

The following story is about a boy who tries to explain what happened to his sweater. Read the story. Then answer the questions. Some questions may ask you about certain paragraphs. The numbers are found on the left side of the paragraphs.

It All Started with the Ant

by Margaret Meacham

- 1 Billy's mother held up what was left of his sweater. "Billy! Your brand-new sweater! What happened?"
- 2 "It's kind of hard to explain, Mom," said Billy.
- 3 "Just start at the beginning," said his mother.
- 4 "Well, I guess it all started with the ant."
- 5 "Billy, are you trying to tell me that an ant did this to your sweater?"
- 6 "No, Mom. See, the ant was crawling on Sarah's cheek. And when Roddy told her there was an ant on her cheek, she screamed." As he explained, Billy put the box he was holding on the floor and sat down across from his mother.
- 7 "Mmmhmm," she said.
- 8 "Well, when Sarah screamed, Mrs. Willis dropped her chalk, and Tommy and Harlow both bent down to pick it up, and they bumped heads."
- 9 "Oh, I hope they weren't hurt."
- 10 "No. Not really. But Tommy pretended he was, and he grabbed his head and kind of fell backwards, and he knocked over the hamster cage, and all the hamsters got loose."

- 11 "Oh, no. All ten of them?" asked his mother.
- 12 "Yup. And we sure had a hard time getting them back into that cage."
- 13 "I can imagine. How did you ever do it?"
- 14 "Well, Johnny got two, and Sally caught one. And Frank found one in his boot. And I caught two. Know how?"
- 15 "How?"
- 16 "I threw my sweater over them and trapped them."
- 17 "Oh. So that's what happened to your sweater."
- 18 "No, Mom. Two little hamsters couldn't do that to a sweater. After I got them out of it, I just put it back on."
- 19 "Oh. I'm beginning to get confused. And, Billy, what's in that box?"
- 20 "I'll get to that in a minute, Mom. But, see, one of the hamsters ate part of my sandwich, and Mrs. Willis said I had to throw the whole thing out, even though the hamster only ate a little bit."
- 21 His mother nodded.
- 22 "So Mrs. Willis got me some pea soup from the cafeteria, but it was horrible. I told Sammy I'd get sick if I had to eat it, so he gave me half of his sandwich. Peanut butter and jelly."
- 23 "Billy, I think that box just moved," said his mother.
- 24 Billy put his foot on top of the box. "It's OK, Mom. So Sammy said since he gave me half of his sandwich, I had to teach him how to do my flying jump from the playground bike rack. 'Cause I do it best. Usually."

- 25 "Usually?"
- 26 "Well, today it didn't work so well. See, my sweater got caught on the bike rack."
- 27 "So that's what happened to it."
- 28 "Well, no. It was OK after that, except for the string that got pulled out of it."
- 29 There was a scrabbling sound from the box. "What was that?" asked Billy's mother.
- 30 "Nothing, Mom," said Billy. "But see, this little string was hanging from my sweater, and when the kitten got the string caught on his claw, he kind of pulled the whole sweater apart. He didn't mean to do it, Mom."
- 31 "The kitten?"
- 32 "The one that Tommy and I found on our way home."
- 33 Billy's mother sighed.
- 34 "I told you it was hard to explain, Mom."
- 35 "I see what you mean," she said.
- 36 More sounds came from the box on the floor.
- 37 "Billy, that box?"
- 38 Billy picked up the box.
- 39 "That's what I wanted to talk to you about, Mom." He opened the box and pulled out a furry kitten. "Don't you think it's time we had a cat around here?"

1. What is Billy probably thinking all through this story?
- Ⓐ I hope Mom will let me keep the kitten.
 - Ⓑ I wish Mom was not so angry about the sweater.
 - Ⓒ I am glad that Sammy gave me half his sandwich.
 - Ⓓ I wish I had 1 of the hamsters from school.

1. Based on the story, what will Billy's mother most likely do next?
- Ⓐ Fix Billy's damaged sweater
 - Ⓑ Talk to Billy about the kitten
 - Ⓒ Punish Billy for ruining his sweater
 - Ⓓ Ask to hear about Billy's day again

1. Who are the 2 most important characters in this story?
- Ⓐ A teacher and a student
 - Ⓑ A parent and a child
 - Ⓒ A boy and a girl
 - Ⓓ A child and a make-believe friend

1. Why does the teacher, Mrs. Willis, drop the chalk?
- Ⓐ Billy tears his new sweater.
 - Ⓑ Tommy and Harlow bump heads.
 - Ⓒ An ant is crawling on her cheek.
 - Ⓓ Sarah lets out a scream.

1. In paragraph 19, Billy's mother says she is confused.

This means that she

- Ⓐ does not understand his story.
- Ⓑ does not think his story is funny.
- Ⓒ feels bored by his story.
- Ⓓ feels sad about his new sweater.

1. Look at the sentence from paragraph 20.

'But, see, one of the hamsters ate part of my sandwich, and Mrs. Willis said I had to throw the whole thing out, even though the hamster only ate a little bit.'

Which word sounds the same as ate?

- Ⓐ At
- Ⓑ Aim
- Ⓒ Eight
- Ⓓ Eat

1. Which of these events would be the most important to include in a summary of this story?
- Ⓐ Frank has a hamster in his boot.
 - Ⓑ Tommy and Billy find a kitten.
 - Ⓒ Mrs. Willis gets some pea soup for Billy.
 - Ⓓ Billy traps 2 hamsters in his sweater.

1. Which words in paragraph 22 help the reader know what horrible means?

- Ⓐ "the cafeteria"
- Ⓑ "get sick"
- Ⓒ "his sandwich"
- Ⓓ "Peanut butter"

1. How does Billy probably feel at the very end of the story?

Ⓐ Surprised

Ⓑ Ashamed

Ⓒ Hopeful

Ⓓ Gloomy

MCA-II Item Sampler Answer Key Grade 3 Reading

Item #	Correct Answer	Item Type	Strand	Sub-Strand	Benchmark	Cognitive Level
131133-7306	A	MC	I	D	2	B
131134-7306	B	MC	I	C	3	C
131135-7306	B	MC	I	D	2	B
131136-7306	D	MC	I	C	3	A
131132-7306	A	MC	I	B	3	B
131130-7306	C	MC	I	B	2	A
131141-7306	B	MC	I	C	4	C
131131-7306	B	MC	I	B	3	B
131139-7306	C	MC	I	D	2	B
131143-7306	See Annotation	CR	I	D	2	C

MCA-II Item Sampler

Rubric, Sample Responses and Answer Annotations

Grade 3 Reading

Rubric:

Score	Description
3	The response presents at least 1 germane reason why Billy tells his mother a long story before showing her what is in the box and provides appropriate details from the story as support.
2	The response presents a germane reason why Billy tells his mother a long story and provides some appropriate, supportive details from the story. OR The response presents a less germane but still topical reason why Billy tells his mother a long story and provides appropriate details from the story.
1	The response presents a germane reason why Billy tells his mother a long story but provides no details from the story. OR The response presents a less germane but still topical reason why Billy tells his mother a long story and provides an appropriate detail from the story. OR The response presents a less germane but still topical reason why Billy tells his mother a long story and may provide 1 less-related detail from the story.
0	The response is incorrect or irrelevant.

Sample Answer:

Billy tells his mother such a long story because he is afraid she might not let him keep the kitty if he tells her about it right away. When she keeps asking him what's in the box, he keeps telling her that he'll get to that. So instead of answering her questions about the box, he tells his mother this funny story about the ant and the hamsters and the pea soup and the bike rack. He thinks that his mother will be more likely to let him keep the kitty after hearing his funny story.

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

Billy tells such a long story because he wants his mother to stop asking about what's in the box and so he gets more time to think about what he is going to say about what's in the box. Billy is nervous to tell his mom what's in the box, Billy's mother was also wondering about what happened to Billy's sweatshirt. A detail is when he was telling the story to his mother when he was at school that Robby told Sarah that an ant was on

131143-7306

Score Point: 3

Response presents one reason, "...so he gets more time to think..." Provides appropriate details, "...mother wondering about sweatshirt" ...Robby told sarha that an ant..." *sweatshirt vs. sweater not an issue.

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

I think he started with the ant then the girl screaming, the boy bumping heads, the hamsters getting loose, Billy having to eat the pea soup, him having to teach Tommy. Just so his mom would get confused so she would think about saying yes about the kitten.

131143-7306

Score Point: 3

Response presents one reason, "Just so mom would get confused." And 2nd reason, "would ...say yes ..." Provides appropriate details, "...boy bumping heads...him having to teach Tommy."

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

When Billy got home from school his mother saw his sweater. His mother asked what happened but Billy said it was a long story. His mother said to start from the beginning so he did. He started with an ant. so his mom said an ant did that not really. + then When me + Tommy went home! We found a kitten!

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Score Point: 2

Response presents reason, "...mother says to start from beginning..." Provides some details, "He started with an ant...When me & Tommy went home. We found a kitten!"

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

He tells her the whole story first so his mom new what happened.

Some reasons are because of the cat ruining his sweater, the hamsters getteing out, and the cat he brought home.

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Score Point: 2

Response presents (weaker) reason, "He tells her the whole story first..." Provides some (better) details, "...ruining his sweater, hamsters getting out, the cat brought home."

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

He didn't show her
what was in the
box until the
end because once
he told her
about the kitten
then she was more
likely to say yes!

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Score Point: 1

Response presents reason but provides no detail from the story. More reason than detail.

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

Billy tells his mother
a long story because
his mother said said
start from the beginning
so he did.

131143-7306

Score Point: 1

Response presents reason but provides no detail from the story.

1. Give at least 1 reason why Billy tells his mother such a long story before he shows her what is in the box.

Support your reason with details from the story.

He told her such a long story because he probably wanted the kitten that was in the box to be a surprise to his mom to make up for the broken sweater.

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Score Point: 0

Response has incorrect understanding, to "surprise" his mom not accepted.

