

Name: _____

Date: _____

A Letter to the class from Betsy Byars

Dear Class,

When I was growing up, I did not want to be a writer, but I had one thing in common with every writer I know. I loved books.

The whole family knew how much I loved to read, so I got books for my birthday, books for Christmas. At Christmas I would sneak the books out from under the tree, one by one, carefully unwrap them, read them, and stick them back under the tree. I just couldn't wait.

In those days I read for one reason – to find out what was going to happen. Would the black stallion be captured? Would the boys find the pirate's treasure? Did the mummy speak?

I still read a lot, but I read differently now. I want to know what's going to happen, of course, but I also want to find out how the writer made it happen. If a writer makes me feel sad or excited, I read that part again and again until I see how the writer did it. For example, a writer makes a scene move faster by using more dialogue than description. Reading carefully is how I learned how to write.

Whether you read to find out what's going to happen or because you, too, are interested in writing, I hope you've found lots of good books this year. And, yes, I still open anything that looks like a book immediately. I still can't wait.

Happy Reading!

Betsy Byars

1. According to the letter, how has reading parts of books helped Betsy Byars become a better writer?

- A. It has shown her how other authors create excitement and a fast pace.
 - B. It has given her ideas for books.
 - C. She has met other authors.
 - D. It has shown her that the purpose of writing is to tell what happens.
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2. Which piece of advice would Betsy Byars give to someone who wants to be a good writer?

- A. write letters to authors
 - B. ask for books as gifts
 - C. read a lot
 - D. always plan your ending first
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3. How did Betsy Byars probably decide what information to put into her letter to the class?

- A. She thought about what teachers like to know.
 - B. She remembered questions that students had asked her.
 - C. She asked her family for suggestions.
 - D. She reread her own books to see what was important.
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4. What about Betsy Byars has probably NOT changed over the years?
- A. her love of books
 - B. the way she writes
 - C. the characters she writes about
 - D. the way she reads
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Planting Peach Trees

To plant a peach tree you will need: shovel
bare-root peach
tree
fertilizer
water hose
tree stake and
tie

Visit a nursery in the springtime to select a peach tree that is good for your area and take it to the planting spot.

Dig a hole more than twice as deep as the tree's roots with the shovel. Mix the fertilizer with the soil from the hole. Make a cone out of the soil in the bottom of the hole so that this will support the tree's roots.

If any roots on the tree are broken, cut them off just above the break. Put the tree into the hole and make sure that the roots make a fan over the cone of soil. The tree should be planted deep enough so the graft, where the young tree is joined to the roots, is two to four inches above the surface of the soil. Add or take out soil until it is just right.

Fill the hole with more of the dirt and fertilizer mixture. When the hole is almost full, fill it with water and let it settle into the soil. Put the support stake in six to ten inches from the trunk and tie the tree to it.

Make sure you water the tree every week. It will soon sprout leaves, but it will take several years before it will produce peaches.

5. In which book would you MOST likely find this passage?
- A. *Let's Recycle!*
 - B. *Our Earth*
 - C. *Springtime Gardening*
 - D. *Dynamic Roses*
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6. In which book would you MOST LIKELY find this passage?
- A. *Our Earth*
 - B. *Let's Recycle*
 - C. *Dynamic Roses*
 - D. *Springtime Gardening*
-

7. According to the passage, how deep should you dig the hole for the tree?

- A. six to ten feet deep
 - B. two to four inches below ground
 - C. more than two times as deep as the tree's roots
 - D. deep enough to cover just above the broken tree roots
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8. What will happen if you water the tree every week?

- A. It will grow quickly.
 - B. It will soon sprout leaves.
 - C. It will soon produce seeds.
 - D. It will require more fertilizer.
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9. What is the next step after filling the hole with more of the dirt and fertilizer mixture?

- A. Fill the hole with water.
 - B. Put in the support stake.
 - C. Make a cone out of the soil.
 - D. Cut off the broken tree roots.
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10. If you plant a peach tree this year, how long will it take before you can harvest some peaches?

- A. one year
- B. one month
- C. several years
- D. several months

Answer Key

1. A) It has shown her how other authors create excitement and a fast pace.
2. C) read a lot
3. B) She remembered questions that students had asked her.
4. A) her love of books
5. C) *Springtime Gardening*
6. D) *Springtime Gardening*
7. C) more than two times as deep as the tree's roots
8. B) It will soon sprout leaves.
9. A) Fill the hole with water.
10. C) several years