do this. If necessary, crawl or lie down on your stomach to reach the center of the tent.



6. Raise the poles. If you have a partner, work on opposite sides of the tent.



7. Pull the guy lines straight out from the sides of the tent. Peg each one.



1. What do you know about pitching a tent? Do you have anything to add to these instructions?

2. Number the sentences to show the order of steps to pitch a tent.

- _____ Spread out groundcloth.
_____ Tighten and peg guy lines.
_____ Choose and clear an area.
_____ Put together tent poles.
_____ Lay out equipment.
_____ Pound stakes through loops.
_____ Raise the poles.

3. If you don't know or understand what a guy line is, which illustration helps you figure it out? Tell how.

4. Choose one illustration. Explain what it shows.

5. In the first paragraph, the author says that pitching a tent alone is difficult. Why do you think this is?

6. What is the purpose of a groundcloth?

7. Which two steps explain what to do with the poles?

_____ and _____

8. After reading these instructions, do you think you could pitch a tent? Why or why not?

One Tent...What Next?

What do the boys expect to happen?

¹ “Then, there was the time my brother and I nearly got blown away with the tent! Did I tell you about that one?” Sam shook his head and tried not to look impatient. His dad had been telling camping stories for almost an hour. *How can I get him to stop without saying anything?* thought Sam to himself. He really wanted to get out to the tent.

² Finally, his dad stopped for a bite of dessert, and Sam asked to be excused. When his mom nodded her head okay, it took only four trips to clear the table. Then, he was off and across the backyard.

³ “Caught you!” yelled Sam as he flipped back the tent flap. Kent jumped and turned red. “Ha! I knew it! In the crackers already.” Then, he laughed. “Have you been waiting long?”



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⁴ Kent shook his head because his mouth was full. Finally, he said, “Not long. My dad got home late.”

⁵ Sam shrugged. “Oh, well. We’re here now. Let’s get ready.”

⁶ “Ready for what?” asked Kent.

⁷ “For whatever’s going to happen,” answered Sam. *Well, he must know,* thought Kent. He helped Sam straighten the sleeping bags and stash stuff in the corners. They played catch across the tent for a little while. *Ah, the baseball glove,* thought Kent. They played badminton with crackers, but then Sam discovered crumbs in his sleeping bag, so they stopped.

⁸ They turned on the lantern and read. After a while, Sam retold some of his dad’s camping stories. Then, Kent turned out the light, and they listened for noises in the dark. They didn’t hear any for a very long time.

⁹ Finally, Kent heard something at the tent flap. He half crawled and half flew across the tent to warn Sam. Sam yelled when Kent landed on top of him.

¹⁰ “Hey, are you guys all right?” It was Sam’s mom. “Breakfast is ready.”

¹¹ Sam and Kent looked at each other in disbelief. They had slept through the whole night, and nothing had happened.

1. Which sentence best describes this story?
_____ Nothing exciting happens to the boys in the tent.
_____ The boys have a crazy night in the tent.
_____ In the morning, Kent plays a trick on Sam and scares him.
2. Why did the boys stop playing badminton?

3. Read the sentences below. Write **F** next to sentences that are facts and **O** next to sentences that are opinions.
_____ Kent eats too many crackers.
_____ Sam's dad had been telling camping stories for almost an hour.
_____ Breakfast is ready.
_____ Sam's dad tells the best camping stories.
4. What do you think the boys were hoping would happen?

5. In paragraph 3, why does Kent turn red?

6. Write **C** next to the sentence below that is the cause. Write **E** next to the sentence that is the effect.
_____ Kent landed on top of Sam.
_____ Sam's mom startled the boys.
7. This story has two settings. What are they?
_____ and _____

Night Lights

What is keeping Mikki awake?

¹ There were lights flashing outside. No matter what I did, I could see those lights. I couldn't figure out what they were, so I started worrying.

² I turned away from the window and closed my eyes. But then I had to open them, just a crack, to see if the lights were still there. *Flash-flash, off, flash!*

³ I rolled toward the window and watched. Maybe I could figure it out. I started listing things. Car lights? Not bright enough. Police car flashers? Not blue and red enough. Spaceships? Not likely. All right, this is really bugging me. I have to go ask Mom, I finally concluded.

⁴ I padded downstairs where my mom was reading a magazine. She was a little surprised to see me.

⁵ "The lights are flashing upstairs," I said.

⁶ "They are?" She said it with that "this is a great excuse for being out of bed" look on her face.

⁷ "I can't figure out what it is," I continued, hoping for some comfort. To my relief, she put down her magazine and steered me back upstairs.

⁸ We laid across my bed on our stomachs and watched out the window. Mom knew right away.

⁹ "Mikki, do you remember driving up to visit Uncle Walt last month?" she asked. I nodded. "Do you remember how long it took?" I nodded again. "Well, Uncle Walt is having a thunderstorm way up north where his house is. The lightning is sort of shining off the clouds, so we can see the flashing down here, even though the storm is far away from us."

¹⁰ "Oh," I said. I thought to myself, *Well, that makes sense.* After all, what else causes lights to flash in the sky? Aliens? Not likely.



1. What is causing Mikki to worry?

2. What does Mikki do to try to get to sleep?

First, she _____

Then, she _____

3. What is causing the flashing lights?

4. Have you ever been kept awake at night by something that bothered or puzzled you? Write about it.

5. From whose point of view is this story told?

_____ Mom's _____ Mikki's _____ Uncle Walt's

6. Which word best describes Mom in the story?

_____ impatient _____ confused _____ kind

7. Is this story realistic? Why or why not?

8. Name three things that Mikki thinks the lights could be.
