

Name: _____

Oliver and Peppercorn

By Neal Levin



Oliver sat by himself on the playground, munching away on his cucumber sandwich.

Peppercorn came along, carrying a brown paper lunch sack. "Is this seat taken?" he said.

"Yes. It's for my friend," Oliver told him.

Peppercorn scratched his head. "Where is he?"

"He's probably busy." Oliver took a sip of his apple juice. "He's very important."

"Is that so?" Peppercorn asked, sitting down. "Well, I have an important friend myself. My friend can tell you when it's going to rain. He can feel it in his elbow."

"Really?" Oliver said. "I have a friend who can balance a basketball on his elbow."

"That's nothing," Peppercorn said, peeling a hard-boiled egg. "I have a friend who can spin a basketball on the tip of his finger and another one on the top of his head. At the same time."

"Is that so?" Oliver said. "I'm friends with someone who can play the piano at the same time as the guitar."

"I'm friends with someone who can play the piano and guitar blindfolded. And someone who can count to a gazillion backwards," said Peppercorn. "I have tons of friends."

"I bet I have more," said Oliver. "I have so many friends I can't even name them all."

"I have the most friends in the whole wide universe." Peppercorn spread

his arms apart as far as he could reach.

Oliver looked around. "If you have so many friends, where are they all?"

Peppercorn shrugged. "If you have so many friends, why do you always eat lunch by yourself?"

Oliver wiped his lips with a napkin. "I told you. I happen to be saving a seat for my friend right now."

"Well, I happen to be sitting in that seat," said Peppercorn. "So you know what that means?"

"What?" said Oliver.

"I must be your friend." Peppercorn smiled.

Oliver looked at Peppercorn and smiled back. He knew a friend would show up one day. It's a good thing he saved him a place to sit.



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1. What was the author's purpose?
 - a. to teach you that bragging is bad
 - b. to describe how kids play and eat lunch
 - c. to tell the story of how two boys became friends
 - d. to show the best way to make friends
2. What did Peppercorn eat for lunch?
 - a. corn on the cob
 - b. a salad
 - c. a cucumber sandwich
 - d. a hard-boiled egg
3. Why does Peppercorn say he's Oliver's friend?

4. When you exaggerate (*ex-aj-ur-ate*), you brag about something by saying it is bigger or better than it really is. Which of the following is an exaggeration?
 - a. Kids can have a lot of fun at the playground.
 - b. He can count backwards from a gazillion.
 - c. I ate a sandwich for lunch.
 - d. My friend is good at playing piano.
5. Do you think Oliver and Peppercorn were being honest about what their friends can do? Why or why not?

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The scrambled words below are vocabulary words from the story. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Please be sure each word is spelled correctly.



1. _____

c a b l e a n

clue: to keep steady

2. _____

h n m u c

clue: to eat or chew on something

3. _____

d h a r - l d o b e i

clue: a way to cook eggs

4. _____

d o f d l b i l n

clue: something to cover your eyes

5. _____

l a n i i z g o l

clue: a big number that isn't real

6. _____

e n g p e l i

clue: removing the skin or shell from something

7. _____

a k r b a s d c w

clue: in the opposite direction or order

8. _____

v r u e i n e s

clue: all of space; everything we know that exists

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In the story, *Oliver and Peppercorn*, you read about two boys named Oliver and Peppercorn. They meet while having lunch on a playground. After talking for a while, they become friends.

Think of a time that you made a friend. Where did you meet your friend? What were you both doing? Describe how you became friends.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ANSWER KEY

Oliver and Peppercorn

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1. What was the author's purpose?
 - a. to teach you that bragging is bad
 - b. to describe how kids play and eat lunch
 - c. to tell the story of how two boys became friends**
 - d. to show the best way to make friends

2. What did Peppercorn eat for lunch?
 - a. corn on the cob
 - b. a salad
 - c. a cucumber sandwich
 - d. a hard-boiled egg**

3. Why does Peppercorn say he's Oliver's friend?

Peppercorn says that because he's sitting in the seat Oliver saved for a friend, he must be Oliver's friend.

4. When you exaggerate (*ex-aj-ur-ate*), you brag about something by saying it is bigger or better than it really is. Which of the following is an exaggeration?
 - a. Kids can have a lot of fun at the playground.
 - b. He can count backwards from a gazillion.**
 - c. I ate a sandwich for lunch.
 - d. My friend is good at playing piano.

5. Do you think Oliver and Peppercorn were being honest about what their friends can do? Why or why not? **Answers will vary. Examples:**

No, because it's not possible to play guitar and piano at the same time. // Sometimes, because you can balance a basketball but you can't count to a gazillion backwards.

ANSWER KEY

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1. balance

c a b l e a n

clue: to keep steady

2. munch

h n m u c

clue: to eat or chew on something

3. hard-boiled

d h a r - l d o b e i

clue: a way to cook eggs

4. blindfold

d o f d l b i l n

clue: something to cover your eyes

5. gazillion

l a n i i z g o l

clue: a big number that isn't real

6. peeling

e n g p e l i

clue: removing the skin or shell from something

7. backwards

a k r b a s d c w

clue: in the opposite direction or order

8. universe

v r u e i n e s

clue: all of space; everything we know that exists