The Day the Worms Moved In

October/November 2019

Think About It!

Critical-Thinking Questions: After reading “The Day the Worms Moved In,” think about the whole story to answer the questions below.

1. What message do you think the author wants you to take away from the story?

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________________________________________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Who is the narrator of the story? How would you describe the way she tells it (for example, serious, angry, funny, etc.)? Support your answer with examples from the story.

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Critical Thinking
“The Day the Worms Moved In”
October/November 2019
3. After reading this story, would you want to try worm composting? What might be some advantages or disadvantages?

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**Pick Your Own Vocabulary Words**

**Directions:** We’ve given you the definitions of five important words from this issue’s story “The Day the Worms Moved In.” Look for the words as you read. Then pick out three more words that are new to you. Write their definitions, using context clues or a dictionary to help you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>PAGE NO.</th>
<th>IT MEANS . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. burrow</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>to dig a tunnel or hole in the ground to have a safe place to stay or to live (for animals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. composting</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>heaping together old leaves, food scraps, manure, and other natural materials so they can change into soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. phobia</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>an extreme fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. sawhorses</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>racks to place wood on when it’s being sawed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. writhing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>wiggling and squirming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MY OWN WORDS:**

6. 

7. 

8. 

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**Maddie’s Moment of Truth**

**Directions:** Answer the questions in the chart below to help you figure out how Maddie changes in “The Day the Worms Moved In.” Use specific examples from the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Beginning</strong></th>
<th><strong>Middle</strong></th>
<th><strong>End</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How does Maddie feel when she learns that her mom will be raising worms in their garage?</td>
<td>When is Maddie forced to go near the worms? How does this make her feel?</td>
<td>What forces Maddie to face her fear of worms? What action does she take?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why does she feel this way?</td>
<td>How do her feelings contrast with those of her mom?</td>
<td>How does she feel as a result?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Your turn!** Do you think Maddie’s feelings about the worms will change? Write a prediction on a separate sheet of paper, making sure to include Maddie’s feelings and how she responds to those feelings.
The Plot of the Worms

Directions: The action of a story is called the plot. Many plots start with a problem or issue. The issue gets more complicated until it reaches a climax, or turning point—usually the most dramatic part of the story. The result of the climax follows, then the conclusion. Fill in each block in the pyramid below to identify the plot parts of “The Day the Worms Moved In.” Use the prompts to help you.

1. Opening Action
   What big problem is Maddie facing at the beginning of the story?

2. Rising Action
   What are some ways that Maddie tries to deal with her problem?

3. Climax
   What dramatic event happens that forces Maddie to face her problem?

4. Falling Action
   How does Maddie react to this event?

5. Conclusion
   What has Maddie learned about herself in the end?
In the story “The Day the Worms Moved In,” author Marlane Kennedy often has Maddie, the narrator, describe her feelings using hyperbole [hye-PUR-buh-lee]. That means Maddie exaggerates her feelings to show how strong they are. This activity will help you understand how the author uses hyperbole.

**Handling Hyperbole**

In the story “The Day the Worms Moved In,” author Marlane Kennedy often has Maddie, the narrator, describe her feelings using hyperbole [hye-PUR-buh-lee]. That means Maddie exaggerates her feelings to show how strong they are. This activity will help you understand how the author uses hyperbole.

**Directions:** Read each line from the story below. Think about what each one means. Then answer the questions that follow.

1. “With me, seeing even a single worm makes me . . . well, imagine being in the path of an oncoming train.” (p. 11)

Maddie does not actually feel like she is in the path of an oncoming train. What does this description tell you about how Maddie feels about worms?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Find at least one other phrase in the same paragraph that helps you understand what Maddie means by “being in the path of an oncoming train.” Write it here.

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

2. “My heart jumped out of my chest and fled the room.” (p. 12)

Does Maddie’s heart actually jump out of her chest and flee the room? How does she feel at this point in the story? What makes her feel this way?

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. “I turn my head away, knowing I’d faint if I caught even a glimpse of the pink in the dirt.” (p. 12)

Based on the rest of the story, would Maddie really faint if she saw the worms? Use details from the story to support your answer.

__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Continued on next page >
4. “Sharing my home with those things is a living nightmare!” (p. 13)

Is Maddie actually sharing her home with the worms? Does she truly feel like she’s living in a nightmare?

Why does the author most likely have Maddie use hyperbole in this line?

Find at least one other sentence in the same paragraph that helps you understand Maddie’s feelings.
Write it here.

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________________
7. Explain how worms are useful in a composting bin.

8. Why does Maddie keep her fear of worms a secret? Do you think this is a good choice?
“The Day the Worms Moved In” Quiz

Directions: Read the story “The Day the Worms Moved In” in the October/November 2019 issue of Storyworks. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. Which is the setting of the story?
   - Maddie’s aunt’s house
   - Maddie’s fifth-grade classroom
   - Maddie’s house
   - Maddie’s imaginary world

2. Maddie keeps her fear of worms a secret because she . . .
   - doesn’t want to anger her mother.
   - is really excited about composting.
   - doesn’t want to upset Billy Peppercorn.
   - is afraid that her brothers and other kids will tease her.

3. Why are there small holes in the bottom and sides of the composting bin?
   - to let the worms out when they get too cold
   - to put food scraps through
   - to allow water to drain out and air to get in
   - to take garden soil out

4. In the story, the phrase “My mind turns to trickery” means that Maddie is . . .
   - plotting to get back at Billy Peppercorn.
   - thinking of ways to kill the worms.
   - figuring out how to hide her worm phobia.
   - coming up with practical jokes to play on her brothers.

5. Why does Maddie try to eat all the food on her plate after the worms arrive?
   - She wants to please her mother.
   - She wants to avoid using the compost bin.
   - She is trying to starve the worms.
   - She thinks that food scraps are bad for worms.

6. Which line from the story supports the answer to question 5?
   - “Worms sure are delicate, I think.”
   - “The worms are always on my mind anyway, though.”
   - “I have a few tidbits of toast . . .”
   - “. . . I can avoid being in the presence of that bin.”

7. What is Maddie’s first idea for what to do when she sees the worms on the garage floor?
   - scream for her big brother to help
   - telephone her mother
   - close the door and let the worms die
   - put the worms back in their bin

8. In the phrase “hundreds of worms writhing around under the composting bin and across the floor,” writhing means ______.
   - squirming
   - dying
   - disappearing
   - gardening

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the story.

9. Explain the role of worms in composting.

10. In the beginning, Maddie says she has a “severe worm phobia.” Use evidence from the text to support this statement.
Worm Contest

My name: ________________________________________________

Teacher's name: ____________________________________________

School name: _______________________________________________

School address: _____________________________________________

(Remember to include city, state, and ZIP code!)

School phone: ______________________________________________

Parent’s name and email (optional): ______________________________

See page 14 of the October/November 2019 issue of Storyworks for more information about this contest.

My Response

How did Maddie overcome her fear of worms? Write an explanation, with details from the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Entries will be judged on:

- a clearly stated main idea
- good organization and transitions
- effective use of supporting evidence
- grammar, spelling, and punctuation

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Continue on another piece of paper if you need more room.