

STUDENT NAME _____



State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness

GRADE 8
Reading Language Arts
STAAR Alternate 2

Administered Spring 2025
RELEASED

READING LANGUAGE ARTS

Beep Baseball



AP Photo/Tyler Morning Telegraph, Sarah A. Miller

In beep baseball, players wear blindfolds. Beep baseball is a kind of baseball game for people with blindness or visual impairment.



Bob Daemrich/Alamy Stock Photo

Some players on a beep baseball team are legally blind. Others are visually impaired, which means that their vision may be limited to an awareness of light and shapes. Putting on a blindfold while playing the game creates a circumstance in which all players have the same level of vision. It takes away the advantage that players with some vision have over other players who are totally blind.

demonstration

situation



Courtesy of Marge Bancroft/Austin Blackhawks

To play beep baseball, players use a softball that makes a beeping sound. The players listen for the beeping sound to figure out where the ball is. When the batter hits the ball, the players in the field follow the beeping sound of the ball.



Courtesy of Marge Bancroft/Austin Blackhawks

There are other differences between baseball and beep baseball. In baseball, a batter runs around three bases and then back to home plate to score. In beep baseball, there are only two bases. A run is scored when the batter tackles one of the large padded bases at first or third base.

Beep baseballs and bases are larger, making them easier to see.

Beep baseball players run around three padded bases to score.

Beep baseball players use the sounds made by the ball.



Courtesy of Marge Bancroft/Austin Blackhawks

Although beep baseball is different from baseball, it is still an exciting game to watch. To play the game, a blindfolded batter walks up to home plate with the help of a sighted spotter. The pitcher—who is on the same team as the batter and is able to see—calls, “Ready, set, pitch!”

4a

If the batter hits the ball, the base operator flips a switch that causes either first or third base to buzz. If the base to the right makes a buzzing sound, the batter runs to the right. If the base on the left makes a buzzing sound, the batter runs to the left. The batter must tackle the base before the players in the field can get the ball. If the players in the field get the beeping ball before the batter can make it to the base, the batter is out and the play is over. If the batter can get to the base before a player in the field gets the ball, the batter scores a run.



Courtesy of Marge Bancroft/Austin Blackhawks

4a

The National Beep Baseball Association has made it possible for people with visual impairments to enjoy the excitement, fun, and friendships that come with playing a team sport. The league now has 33 teams, including the Austin Blackhawks, who have won the National Beep Baseball League World Series nine times—more than any other team in the league.



Courtesy of Marge Bancroft/Austin Blackhawks

to encourage the reader to start a beep
baseball team

to explain to the reader how beep baseball is
played

to describe the Austin Blackhawks beep
baseball team

Ironman Chris Nikic



Michael Reaves/Getty Images Sport

In 2020, Chris Nikic finished his first Ironman competition and became the first person with Down syndrome to cross an Ironman finish line.



Chris Nikic has overcome many obstacles to reach challenging goals. Because Nikic had trouble balancing, one of his earliest challenges was learning to walk. But by age four, he was walking on his own. As a teenager, he learned to ride a bike after months of trying, and soon he was also running and swimming in the Special Olympics.

difficulties

triumphs



© iStock.com/jon11

Athletes who compete in an Ironman competition seem more like superheroes than ordinary people. First, athletes swim 2.4 miles in the open water. This means that instead of the calm water of a swimming pool, they

must swim against waves and currents. After the swim, there is a difficult 112-mile bike ride. Anyone still able to go on after the bike ride must then compete in a 26.2-mile run called a marathon. And just to make things even more challenging, athletes in Ironman races must finish within 17 hours!

7a

When Chris Nikic began to train for an Ironman competition, he started very early every morning working out with his coach. One strategy that led to his success was setting the goal of improving by 1% every day. For example, if he did 100 sit-ups one day, he would try to do 101 the next day. Instead of feeling discouraged by all the hard work he had to do to prepare for the Ironman race, he just focused on running or swimming a little bit farther every day. Finally, after months of hard work, Nikic was ready for the competition.



Jonathan Bachman/Getty Images Sport

Chris Nikic practiced swimming 2.4 miles every day.

Chris Nikic focused on improving by 1% every day.

Chris Nikic completed 100 sit-ups every day.



Michael Reaves/Getty Images Sport

On the day of the Ironman race, Nikic completed the swimming portion with no problems. But on the long bike ride, Nikic suffered terrible ant bites during one stop when he accidentally stepped on an anthill. Then, he crashed his bike on a downhill stretch, but he got back on his bike and rode on.

Nikic finally made it to the 26.2-mile marathon run. With miles left to go, Nikic started to slow down. He was exhausted after the 2.4-mile swim and the 112-mile bike ride. But he was determined to fulfill his dream of finishing. Nikic willed himself to reach the finish line just a few minutes before the 17-hour time limit ended.

After his Ironman victory, Nikic was named a Champion Ambassador for the Special Olympics. He plans to compete in the next Ironman World Championship in Hawaii.



Michael Reaves/Getty Images Sport

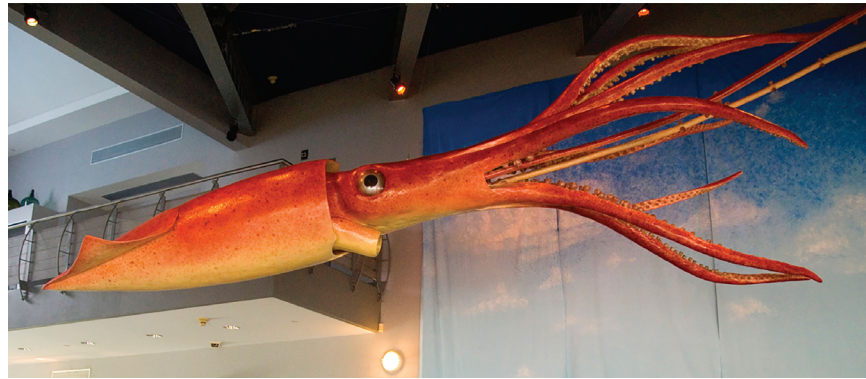
Nikic also used his accomplishments to help others reach their goals following his strategy for success. He and his dad wrote the book *1% Better: Reaching My Full Potential and How You Can Too*. By becoming an Ironman, Nikic has taught everyone that ordinary people can be superheroes. All it takes is the will to improve—just a little bit—every day.

Then, he crashed his bike on a downhill stretch, but he got back on his bike and rode on.

After his Ironman victory, Nikic was named a Champion Ambassador for the Special Olympics.

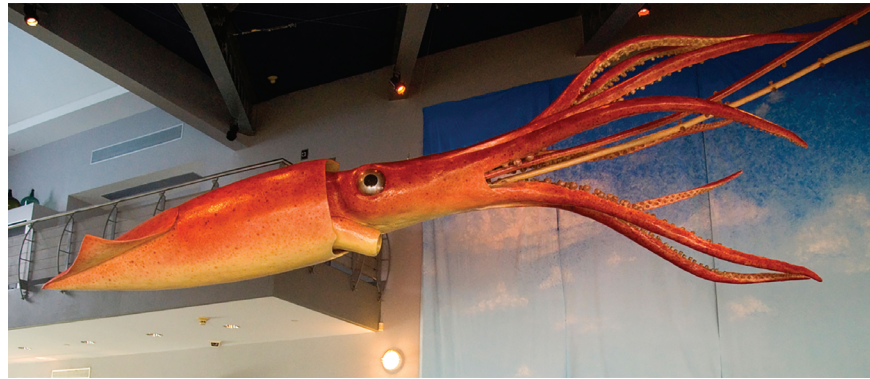
He and his dad wrote the book 1% Better: Reaching My Full Potential and How You Can Too.

A giant squid is large.



M. Timothy O'Keefe/Alamy Stock Photo

The largest giant squid found by scientists was almost 43 feet long and weighed nearly a ton.



M. Timothy O'Keefe/Alamy Stock Photo

Giant squids live deep underwater. They are rarely seen.
In 2012 a group of scientists filmed a giant squid in its natural habitat for the first time. People around the world were finally able to see a giant squid.

Giant squids live deep underwater,
so they are rarely seen.

Giant squids live deep underwater,
or they are rarely seen.



wildestanimal/Moment/Getty Images

Giant squids belong to a group of animals that shoot out ink. The giant squid sprays the dark ink as a defense against predators. It blinds predators so the squid can escape and not be seen.

The group of animals

The predator

The dark ink



© Kietr/stock.adobe.com

Giant squids have very large eyes that help them find food in deep, dark ocean waters, where most other animals cannot see anything. Giant squids have eight arms and two long feeding tentacles that they use to bring food to their mouths. They eat fish, shrimp, and other squids.



Scientists do not know for sure where to find giant squids.

Scientists in Japan brought a giant squid to the surface of the water.

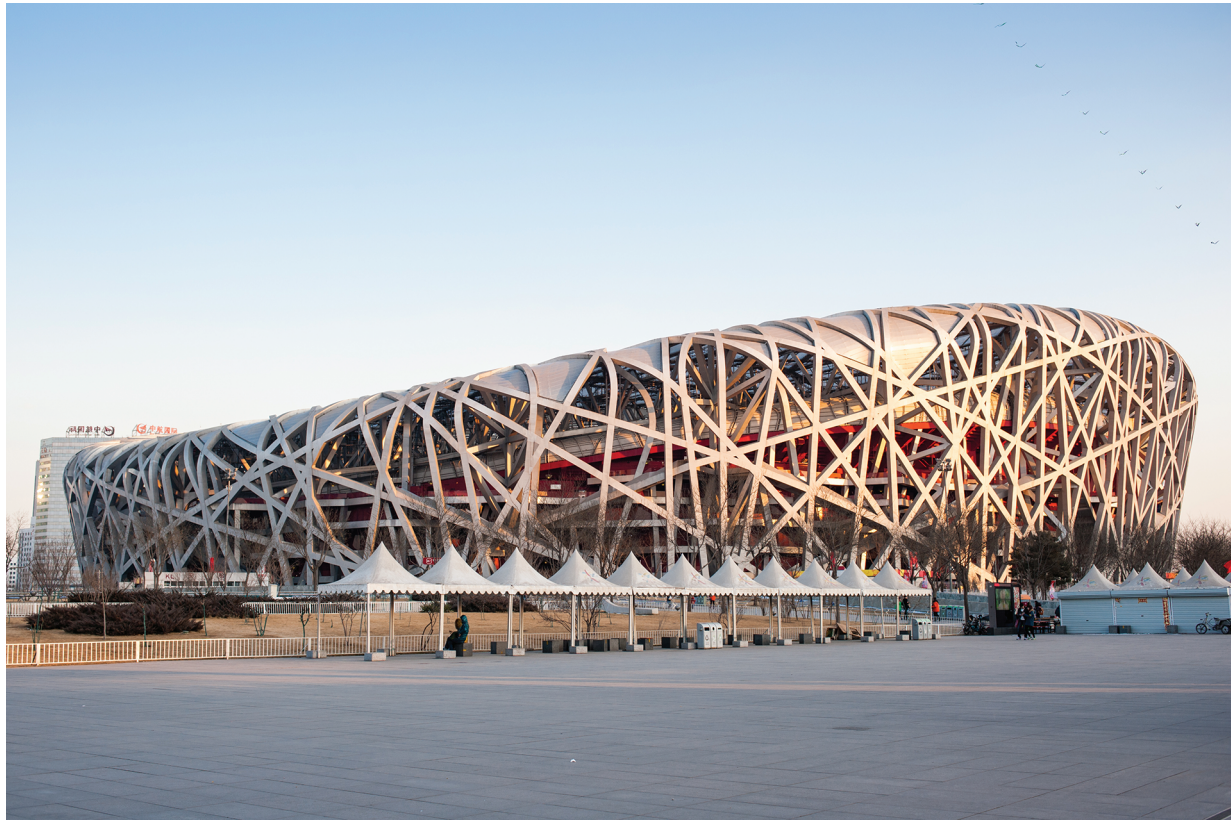
Some scientists think giant squids might even eat small whales.

This snowy mountain resort hosted skiing and snowboarding events for the 2022 winter olympics in beijing, china.



© Mirko Kuzmanovic/Shutterstock.com

This snowy mountain resort hosted skiing and snowboarding events for the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China.



The opening and closing ceremonies for the 2022 Winter Olympics were inside Beijing National Stadium called the Bird Nest. The stadium gets its name from the web of twisted steel sections that form the sides and roof.

Birds Nest

Bird's Nest



The Bird's Nest is also one of the steel structures in the world. Construction began in 2003. The building was finally completed five years later, in time for the 2008 Olympics. It was reused for the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. The Bird's Nest was the only stadium in the world to host both summer and winter Olympic Games ceremonies.

large

larger

largest



Nokuro/Alamy Stock Photo



Karen Cowled/Alamy Stock Photo

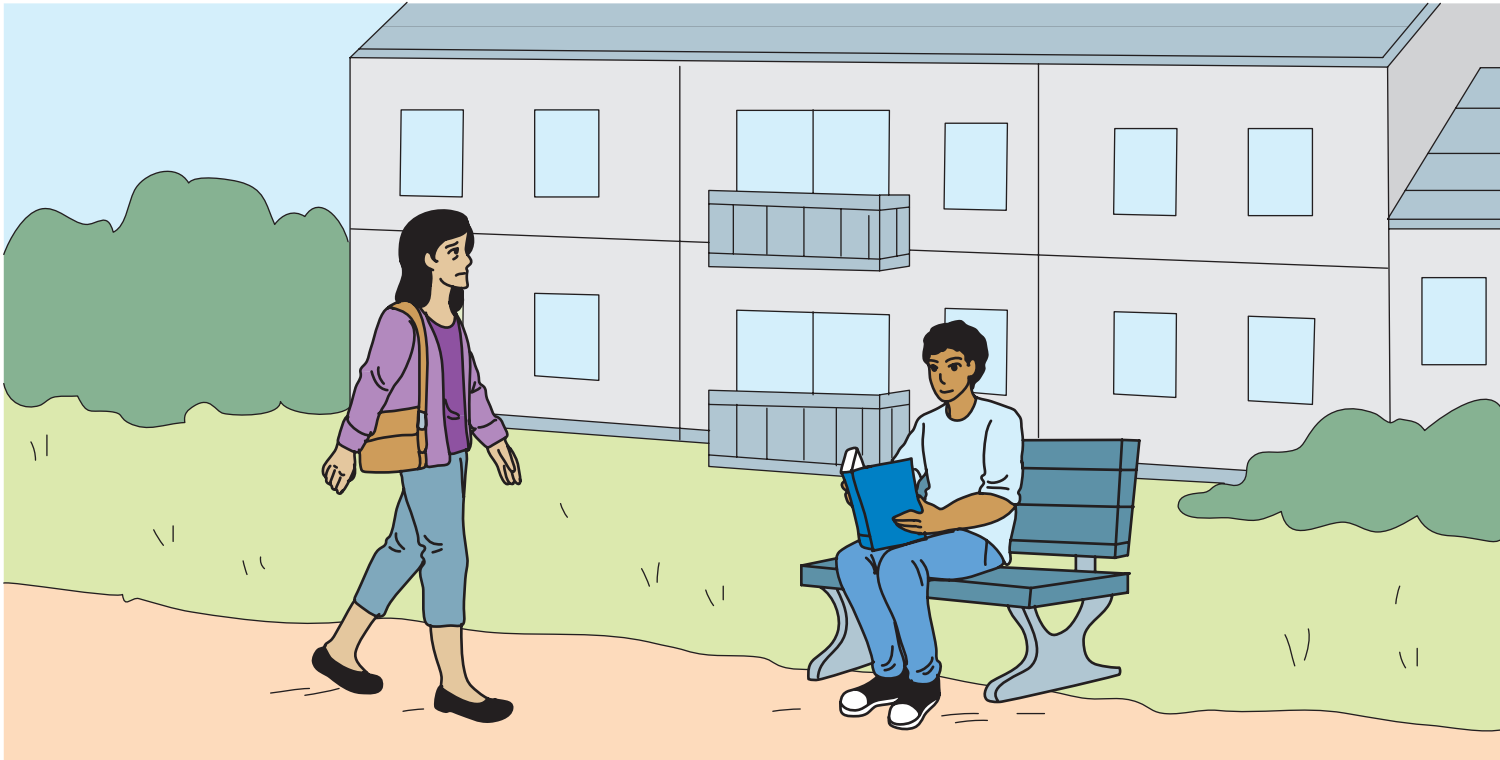
The Beijing National Aquatics Center is also known as the Water Cube. It was built to host the diving, swimming, and synchronized swimming events for the 2008 Summer Olympics. The city of Beijing built a housing facility with over 3,000 beds for Olympic athletes and officials. When Beijing was awarded the 2022 Winter Olympics, the Water Cube was renovated and became the Ice Cube. The multi-lane swimming pool was converted into a curling rink with four sheets of ice.

It was built to host the diving, swimming, and synchronized swimming events for the 2008 Summer Olympics.

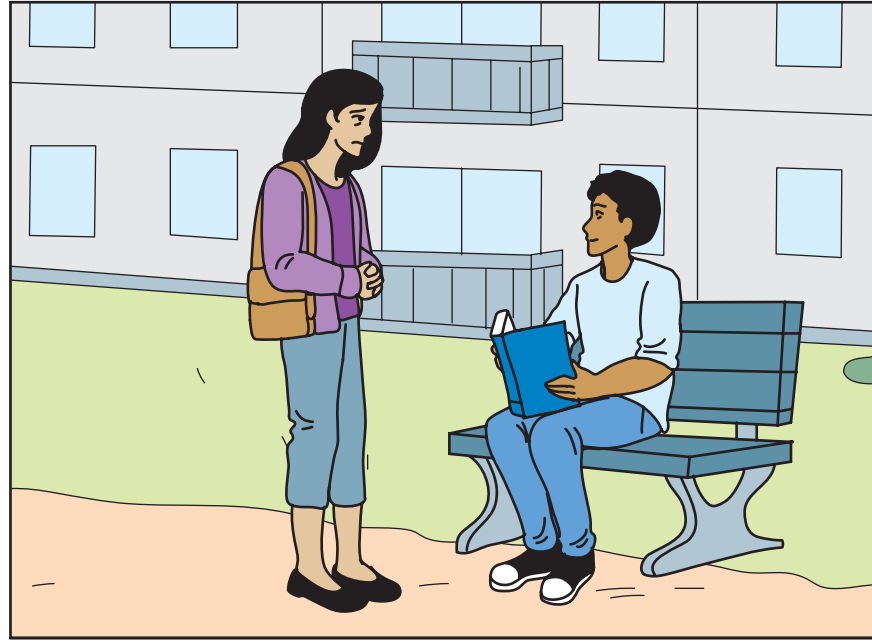
The city of Beijing built a housing facility with over 3,000 beds for Olympic athletes and officials.

The multi-lane swimming pool was converted into a curling rink with four sheets of ice.

The Mystery of the Missing Photograph

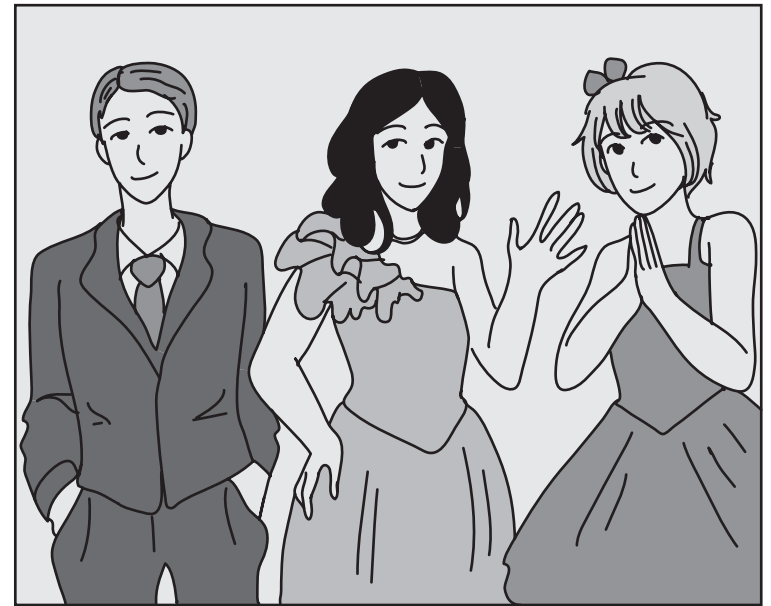


Jayden is reading one of his favorite books. It is about a detective solving the mystery of a very valuable lost painting. He does not notice his neighbor Ms. Garcia nervously walking up and down the sidewalk in front of their apartment building.

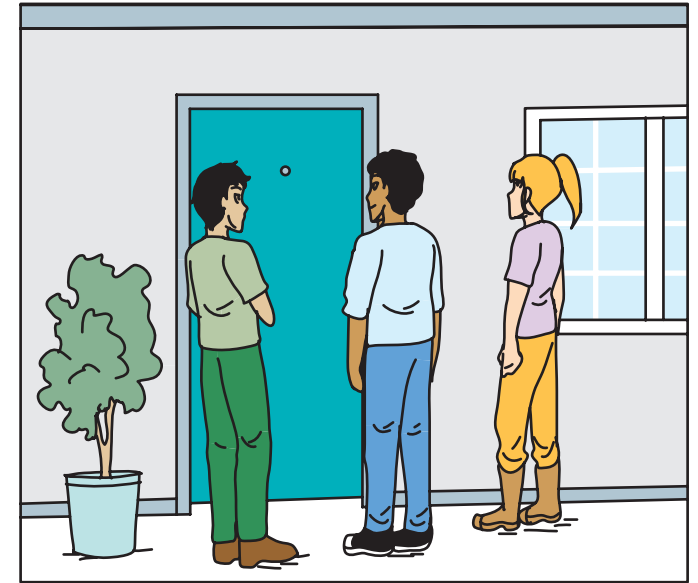


When Jayden looks up from his book, he sees Ms. Garcia wringing her hands and asks, "Is something wrong?"

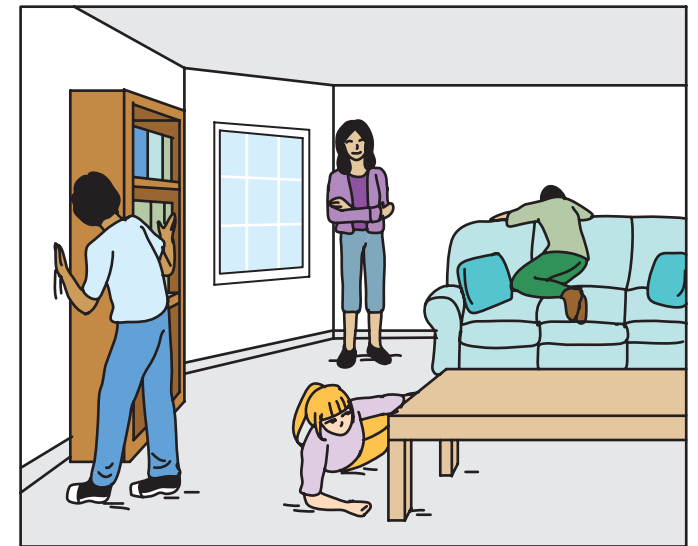
"I'm so upset," Ms. Garcia answers. "When I was cleaning out a drawer I found an old photograph taken in 1977 of some friends at my high school prom. I decided to have it framed, so I set it aside while I finished cleaning out the drawer. Now it has disappeared!"



Jayden texts his friends Rebecca and Vincent and asks them to meet him at Ms. Garcia's apartment and help find Ms. Garcia's missing photograph from her high school dance. The photograph is all that Ms. Garcia had left to remind her of her friends.



Jayden, Rebecca, and Vincent search under the furniture and behind bookshelves, but the photograph is not in the apartment. Then Jayden remembers seeing someone loading boxes onto a truck earlier that day.



"Ms. Garcia, after you cleaned out the drawer," Jayden asks, "did you donate anything you found in it to charity?"

"Why yes," she replies. "I filled a few boxes with old books from the cabinet, and then I called the used bookstore to pick them up."

"Maybe the photograph fell into one of those boxes," Jayden suggests. "But don't worry. The bookstore is just a few blocks away. We'll walk there and look for it."

The three friends meet the manager at the bookstore and tell him that they are looking for Ms. Garcia's missing photograph. The manager takes them to a stack of boxes at the back of the store that has just been unloaded. They search through the boxes for the missing photograph.



After looking carefully through each book in every box, Jayden says sadly, "Ms. Garcia will be so disappointed. I was sure we'd find the photograph inside one of the boxes."

The photograph is all that Ms. Garcia had left to remind her of her friends.

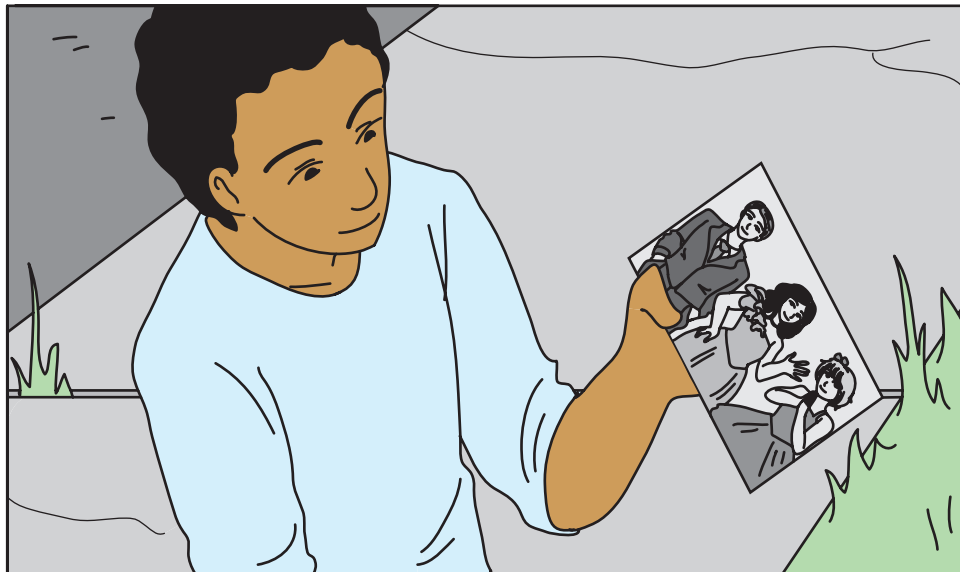
Jayden, Rebecca, and Vincent search under the furniture and behind bookshelves, but the photograph is not in the apartment.

The three friends meet the manager at the bookstore and tell him that they are looking for Ms. Garcia's missing photograph.

"Wait!" Jayden shouts. He picks up an empty box and notices that a loose piece of packing tape on the bottom of the box is stuck to his hand. "What if Ms. Garcia accidentally set this box on top of the photograph? The photo could have stuck to it, but neither Ms. Garcia nor the delivery driver would have seen it. It could have fallen off onto the floor of the truck when the boxes were unloaded."

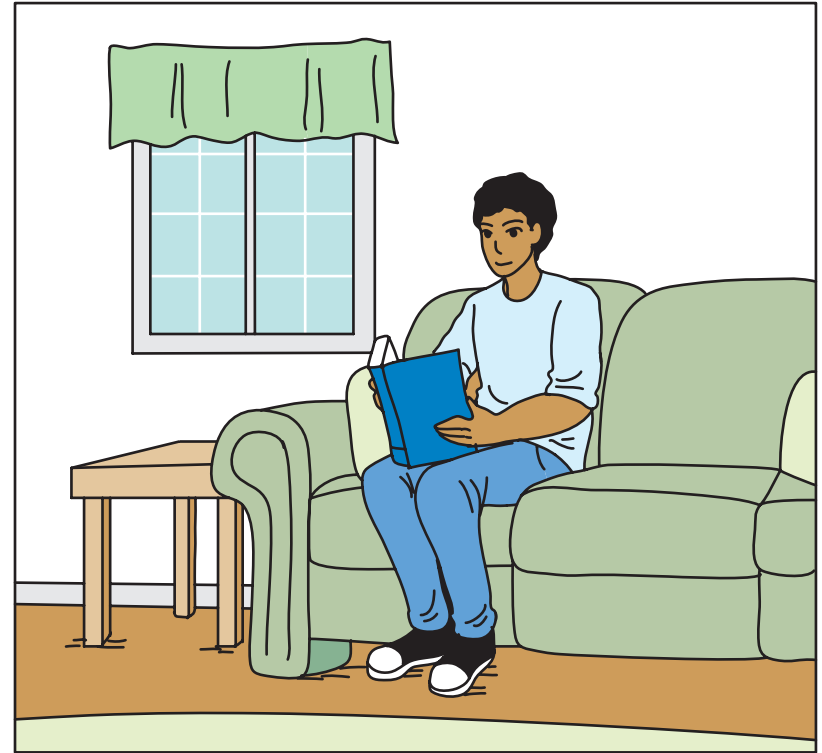


Jayden, Rebecca, and Vincent run outside to the delivery truck that is still in the parking lot. They ask the driver if they can search inside it, but they do not find the missing photograph. About to give up, Jayden sees something blowing in the wind. Whatever it is finally gets trapped by a patch of weeds growing up from a crack in the sidewalk. He goes over and picks up an old black-and-white photograph of teenagers dressed in old-fashioned clothes at a high school prom. The number 1977 is written on the back.



Ms. Garcia is so happy when the three friends bring back the photograph. She wants to hear all about how they solved the case of her missing photograph.

Later that evening, Jayden picks up his book again and reads about how the detective in the story follows the clues to find the missing painting. He realizes that he has also solved a mystery by finding something that was lost and very valuable to someone.



the packing tape from the box
stuck to his hand

the delivery truck in the parking
lot behind the bookstore

the patch of weeds growing from
a crack in the sidewalk



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