

The Golden Age of Pirates

Courtney sat at her desk writing a report about pirates when her mom came in to remind her it was late. But she wanted to finish. She thought it would have been an adventure to be a mate to Calico Jack, a famous pirate. After all, Anne Bonny had been a woman pirate who sailed with him on the Caribbean Sea. "Ah, the 1700s, the golden age of pirates," Courtney sighed...

"Ahoy, matey—are you the new deck hand?"

"Aye, sir," Courtney answered in a deep voice, hoping the mate wouldn't notice she was a girl. "No need to worry," she thought as she looked down at her bare feet and leather knickers. She felt for her hair—it was covered with a scarf. Good, she looked like the rest of the hardy sailors.

"Here's your share of the booty we stole," her mate said as he handed her two doubloons.

"Wow!" Courtney thought, "these are worth two years' pay for a sailor. But these can't be from buried treasure—it was rarely buried. They must have plundered a ship from Spain."

As she gazed at the sails billowing in the wind, she saw the *Jolly Roger*. She recognized Calico Jack's flag—with its skull above two crossed swords—flapping in the breeze. "This is what I've dreamed of—I'm sailing with Calico Jack," she said aloud in her normal voice.

"Shiver me timbers! This one's a girl. Let's make her walk the plank."

"I read pirates never made people do that!" Courtney shouted as they blindfolded her and tied her hands with rope.

"You're just a lousy landlubber," Jack shouted. "You're going to visit Davey Jones's locker!"

Courtney broke through the rope, ripped off the blindfold, and jumped into the motorboat Anne Bonny had waiting. Off they sped into the sinking sun.

Just then, Courtney woke up in her dark room. "Boy," she thought, smiling, "talk about the sun sinking fast!"

Reading Comprehension

1. Which of these could probably not really happen?
 - A. A girl writes a report about pirates.
 - B. A girl has a dream.
 - C. A girl breaks through ropes tied around her hands.
2. In paragraph three, which clue word is a synonym for *plundered*?
 - A. booty
 - B. buried
 - C. stole
3. What did Courtney do immediately after she received her two doubloons?
 - A. She saw the *Jolly Roger* of Calico Jack.
 - B. She broke the rope around her hands.
 - C. She jumped into the motorboat.
4. Which of the following resulted in the pirates ordering Courtney to walk the plank?
 - A. She didn't believe the doubloons were buried treasure.
 - B. She was dreaming.
 - C. She spoke in her own voice and revealed that she was a girl.

A Greek Myth—The Story of Arachne

Arachne lived in the days when cloth was made by hand. Even though she was only mortal and not very beautiful, wealthy, or clever, she was famous for her spinning. No one spun cloth as fast or made it as supple and flowing.

Often Arachne could be found admiring her slender hands, their long fingers, and the light, airy gauze they wove. She was certain no one could create anything as lovely. She wove tapestries with scenes fit for palaces. Wherever she spun, all would come to watch. It was like a ballet, with the shuttle dancing across the loom and the threads leaping as they wove into place. Arachne boldly exclaimed that "not even the goddess Athena could teach a born artist like me."

At that moment an old woman at the edge of the crowd rose up tall and magnificent. As her worn, brown robes fell away, the glittering gown of the goddess Athena appeared. Instead of begging forgiveness, Arachne challenged Athena to a weaving contest. Looms were set up at opposite ends of the room. Not a sound was heard for a time except the clicking of the shuttles. When all was quiet the onlookers seemed embarrassed. All could see that Arachne's work was better than that of the goddess.

Athena was furious. She ripped apart Arachne's cloth and struck her with a spell. "You will weave forever, yet no one will want your tapestries on their walls." At once, Arachne's slender body became round and bulbous. All that remained of her hands were her fingers, which sprouted from her shoulders.

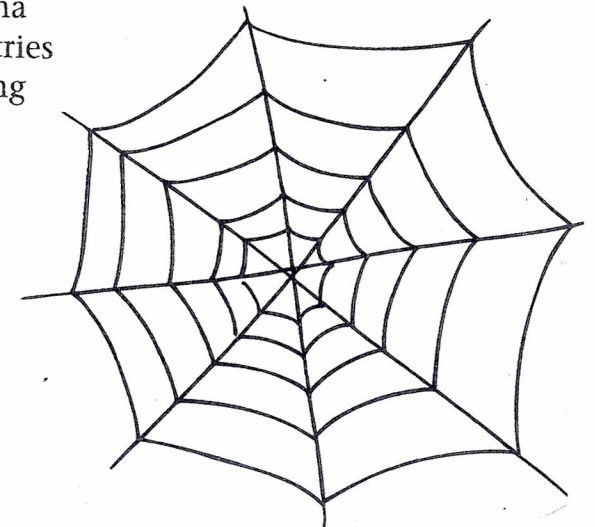
Arachne the spider scuttled to hide in a crevice until night. Only then did she dare to spin her web in a corner of the room. Alas, when someone found her work they would exclaim, "Oh, another cobweb!" and brush it away.

Reading Comprehension

1. "No one spun cloth as fast or made it as supple and flowing." Another word for *supple* is _____.
A. stiff
B. flexible
C. simple
2. "At once, Arachne's slender body became round and bulbous." The word *bulbous* means _____.
A. shaped like a bulb
B. bumpy
C. long
3. "She wove tapestries with scenes fit for palaces." A *tapestry* is _____.
A. a woven cloth with a picture
B. woven tape used for repairs
C. a story told to royalty

A simile uses *like* or *as* to compare two things. Find the simile in paragraph two. Then answer the following:

4. The two things being compared are _____.
A. Arachne and Athena
B. dancing and tapestries
C. a ballet and weaving



I Certainly Am Not Hard to Please When It Comes to Food!

I like the way all food is fixed,
If it is by itself, not mixed.
Not served on top of sticky rice,
Separate is normal, nice.

And certainly not, if you please,
Nothing's worse than black-eyed peas.
Peas are round and green, I think,
Not the color of my ink.

Not buttery, white cauliflower,
Never! No—not at this hour.
I don't like starchy lima beans,
They're not for people wearing jeans.

Don't try to give me broccoli trees,
Or food that's moldy—like blue cheese.
Pass not a single Brussels sprout,
You feed me these—I'll throw them out.

I won't eat these if I am able,
At least not at the dinner table.

I do like sandwiches made of cheese,
Heated up and toasted, please.
Spaghetti's good and pizza's great,
Go ahead and put them on my plate.

So, see, I hope you recognize,
That as your daughter I am wise.
I told you that I am not picky,
I just don't like the food that's icky.

1. You can tell the poem's narrator is
 - A. not hard to please.
 - B. a girl.
 - C. a big eater.
 - D. willing to eat anything.
2. A better name for this poem might be
 - A. "What's for Dinner? I'm Hungry"
 - B. "Three Foods I Like"
 - C. "A Very Picky Eater"
 - D. "Let's Eat Out"
3. From reading the poem, you can tell the narrator's least favorite food is _____.
 - A. sticky rice
 - B. lobster
 - C. lima beans
 - D. black-eyed peas
4. The author wrote this poem mainly
 - A. to persuade people to eat healthy foods.
 - B. to describe different foods people eat.
 - C. to explain why a lot of food is wasted.
 - D. to amuse readers with details about a fussy eater.
5. Which of the following is this person's favorite food?
 - A. pizza
 - B. toasted cheese sandwiches
 - C. spaghetti
 - D. can't tell

The Man Who "Invented" Peanuts

You've heard of George Washington, but have you ever heard of George Washington Carver? He was born as a slave around 1864. He lost both of his parents when he was still a baby. His former owners, Moses and Susan Carver, raised him and taught him to read. Even as a boy, George was anxious to learn everything he could. He especially loved to learn about plants of all kinds.

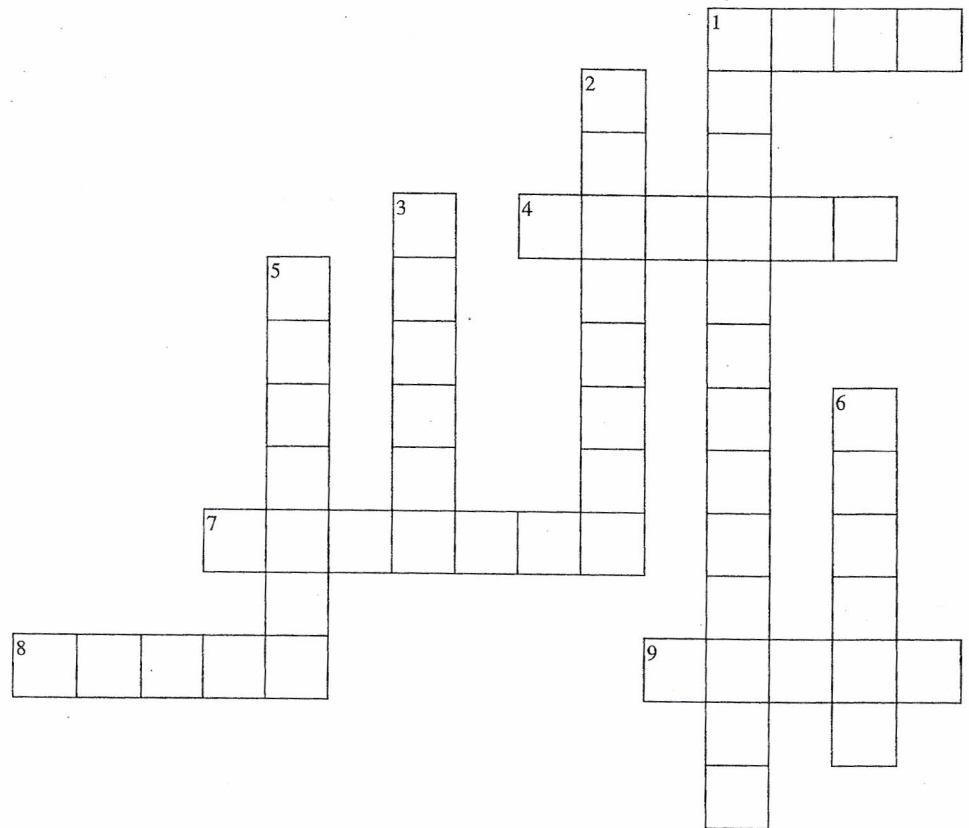
There were few opportunities for black people then. Still, George was able to attend a school for black children. He studied hard—he was always reading a book. When he was a teenager he began working odd jobs. He saved his money so he could attend college someday.

At college George studied botany—the science of plants. He researched methods of helping farmers. Many of the farmers in the South grew cotton every single year. George believed they could improve their soil by growing other crops. He soon took a special interest in peanuts.

Of course, George Washington Carver didn't actually invent peanuts. But you wouldn't believe how many ways he found to use peanuts. He made peanut butter and peanut wafers. He made pancakes and candy and hundreds of other foods. But that's not all—he made soap and lotion from peanuts. He made ink and rubber. There was no limit to what this man could do with peanuts. He even made gas and glue.

George Washington Carver became the first African American to teach at Iowa State University. He also worked to improve race relations between African Americans and whites. He had goodwill for everyone. He even gave his life savings to the school where he taught. What an amazing man!

Comprehension Crossword



Across

1. something Carver loved to do when he could
4. This word means "to create."
7. the plant George Washington Carver was most interested in
8. He was born a _____.
9. George Washington Carver's adoptive father's name

Down

1. "George Washington Carver also worked to improve _____."
2. the number of things George Washington Carver made from peanuts
3. a crop Southern farmers grew
5. He saved his money to go here.
6. a bouncy substance made from peanuts