

Name: _____

Date: _____

Mary's Little Lamb

Almost every child knows the poem "Mary Had a Little Lamb." But not everyone knows that there was a real Mary whose adventures, when she was a nine-year-old schoolgirl, were recorded in the poem.

The real Mary was a girl named Mary Elizabeth Sawyer, who lived in Sterling, Massachusetts. She found and adopted a young lamb whose mother had left it. Even though the lamb was very weak, Mary fed it and kept it warm. As the lamb grew, it seemed to like being with Mary and would follow her whenever it could.

Mary and her brother walked to school one day. After they got there, they discovered that the lamb had followed them. They didn't want to leave it outside, so they hid it near Mary's seat. The lamb slept for most of the morning. The teacher called Mary to the front of the room. While Mary was at the front of the room, the lamb woke up. It went to the front of the room and must have caused quite a disturbance. The teacher made Mary take the lamb outside, where it stood by the door until Mary took it home at the end of the day.

A man named John Roulstone was at the school the day that Mary's lamb visited. He wrote the first three verses of the poem we know today. John Roulstone gave the poem to Mary, who liked it so much that she gave copies of it away. A woman named Sarah Hale included the poem in a collection of poetry she edited. By the time the poem was published in 1830, it was several verses longer.

Mary's lamb eventually grew up. The lamb was so well-known that small tufts of its wool were sold to help raise money to save a historic building in Boston.

So the next time you repeat that famous poem, remember that the real Mary was once a student like you!

1. What was sold to help raise money for a historic site in Boston?

- A. a collection of poems
- B. pieces of lamb's wool
- C. copies of the poem
- D. Mary's lamb

2. How was the poem different in 1830 from when it was first written?

- A. It was longer.
- B. It was given away.
- C. It was written by hand.
- D. It was rewritten by John Roulstone.

Theodor Geisel

Theodor Geisel loved to draw funny people and animals. He loved to read. When he grew up, he wanted to make reading easy and fun for boys and girls. His first book was an alphabet book, but no one would publish it. For nearly four years, he stopped writing.

Finally in 1936, Theodor took a trip on a ship. As he sat on the deck, he wrote a story about what a boy imagines he sees on his hometown street. Theodor named the story *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. The book was his first big success.

In the 87 years of Theodor's life, he had many other successes. He wrote and had published a total of 47 books. Some of his books teach a lesson. His stories always include strange, make-believe animals and people with funny names. Because he wanted books to be fun for children, he often wrote in silly rhyme. In 1986, he did something different and wrote a book for older folks. This book was called *You're Only Old Once!*

Theodor Geisel used a pen name when he wrote children's books. Some of his most famous ones are: *The Cat in the Hat*, *Horton Hears a Who*, and *Green Eggs and Ham*. Theodor Geisel is better known to children as Dr. Seuss. Theodor was not really a doctor, but he did find a cure for children who were bored with books. His funny books have been delighting children for over fifty years.

3. **Dr. Seuss wrote his FIRST successful book**

- A. when he was 87 years old
 - B. as he sat on the deck of a ship
 - C. when he lived on Mulberry Street
 - D. after becoming a doctor
-

4. How many books did Dr. Seuss write and have published?

- A. 5
 - B. 47
 - C. 50
 - D. 87
-

5. This passage is an example of

- A. a fairy tale.
 - B. a fable.
 - C. a biography.
 - D. a poem.
-

6. In the fourth paragraph, *pen name* means a name
- A. for a character in a story.
 - B. given to make-believe animals.
 - C. that rhymes with silly words.
 - D. that authors use instead of their own.
-

Right in Your Own Backyard

I have become very interested in taking care of the environment. This happened because of my neighbor, Mr. Edwards. But he is not your typical neighbor. You will not see Mr. Edwards working in his backyard. He works in everyone's backyard, which is Planet Earth!

He has spent many years working for environmental causes. But he never brags about the valuable work he does. Mr. Edwards believes it is people's duty to protect their home, Planet Earth. "Earth is one big backyard. We have to start in our own backyards and work outward," Mr. Edwards always says. Mr. Edwards has turned his words into action. First, he was named tree commissioner for our town. As commissioner, he oversees the planting of trees and teaches people about their environmental benefits. "If I can encourage one person to plant a tree, then I have done my job. Just think of how wonderful it would be if each person planted a tree," Mr. Edwards says. He has encouraged several citizens to plant more trees. In fact, our town has won the *Tree City USA Award* for the past nine years because of Mr. Edwards's work.

Just last year, Mr. Edwards adopted a highway. Throughout the year, he and his friends clean up the litter along his highway. One afternoon, when I was out in my own yard, Mr. Edwards stopped by. He asked me if I wanted to join his highway clean-up group. It is hard work, but also a lot of fun. We wear bright orange safety vests so people can see us on the roadside. We use sticks to pick up the litter, and the town comes and picks up our bags at the end of the day. One of my friends asked me why I clean up the highway when people keep littering anyway. My answer surprised us both.

"Earth is one big backyard. We have to start in our own backyards and work outwards," I proudly replied. We both laughed. I sounded just like Mr. Edwards. "May I join the highway clean-up group?" my friend then asked. "Sure!" I exclaimed with a smile.

7. This passage is an example of
- A. a letter.
 - B. a story.
 - C. a drama.
 - D. a folk tale.
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8. What would be another good title for this passage?

- A. How to Adopt a Highway
 - B. The Planet Earth
 - C. It's Everyone's Backyard
 - D. My Neighbor, the Tree Commissioner
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9. When the author says, "I sounded just like Mr. Edwards," what does she mean?

- A. Mr. Edwards tells people what to say.
 - B. She learned from Mr. Edwards.
 - C. Mr. Edwards is a very smart man.
 - D. Her voice sounded like Mr. Edwards's.
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10. Why do the highway workers wear orange vests?

- A. so they can be seen easily by drivers
- B. because that is the city color
- C. so all of the workers have matching outfits
- D. so people know that they are working

Answer Key

1. B) pieces of lamb's wool
2. A) It was longer.
3. B) as he sat on the deck of a ship
4. B) 47
5. C) a biography.
6. D) that authors use instead of their own.
7. B) a story.
8. C) It's Everyone's Backyard
9. B) She learned from Mr. Edwards.
10. A) so they can be seen easily by drivers