

Focus Skill: Character, Setting, and Plot

- Read the passages. Then choose the best answer for each question.

The Surprise

Jordan Brin's mother was a nurse. She worked at the hospital downtown. Jordan usually did her homework and set the dinner table while she waited for her mother to come home from work. As Jordan was getting a snack from the kitchen, she noticed the blinking light on the answering machine.

It was a message from her mother. "Jordan, I have a big surprise for you. Call me when you get home."

The last time her mother had surprised her, the surprise was not what Jordan had expected. Her mother had asked her to help with the annual neighborhood cleanup. Still, Jordan hoped this would be a pleasant surprise. She paged her mom, who called back almost immediately.

"You'll never guess who's here," her mother said gleefully into the phone. "It's Cally Chin."

Jordan had posters of Cally Chin on her bedroom walls. She was a basketball sensation. Jordan's mother explained that Cally had injured herself and had come to the hospital. As Ms. Brin took care of Cally, they became friendly. Now Jordan had a chance to meet Cally in person at the hospital.

Jordan jumped on the first bus headed toward the hospital. It was a great experience. Cally gave Jordan some tips for improving her own basketball skills. She also autographed a basketball for Jordan. This time, Jordan's mother's surprise had been great!

Name _____

1. Who is the main character in the story?
 - (A) Jordan Brin
 - (B) Jordan's mother
 - (C) Cally Chin
 - (D) Ms. Brin

2. Where does most of the story take place?
 - (A) at Jordan's school and at the hospital
 - (B) at Jordan's home and on the bus
 - (C) at Jordan's school and at her home
 - (D) at Jordan's home and at the hospital

3. Why was Cally Chin at the hospital?
 - (A) She was hoping to meet Jordan.
 - (B) She was injured.
 - (C) She was old friends with Ms. Brin.
 - (D) She was very ill.

The Giant Lobster

Gary had heard about the giant lobster from some friends. It turned out they were right about its size. It weighed thirteen pounds! When he saw it, Gary felt more than awe for this lobster, though. He had read that large lobsters were also old ones. This one was trapped in a tiny tank at the supermarket. The thought of someone eating that poor old guy made Gary very sad.

He wanted to rescue the lobster, but he knew that he had neither the time nor the money to take care of a pet. Besides, where would he put it? Even so, Gary asked the supermarket manager if he would let the lobster go to a good home. The manager explained that lobsters are sold by the pound, and he showed Gary how much the giant lobster cost. The manager could not afford to give away that much money. Then Gary asked his friends to give money to buy the lobster, but his friends were more interested in eating the lobster than saving it.

Finally, Gary called the city zoo. Mr. Hu, an employee of the zoo, said he would try to help. Gary and Mr. Hu worried that someone might buy the lobster before they could save it. Working together, they raised enough money to buy the lobster, and they put it in the children's section of the zoo's aquarium. Mr. Hu put a picture of Gary beside the lobster's new tank.

Name _____

4. How does the supermarket manager affect the events in the story?
- Ⓐ By lowering the price of the lobster, the supermarket manager helps Gary buy the lobster and save it.
 - Ⓑ The supermarket manager likes lobsters, so he helps Gary raise money to save the lobster.
 - Ⓒ The supermarket manager dislikes Gary's friends; therefore, he will not allow them to buy the lobster.
 - Ⓓ Because the supermarket manager is unable to help Gary, Gary must find other ways to save the lobster.
5. Why is Mr. Hu an important character in the story?
- Ⓐ Mr. Hu helps Gary resolve his problem.
 - Ⓑ Mr. Hu makes solving the problem in the story more difficult.
 - Ⓒ Mr. Hu is the main character in the story.
 - Ⓓ Mr. Hu is part of the problem to be resolved in the story