

Reading Comprehension Home Learning

Read the text and answer the comprehension questions.

The One That Got Away

by Jan Mark

'And what have we to remember to bring tomorrow?' Mrs Cooper asked, at half past three. Malcolm, sitting near the back, wondered why she said 'we'. She wasn't going to bring anything. 'Something interesting, Mrs Cooper,' said everyone else, all together.

'And what are we going to do then?'

'Stand up and talk about it, Mrs Cooper.'

'So don't forget. All right. Chairs on tables. Goodbye, Class Four.'

'Goodbye, Mrs Cooper. Goodbye, everybody.'

It all came out ever so slow, like saying prayers in assembly. Class Four put its chairs on the tables, collected its coats and went home, talking about all the interesting things it would bring into school tomorrow.

Malcolm walked by himself. Mrs Cooper had first told them to find something interesting on Monday. Now it was Thursday and still he had not come up with any bright ideas. There were plenty of things that he found interesting, but the trouble was, they never seemed to interest anyone else. Last time this had happened he had brought along his favourite stone and shown it to the class.

'Very nice, Malcolm,' Mrs Cooper had said. 'Now tell us what's interesting about it.' He hadn't known what to say. Surely anyone looking at the stone could see how interesting it was.

Mary was going to bring her gerbil. James, Sarah and William had loudly discussed rare shells and fossils, and the only spider in the world with five legs.

'It can't be a spider then,' said David, who was eavesdropping.

'It had an accident,' William said.

Isobel intended to bring her pocket calculator and show them how it could write her name by punching in 738051 and turning it upside down. She did this every time, but it still looked interesting. Malcolm could think of nothing.

When he reached home he went up to his bedroom and looked at the shelf where he kept important things: his twig that looked like a stick insect, his marble that looked like a glass eye, the penny with a hole in it and the Siamese-twin jelly-babies, one red, one green and stuck together, back to back. He noticed that they were now stuck to the shelf, too. His stone had once been there as well, but after Class Four had said it was boring he had put it back in the garden. He still went to see it sometimes.

What he really needed was something that could move about, like Mary's gerbil or William's five-legged spider. He sat down on his bed and began to think.

Friday

On Friday, after assembly, Class Four began to be interesting. Mary kicked off with the gerbil that whirred round its cage like a hairy balloon with the air escaping. Then they saw William's lame spider, James's fossil, Jason's collection of snail shells stuck one on top of the other like the leaning tower of Pisa, and David's bottled conkers that he had kept in an air-tight jar for three years. They were still as glossy as new shoes. Then it was Malcolm's turn. He went up to the front and held out a matchbox. He had chosen it very carefully. It was the kind with the same label top and bottom so that when you opened it you could never be sure that it was the right way up and all the matches fell out.



Malcolm opened it upside down and jumped. Mrs Cooper jumped too. Malcolm threw himself down on hands and knees and looked under her desk. 'What's the matter?' Mrs Cooper said.

'It's fallen out!' Malcolm cried.
'What is it?' Mrs Cooper said, edging away.
'I don't know – it's got six legs and sharp knees... and sort of frilly ginger eyebrows on stalks—'. He pounced. 'There it goes.'
'Where?'



'Missed it,' said Malcolm. 'It's running under your chair, Mary.'
Mary squeaked and climbed on to the table because she thought that was the right way to behave when creepy-crawlies were about.

'I see it!' Jason yelled, and jumped up and down. David threw a book in the direction that Jason was pointing and James began beating the floor with a rolled-up comic.

'I got it - I killed it,' he shouted
'It's crawling up the curtains,' Sarah said and Mrs Cooper, who was standing by the curtains, moved rapidly away from them.

'It's over by the door,' Mary shrieked, and several people ran to head it off. Chairs were overturned.

Malcolm stood by Mrs Cooper's desk with his matchbox. His contribution was definitely the most interesting thing that anyone had seen that morning. He was only sorry that he hadn't seen it himself.

1. Circle the correct option to complete each sentence below.

- (a) At the end of the day Mrs Cooper reminded Class Four that the next day they were to bring something interesting to school. After school Malcolm walked home

alone **in a group of friends** **with James and Sarah** **with Mrs Cooper**

1 mark

- (b) He was trying to think about what he could bring in to show the class. Last time he had brought his

calculator **stone** **penny with a hole in it** **interesting marble**

1 mark

- (c) The other children discussed what they were going to bring. Mary decided she would bring her

cat **mouse** **gerbil** **rabbit**

1 mark

- (d) When Malcolm got home he went into

the kitchen **the garden** **his bedroom** **the lounge**

and looked at all of his interesting things.

1 mark

(e) What he really needed was something that

could move **made a noise** **was funny** **was brightly coloured**

1 mark

(f) On Friday after assembly, Class Four showed the interesting things they had brought. The first person to come to the front of the class was

William **Mary** **Sarah** **Jason**

1 mark

(g) Then came James with his fossil and David with his conkers. Soon it was Malcolm's turn. He went up to the front and held out a

lego box **shoebox** **matchbox** **chocolate box**

1 mark

(h) Malcolm opened his box upside down and jumped back in surprise. He got on his hands and knees to look under the desk. It had fallen out! All of the children started looking but they did not know exactly what they were looking for. Only Malcolm knew that they were looking for

his interesting stone **a matchbox** **an insect** **nothing at all**

1 mark

2. Here are some of the events that happened in the story. Put them in the right order by numbering each line. The first event has been numbered for you.

on the way home the children discussed what they would bring in

the next day the class showed their objects

the class was in uproar

Mrs Cooper told the class to bring in interesting objects

the children looked at a gerbil, a spider, a fossil, snail shells and conkers

at home, Malcolm thought about what he could bring to show

then it was Malcolm's turn

2 marks

About the characters

3. The story says that Malcolm had chosen his box
very carefully. It was the kind with the same label top and bottom

Why do you think he had to be so careful in his choice of box?

1 mark

4. *Malcolm opened it upside down and jumped.*
Mrs Cooper jumped too.

Mrs Cooper was clearly nervous.
Find another word or phrase in the story which tells us that Mrs Cooper was not very happy that the contents of Malcolm's box had escaped.

1 mark

5. (a) Last year Malcolm had brought his interesting stone but the class *had said it was boring.*
How did Malcolm feel about the reaction of the class?

(b) Do you think Malcolm's own feelings about the stone changed?

Yes No

What in the story tells you this?

2 marks