

A Trip to the Beach

Riiing!

The bell echoed loudly throughout the school. Summer vacation was here, and Liza couldn't be happier.

Liza was in third grade, but soon she would be in fourth grade. She was beginning to feel all grown up. As the bell faded away, Liza packed her books into her light blue backpack and went out to meet her mother in the schoolyard.

"Guess what?" said Liza's mother, who was standing in the shade of a large oak tree.

"What?" asked Liza, hoping she would get a present or maybe a delicious treat like an ice cream cone.

"We're going to the beach tomorrow!"

"Are we going to the ocean beach or to a lake?" asked Liza.

"We are going to the ocean," said her mother. They had never been to the ocean before. The ocean was three hours away. Her mother and father had only taken her to swimming pools and lakes.

Until now.

That night, Liza couldn't fall asleep. She kept thinking about what it would be like. Her mother had said the waves could be as tall as her body and that the water might be as cold as ice.

Liza was worried there might be sharks or turtles or jellyfish that could bite her. The only fish Liza liked were dolphins, except her teacher told her that dolphins were mammals, not fish.

When the morning came, Liza awoke excited, but she was still nervous. She went into the kitchen and saw her parents packing a lunch for the family.

“Don’t worry,” said her father. “Today’s going to be a blast.”

“Do I have to go in the water?” asked Liza.

“You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to,” said her mother.

After a long car ride, they finally arrived. The air was hot, and the sun shone brightly. There was not a cloud in the sky. Liza could hear seagulls cawing and see their shadows move along the fine grains of sand.

“Where’s all the seaweed?” asked Liza, as they put down a blanket in the middle of the beach. They were not alone. Many other families were also enjoying the summer afternoon, sitting on blankets or relaxing in beach chairs.

“The seaweed is in the water, silly,” said her mother.

“Do I have to go in?” asked Liza, again.

“Why don’t we just dip our toes?” said her father.

Holding her parents’ hands, Liza felt like a little kid again. The ocean was larger than anything she had ever seen and the bluest blue. The waves kept coming toward the land, making loud whooshing noises. The tide was coming in, her father said, and soon the beach would get a little bit smaller as the water rose higher.

“What controls the tide?” Liza asked.

“The moon,” said her mother, as they reached the water’s edge. Liza’s toes were freezing! The water was moving fast.

“This isn’t so bad,” Liza thought. Feeling brave, she walked into the water up to her knees and lowered her palms into the waves.

Looking down, she thought she saw a school of fish swim by, and she ran out of the water. The warm sand felt good on the bottoms of her feet.

“Done for the day?” shouted her mother, whose legs were still submerged in the deep blue water.

“Done for now,” Liza shouted back. She felt proud that she had gone as far as she did into the ocean. For now, though, that was enough.

The ocean wasn’t as bad as she imagined it would be, she thought, sitting down and digging her toes into the sand. Her parents came to join her where she sat, and the three built the largest sandcastle on the beach.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where do Liza and her family go on a trip?

- A** a beach at a lake
- B** a beach at the ocean
- C** a schoolyard
- D** a store that sells ice cream

2. Who is the main character in this story?

- A** Liza
- B** Liza's mother
- C** Liza's father
- D** Liza's third grade teacher

3. The ocean is not as bad as Liza imagined it would be.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A** "Liza was in third grade, but soon she would be in fourth grade. She was beginning to feel all grown up."
- B** "The only fish Liza liked were dolphins, except her teacher told her that dolphins were mammals, not fish."
- C** "The bell echoed loudly throughout the school. Summer vacation was here, and Liza couldn't be happier."
- D** "Feeling brave, she walked into the water up to her knees and lowered her palms into the waves."

4. How does Liza feel about going to the beach?

- A** happy and eager
- B** bored and annoyed
- C** excited and nervous
- D** angry and upset

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A** the difference between being in third grade and being in fourth grade
- B** a girl who goes to the ocean with her family for the first time
- C** two parents who make their daughter do something she hates
- D** sharks, turtles, dolphins, jellyfish, and other sea creatures

6. Read the following sentence: "The ocean was larger than anything she had ever seen and the bluest blue."

Why does the author describe the ocean as **the bluest blue**?

- A to draw attention to how blue the ocean was
- B to give the reader an idea of what the ocean sounded like
- C to remind the reader that jellyfish live in the ocean
- D to point out how big the ocean was

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Liza is worried about going to the ocean, _____ it is not as bad as she imagined.

- A so
- B obviously
- C but
- D before

8. What is Liza worried there might be in the ocean?

9. What are some of the things Liza does at the beach?

10. At first Liza is worried about going to the ocean. Explain whether or not it turns out to be as bad as she imagined. Support your answer using evidence from the story.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 680

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- D** before

8. What is Liza worried there might be in the ocean?

Suggested answer: Liza is worried there might be jellyfish, sharks, or turtles that could bite her.

9. What are some of the things Liza does at the beach?

Suggested answer: Students should name at least two things Liza does at the beach, as described in the story. These may include such activities as walking into the water up to her knees, lowering her palms into the waves, and building a sandcastle with her parents.

10. At first Liza is worried about going to the ocean. Explain whether or not it turns out to be as bad as she imagined. Support your answer using evidence from the story.

Suggested answer: All students should be able to answer that the ocean is not as bad as Liza imagined. As support, they might point out that Liza worried about there being jellyfish, sharks, or turtles that could bite her in the ocean, but she does not see any when she goes. Students may add that she enjoys being in the sand at the beach, especially the feel of it on her feet.