

# Energetic Emily

By ReadWorks



Emily, as usual, had been up since dawn. This morning, she skipped around the kitchen, laying out forks, knives and napkins for breakfast to help her dad. She pushed the “on” button on the coffee machine. She pulled the bread and eggs out of the refrigerator. And then she waited.

Emily’s dad was a writer who worked from home. Upstairs, she heard his alarm go off for the third time. Finally, he plodded downstairs to the kitchen.

“Good morning, sunshine,” he said, and smiled his groggy morning smile.

Emily was ready to get cooking. She grabbed two slices of bread. Then, getting a running start, she ran and slid across the slippery kitchen floor. As she slowed to a halt in front of the toaster, she deftly double-dunked the slices into their slots.

“Woo!” she yelled, stealing a glance at her dad to see if he’d glimpsed her smooth move. “And the crowd goes wild!”

Emily’s dad smiled and shook his head as he poured his coffee.

“I’m gonna call you ‘Energetic Emily,’” he said. “That’s your new nickname now.”

“Why?” Emily asked.

“Because you have a lot of energy!” he said. “That’s what energetic means.”

“Oh.”

“Where do you get all of that energy, anyway?” he asked. “Certainly not from me. In fact, I wish you could give me some of your energy, right in here.” He pointed to his steaming coffee cup.

Emily thought for a moment. “I don’t know where I get it. What is energy, anyway?”

“Good question,” said her dad. “Let’s look up the definition.” He pulled out his phone and typed in the word.

“Energy,” he read. “There are a few definitions. There’s the physical or mental strength that allows you to do work.” He looked at the forks and knives arranged neatly around the table. “Check. You’ve got that. Then, there’s natural enthusiasm and effort.” He smiled at her again. “Yep, you’ve got that, Miss Toaster Olympics Champion.” Emily giggled. “And there’s the usable power that comes from heat or electricity.” He pointed to the toaster. “Like the kind that’s toasting our bread right now.”

Emily paused to take this in. “So are they all the same thing? The energy that powers the toaster and the energy that powers my *amaazing* toaster tricks?”

“I don’t think so,” said Emily’s dad. “But maybe you’d better check with Mrs. Nelson. And report back to me. I want to know if I can plug you into the wall and power myself up for the day.”

Mrs. Nelson was Emily’s fifth-grade teacher. That morning, Emily stopped by her desk on the way to recess.

“Mrs. Nelson, where do you think my energy comes from?”

Mrs. Nelson looked confused. “Your energy?”

“Yes. My dad wants to know.”

Mrs. Nelson threw back her head and whooped with laughter. “Ahhh-hahaha! I bet he does,” she said. “We’ll talk about this later in the year, but I’ll give you a hint for now: it comes from your food.”

Later, in the lunchroom, Emily asked Mrs. Jacobs, the lunch-lady, what this meant.

“Well,” said Mrs. Jacobs, “I know that all food has calories, and calories are a way to measure energy, the same way we use inches to measure length.” She shrugged. “But I don’t know how all that energy ends up in our food in the first place. I guess you’d have to ask a farmer!”

As luck would have it, Farmer George came to the park near Emily’s house every Thursday afternoon to sell his tomatoes and apples. And today was Thursday.

Her dad liked Emily’s idea of going to interview Farmer George about energy. “You’re quite the investigative journalist, Emily!” he said.

Farmer George was also delighted by Emily’s question. “Burning calories of energy is what keeps us all moving. We couldn’t live without them!” he said. “And my plants work hard to make those calories for you.”

“Plants make energy? But *how*?” Emily asked, growing impatient. “I’ve been asking people all day!”

“Why, they use the best things on Earth,” Farmer George said. “Sunshine, fresh air and water.”

“But, how?”

“Well, plants are one of nature’s energy factories. When the sun hits the leaves of say, a tomato plant, that tomato plant starts up like a machine. It takes in carbon dioxide from the air and water from the ground, and mixes them together. The heat from the sun helps to cook this all up into sugar. And that sugar is then stored in the plant for us to eat. Some plants store more calories than others, but they can all give you energy in the form of sugar.” Farmer George paused. “There’s more to it than this, but that’s the simple version. Does that answer your question?”

Emily thought for a moment. “So, when I eat your tomatoes, I’m eating ... plant-made energy created by the sun, the air and water?”

“You got it.”

Emily turned to her dad.

“So all you have to do to get my energy is to eat your vegetables, Dad!”

Emily’s dad laughed. “I wish it were that easy, Emily. But still, I think that’s probably very good advice.”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why is Emily's nickname "Energetic Emily"?

- A She gives her dad energy.
- B She has a lot of energy.
- C She is interested in energy.
- D She knows a lot about energy.

2. Emily asks questions throughout the story. What motivates Emily's questions to Mrs. Nelson, Mrs. Jacobs, and Farmer George?

- A She wants to know what calories are.
- B She wants to know how plants grow.
- C She wants to know where energy comes from.
- D She wants to know where food comes from.

3. The word "energy" has different meanings. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A Emily's dad wishes he could have some of Emily's energy.
- B Emily gets an answer to the question, "Where does energy come from?"
- C Emily's dad tells her to ask her teacher about energy.
- D Emily's dad reads three definitions of energy from the dictionary.

4. How can Emily best be described?

- A curious
- B lazy
- C tired
- D kind

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A how to make breakfast
- B the purpose of questions
- C energy and where it comes from
- D how food gives us energy

6. Why does the author have Emily asks so many questions about energy?

- A so that the reader will become confused
- B to tell the reader something they probably know
- C to teach the reader facts about energy
- D to make sure the reader is paying attention

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Emily asks Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Jacobs where she gets her energy. \_\_\_\_\_, she learns the answer from Farmer George.

- A For example
- B In contrast
- C Currently
- D Finally

8. What are calories?

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9. What three things do plants use to make energy?

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10. Explain how eating vegetables gives you energy.

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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 540

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8. What are calories?

**Suggested answer:** Calories are a way to measure energy.

9. What three things do plants use to make energy?

**Suggested answer:** Plants use sunshine, fresh air (carbon dioxide), and water to make energy.

10. Explain how eating vegetables gives you energy.

**Suggested answer:** Eating vegetables gives you energy because plants make energy which is stored as sugar in them. When you eat a plant, you eat the sugar that the plant has stored in it, and this gives you energy.