

Reading comprehension: THE SHEPHERD BOY AND THE WOLF

A shepherd boy tended his master's sheep near a dark forest not far from his village. He found life in the pasture very dull; all he could do all day was to talk to his dog or play on his shepherd's pipe.

One day as he sat watching the sheep and the quiet forest, feeling very bored, he suddenly had an idea to make the day pass more quickly. He got up and ran towards the village, shouting at the top of his voice: "Wolf! Wolf!"

It made the boy laugh to see all the villagers look up at him terrified, drop their tools and run towards the pasture to help. Once they arrived they realised the boy had been lying: he doubled up with laughter at the trick he had played on them.

A few days later, the shepherd boy repeated the trick. Although the villagers thought there was a chance he might be lying, they decided it would be better to help him, so they ran towards the pasture again. This time, they found the boy rolling on the ground and crying with laughter, amazed that he could trick them all a second time.

Then one evening, as the sun was setting behind the forest and the shadows were creeping out over the pasture, a wolf really did spring from the bushes. He stared at the young boy and proceeded to spring onto the sheep, sinking his teeth into their flesh.

In terror the boy ran towards the village, shouting, "Wolf! Wolf!" The villagers heard his cry but refused to help. They did not want to be made to look foolish a third time.

The boy looked on, appalled, as the wolf killed a great many of his master's sheep and then slipped away into the forest. He realised that his silly trick had meant that no-one could trust that he was telling the truth and that left him with no help at all.



1) What word in the first paragraph means the same as boring?

2) What two things did he do to interest himself?

3) What does he decide to do to make the day pass more quickly?

4) What did the villagers do when the boy shouted that there was a wolf?

5) What do you think *doubled up with laughter* means?

6) The boy repeats the trick on the villagers. Find and copy the group of words that tell us that the boy found it even funnier second time around.

7) What does the wolf do to the sheep?

8) Why did the villagers refuse to help when he calls "Wolf!" for the third time?

9) The boy looked on, appalled, as the wolf killed a great many of his sheep.

What do you think *appalled* means? Tick one:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> amused | <input type="checkbox"/> fascinated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> horrified | <input type="checkbox"/> bored |

10) What lesson do you think the boy has learnt at the end?

Answers: 1) Dull 2) Talk to his dog and play on his shepherd's pipe. 3) Run to the village shouting "Wolf!" 4) The villagers ran to the pasture to help him. 5) He was laughing so much he bent over. 6) "rolling on the ground with laughter" 7) Sinks his teeth into their flesh / kills them. 8) They don't want to be made to look foolish / they don't believe him / he has lied before, so they think he is lying again. 9) Horrified 10) The boy learns that if you lie many times, no-one will believe you / that you shouldn't trick people / you must only ask for help if you really need it.