



Sand Castle Contest



by Gertrude Fleck
illustrated by Paige Billin-Frye

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN



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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT
School Publishers

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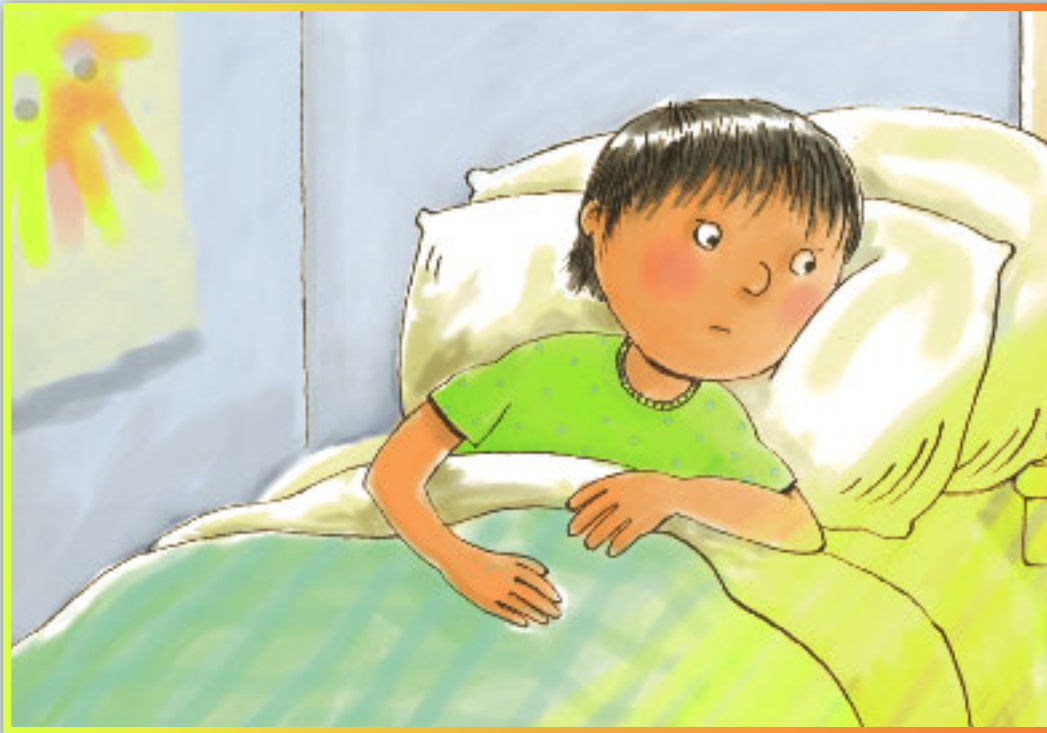
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☞ Sunbeams streamed through Bernardo's bedroom window and danced across his face. He felt the warmth and knew it was a beautiful summer day. For a moment, Bernardo thought he was back in his old home in the city. He smiled sleepily. His friends would want to play soccer in the park.

☞ Then Bernardo remembered that he had moved. His new home was near the ocean. It was far away from the city and all of his friends.



🔊 Bernardo frowned. He didn't know anyone in his new neighborhood. Worst of all, it looked like the only kids who lived here were babies, like his sisters. Bernardo hadn't seen anyone his age. Maybe he'd be stuck playing with his baby sisters for the rest of his life! Bernardo's eyes filled with tears. He had never before felt so **lonely**.

🔊 Bernardo sighed and got out of bed. Maybe today wouldn't be so bad. Maybe he'd meet some kids his own age.



🔊 Bernardo went down to breakfast and poured a bowl of cereal and milk. He pushed the cereal around in his bowl instead of eating it.

🔊 Mama looked up from the newspaper she was reading and said, “Cheer up, Bernardo! It’s summer. I’m sure many of our neighbors are away on vacation. You’ll meet some children your age when you start school. Then you’ll have lots of friends!”



🔊 Bernardo **answered**, “But I want friends now. I had lots of friends back home in Chicago!”

🔊 Mama looked at Bernardo **seriously**. “I know you miss your friends. It’s hard to move to a new place, but this is our home now. It will take a little time to settle in to our new community. But I think you will like it here.”



🔊 Mama tapped the paper she'd been reading. Bernardo could tell she was **planning** something. "This paper has a catalog of summer events to participate in." Mama pointed to one of the events listed.

3 pm

Summer Sand Castle Contest:

Children aged 5 to 11 are invited to participate in a sand castle building competition on the beach this Saturday from 10 A.M. to noon at Seaside Community Center. Judges will award prizes for the best sand castles in each age group. The Center will provide materials and tools.

Hike

🔊 “But I don’t know anything about building sand castles,” said Bernardo. “The other kids will be really good at it.”

🔊 “It’s a chance to make friends,” explained Mama. “And, it’s a good time to see what the beach is like.”

🔊 “But how will I know what to do?” asked Bernardo.

“I’m sure you’ll figure it out. You’re always so creative,” said Mama. “You’d better get dressed. The competition starts in an hour. Be sure to wear your shorts and your flip-flops.”

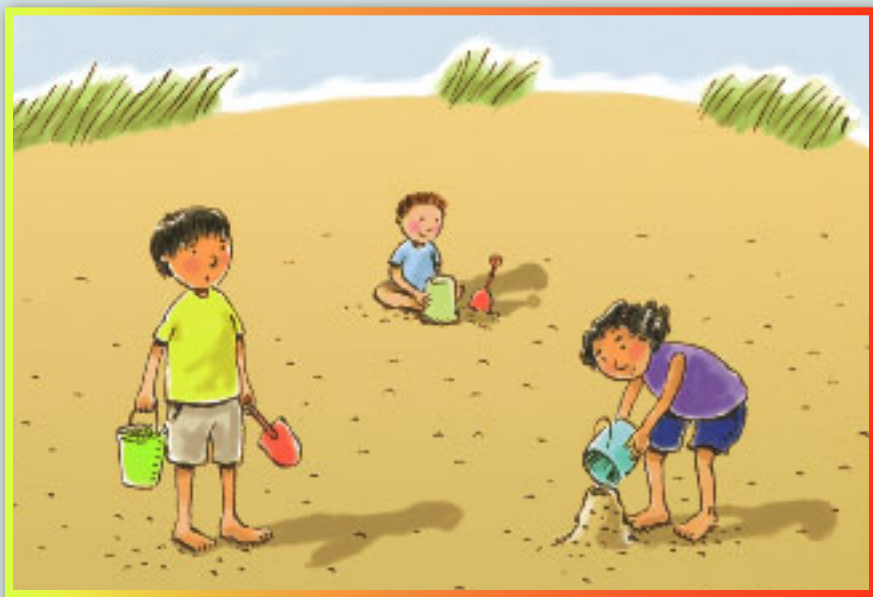
Bernardo dragged his feet **heavily** upstairs and got dressed.



When they arrived at the community center, Bernardo's heart sank. He felt a **knot** in his stomach. Children were talking happily in small groups. "How will I meet anyone here?" thought Bernardo. "They all know each other already."

The judges put the children into three age groups, and Bernardo went to join the 7 and 8 year olds. The judges gave each child a pail and a shovel. They had two hours to build their sand castles.

Bernardo looked at his pail and shovel. He felt nervous. He watched other children fill their pails with sand and begin to make castles.



🔊 Bernardo decided to **copy** the other children. He filled his pail with sand. Then he turned it over and lifted the pail. The sand flowed every which way.

🔊 Bernardo tried again and again, but the same thing happened every time. “What am I doing wrong?” thought Bernardo. “Everyone else has towers that stay together.” He put down his shovel and pail.



“I used to have the same problem,” said a girl next to Bernardo. “You need to use damp sand to build a tower. Dry sand won’t hold a shape. Here, I’ll show you.”

“Thanks,” mumbled Bernardo. He watched the girl make a perfect tower.

“Now you try,” said the girl.

Bernardo did just what the girl had done, and he made a perfect tower.

“That’s great! Thanks,” he said.



🔊 “I’m Sofia,” said the girl.

“My name is Bernardo. I’m new in town. I’ve never been in a sand castle contest before,” he said.

🔊 Sofia said, “I **guessed** that. I didn’t know much about sand castles when I moved here. I used to live in the city.”

🔊 “I moved from the city, too,” said Bernardo.

Sofia said, “Let’s work together. We can build a giant sand castle. Then we can decorate it with shells and seaweed.”



They began to make a circle of towers. Sofia showed Bernardo how they could join towers together and carve windows and turrets. Suddenly, the judges told them that the time was almost up! Bernardo couldn't believe it! Two hours had gone by so quickly.

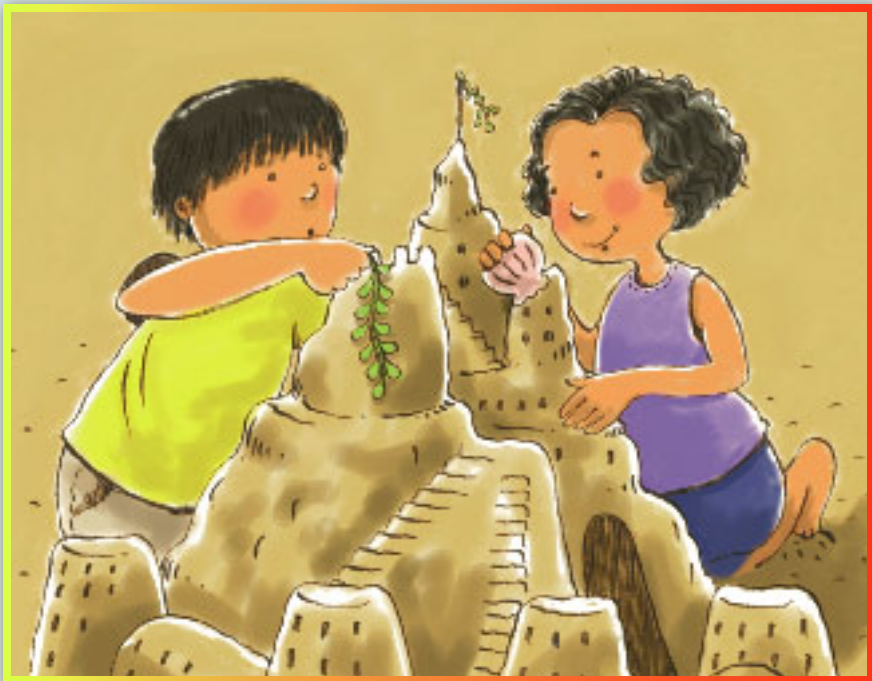
“Quick!” said Sofia. She motioned Bernardo to follow her. “We have to collect seaweed and shells to finish it.” They ran to the water's edge and began filling a bucket with small shells and seaweed.



🔊 “Ten more minutes,” yelled one of the judges.

They ran back to the castle and quickly began decorating it. Just as Sofia placed the last shell, the judge called, “Time is up!” Bernardo and Sofia sat back to admire their castle. It looked like a castle from a fairy tale! Then they walked around to look at the other sand castles.

🔊 After awhile, the judges called everyone to join them. They were standing at Bernardo and Sofia’s castle! They had won a prize! Bernardo was so happy. Best of all, he had a new friend!

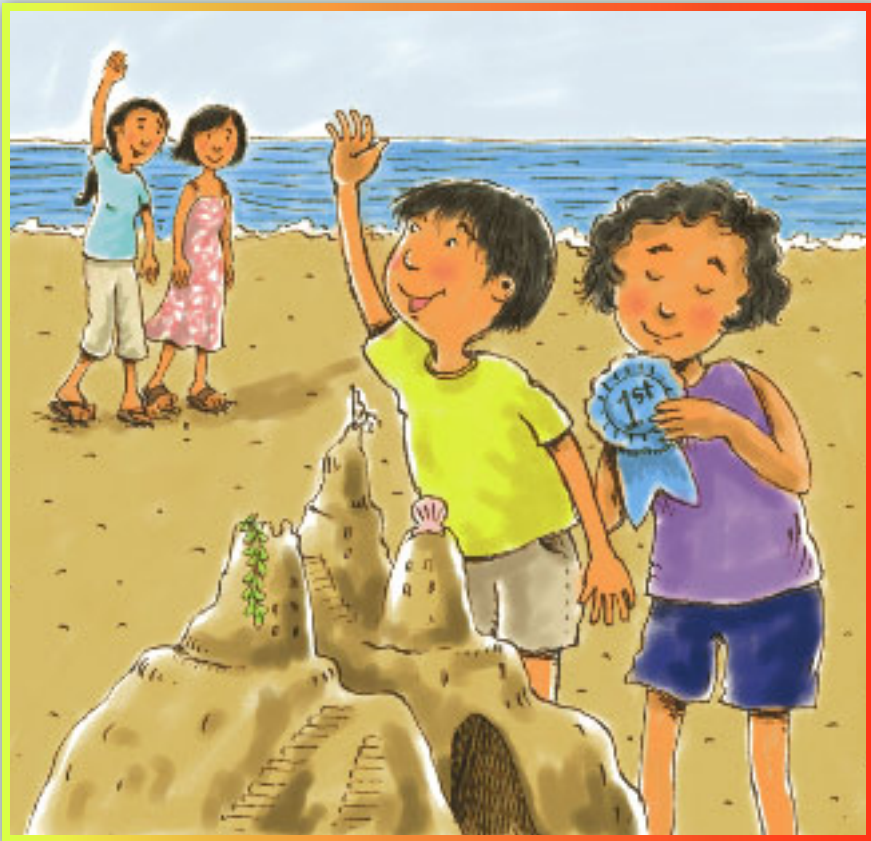


At the end of the contest, Mama came over to Bernardo. He was surprised to see her walking with another woman. Sofia ran to the woman and hugged her.

“This is my mother,” said Sofia.

“This is Mrs. Sanchez,” said Mama. “She and her family live next door to us.”

Bernardo grinned. He was too happy to talk.





Responding

**TARGET SKILL Understanding**

Characters How does Bernardo feel about going to the sandcastle contest? How can you tell? Copy the chart and add details from the story.

Thoughts	Actions	Words
?	?	?

**Write About It**

Text to Self It was hard for Bernardo to build a sand castle. Then he learned how to do it. Write a paragraph that compares and contrasts something that you do well, with how you did it before you learned to do it well.



TARGET VOCABULARY

answered
copy
guessed
heavily

knot
lonely
planning
seriously

EXPAND YOUR VOCABULARY

community
competition

nervous
participate



TARGET SKILL **Understanding**

Characters Tell more about the characters.



TARGET STRATEGY **Question**

Ask questions about what you are reading.



GENRE Realistic fiction is a story that could happen in real life.

Level: N

DRA: 30

Genre:

Realistic Fiction

Strategy:

Question

Skill:

Understanding Characters

Word Count: 949

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