

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Blockhead and the Queen Bee

Once upon a time, there were three brothers. The youngest was called Blockhead because his brothers considered him stupid. One day, the three set off in search of an adventure.

Along the way, the brothers came upon a huge anthill. "Let's stir this up and see what happens," said the eldest brother.

Blockhead frowned and said, "Oh, leave the poor creatures alone. They've done you no harm."

His two brothers laughed, but went on their way without bothering the ants. A bit further down the road, they chanced upon a lake in which many ducks were diving and swimming. The middle brother said, "Let's snare a few ducks and roast them for dinner."

Again poor Blockhead protested. "Leave the poor creatures alone. I'll not let you harm them."

His brothers shook their heads and made fun of their stupid brother, but they went on their way without bothering the ducks. However, before long they reached a tree with honey dripping from a huge hive. The eldest brother looked thoughtfully at the tree. "Let's set fire to this hive to suffocate the bees and steal the honey," he suggested.

Blockhead was outraged. "Leave the poor creatures alone," he said. "I will not let them come to harm."

Once again, Blockhead's brothers laughed at his soft heart, saying that it reflected his soft head. But they headed off without carrying out their threat. Soon afterward, the three brothers came upon a huge, deserted castle. They walked through the unguarded gate, crossed the empty courtyard, and then roamed from room to room until they reached a door with an iron gate.

"Look!" cried the eldest brother, "I can see a little man in there." He banged on the door and shouted, "Let us in, old fellow!"

The old man approached slowly. Silently, he unlocked the door and led the three brothers to a table heaped with food. They ate and ate. Then they fell asleep on the chamber floor.

The next morning, the brothers woke to find the old man – still silent – standing and staring at them.

The eldest brother stretched, yawned, and said, "Oh, it is you, old man. What do you want?"

The old man didn't say a word. He just handed the eldest brother a stone tablet.

"Let's see," said the eldest brother. "It says that I must complete three tasks in order to free this castle from an evil enchantment. Well, that sounds interesting enough."

"What are the tasks?" asked the second brother.

"This only lists the first," his brother replied. "I am to find the Princess's pearls in the woods. That seems simple enough. I will be off now and back in time for dinner."

Snider – ELA 8
Blizzard Bag 1

As instructed, the eldest brother searched the woods around the castle. However, by dusk, he had found only a few pearls. He returned and handed them to the old man, saying, "This task was impossible. So tell me what the second task is and perhaps I will do that tomorrow."

The old man just shook his head. At once, the eldest brother turned to stone.

The next day, the old man appeared at the chamber door. He handed the middle brother the stone tablet.

"Well," said the middle brother to Blockhead, "I am to do the same task. I am sure I can succeed where our brother failed. After all, I am the cleverest of the three of us."

So the middle brother headed into the forest, whistling merrily. He did not return until after the sun had set. In his hands he held only a few pearls.

"No one can complete this foolish task," he complained. "Why, I –"

With a shake of his head, the old man interrupted. And at once the middle brother was turned to stone.

Now, Blockhead knew that his turn was next. He would have to find the pearls or be turned to stone. "What will I do?" he moaned. "I am only a soft-hearted blockhead. If my clever brothers could not complete this task, how can I succeed?"

That night Blockhead hardly closed his eyes, so worried he was about to get turned to stone. So he was awake when the old man appeared at the chamber door with the stone tablet. Sighing, Blockhead trudged into the forest to find the pearls.

For several hours, he turned over logs and rocks, hoping to find a few pearls. However, he had little luck. "I have searched and searched," he said, "but these pearls are hard to find. I will be turned to stone like my brothers. Oh, woe is me!"

To Blockhead's amazement, thousands of ants started to scurry towards him along the mossy forest floor. In minutes, a huge heap of pearls lay at Blockhead's feet, shining like stars in a mossy sky. Smiling, Blockhead headed back to the castle.

When he arrived, Blockhead marched right up to the silent old man. "Here are the pearls," he said. "Now, tell me, what is my new task?"

The old man handed him a second stone tablet. Slowly, he made out the words.

"Hmmm . . . I must search the lake for the key to the Princess's room. Very well. I can do that."

At once, Blockhead left the castle and headed for the lake. When he reached the shore, the ducks he had saved earlier dived to the bottom of the lake and retrieved the key.

Blockhead took the key back and presented it to the little old man, who used it to unlock a heavy door. Behind the door, three lovely princesses lay in a deep sleep.

Without a word, the old man handed Blockhead another stone tablet. Blockhead studied it, curious about his third and last task.

"I see," he said. "I must identify which of the princesses is the youngest. But they look exactly alike!"

Then Blockhead read on. “Ah, here is a clue. It tells me what each maiden ate before being enchanted. The oldest had sugar, the second had syrup, and the youngest had honey.”

Blockhead stared and stared at the lovely trio, thinking about the clue. Then he had an idea. “I shall call the queen of the bees, whose lives I saved. *She* will be able to tell which princess ate the honey!”

And that is what happened. The queen of the bees flew straight to the lips of the youngest princess – the one with invisible traces of honey upon her lips.

At once, the enchantment was broken and the castle and everyone in it came to life – even Blockhead’s two brothers. Blockhead married the youngest princess and his brothers married the sisters. And they all lived happily together.

1. What is the theme of this passage? (RL 8.2)
 - a. Complete tasks on time or you will be punished.
 - b. The older you are, the wiser you should be.
 - c. Kindness is often returned.
 - d. Family members must stick together.

2. The element of enchantment in this story is a clue that the passage is an example of what type of literature? (RL 8.2)
 - a. Myth
 - b. Folktale
 - c. Trickster tale
 - d. Tall tale

3. Based on his actions, we can infer that Blockhead is what kind of person? (RL 8.1)
 - a. Kind and good
 - b. Foolish and simple
 - c. Wise and ambitious
 - d. Lazy and cruel

4. Read this excerpt from the passage:

. . . a huge heap of pearls lay at Blockhead’s feet, shining like stars in a mossy sky . . .

The author compares the pearls to stars in order to – (RL 8.4)

- a. Suggest that each pearl is enormous
- b. Show that the moss on the ground looks like the sky
- c. Draw attention to how the pearls gleam with light
- d. Create an idea that Blockhead’s feet are in the sky

5. The two oldest brothers are turned to stone because - (RL 8.2)
- The old man likes the youngest brother the best.
 - They eat all of the enchanted food
 - They are thoughtless and cruel
 - They cannot find all of the princess’s pearls
6. Write an objective summary of the story in the answer box below. Use the rubric to assist you in your writing. (RL 8.2)

Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Below Average (2)	Ineffective (1)
Clear Main Idea	Clear Main Idea	Main idea is unclear-not specifically stated in the writing.	The main idea is not present.
All important details are included	Important details are included but some might be missing	Some critical information is missing	Contains only some details
Details are in logical order	Ideas are in logical order	Ideas are in random order and not logical	Ideas are not in a logical order
Demonstrates clear understanding of information in the text.	Demonstrates adequate understanding	Demonstrates basic understanding of information in text	Demonstrates little or no understanding
Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea and significant details	Is characterized by paraphrasing of the main idea and significant details	Is characterized by the substantial copying of key phrases and minimal paraphrasing	Is characterized by the substantial copying of indiscriminately selected phrases or sentences.

Write your objective summary here.

A large rectangular box containing 25 horizontal lines for writing an objective summary.