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How Daddy Was Always Late

Contexts

The story 'How Daddy Was Always Late' is a humorous account that many students around the world will relate to. The narrator's father has a lifelong problem of being late to everything. As a child, he loved reading books but detested schoolwork. His habit of reading books till late at night would cause him to be sleepy and late to school every day.

Alexander Borisovich Raskin's story is a children's tale. Stories or poems of this kind are meant for children and often have child characters themselves. Such stories often include interesting, adventurous or funny incidents and characters that the child comes across. They are full of vivid details and make use of descriptive language. These features give readers a chance to experience the same things as the characters in the story.

Summary

The story tells us how the narrator's father grows up to be late all the time. As a child, Daddy is late to school every day. Every evening when Grandma calls Daddy to finish his homework, he is busy reading. He asks for a little more time to just finish one more page of his book. But at the end of each page, he starts a new one! When he finally sits down to do his homework, he is sleepy and manages to finish his homework in a daze. In the morning, he asks for a little more time in bed and is not able to reach school in time.

Since the narrator's father does his homework half-heartedly and is often late, he finds it hard to understand his lessons in class. Thus, he grows up to be late all the time and spends his life hurrying to catch up.

Perspectives

- ▶ Daddy asks for a second whenever he is called to do his homework or to wake up in the morning. It seems like such a small and common habit, but the effect it has on him in the long run is huge.
 - Can you think of any other such small things in life which make a lot of difference to people's lives?
 - Is there a small thing in your life which you could work on to make a big change?

- ▶ Daddy was always tempted to turn the page and continue reading. He would do this even when he knew he had other important tasks to finish.
 - What are some of your hobbies that you find difficult to take a break from?
 - How can you make sure you prioritize your tasks and spend your time wisely?
- ▶ Just like Daddy, many people have trouble waking up early in the morning, especially school kids. Some people find it easier to work and get better results at different times in the day.
 - When do you find yourself most active and keen to work?
 - How would you feel if school began in the afternoon or evening?
- ▶ Daddy would grow sleepy by the time he was ready to do his homework and would also oversleep in the mornings.
 - Find out about sleep cycles. Learn how much sleep a person needs on average, how one can sleep well and be active as soon as one wakes up, and so on.

Higher Order Thinking Skills

1. At the end of the story we find that Daddy was late to things even as an adult and he lost many opportunities because of his habit. How do you think he felt when such things happened? What thoughts could he have had about his own habit of always being late?
2. Do you think Daddy ever regretted his habit of being late? Imagine that Daddy changed his ways and became better at managing his time when he was young. In what ways do you think this would have affected his life?

Language in Use

Vocabulary

A. Derivative Words

Divide the class into four teams. Your teacher will give out sheets with a table of derivative words. Each team should take turns to try to form one sentence each with a verb and its derivative words (four sentences per row). When a team successfully makes four sentences with the words from a row, it will gain four points and claim that row. That particular verb and its derivatives cannot be used by other teams. If a team makes an incorrect sentence, it does not get points and that row can be used by another team. In this way all ten verbs and their derivative words will be used. The team that gets the highest points wins.

B. Words Easily Confused

Work in groups of five. Your teacher will give each group a set of cards and a dictionary. First, find another word from the dictionary that can be confused with the word you have. For example, *dual* and *duel*. Then, look up the meanings of the words from the dictionary. Finally, create an illustration of the word your teacher gave you. Display your words and the illustration for the class to have a look at.

Grammar

Have to, Used to, Need, Dare

Divide the class into five groups. Discuss and make four sentences with *have to*, *used to*, *need* and *dare*. Take turns to speak out your sentences in class. For each correct sentence a group will get two points and for each incorrect sentence one negative point. The team with the most correct sentences wins.

Appreciation

The story tells us that even though Daddy was late, 'Time marched steadily on'. Assigning human-like qualities to animals or any non-living objects used in poems or stories is called personification. Sometimes an abstract idea, that is, an idea or a concept which cannot be touched or seen can also be personified. Here, the abstract concept of 'time' is personified as a marching soldier.

Interact

Listening

Ben has just come back from an island vacation and he has got a prized possession. Listen to the conversation between Ben and his friends carefully and answer these questions.

1. Rocky and the others were not happy to see Ben. True or False?
2. What does 'looking forward to it' suggest about Ben's attitude to the vacation?
3. How is the city skyline different from that of the islands?
4. Did Ben harm the marine creature to which the shell belonged?
5. Which boy knew more about shells and corals than the others? How do you know?
6. What was Ben thankful for? Why?

Speaking

About 1000 students are enrolled in Model School out of which 250 were selected for special training in their chosen sports and games. The principal asks the physical education teacher details about the selection process and the aptitude of the trainees. Imagine you are the teacher giving answers on the basis of the following data. Complete the dialogue and continue it in any interesting way to cover the entire data.

Total number of students selected: 250

	Juniors	Seniors
Badminton:	34	22
Basketball:	24	26
Cricket:	20	28
Football:	36	30
Tennis:	16	14

Class V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
22	28	38	42	38	24	32	26

Principal : Is the selection process over? How many students have been selected among juniors and seniors?

PE teacher : Yes, ma'am, _____

Principal : Among the juniors which class has the maximum participants?

PE teacher : _____

Principal : And among the seniors?

PE teacher : _____

Principal : What about the least participation among juniors and seniors?

PE teacher : _____

Principal : How many students have opted for football?

PE teacher : Football seems to be the most popular. _____

Principal : I hope they have an aptitude for it. What about tennis?

PE teacher : Tennis _____

Express

Study the following table showing the result of an examination in Model School. Interpret the data given and fill in the blanks accordingly.

A+, A, A- represent excellent performance

B+, B, B- represent good performance

C+, C, C- represent satisfactory performance

D indicates less than satisfactory performance.

Grades	A+	A	A-	B+	B	C+
No. of students	290	55	45	34	16	10
Percentage	64	12	10	7.5	3.5	2

When we interpret the data given in the table, we are glad to say that we have had an excellent result in the examinations held in March this year. The majority of the students in our school have done well.

The number of students who have scored A+ in all five subjects is _____ out of the total 450. That is about _____ per cent. The number of students who have scored A in four subjects is _____, that is about _____ per cent, whereas _____ students have got A - in three subjects. The percentage of those students is _____. About 7.5 per cent of students have got _____ in three subjects and the number of such students is _____. The number of students who have scored B in three subjects is 16. That is about _____ per cent. The number of students who have scored C+ in three subjects is _____, that is about _____ per cent.

Learn by Doing

Some people, despite being considered lazy, irresponsible or incapable by many, overcome all the odds to become successful. Many even become famous personalities. Divide the class into groups of three and collect information about any three such personalities and share it in class.