

## 5 An adventure story

### Reading and comprehension

Read the story, *The day the school shook*, then answer the questions that follow.

#### ***The day the school shook***

The children had gone into their classroom that morning as usual. They had sat in their seats and taken out their books. Now, Mrs Marr, their teacher, was telling them what they were going to do in the lesson.

Joshua stared up at the ceiling where a large black spider was slowly spinning a web.



‘Joshua! Are you listening to me?’ Mrs Marr called out.

‘Yes, Ma’am,’ Joshua replied, although he had not been really. He tried to concentrate on what Mrs Marr was saying.

‘Today, we are going to write adventure stories,’ Mrs Marr said excitedly. Joshua groaned to himself. He did not like writing stories, he could never think of anything to write about.

Suddenly, a low rumbling sound could be heard. Joshua looked out of the window, across to the road that ran past the school, expecting to see a big truck driving by. But, the road was empty. He looked up at the sky, thinking that it was thunder that he had heard. However, the sky was as blue as his school uniform and completely cloudless. He glanced towards Mrs Marr, aware that she had stopped speaking.

Just at that moment, the ground beneath his feet started to tremble. Mrs Marr’s eyes widened.

‘Class!’ she said sharply, ‘Follow the drill please.’ The class knew exactly what she meant. They dropped to the floor and quickly crawled beneath their desks. Joshua grabbed the legs of his wooden desk and held on tightly. The rumbling grew louder. The trembling became stronger. Someone started crying.

Peering out from under his desk, Joshua saw books cascading from the shelves onto the floor. Mrs Marr’s table tilted and everything on it slid sideways. He could see Mrs Marr lying under the table. She had her eyes closed. Was she hurt? He too shut his eyes. He knew what was happening. It was why they practised the drill Drop, Cover, Hold On every week. It was an earthquake.

Gradually, Joshua realised that the thundering and shaking had stopped. He could still hear some of his classmates crying.

‘Now what?’ he said to himself. They had practised the drill many times, but he could not remember ever being told what to do afterwards. His hands were still gripping the legs of his desk. He slowly let go, opened his eyes and looked around. The floor of the classroom was covered with books, paper, backpacks – everything that would have been on the shelves and desks before the earthquake.



A voice broke into his thoughts. It was the Principal.

‘Class, come out from under your desks slowly and carefully. Line up by the door quietly. Do not panic. Everything is fine.’

The class did as they were told, but Mrs Marr remained still under her table. They followed the Principal out of the classroom and he quickly led them across the playground to the school field. The rest of the school were sitting quietly on the grass.

‘Your parents will come and collect you soon,’ the Principal announced, ‘Once we have checked that the school buildings are undamaged, we will contact everyone to tell you when to come back to school.’



A few days later, Joshua sat at his desk. The Principal stood at the front of the class.

'Where is Mrs Marr?' one of the girls asked.

'She is fine,' the Principal replied, 'She had a bit of a bump on the head. She is in hospital where the doctors are keeping an eye on her but she'll be back at school next week. Now, what were you doing before the quake started?'

'We were going to write adventure stories,' Joshua called out.

'Right, carry on writing your stories,' the Principal said.

Joshua found his pencil and opened his book. At the top of an empty page he wrote, 'The day the school shook'. He knew that he could write this story. After all, he had just had the biggest adventure of his life.



Read the adventurous story *The Day the School Shook*, and then answer the following questions:

1. What was the low rumbling sound that could be heard? Where do you infer this from?

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2. ‘Class!’ she said sharply, ‘Follow the drill please.’ Based on your understanding, what was the drill?

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3. Joshua saw books cascading from the shelves onto the floor. What does the word ‘cascading’ mean in context?

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4. According to the passage, Joshua had the biggest adventure of his life. In your own words, summarize Joshua’s adventure.

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5. What is the overall mood of the passage? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

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6. From the passage, highlight two adverbs of manner.

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7. “She is in hospital where the doctors are keeping an eye on her, but she’ll be back at school next week.” Change it to indirect speech.

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8. What does the story reveal about the principal’s character?

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9. What makes this story an adventure one? Specify key elements and characteristics.

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10. Just at that moment, the ground beneath his feet started to tremble. Mrs. Marr’s eyes widened. What does the underlined statement imply?

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