

Snow Day

The room was very bright when Chloe woke up. She opened her curtain and saw millions of tiny snowflakes falling. They tumbled in the wind. A thick, white blanket began to cover everything. The grass was white. So were the tree's leafless branches. Her parents' car looked like a white turtle.

"Mom, look outside!" Chloe called.

Chloe's mother came into her room. She was still wearing her pajamas. "Looks like we're staying inside today," she said. "That's quite a blizzard outside."

Chloe smiled. Perhaps the blizzard would stop. Then she could go sledding.



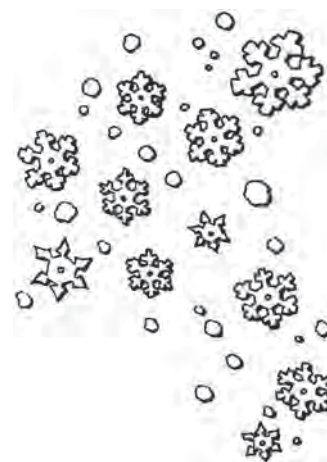
Blizzards

Storms with strong winds and lots of snow are called blizzards. In a blizzard, the wind is powerful. It pushes snow into big, white piles. The snow piles can grow tall enough to cover rooftops.

Heavy snow can pull down telephone lines. It can crack trees. Tree limbs crash onto roads and houses.

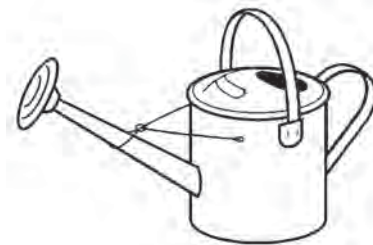
Blowing snow can be dangerous. Drivers cannot see the roads. Cars and buses slip and slide.

The air is very cold during a blizzard. The wind makes it hard to stand up. It rubs your skin raw. Blowing ice and snow sting your eyes. During a blizzard, the safest place to be is inside.



I'll Be Brave

Jeremy's family was going on vacation. Devon, Jeremy's best friend, had agreed to water the family's spider plant while they were away. Devon had never seen a spider plant before. He imagined large spiders living on the plant. Devon decided he would be brave.



Before they left, Devon went to Jeremy's apartment. Jeremy showed him the plant. "This is the spider plant," Jeremy said. "Water it whenever the soil feels dry, okay?" he asked.

"Sure," Devon said. "What are those little things hanging from the plant?" he asked.

"Those are baby spider plants. Don't they look like spiders hanging from a web?" Jeremy asked.

"Now I know why it's called a spider plant!" Devon laughed.

Spider Plants

Many people have plants in their homes. Spider plants are popular houseplants. They have long, green and white leaves. The leaves hang down, so many people plant spider plants in hanging baskets.

Spider plants are easy to take care of. All they need to grow and stay healthy are sunshine and water. Sunny windows are good places to put a spider plant. Watering is easy. Touch the soil. If the soil is damp, the plant is fine.

As a spider plant grows, new spider plants grow on the parent plant. Baby spider plants hang like spiders dangling from a web. That is how the spider plant got its name.



A Cold Problem

At first, Billy and his sister Olivia laughed as they rolled snow to make a snowman. But it was hard work pushing the growing snowball across the ground. Finally, they finished making the first giant snowball. But there were still two snowballs to go. Billy was shaking with cold. "I'm as cold as an ice cube!" he chattered.



"Me, too!" said Olivia. "Let's go inside to warm up. Then we can come back to make the other snowballs."

Billy and Olivia raced to the front door and stumbled inside. "I'll make some hot tea while you hang up your coats," Dad said.

Dad peeked at their snowman through the window. "Uhm," he said. "I think you have a giant snowball, not a snowman."

Billy and Olivia laughed. "We know," Billy said. "We need to invent a warmer way to roll snowballs!"

Wristies™

Many people wear gloves and a jacket in cold weather. As they move, their jackets and gloves pull apart. Snow and cold air hit the bare skin.



This often happened to Kathryn Gregory. One day, she thought of a solution. Kathryn was only 10 years old when she invented Wristies™. You wear Wristies™ beneath your gloves and jacket to cover your wrists. This keeps snow and ice away from your skin. It also keeps you warmer in cold weather.

At first, people paid no attention to Kathryn's idea. Some kids even teased her. But this didn't stop her. She worked hard, and her invention became popular. Today, she tells other young inventors, "Go for your dreams!"

Saving the Everglades

The sun was setting. Ernesto and his wife Anna loved this time of the day. The air was warm. The lake sparkled with soft sunlight. Flowers gave off beautiful smells. Ernesto and Anna agreed. They always wanted to live here, near the Everglades.

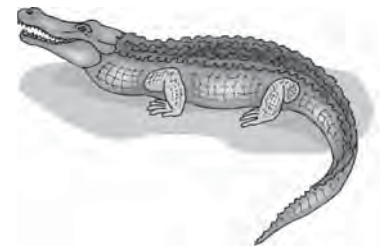


Anna and Ernesto hiked along a path. The path wrapped around a huge lake. Anna touched Ernesto's arm. "Look," she whispered as she pointed. A large white bird walked stiffly among the reeds. Then it stopped. It stood still, watching the water's surface. Suddenly, the bird's head disappeared. When it came up again, the bird swallowed.

Ernesto and Anna smiled and continued walking. "Let's not disturb his dinner," Ernesto said.

The Everglades

The American Alligator is called the "King of the Everglades." This animal is important to the Everglades. In winter, the Everglades are dry. It is hard for animals to find water. Alligators dig holes in the ground. These holes, called "gator holes," fill with water. Many animals come to the gator holes to drink. Insects, turtles, and fish live in gator holes. Wading birds come to eat and drink. Without gator holes, many Everglade animals would die.



In summer, people control the water level in the marsh. Sometimes, they release water. The water washes away alligator nests. If fewer alligators are born, there will be fewer gator holes. Then all of the animals in the Everglades will be in danger of disappearing.

Kaleb's Favorite Monument

Kaleb had seen so much on his trip to Washington, D.C. What would he write about for his school report? He had so many choices. Kaleb thought so hard that he was silent for most of the ride home. "What are you thinking about?" his mother asked.

"I'm thinking about everything we saw. I liked visiting the White House. And the museums were wonderful. It's hard to pick a favorite."

"I know what you mean," his mother said. "Your dad and I took lots of photographs. I liked the Lincoln Memorial best."

"Lincoln taught himself to read and write," Kaleb said. "He would be perfect for a school report."

"I can't wait to read it," said his mom. "Maybe you'd like to show some photographs, too."



Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States. He was a hard worker as a boy and as a man.

Abraham Lincoln had many jobs as he grew up. He helped his father cut logs to build houses. He also worked on a farm and in a store. All the while, he taught himself to read and write. When he grew up, Abraham Lincoln became a lawyer. He liked working to make laws that helped people.

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln began a new job. He served as a United States president. He worked hard to bring the country together during a time of war.

Today, there is a monument of Lincoln in Washington D.C. His picture is also on the penny and the five-dollar bill.



Symbol of Freedom

"I was very young when my parents and I came to America," Great-grandmother said. "It was in 1932. We traveled across Europe by train. Finally, we reached the coast. We took a ship across the Atlantic Ocean."

"What was the first thing you saw when you got to New York?" asked Sofia.

"The very first thing I saw was the Statue of Liberty. I cried. I was so happy to be in America," said Great-grandmother.

"You cried?" Sofia asked gently.

"Yes, the Statue of Liberty welcomed everyone. Seeing her gave us hope. My parents worked hard, and we lived happily in our new country. I'm very glad we came. I'm also glad I have a real American great-granddaughter."



The Statue of Liberty

What birthday present do you give to a 100-year-old country? For its 100th birthday, France gave the United States a statue. It was the Statue of Liberty. It was a sign of friendship between the two countries.

The Statue of Liberty is on a small island near New York City. Before planes, people came to the United States by ship. The Statue of Liberty was often the first thing they saw.

The statue is of a woman wearing a crown. The crown has seven spikes. They stand for the seven seas and continents in the world. The statue holds a torch. The torch shows people the way to safety.

Today, people from around the world visit the Statue of Liberty. The statue welcomes them today, just as she did 100 years ago.



Grandma's Records

Music filled the room. Jada and her brother loved to play Grandma's records. Jada took each record out of its cardboard sleeve carefully. Then she used both hands to put the record on a record player. She turned on the machine and put the needle down gently. Then she and her brother would sing and dance.



Jada and her brother were dancing happily. They didn't see Grandma enter the room. Grandma smiled and clapped.

The children stopped quickly and turned around. "You scared us, Grandma!" they both said, laughing.

"I couldn't help myself. I had to clap. You two are great dancers. And you're playing my favorite record."

"Why is it your favorite record?" asked Jada.

"Well, let me tell you about Bessie Smith," she said, smiling.

QUESTION

Empress of the Blues

Bessie Smith was born in 1894 in Tennessee. When she was eight years old, her mother died. When she was nine, she started singing on the streets. She needed to earn money for her family. Bessie and her brother Andrew worked together. Andrew played the guitar and Bessie sang.



Bessie Smith grew into a strong woman. She was proud to be African American. Bessie was also a powerful singer. She traveled and sang and danced in shows.

Bessie sang jazz music called the blues. She sold a lot of records. Many people loved to hear her sing. Today, Bessie Smith is remembered as the Empress of the Blues.

A Noise in the Woods

Nan and Sara were hiking with their scout troop. "We're close to where scientists found a skeleton of a saber-toothed cat," Nan said. She pulled out a book from her backpack. "Look at this picture."

Sara's eyes opened wide. "That looks scary. Its teeth are huge! Good thing they're no longer alive," she said.

Just then the girls heard dry leaves crackle and twigs snap.

"What's that?" they both whispered, standing very still.

The girls moved quietly into the woods. They crouched low and peeked through the bushes. "I thought you said saber-toothed cats were all gone," whispered Nan.

"They are," said Sara, as she stood up. "Hello, there," she called to their scout leader.



Saber-toothed Cats

Saber-toothed cats are no longer alive. The last cats died thousands of years ago. Today, scientists study their bones to learn more about them. Many of these cats used to live in the United States.

Saber-toothed cats had two front teeth that were seven inches long! They were sharp, too. The word "saber" means sword. So people called the cats "saber-toothed." The cats used their teeth for catching food.

These cats were about the size of a lion. Their legs were short and strong, but they could not run very fast. Saber-toothed cats hunted mostly by surprising other animals. They would hide and then jump out of bushes. Saber-toothed cats were powerful hunters.



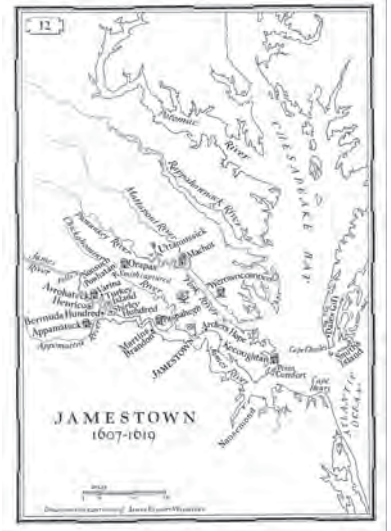
The New People

The little girl was curious. She often played in the woods. Now, there was more to see. New people had moved to the land. She liked to watch them from a distance.

The new people looked very different. Their clothes were not like Pocahontas'. They acted differently, too. Pocahontas didn't understand them when they spoke.

Everyday, Pocahontas would watch the people. One day, some friendly people spoke to her. Pocahontas smiled warmly. She didn't know what they said, but they were nice to her. Sometimes, Pocahontas brought food and gifts to the people. The new people always welcomed her.

"I like the new people," Pocahontas said to her father, Chief Powhatan. "I think they are our friends."



Pocahontas

Pocahontas was an Algonquian Indian. She lived in the early 1600s. Her tribe lived in what is now Virginia.

At that time, most people didn't write their stories. They told them. People have told many stories about Pocahontas. One story is about Pocahontas when she was 12 years old. People said that Pocahontas saved a man's life.

Some Native Americans were afraid of the English settlers. They thought the settlers would harm them.

John Smith was an English settler. One day the Algonquians captured him. They planned to kill him. Pocahontas stopped them. She knew that the settlers were friendly. Pocahontas helped the Algonquians and the settlers get along.

