

Reading Comprehension: A Short Story (Grades 4–5)

Grade 4-5 · Ages 9-11 · Reading · Reading Comprehension · ★★

Read the passage, then circle the best answer for each question.

Maya had been looking forward to the school science fair for weeks. She planned to build a model volcano that would fizz and bubble dramatically. The night before the fair, however, she discovered that she had used the last of the baking soda making pancakes that morning. The stores were already closed, and panic crept into her chest. Then her grandmother, who was visiting for the week, suggested a different idea. 'Why not show how plants drink water?' she said, placing a white carnation into a glass of water mixed with blue food coloring. By the next morning, the flower's petals had turned a delicate shade of blue. Maya presented her experiment with confidence, explaining how stems carry water upward through tiny tubes. Her teacher called it 'unexpectedly elegant,' and Maya won second place.

1. What is the main idea of this story?
 - (A) Maya wins first place at the science fair with a volcano
 - (B) Maya decides that science fairs are too stressful
 - (C) Maya's grandmother teaches her how to bake pancakes
 - (D) Maya solves an unexpected problem and succeeds at the science fair

2. Why did Maya run out of baking soda the night before the fair?
 - (A) She had used it to clean the kitchen
 - (B) Her grandmother had borrowed it
 - (C) She had used it making pancakes that morning
 - (D) She forgot to buy it at the store

3. In the passage, the word 'elegant' most likely means —
 - (A) simple and impressively done
 - (B) messy and complicated
 - (C) colorful and loud
 - (D) difficult to understand

4. What happened to the white carnation by the next morning?
 - (A) It wilted and fell apart
 - (B) Its petals turned a delicate shade of blue
 - (C) It grew taller in the glass
 - (D) It changed color to red

5. Based on the story, what can the reader infer about Maya's grandmother?
 - (A) She was calm and resourceful when problems arose
 - (B) She had never heard of a science fair before
 - (C) She was upset that Maya changed her project
 - (D) She wanted Maya to quit the science fair

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Answer: (D) Maya solves an unexpected problem and succeeds at the science fair

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Answer: (C) She had used it making pancakes that morning

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Answer: (A) She was calm and resourceful when problems arose