



Storytelling

EVALUATION SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS

Please review the instructions for evaluating the performances of the storytelling contestants. The following criteria are of equal importance to evaluating contestants. Terminology used is only intended to help the judge identify criteria for determining a winner. Please make your comments using language understandable to the contestant. Students and instructors appreciate constructive narrative comments. Please do not confer with other judges before ranking students. Judges' decisions are an individual responsibility.

Speaker Number _____

Speaker Name _____

Round Prelims

Section _____

Finals

Yes No **Did the contestant communicate effectively with the audience?**

Yes No **Did the contestant command attention?**

Yes No **Did the contestant tell the story with ease?**

Yes No **Did the contestant exhibit enthusiasm?**

Yes No **Did the contestant utilize facial expressions, vocal variety and characterization?**

Yes No **Did the contestant make good eye contact?**

Yes No **Did the contestant use good posture?**

Yes No **Did the contestant speak clearly?**

Yes No **Did the contestant use gestures effectively?**

CONSTRUCTIVE COMMENTS FOR THE CONTESTANT:

Judge's signature _____



Storytelling Contest
Invitational District 2020-21

“Making Music”
Major Elements of the Plot
Grades 2 and 3

Directions to Contest Directors: Give a copy of this sheet to each judge before the contest begins.

Directions to Judges: Each speaker must include at least one of the following elements from the story in his or her presentation. Words may vary. It is up to the judge to decide if the speaker has included one of the elements.

1. Dennis loves to play music loud, but his family and neighbors keep telling him to be quiet.
2. Dennis walks over to his friend Billy's house to see if Billy had any music instruments, but he didn't. So, they went to Clara's house. She only had a drum with a hole in it.
3. They went to Karen's house and Joshua's house. Each friend did not have an instrument or at least one that worked. Then, Dennis decides they can make their own instruments.
4. They gathered supplies from their houses and met back at the park. They twisted rubber bands onto Joshua's guitar and found a stick to make the hole bigger on Clara's drum. They started to play music as loud as they can and then decided to have a parade.
5. When the ice cream truck man arrived, he gave the band popsicles. They then decided to play their instruments even louder.



Storytelling Contest

Invitational 2020-21

“Making Music”

Grades 2 and 3

by Kathryn Lay

Dennis turned the radio on as loud as he could. He loved music. And he loved it loud.

“Turn down the music, please!” His father shouted.

“It’s too loud!” his sister yelled.

Dennis turned off the music and went to the kitchen. He grabbed a banana for a snack. While he ate, he picked up a wooden spoon and beat it against the wall. He drummed it against pans on the stove. He tapped it on the refrigerator door.

“No more loud tapping, please,” his Mom said.

“Grrr,” his puppy Max growled.

Dennis went out to the backyard. He swung a moment, then saw his father’s saw beside the new fence. He had learned how to hit it just right with a hammer to make a loud noise.

“Stop that sawing, please,” his neighbor on the right shouted.

“It’s too loud!” the neighbor on the left yelled.

Dennis sighed. He loved making music. Especially loud music. But no one seemed to like it loud.

He walked across the street and knocked on Billy’s door. Billy opened the door.

Billy invited him inside. “Do you want to play in my room?”

Dennis asked. “Do you have any musical instruments?”

Billy tapped his finger against his nose. He closed his eyes as if thinking hard. Then he shook his head.

Dennis said, "I'm on the hunt for something musical. Everyone says mine are too loud."

They walked down the street to Karen's house. Dennis asked Karen if she had any musical instruments. She did not have any either.

Together they went to each of their friend's houses. Clara had a drum with a hole in it. Joshua had a guitar with no strings.

Dennis knew that Mr. Stoker at the Music Notes store had lots of instruments. But he only let people play them who wanted to buy one.

"What if we just make our own?" Dennis said.

The others smiled.

They went back to each house. They found Clara's broken drum and Joshua's stringless guitar. Karen grabbed a paper towel roll and Billy found two old hubcaps in his garage.

"My dad said I can have these," Billy told them.

Dennis ran into his room. He grabbed his brother's toy hammer that squeaked and a metal pan from the kitchen. He found rubber bands in his father's office.

The friends went to the playground. Dennis twisted the rubber bands onto Joshua's guitar. He found a stick and made the hole bigger on Clara's drum.

"Bang the stick around the inside of the drum, on the wood," Dennis said.

Everyone clapped when she did.

Karen puffed out her cheeks and sang into the paper towel roll.

Billy crashed the hubcaps together like cymbals.

Dennis banged the squeaky hammer onto the metal pot. They laughed at the silly sound.

"Now what do we do?" Billy asked.

Dennis stood and hammered the pot again. He found a beat he had heard on the radio. He walked around his friends marching and playing.

“We have a parade, of course.” Dennis said.

Everyone lined up behind him. They began to play the rubber band guitar, the drum with the stick, the hub cap cymbals, the paper towel roll and the squeaky hammer and pot.

They marched and played around the swings, past the slide, and under the treehouse.

Soon there was a crowd of kids waving and cheering.

“Louder!” someone shouted.

Dennis hit the pan louder.

When the ice cream truck drove by, the ice cream man played his music loud and waited in the parking lot.

“That’s a great band you have there,” he said. “I think the players will all have popsicles!”

Dennis and his friends ran to the truck. They chose their popsicles and fell into the grass.

“I bet they heard us all over the park,” Clara said.

“No,” Dennis said. “We weren’t loud enough.”

They lined up again and played their homemade instruments. Louder.



Storytelling Contest
Invitational 2020-21

“Zoo Paintings”

Major Elements of the Plot

Grades 2 and 3

Directions to Contest Directors: Give a copy of this sheet to each judge before the contest begins.

Directions to Judges: Each speaker must include at least one of the following elements from the story in his or her presentation. Words may vary. It is up to the judge to decide if the speaker has included one of the elements.

1. Michael was excited to be at the zoo for his first day of the zoo painting class.
2. The first stop the class made was to the elephants. The teacher, Mr. Seabolt, said they would have ten minutes at each stop for the students to paint.
3. He looked at the elephant and thought how much paint he would need to paint it. Then, he had a great idea.
4. He used his great idea to paint the elephant, the rhinoceros, lions, eagles, alligators, and last a Toucan. He heard his other classmates talk about how hard it was to paint an animal so fast.
5. When it was time to show each other their paintings, the other students said Michael did not paint the animals. His teacher told them to look closely, and they realized Michael painted each animals' nose. For next week's class, Michael thought how fun it would be to paint feet.



Storytelling Contest

Invitational 2020-21

“Zoo Paintings”

Grades 2 and 3

by Kathryn Lay

Michael looked up at the big gates that led into the zoo. It was his favorite place to visit. He loved to go with his parents and grandparents. Sometimes he went with his best friend Kylee or his cousin Kurt.

But today was the most exciting of all.

“Everyone, please take your paper and paints with you through the side gate,” Mr. Seabolt said.

Michael picked up his big red bag. Inside was a large pad of blank paper and his new watercolor set. He followed the zoo schoolteacher and other kids inside. Today was the first day of the zoo painting class.

“The first stop will be at the elephants,” the teacher said. “Line up in front of the easels that are side by side. We will have 10 minutes at each stop for you to do your paintings.”

Michael put his spiral art pad on one of the stands in front of the elephants. He pulled out his bright paint set and a little plastic jar of water.

He dipped his brush into the water, then stared at the elephants in front of him. They were big. They were giant. It would take a lot of paint.

After a moment, he had an idea. A great idea.

He dipped the wet brush into a square of dry paint until it was wet enough. Then he began to paint. The others around him were laughing and talking. They talked about how big the elephants stood. Some of the kids said they could not fit an elephant on their paper.

When the teacher told everyone it was time to stop, they took their supplies and followed him around the corner.

“These rhinoceros should be interesting to paint,” Mr. Seabolt said.

Michael smiled as he began to paint. The rhinoceros in front of him was almost the same color as the elephant. But it looked much different. He finished his painting before the teacher told them to stop.

Before anyone could look at it, he closed the tablet.

They stopped to paint the lions and eagles. They crowded around the glass around the pond full of alligators.

Michael listened to the others talk about how hard it was to paint the animals so fast. He smiled. Soon they would go back to the zoo classroom and show their paintings. He bet no one had the same idea as he had.

The last animal they came to was a beautiful black bird with a bright colored beak. He was called a Toucan.

“How many can? Not one can. Not three can. But Toucan,” Michael said as he painted.

The other kids laughed.

Soon they were walking back to the classroom. He could not wait to show everyone his paintings.

“That was really hard to do,” a girl walking beside him said. “I had to paint fast. I don’t think mine looks very good. My elephant looks like a ball. And my alligator looks like a pickle with legs.”

Michael nodded. It would be hard, unless you had a great idea.

“Alright, if everyone would stand in a circle and hold up their elephant picture, please,” the teacher said.

Michael opened his notebook to the first page. He looked at the other paintings. They were all different.

“Hey, what is that?” a kid asked, pointing at Michael’s picture.

Everyone looked. They laughed.

Michael said, “It is my elephant picture.”

The girl he talked to earlier said, “That’s not an elephant.”

Then they showed their rhinoceros pictures.

“Hey, that is not a rhinoceros,” someone said to Michael.

By the time they finished showing all the pictures, everyone agreed that Michael’s paintings were not like theirs.

“Where are the animals?” someone asked.

Michael pointed to his elephant. It was long and thin and gray with wrinkles. Then he pointed to his rhinoceros. It was light gray with a pointed white bone standing up. His lion picture was pink with thin whiskers. His eagle was a curved orange piece in the middle of the paper. His alligator was two round dark spots on top of green scales.

“And this is my toucan,” Michael said.

Mr. Seabolt smiled. “I think I understand. Look closely at each of Michael’s paintings everyone.”

The other students moved closer to Michael’s drawings. They looked at each one and whispered together.

“Those are noses,” someone said.

Michael nodded. “I was afraid I didn’t have the room on my page or the time to paint the whole animal. So, I painted the same part of each one.”

The toucan’s bright beak was everyone’s favorite.

Michael put away his paper and paints. Next week, everyone said they were painting noses.

Michael smiled. He had a great idea. He thought how fun it would be to paint feet.



Storytelling Contest
Fall/Winter District 2020-21

“A Kite Tail”

Major Elements of the Plot

Grades 2 and 3

Directions to Contest Directors: Give a copy of this sheet to each judge before the contest begins.

Directions to Judges: Each speaker must include at least one of the following elements from the story in his or her presentation. Words may vary. It is up to the judge to decide if the speaker has included one of the elements.

1. Carla and Rosa are at the park looking at kites. They decide to enter the kite show this year and go to Carla's house to start planning the kite they will make.
2. They look at the kite supplies from all of the kites that Carla's Mom has used over the years. Carla feels bad that she never helped her Mom with the kites before.
3. Carla decides to make a kite with kite tails. The next day, she and Rosa test it out, but it does not fly.
4. Carla's mother offers to help and tells Carla that sometimes her Dad helped her.
5. The next day, Carla's parents drove her and Rosa to the park for the festival. They ended up winning the "most unusual kite" award. Her Mom said she would frame the kite in her office as their first kite together.



Storytelling Contest

Fall/Winter District 2020-21

“A Kite Tail”

Grades 2 and 3

by Kathryn Lay

Carla pulled her knees to her chest. She watched the bright kites dancing in the sky. Her favorite was the one that looked like a dragon. It was green and had a red banner coming from its mouth.

“Look at the dragon,” she told her cousin, Rosa. “It looks like it is breathing fire.”

“Oh, and the ship looks like it is sailing on the clouds,” Rosa said.

Every year the town had a big kite show. This year’s was just a week away. At the end of the show, there were ribbons given for different kinds of kites.

“We could enter this year,” Carla said. “We are old enough now.”

Rosa shook her head. “I don’t think we have time to build a kite and practice.”

Carla jumped up from the cool grass. “I just know we can do it. We just need a plan. Let’s go to my house. Mom has lots of supplies from last year’s show. And she said he didn’t have time to enter this year.”

They ran across the park and two blocks to Carla’s house.

Carla told her parents what she wanted to do. They pulled out a box of material and sticks and ribbon from the garage.

“Let’s go to my room,” Carla said. “We need to plan our kite first before we can make it.”

They grabbed bottles of juice and hurried to Carla’s room. All around the room were pictures of her mother’s kites she had made over the years. All of her kites were winners. An elephant, a butterfly, and even a cat with a long black tail.

“I hope you have learned kite making from your mom,” Rosa said.

Carla didn't want to admit she had never helped her mother with the kites. She used to think it was boring. But now, the year her mom was too busy to enter the kite festival, Carla really wanted to enter. And win.

They sat on Carla's bed, drank juice and talked about kite ideas.

"It needs to be something that would have a cool tail," Carla said. "The judges always like kites with fancy or fun tails."

"Maybe we should just make a tail," Rosa said with a laugh.

Carla stared at her friend. "That's it!" she shouted.

They worked on a special kite idea until Carla's mother shouted, "Rosa, your Mom needs you to come home."

Rosa left and Carla went into the kitchen to help her mother with dinner.

She took a deep breath. "We are making a kite for the festival."

Her mother turned and smiled. "I'm glad you are taking over this year. I've always wanted you to help me."

Carla shrugged. She wished she had helped her mom with the kites. But she wanted to plan this one herself.

Later, in her room Carla drew pictures of long kites that looked like tails. They looked silly. How could you have a kite that was just a tail? How would it fly?

She studied the pictures of her mother's kites. They all had great tails. But they were attached to great kites.

"Wait, what if...?"

She grabbed her notebook and started to draw and make notes. When she was done, she grinned. Perfect. It was a perfect plan.

The next day she and Rosa cut out long strips of cloth. They were different colors. Some were stripes and some were polka dots. One had little frogs on it. Carla laughed at the idea of flying frogs.

They sewed all the tails together to shape them like a kite and attached wood sticks to make the frame. The bottom of the tails hung below the kite.

"That is a special kite," Rosa said. She held it up as Carla attached the string to fly it high into the sky.

They hurried to the park to practice. There were a few other people flying kites.

Rosa took the kite and backed away from Carla. They waited for a good gust of wind. Then Carla told Rosa to let go of the kite. She watched as Rosa threw it up into the air.

And it crashed to the ground.

“Uh oh,” Rosa said.

They tried again and again, but the kite did not fly.

Carla frowned. What did she do wrong? They walked home. Carla saw her mother in her office.

She sat down and told her mother about the problem with the kite. “I’m sorry, I really wanted to do this all by myself like you did.”

Her mother leaned forward. “We all need help sometimes. Your dad helped me with the kites when I needed it.”

Carla explained everything she did with the kite and held it out to her mother. Her mother smiled. “Very nice, Carla. Look at the tails of your tail kite.”

Carla stared at it and thought about her mother’s kites. She smiled. “Thanks for the hint, I know what to do. Can you help me?”

Carla and her mother worked the rest of the day on kite. The next day was the day of the kite festival.

Carla and her parents picked up Rosa and drove them to the park. Carla showed Rosa the kite.

“Too bad we don’t have time to test it first,” Rosa said.

Carla nodded. People were spread out around the park, ready to send their kites into the sky. Carla touched the extra long tails she and her mother had added. Tails from her Mom’s winning kites. She held the kite out to her mom.

“You should fly it,” Carla said.

Her mother shook her head. “No, this is your kite. You and Rosa had a great idea. I just helped a little.”

Carla and Rosa found a spot and got ready. Rosa held the kite as Carla unraveled the string just a little. When the judge's whistle sounded, Rosa tossed the kite into the wind.

Carla began to let out more string as the kite rose. She backed up and moved her arm side to side. The kite climbed higher. Its bright tails waved and wiggled.

Carla's parents clapped their hands. Rosa jumped up and down.

"It's working," Carla shouted. She watched their kite dance in the wind.

When the competition ended, and the kites were on the ground, Carla and Rosa waited for the names of the winners.

Carla listened for her and Rosa's name. They didn't win prettiest kite or highest-flying kite. They didn't win for biggest or smallest.

Then the judge said, "And for our most unusual kite today, the winning kite is by Carla and Rosa Rodriguez for their Kite of Tails."

Carla screamed. Rosa shouted. Carla's parents clapped.

Carla gave the kite to her mother. "For your winning kite collection."

Her mother smiled. "I will frame it and hang it in my office. Our first kite together."

Carla held her trophy and smiled. It was time to start planning for next year's kite.



Storytelling Contest
Fall/Winter District 2020-21

“The Jeweled Box”
Major Elements of the Plot

Grades 2 and 3

Directions to Contest Directors: Give a copy of this sheet to each judge before the contest begins.

Directions to Judges: Each speaker must include at least one of the following elements from the story in his or her presentation. Words may vary. It is up to the judge to decide if the speaker has included one of the elements.

1. Kyran is excited that today is the day he goes garage sailing with his Mom and Dad. Kyran's parents let him invite his friend Chris along too.
2. When they go to the garage sales, Chris is able to find gifts for other people, but Kyran isn't able to find a gift for himself. He does not have any interest in finding gifts for other people.
3. Kyran feels defeated that he can't find a gift for himself. His Dad said they have one more sale left, and it is supposed to be a big one.
4. At the last sale, Chris found a treasure box covered with shiny stones and colorful jewels that Kyran really liked. Kyran feels defeated that Chris found the box and not him. Before they dropped Chris off at his house, Chris told Kyran he got the treasure box for him.
5. Kyran starts thinking what he would do with the box. He thinks it is the perfect size for a gift. Then, he asks his Dad to drop him off at his Grandma's house for a surprise visit.



Storytelling Contest

Fall/Winter District 2020-21

“The Jeweled Box”

Grades 2 and 3

by Kathryn Lay

It was the day Kyran had been looking forward to all week.

Saturday garage sale day with his Mom and Dad. This time, they said he could invite his best friend Chris to go along.

Every first Saturday of the month, Kyran and his parents drove around town looking for sales. It was better than going to the mall. You never knew what you would find at a garage sale or yard sale.

Once he found a dinosaur that had eyes that lit up. It opened its mouth and roared like something in a movie. Another time, he found the biggest box of connecting cubes he had ever seen. He built castles and robots and anything he could imagine.

“Is it time to go yet?” he asked his Mom.

She smiled. “Almost.”

He followed his dad to the car and helped him put boxes in the back for the treasures they would find.

“Is it time to go yet?” he asked his Dad.

“Almost,” his father said.

Kyran pulled out his garage sale wallet and counted the money. Five one-dollar bills to spend any way he wanted.

He heard someone whistling and turned to see Chris walking backwards toward him. Kyran laughed.

His mom and dad laughed.

Kyran grinned at Chris, then asked his parents, “Is it time to go yet?”

“Yes!” they both said.

Soon they were stopping at the first sale. Kyran and Chris went straight to a table of toys.

“Just little kid stuff,” Chris said, poking at a stuffed bear.

Kyran nodded. He was looking for something exciting. Maybe something to add to his pewter animal collection or his collection of patches. Last time he found a patch with a rocket ship on it.

At the next sale, Chris bought a big plastic ball with red polka dots all over it. He balanced it on his head.

“That’s weird looking. It’s not a baseball or football or soccer ball,” Kyran said.

Chris grinned. “My little sister loves polka dots.”

Kyran was still looking for something exciting for himself. He wasn’t spending his money on someone else.

His parents found an old shelf at the next sale. Chris got a squeaky toy for his dog. Kyran didn’t find anything there or the next three sales. Chris bought a shiny pin for his mom and a broken watch for his dad to repair.

Kyran folded his arms and plopped into the car. “This isn’t fun anymore. I have not found one thing that I would like to have.”

They stopped for sandwiches to take to the park. Kyran took a big bite of his turkey and cheese sandwich. His parents talked about all the things they had bought that day. He watched as Chris counted the money he had left.

Chris held up his last dollar.

Kyran still had all of his money. But he felt sure he would find something for himself instead of buying for other people.

“We have one more sale we want to go see,” his father said. “It’s supposed to be a big one. Maybe you can find something that you like there.”

Kyran shrugged. Only one more sale left. He had been waiting all week for this day.

“Wow!” Chris shouted when they drove up to the big old house.

Kyran whistled. The whole driveway and front yard were full of tables and boxes to dig through. He jumped out of the car and ran to the first table. The yard was

crowded with people. He peeked around people and dug through boxes. There was nothing to add to his collection.

“Look at this,” Chris said. He held out a big box covered in shiny stones and colorful jewels. It was made of wood and had a lid that opened. In the front was a lock that looked like a pirate skull.

Kyran gasped. “It’s a treasure box. A real treasure box.” He touched the lock. “What’s inside?”

Chris shook his head. “Nothing. And the lady said I could have it for one dollar.”

The jewels sparkled in the sun. The stones seemed to wink at Kyran. “What are you going to do with it?”

Chris grinned. “It’s a secret. A treasure box secret.”

Kyran frowned. He was the one who had invited his friend to go with them that day. And now his friend had found the best thing he had ever seen at a garage sale. He turned and walked back to the car. He didn’t want to look any longer.

When they got back to Kyran’s house, he jumped out of the car and told his friend goodbye.

“Wait,” Chris said. He held out the treasure box. “I got it for you. For your collections.”

Kyran held his breath. He took the box and smiled. “Wow, that is a great gift. I’ve never had a nicer one.”

Chris waved goodbye and ran toward home.

Kyran stared at the box. It would look perfect on his dresser, full of one of his collections.

He could put in his pewter toys or his patches. His grandma gave him a toy dinosaur collection last year on his birthday.

His grandma collected old spoons from around the world. And she loved pretty jewelry with bright colors.

Kyran stared at the box. People were always giving him things. His parents, his grandma, and even his friend.

He rubbed the jewels and stones on the box. It was the perfect size for spoons. It was the perfect size for shiny jewelry. It was the perfect size for a gift.

“Hey Dad, can you drive me to Grandma’s house?” Kyran asked.

His father smiled. “Of course, did you two have plans today?”

Kyran shook his head. “No, it’s a surprise visit.”

He climbed back into the car and put the treasure box on his lap. It was the perfect day.

And he still had five dollars left to take his grandma out for ice cream.



Storytelling Contest
Spring District 2020-21

“Case of the Missing Socks”

Major Elements of the Plot

Grades 2 and 3

Directions to Contest Directors: Give a copy of this sheet to each judge before the contest begins.

Directions to Judges: Each speaker must include at least one of the following elements from the story in his or her presentation. Words may vary. It is up to the judge to decide if the speaker has included one of the elements.

1. Brett was having a hard time finding Socks in the house. He checked all the places he thought Socks would be.
2. Socks was Brett’s pet cat that showed up one day on the back porch. The cat liked to spend a lot of time hiding under socks.
3. Brett’s father made him realize that he may have let Socks outside by accident that morning.
4. While searching outside, he believed he had found Socks in the arms of a little boy named Ricky. Brett became confused when he realized that the cat may have looked like Socks, but it wasn’t.
5. After Ricky explained to Brett that his cats name was Mittens, Socks ran to Brett from behind a bush. They realized the cats may have been brothers, and the case of the missing Socks was solved.



Storytelling Contest

Spring District 2020-21

“Case of the Missing Socks”

Grades 2 and 3

by Kathryn Lay

Brett could not find his Sock anywhere.

He looked all over his room. He looked in the kitchen under the table. He looked in the living room at the worn spot on the couch.

“Mom, have you seen my Socks?”

His mother shook her head. “No, have you looked in the laundry room?”

Brett snapped his fingers. Of course. It was the best place to find Socks.

He slid into the laundry room. There was a basket full of his clean clothes. But Socks was not in there.

“Where is that cat?” he wondered. His black cat with three white paws loved to hide in the laundry. That was why Brett named him Socks. And because he had white socks on his feet.

Socks just showed up one day on the back porch. They put up signs and a notice in the paper. No one came to say he was their cat.

The scared kitten spent a lot of time hiding under Brett’s socks on his bed or the floor in his room.

Brett’s father walked by. “Did your cat go outside when you rode your bike this morning?”

Brett gasped. He remembered he had left the front door open when he ran back inside for his helmet. And he had not seen Socks since then. What if the cat ran away or was lost somewhere?

He ran outside and called for his cat. Socks was not under the bushes. He was not up the tree. Brett did not see him up or down the sidewalk.

His heart pounded. Socks was lost somewhere.

He walked to the end of the street, calling his cat's name. He walked around the corner to the next street. He saw a white cat sitting on a rock. He saw a beagle walking with his owner.

Then he saw the boy sitting on a porch. He was holding a cat. The cat was black with three white paws.

"Socks!" Brett yelled. He ran to the front yard. "Thanks for finding my cat."

The boy frowned. "This is my cat. His name is Mittens."

Brett shook his head. He frowned. He knew the boy was holding Socks. "My cat is black with three white feet. That cat is black with one, two, three white paws."

The boy hugged the cat closer. "My cat is black with three white paws. His name is Mittens."

Brett and the boy stared at one another. Brett felt sorry for the kid. He would be sad when Socks jumped and ran into Brett's arms.

Brett called his cat's name. He bent down and held out his arms. The cat stared at him. He did not run. He did not jump into Brett's arms.

Brett walked closer. The cat hissed. Brett could not believe Socks was acting so strange.

"Come on, Socks," he said. "It's time to go home."

The cat hissed again. Brett backed away. Why was Socks so angry at him? And why was he sitting in a strange kid's lap?

He heard a loud meow. From behind a bush, another cat walked out. The cat was black with three white paws.

With another meow, the new cat ran across the yard and rubbed against Brett's legs. Then he jumped into Brett's arms.

"Who's that?" the boy asked.

Brett smiled. "This is Socks."

He looked at his cat. His two front paws and one back one were white. The cat the boy held had two white paws in back and one in front.

Brett asked the boy how long he had Mittens.

“About six months,” the boy said. “He meowed under my window for two days and then I kept him.”

Brett had an idea. He carried Socks close to Mittens and put him down. The two cats stared at each other a moment. Then they purred and sat down beside one another.

“I think they are brothers,” Brett said.

They watched the cats play with blades of grass. Brett said, “I’m Brett.”

“I’m Ricky,” the boy said.

They played with the cats for a while. Brett picked up Socks to go home.

“Can Socks come play with Mittens again?” he asked.

Ricky grinned. “That would be great.”

Brett waved goodbye and carried Socks home.

“Well, you had an adventure and found your brother,” he told the cat. “I’m so happy I solved the case of the missing Socks.”

Socks purred.

Brett laughed. “And, made a new friend.”

He wondered if Socks’ brother liked to hide in a basket of mittens.



Storytelling Contest
Spring District 2020-21

“The Party Mystery”
Major Elements of the Plot

Grades 2 and 3

Directions to Contest Directors: Give a copy of this sheet to each judge before the contest begins.

Directions to Judges: Each speaker must include at least one of the following elements from the story in his or her presentation. Words may vary. It is up to the judge to decide if the speaker has included one of the elements.

1. It was the day of Casey’s birthday party, and she was very excited for her friends to arrive.
2. Casey could not stop thinking about why her best friend Stella was not at her birthday party.
3. The backyard was decorated and filled with her friends, except for Stella.
4. Casey and her friends played games. The last game was a mystery. Casey was given clues that would lead her to her last present.
5. Casey went through all of the clues and was surprised to learn that Stella was her gift at the end.



Storytelling Contest

Spring District 2020-21

“The Party Mystery”

Grades 2 and 3

by Kathryn Lay

Casey put down her newest book, *The Bow Wow Mystery Club*. Her aunt sent it for Casey’s birthday.

“I’m running out of room on my bookshelf,” she said. She squeezed the book in with her other mystery books.

It was time to put on her new clothes. Soon the backyard would be full of her friends. She had been planning her birthday party for weeks.

“Is anyone here yet?” she yelled downstairs.

“No,” her father said.

Casey frowned. Stella, her best friend was always early. She should have come early to help with the party.

She dressed and ran downstairs. The doorbell rang.

“Happy birthday!” Gina and Tina shouted when they walked inside.

Casey giggled. Gina and Tina looked and acted like twins. They held out a gift bag with balloons all over it.

Casey took her friends outside. The backyard was filled with balloons and streamers. The picnic table had bright green plates and cups on it. Her father waved at him from the grill. Casey took a big sniff of the food. All her favorites. Hot dogs. Corn on the cob. Grilled carrots.

Soon the back yard was full of her friends.

Every time someone walked into the yard, Casey expected it to be Stella. But she never came, even when Casey’s mother said it was time to start games.

Casey joined in the first game of tag. But she kept thinking about Stella.

She laughed when her Uncle Roger did his best magic tricks. But she kept looking for Stella.

Her mother clapped her hands. “Everyone, our last game is special for Casey.” She held up a plastic jar. A piece of folded paper was inside.

Casey took the jar and opened it. Her friends stood around her as she read the note.

“A party for Casey would not be fun without a mystery. Here is your first clue,” Casey read.

She grinned. A party mystery!

She read the clue to everyone. “Your mom loves to play with dirt. She piles it high in colorful places. Your next clue is inside the blue place.”

Casey looked at her mother. Her mom played in dirt? Did she have a secret sandbox in the yard? A blue one?

She walked around. Her friends followed her. Then Casey snapped her fingers and went to the corner of her mother’s garden. There were many sizes and colors of pots of flowers. There were three pots that only had dirt inside. One pot was blue.

Casey dug through the dirt in the blue pot. She pulled out a plastic bag with a note inside. She opened the paper and read:

“Inside where the little beaks peck, wiggle your fingers up, wiggle them down, wiggle them all around.”

Casey stood and looked around the yard. What could it be?”

“This is exciting,” one of her friends said with a giggle.

Casey nodded. If only Stella was there to help her.

She walked back and forth, reading the note again. She looked at her father who shrugged. She looked at her mother who smiled.

Then Casey looked up. At the low branch on the big tree by the fence.

“Ah ha!” she shouted.

She stood on tiptoe and reached her hand into the bird house. The birds had beaks. That’s what their mouths were called. And they pecked inside the birdhouse for their food.

She wiggled her fingers all around inside until she felt paper.

“Here it is,” she said. “I found it!”

The others stood around her as she read. “The prize is near, the party gift is yours. Come in or come out. The end is there.”

Casey tapped her finger on her nose. Sometimes people who solved mysteries had to think hard. She thought and thought. Stella would have laughed if she were there.

“I’ve got it!” she yelled.

Casey ran across the yard to the gate. People came in the gate to get into the yard and out of it to leave the yard.

Casey swung open the gate.

“Surprise!”

“Stella!” Casey shouted. She grabbed her best friend’s arm and pulled her into the yard.

Everyone cheered. Casey led Stella to the table where hot dogs and corn filled trays.

“Did you like my gift?” Stella asked.

Casey squirted mustard on a hot dog. “It was the best. We had a birthday mystery together.”

Soon Casey was opening the gifts from her parents and friends. But her favorite gift was something she would never forget. It did not fit on her shelf or sit on her bed or hang in her closet.

It was a memory in her head that made her smile.

“Smile,” her father said, holding his camera at the table. “Say cheese!”

Casey moved closer to Stella. They both smiled and shouted, “Mystery!”