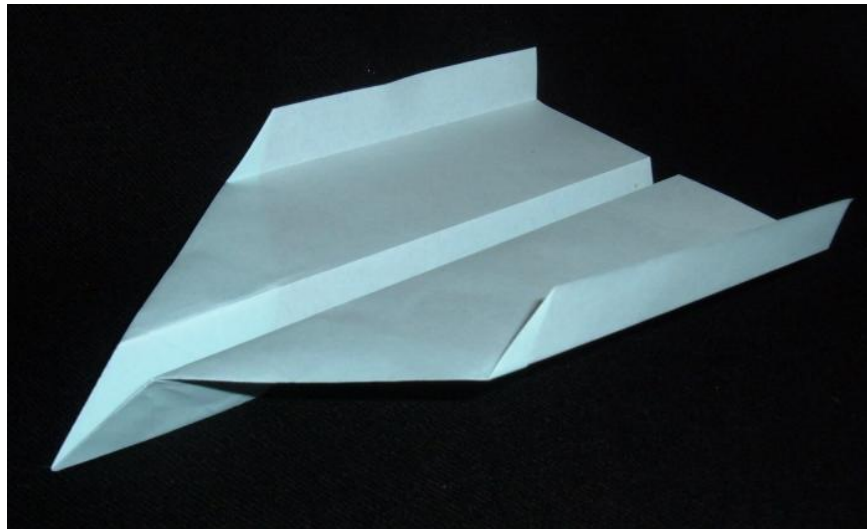


The Paper Airplane Contest



One time, the teachers at a school wanted to teach the students about airplanes. While all airplanes can fly, some are able to fly farther than others. This is because not all airplanes are built the same. For example, a fighter plane looks very different from a plane that people fly in when they want to go on a holiday. The teachers wondered how they could make students understand this.

Then, the science teacher, Mr. Moose, decided that the school should have a paper airplane contest. Every student would design a paper airplane. They would stand in a line in the playground behind the school. The students would take turns throwing their airplanes. The student whose airplane went the farthest would win.

When Mr. Moose announced the paper airplane contest to the students, they were very excited. A student named Paul, who was on the wrestling team, bragged to everyone else that his airplane would win. "I am the strongest," Paul said. "So I

will be able to throw my airplane the farthest.”

However, while Paul was saying this, another student, Brian, was thinking how *he* could win. Brian did not play any sports and was not very strong. But he loved airplanes and really wanted to win the contest.

Brian realized what he had to do. He went to the store and bought a big stack of paper. When he got home, he took the paper into his backyard. He took a piece of paper and folded an airplane. It didn't go very far. So, Brian took another sheet and folded another airplane and threw it. This airplane went a little farther. Brian kept folding different kinds of airplanes and throwing them. Some went very far and some did not. Finally, when Brian had used all the paper, he walked up to the airplane that had flown the farthest and picked it up.

The next day was the contest. All the students lined up. Everyone took turns. After a while, everyone had thrown except Paul and Brian. Paul went first. With a mighty yell, he launched the airplane into the sky. It went farther than every other airplane. Everyone clapped.

Finally, it was Brian's turn. Brian took the airplane that he had picked up the day before. He walked up to the line and, with all his strength, he threw the plane. It went flying, farther and farther, until finally it landed — 10 feet past Paul's plane! The whole school cheered. Brian was the winner. Mr. Moose gave him a prize: a toy airplane.

Brian won because he tried out many solutions to the problem of how to make

an airplane fly very far. He did this by testing out many different designs and comparing the results. When he found the design that worked best — the paper airplane that flew the farthest — he used it. Because Brian tried a lot of designs, he was able to make up for his lack of strength and beat Paul.

Name: _____

Date: _____

1. What is the paper airplane contest?

- A** a contest to see which student is the strongest
- B** a contest to see which paper airplane flies the farthest
- C** a contest to see which student can build a fighter plane

2. A problem in this passage is how to make a paper airplane that flies far. What is Brian's solution to this problem?

- A** testing different paper airplane designs to figure out which one works best
- B** letting out a mighty yell as he walks up to the line and launches his paper airplane
- C** asking his science teacher for help before he starts building his paper airplane

3. Paul is stronger than Brian, but his paper airplane does not fly as far Brian's airplane.

What can be concluded from this information?

- A** Paul built a paper airplane with a better design than Brian's airplane.
- B** If Paul had thrown his paper airplane earlier in the contest, it would have flown farther.
- C** How far a paper airplane flies depends on more than just strength.

4. Based on the events of the story, what has a big effect on how far a paper airplane flies?

- A** the design of a paper airplane
- B** the color of a paper airplane
- C** the kind of paper the airplane is made out of

5. What is a theme of the story?

- A the importance of building strength through sports like wrestling
- B the importance of trying different ways to solve a problem
- C the importance of always paying attention in science class

6. Read these sentences: "Brian won because he tried out many solutions to the problem of how to make an airplane fly very far. He did this by testing out many different designs and comparing the results. When he found the **design** that worked best — the paper airplane that flew the farthest — he used it."

What does the word **design** mean above?

- A the way something has been built
- B the distance that something can travel
- C the amount of time it takes to do something

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

Brian wins the paper airplane contest _____ he tried out different kinds of planes.

- A because
- B before
- C so

8. Who expects to win the paper airplane contest because he is strong?

9. What do the teachers want to make students understand about airplanes?

10. Does the paper airplane contest teach students anything about how real airplanes fly? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the story.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 680

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8. Who expects to win the paper airplane contest because he is strong?

Suggested answer: Paul.

9. What do the teachers want to make students understand about airplanes?

Suggested answer: Answers may vary but should reflect the first paragraph of the story. The teachers want students to understand that some airplanes are able to fly farther than others because of the way they are built.

10. Does the paper airplane contest teach students anything about how real airplanes fly? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the story.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by the story. Students may respond that the paper airplane contest teaches the students in the story about how real airplanes fly by demonstrating the impact of design on plane flight. Conversely, students may respond that the paper airplane contest does not teach the students in the story about how real airplanes fly. The teachers in the story want students to understand that some airplanes fly farther than others because of the way they are built, but some of the key factors affecting how far a real plane can fly, such as fuel capacity, are not addressed by the paper airplane contest.