

Hansel and Gretel

Long ago, in a humble hut on the edge of a great forest, there lived a brother and sister. Hansel was the elder sibling and Gretel was the younger. They lived with their father, a poor but hard-working woodcutter, and his new wife.

The family were not well off. Though they often struggled to get by, things became even worse when a great famine struck the land. With barely enough to feed the entire family of four, they soon became very hungry and their father and stepmother became extremely desperate.

Late one evening, as they readied themselves for bed, the woodcutter solemnly asked his wife, "How can we continue like this? What will become of us with so little food to share between us all?"

His wife thought for a while and, when she spoke, the most terrible and wicked idea escaped her lips. "There is only one thing for it," she declared. "We must take the children into the woods and leave them there.



Hansel and Gretel

Without them, we might have just enough food for the two of us to survive.”

“How can you suggest such an awful thing?” the woodcutter protested. His wife, however, insisted that if they did not act, all four of them would starve. Once she had convinced him of her plan, they agreed that they would lead the children into the thickest part of the forest the very next day.

In the bedroom, Hansel and Gretel were both still awake. Despite the sound of their bellies rumbling with hunger, they heard every word of their parents’ plan. Gretel began to sob.

Hansel comforted his younger sister. “Don’t worry,” he said. “I will look after you. I will think of something.”

He waited until the house was quiet, then sneaked silently outside. A cool breeze blew the clouds across the sky and in front of a full moon. The trees here were less dense than in the forest. Scattered all around on the ground were smooth, white pebbles, glistening in the moonlight. It gave Hansel a marvellous idea and he filled his pockets with as many pebbles as he could carry. Quietly, he returned to bed and reassured Gretel that all would be well.



This is an extract from ‘Twist the Text: The Hansel and Gretel Collection’.
Download the full eBook [here](#).

Questions

1. Which of the following are true? Tick **two**.

- Hansel is older than Gretel.
 Hansel and Gretel are the same age.
- Gretel is older than Hansel.
 Hansel and Gretel are brother and sister.

2. Number the events to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.

- Hansel collected pebbles from the garden.
- The woodcutter's wife suggested leaving the children in the woods.
- Hansel crept back into bed.
- 1 The family became very hungry.
- Hansel sneaked outside.

3. Draw **four** lines to match the noun with the adjective that describes it.

wicked	moon
full	breeze
cool	idea
humble	hut

4. Where are the grown-ups going to leave the children? Tick **one**.

- in a humble hut
 in the woods
- in the town
 in their bedroom

5. Find and copy **one** word which means 'argued against something someone has said or done'.

6. What did Hansel do with the pebbles from the ground?

7. What impression do you get of the woodcutter? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Which of the following are true? Tick **two**.

- Hansel is older than Gretel.**

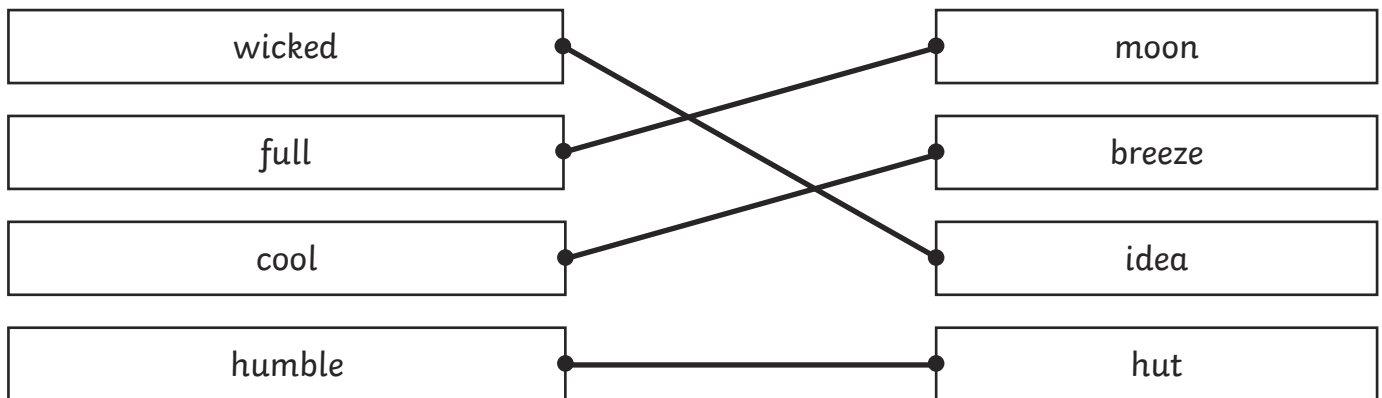
 Hansel and Gretel are the same age.
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5. Find and copy **one** word which means 'argued against something someone has said or done'.

protested

6. What did Hansel do with the pebbles from the ground?

He put them in his pockets/he filled his pockets with them.

7. What impression do you get of the woodcutter? Explain your answer.

Children's own responses which may refer to any of the following:

- **The woodcutter is desperate and hungry.**
- **It was not his idea to abandon the children and he was shocked at the suggestion.**
- **The woodcutter was reluctant to agree with the plan.**
- **The woodcutter was easily convinced to abandon his children.**

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The family were not well off. Though they often struggled to get by, things became even worse when a great famine struck the land. With barely enough to feed the entire family of four, they soon became very hungry and their father and stepmother became extremely desperate.

Late one evening, as they readied themselves for bed, the woodcutter solemnly asked his wife, "How can we continue like this? What will become of us with so little food to share between us all?"

His wife thought for a while and, when she spoke, the most terrible and wicked idea escaped her lips. "There is only one thing for it," she declared. "We must take the children into the woods and leave them there. Without them, we might have just enough food for the two of us to survive."

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starve. Once she had convinced him of her plan, they agreed that they would lead the children into the thickest part of the forest the very next day.

In the bedroom, Hansel and Gretel were both still awake. Despite the sound of their bellies rumbling with hunger, they heard every word of their parents' plan. Gretel began to sob.

Hansel comforted his younger sister. "Don't worry," he said. "I will look after you. I will think of something."

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Sure enough, they were awoken early the next morning.

"Up you get," called their stepmother just after sunrise. "We all need to go into the forest to collect more wood."

She gave each of them a single slice of bread, instructing them not to eat it until later as there was no more. Off they all marched – father, stepmother and both young children – deep into the heart of the forest. However, unbeknown to the two adults, clever Hansel was leaving a trail. One by one, he dropped the white pebbles as they walked. If they were left alone, he knew that they could follow the trail back home.



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- Hansel dropped the pebbles on the ground.
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- The children's stepmother gave them a slice of bread each.
- The family became very hungry.
- Hansel collected pebbles in his pockets.

3. Draw **four** lines to match the adjective with the noun that it describes. One of the adjectives has more than one matching noun.

wicked

idea

humble

breeze

cool

hut

marvellous

4. Where are the grown-ups going to leave the children? Tick **one**.

- in a humble hut
- in the town
- in the woods
- in their bedroom

5. Find and copy **one** word from paragraph 3 which means 'seriously and sadly'.

6. Why did Hansel fill his pockets with white pebbles?

7. What does 'the heart of the forest' tell you about the location they went to? Explain your answer.

8. What impression do you get of the woodcutter? Explain your answer.

Answers

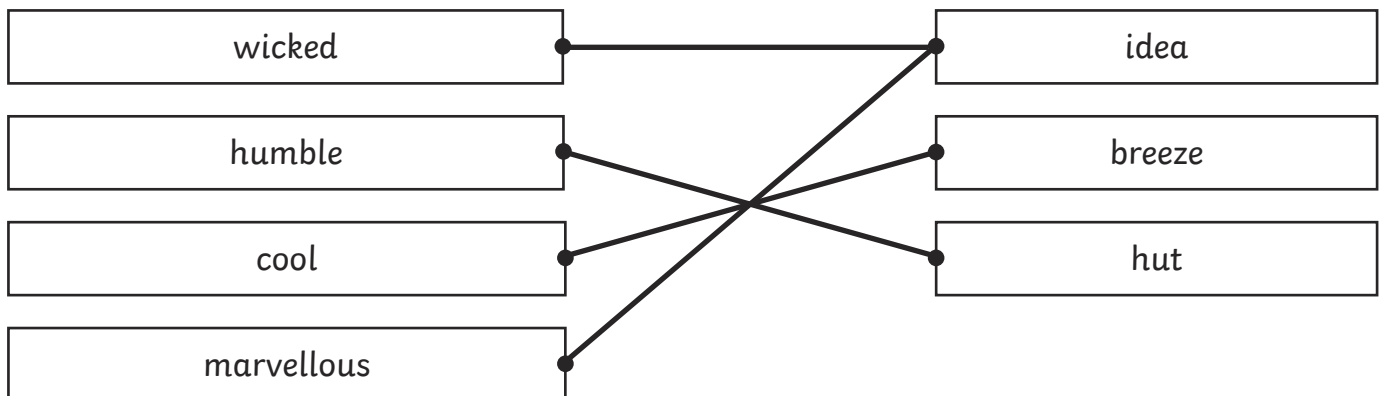
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- 5 Hansel dropped the pebbles on the ground.
- 2 The woodcutter's wife suggested leaving the children in the woods.
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5. Find and copy **one** word from paragraph 3 which means 'seriously and sadly'.
solemnly

6. Why did Hansel fill his pockets with white pebbles?

So that he could leave a trail as they walked. If the children were left alone, they could follow the trail home.

7. What does 'the heart of the forest' tell you about the location they went to? Explain your answer.

Children's own responses which refer to the fact that the heart is deep or central inside the body, and that the location was as deep into the forest as they could go.

8. What impression do you get of the woodcutter? Explain your answer.

Children's own responses which may refer to any of the following:

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It was a cold morning. Upon arriving at a suitable clearing, the family made a small fire together to stay warm. Hansel and Gretel sat beside the gathered pile of burning twigs.

“You two stay here,” their father instructed. “We will go to collect some wood. We’ll be back for you in a little while.”

Poor Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire all afternoon and all evening until the flames faded away. They each ate their single piece of bread and fell asleep, huddled together next to the dying embers. Their father and stepmother did not return.

When they awoke, it was dark and Gretel began to cry once more. Hansel softly squeezed her hand to reassure her. Under the moonlight, they followed the glistening trail of white pebbles, just as Hansel had planned. The pair walked all through the night and reached their home early the next morning.



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- The children's stepmother gave them a slice of bread each.
- Hansel and Gretel followed the trail home.
- Hansel collected pebbles in his pockets.

2. Draw **five** lines to match the adjective with the noun that it describes. Be careful! Some nouns may have more than one matching adjective.

wicked

idea

humble

moon

terrible

breeze

cool

hut

marvellous

3. What reason did the stepmother give for going into the woods?

4. Find and copy one word from paragraph 3 which means 'seriously and sadly'.

5. Find and copy evidence from near the end of the extract that tells you that Hansel and Gretel were cold once the fire had gone out.

6. Read the sentence beginning 'She gave each of them a single slice of bread...'. Why has the author described their location as 'the heart of the forest'? Explain your answer.

7. What impression do you get of the woodcutter? Explain your answer.

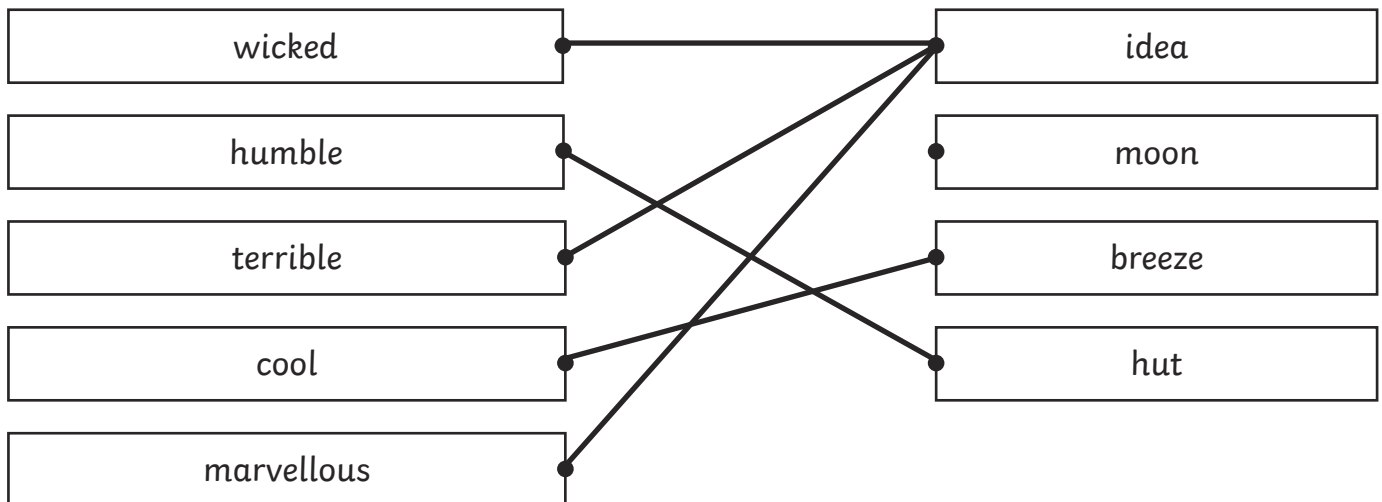
8. Compare the characters of Hansel and Gretel so far. Use evidence from the text to explain the differences between them in your opinion.

Answers

1. Number the events to show the order in which they happened.

- 4 Hansel dropped the pebbles on the ground.
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- 2 Hansel collected pebbles in his pockets.

2. Draw **five** lines to match the adjective with the noun that it describes. Be careful! Some nouns may have more than one matching adjective.



3. What reason did the stepmother give for going into the woods?

To collect firewood

4. Find and copy one word from paragraph 3 which means 'seriously and sadly'.

solemnly

5. Find and copy evidence from near the end of the extract that tells you that Hansel and Gretel were cold once the fire had gone out.

Hansel and Gretel huddled together to sleep.

6. Read the sentence beginning 'She gave each of them a single slice of bread...'. Why has the author described their location as 'the heart of the forest'? Explain your answer.

Children's own responses which refer to the metaphor created by 'heart': that the heart is deep or central inside the body, and that the location was as deep into the forest as they could go.

7. What impression do you get of the woodcutter? Explain your answer.

Children's own responses which may refer to any of the following:

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8. Compare the characters of Hansel and Gretel so far. Use evidence from the text to explain the differences between them in your opinion.

Children's responses may include any of the following but should include evidence from the text:

- **Hansel is more talkative than Gretel (Gretel has not spoken yet).**
- **Hansel is proactive; while Gretel cries, he formulates plans and puts them into action.**
- **Hansel is older than Gretel ('Hansel was the elder sibling and Gretel was the younger').**
- **Hansel is more optimistic than Gretel ("Don't worry [...] I will think of something.")**
- **Hansel takes responsibility for Gretel's safety ("I will look after you.")**