

# Practice on Your Own

Use the Notes column to take notes and use SALSA™ strategies on the paired passages that follow.

## Adapted from “The Three Fishes”

by *Ellen Babbitt*

Word  
Count

Once, long ago, there were three Fishes who lived in a faraway river. They were named Curious, Thoughtful, and Hasty. One day the three friends wandered out of the wild country where no men lived, to explore the long, winding path of the river as it led to the town of men.

Thoughtful said to the other two: “There is danger all around us here. Fishermen come here to catch fish using all sorts of nets and lines. Let us return to the wild country where we used to live.”

But there were so many wonderful new things to see, and taste, and do, that the other two Fishes kept putting off their departure from one day to the next.

Then, one afternoon, Curious and Hasty went swimming on ahead of Thoughtful and they did not see the fisherman’s net. Thoughtful saw them rush into the net and become tangled.

150 words

“I must rescue my friends,” said Thoughtful, as she worked out a plan.

Swimming around the net, Thoughtful splashed in the water in front of it, like a Fish that had broken through the net and gone up the river. Then she swam quietly to the back of the net and splashed there like a Fish that had broken through and gone down the river.

The fisherman, seeing the splashing water, thought the Fishes had broken through his net and that one had gone up the river, while the other had gone down. He pulled in the net by one corner to try again. That let the two Fishes out of the net, and away they swam to find Thoughtful.

“You saved our lives, Thoughtful,” they said, “and now we are quite ready to return home to the wild country.”

So back they all went to their old home, where they lived safely ever after.

155 words

Notes

# The Ant Explorer

by CJ Dennis

Word  
Count



106 words

Once a little sugar ant made up his mind to roam—  
To fare away far away, far away from home.  
He had eaten all his breakfast, and he had his ma's consent  
To see what he should chance to see and here's the way he went—  
Up and down a fern frond, round and round a stone,  
Down a gloomy gully, where he loathed to be alone,  
Up a mighty mountain range, seven inches high,  
Through the fearful forest grass that nearly hid the sky,  
Out along a bracken bridge, bending in the moss,  
Till he reached a dreadful desert that was feet and feet across.  
'Twas a dry, deserted desert, and a trackless land to tread,  
He wished that he was home again and tucked up tight in bed.  
His little legs were wobbly, his strength was nearly spent,  
And so he turned around again and here's the way he went—  
Back away from desert lands feet and feet across,  
Back along the bracken bridge, bending in the moss,  
Through the fearful forest grass shutting out the sky,  
Up a mighty mountain range seven inches high,  
Down a gloomy gully, where he loathed to be alone,  
Up and down a fern frond and round and round a stone.

124 words

A dreary ant, a weary ant, resolved no more to roam,  
He staggered up the garden path and popped back home.

**1** What kind of writing is “The Three Fishes”?

- (A) Narrative poem
- (B) Science fiction
- (C) Biography
- (D) Folk tale

**Skill** *Genre*

**2** What about the setting of “The Three Fishes” MOST affects the events of the story?

- (F) People live by this part of the river.
- (G) The river is long and winding and far from home.
- (H) The story takes place very long ago in a faraway land.
- (J) The river is so wild that it breaks the fisherman’s net.

**Skill** *Setting*

**3** Why are Curious and Hasty unwilling to return home at first?

- (A) They do not believe that fishermen are real.
- (B) They do not like their old home.
- (C) They are having more fun where they are.
- (D) They want to see what is at the other end of the river.

**Skill** *Plot and Conflict*

**4** The author of “The Ant Explorer” MOST LIKELY repeats the ant’s entire trip in reverse in order to—

- (F) help the reader imagine each place the ant visited.
- (G) suggest that readers should go exploring, just as the ant did.
- (H) emphasize how far the ant had gone and how much he had seen.
- (J) make the poem easier to read aloud.

**Skill** *Author’s Use of Language*

**5** Over the course of the poem, the ant in “The Ant Explorer” changes from—

- (A) brave to scared.
- (B) curious to exhausted.
- (C) homesick to satisfied.
- (D) happy to lonely.

**Skill** *Character*

**6** Read the following line from “The Ant Explorer”

’Twas a dry, deserted desert, and a trackless  
land to tread,

This line is an example of—

- (F) alliteration.
- (G) simile.
- (H) rhyme.
- (J) onomatopoeia.

**Skill** *Author’s Use of Language*

**7** How are the themes of “The Three Fishes” and “The Ant Explorer” similar?

- (A) Both passages teach that travel in faraway places is good for you.
- (B) Both passages suggest that home is where you belong.
- (C) Both passages suggest that people should be careful not to harm animals.
- (D) Both passages show that you can rely on family and friends to save you.

**Skill** *Theme*

**8** How are the main conflicts in “The Three Fishes” and “The Ant Explorer” different?

- (F) The fishes struggle against nature (the river); the ant struggles against himself.
- (G) The fishes struggle against each other; the ant struggles against himself.
- (H) The fishes struggle against an object (the net); the ant struggles against a person (his mother).
- (J) The fishes struggle against a person (the fisherman); the ant struggles against nature (the lands he travels).

**Skill** *Plot and Conflict*