

***Reading For Comprehension Series***  
***By Lee Ann Berg***

***The Homework Machine***

By Dan Gutman  
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Reading For Comprehension Series Bundle  
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### **Teacher's Guide**

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And the answers to the comprehension questions are not always written in complete sentences. The answers have sometimes been made in shortened phrases which make the answers easier to find as well as limiting the space needed to give the answers.

## **Introduction Police Chief Rebecca Fish, Grand Canyon, Arizona Pp. 1-2**

- 1. Who was involved in the weirdest case Chief Fish ever experienced? Pp. 1-2**  
Four students, whose case was taped along with anybody else involved, were.

## **Chapter 1 September pp. 3-24**

### **Vocabulary List with Definitions (grade appropriate #, page where word is found)**

**humiliating** (10, 5) to injure the self-respect of; mortify

**discrimination** (8+, 6) to make a difference in treatment of an individual other than merit

**bigotry** (12+, 6) one intolerantly devoted to his/her own prejudices or opinions; fanatic

**trivial** (9, 9) of little importance

**destined** ( , 11) to settle in advance

**unique** (7, 13) being the only one of its kind; very unusual; notable

**self-esteem** (10, 15) the regard in which one holds himself; sense of worth or confidence

**democracy** (6, 19) government of the people and by the people; rule of the majority

**totalitarian** ( , 19) political regime based on the strict control of all aspects of life

**fatigue** (6, 19) weary; tired

**incompetence** (8+, 19) lacking sufficient knowledge, skill, or ability; not qualified

**virtually** (10, 19) almost entirely; nearly

**motivated** ( , 22) to provide with a reason to act on something; impel

**devote** a lot of time (6, 22) to set apart a lot of time for a special purpose

**fatal** (6, 24) causing death or ruin

**blunder** (5, 24) stupid or needless mistake

### **Comprehension Questions**

- 1. Who was Sam Dawkins? Pp. 3-4** He was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. His nickname was his last name spelled backward, Snikwad. He had long hair and was new to this school.
- 2. What did Kelsey Donnelly, who was also in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, say about having to make a statement? Pp. 4** It was not like we robbed a bank. We're sorry about what happened.

## Chapter 1 Continued Page 2

3. **Who was Judy Douglas? P. 5** She was in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She was a G and T program student who claimed things got out of control. She was worried that these things would go on her permanent record, and she wouldn't get into law school.
4. **Who or what did Judy's mom blame for the proceedings? P. 6** She said at first that the proceedings were because of discrimination and bigotry.
5. **What did Brenton, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, have to say about the case? Pp. 6-7** Brenton thought that the case was like a lined up set of dominoes. If you pushed one over, the rest will fall.
6. **What was Judy's first impression of Miss Rasmussen? P. 7** She was very young, and perhaps not experienced enough to handle the trouble-making boys in the class.
7. **What was Sam's take on the first day at school in Miss Rasmussen's class? P. 8** He was the new kid, so there would be lots of stares, and there were. He was uniquely drawn to Brenton even at first impression.
8. **What was Judy's take on Brenton? Pp. 8-9** He always dressed weirdly. He was not concerned with how he looked to the other kids. The kids made fun of him. He had no friends.
9. **What did Sam say about Brenton's observations? Pp. 9-10** Brenton said the weirdest things, like when he said that glass was made out of sand.
10. **What was Kelsey's comment about Brenton? P. 10** Brenton was a genius in school, but didn't even watch TV like everyone else.
11. **What purpose did Brenton say he served in a weird way? P. 11** He wasn't cool, and if everyone were cool at school, there would not be anyone to make fun of.
12. **What did Miss Rasmussen say about the Grand Canyon in September? Pp. 11-12** By September, most tourists were gone, and the locals had the canyon all to themselves.
13. **How did Miss Rasmussen arrange her class? Pp. 12-13** They were to work in small groups. The four students involved in the police case all had last names which started with D, hence the nickname, D Squad.

## Chapter 1 Continued Page 3

14. **What kind of club did Brenton think of starting, and why did he decide against it? Pp. 14** the Antisocial Club If he did, that would defeat the purpose of being antisocial because a club had to have members, which makes it social.
15. **What was Judy's take on the three other kids in the D Squad? Pp. 15-16** Sam (Snik) had low self-esteem, Kelsey didn't care about anything, and Brenton was a natural genius. In fact, Judy was in awe of Brenton.
16. **Why was Ronnie Teotwawki glad the D Squad got in trouble with the police? P. 16** It took attention off him.
17. **Why did the trouble get started according to Kelsey? P. 16** It happened because homework sucked.
18. **What worksheet did Miss Rasmussen give a copy of to every student? Pp. 17-18** The Ten Commandments of Homework
19. **What kind of homework assignment did Miss Rasmussen give her students after she handed out "The Ten Commandments of Homework?" Pp. 18-19** They were to write about the handout. Sam (Snik) wrote a very derogatory ten commandments on homework, himself.
20. **What grade did Miss Rasmussen give Snik on his homework assignment? P. 20** She didn't like what he wrote, but gave him a B for being creative.
21. **What did Sam's parents think about Sam getting a haircut? Pp. 20-21** If he would do his homework, they would not make him get a haircut.
22. **Who likes homework? Pp. 21-22** Judy
23. **When did Sam claim that he first heard of the homework machine? Pp. 22-24** He asked Brenton how much time he spent on homework, and Brenton's answer surprised him because he said he didn't spend time on homework because he had invented a homework machine.

## Chapter 2 October Pp. 25-45

### Vocabulary List with Definitions (grade appropriate #, page where word is found)

**pestering** (6+, 27) irritate; annoy

**hospitable** (8, 29) given to generous and cordial reception of guests

**bogus** (10, 32) a sham, spurious, a ruse

**time-consuming** (7, 39) taking a lot of or too much time

**catapult** (8, 40) an ancient military machine for hurling missiles

**projectile** (11, 40) a missile for a firearm or a catapult

**proportional** (6, 41) corresponding in size, degree, or intensity; having a constant ratio

**modified** (7, 43) changed; altered

### Comprehension Questions

- 1. What did Judy and Kelsey think when they heard about Brenton's homework machine? Pp. 25-27** Judy said she should have told Miss Rasmussen and none of this would have happened. Kelsey said she never once believed Brenton could make a homework machine. Brenton said he should have kept his machine a secret.
- 2. What did Judy try to get Sam to do? P. 27** She wanted Sam to stop pestering Brenton about his machine.
- 3. Why did Brenton agree to let the D Squad see his machine? P. 28** He wanted to prove to them he wasn't a liar and a fake.
- 4. What reaction did Brenton's mom have when he brought three kids home after school the first time? P. 29** She was so elated she made them cinnamon rolls.
- 5. What did Sam think of Brenton's room? P. 30** It was weird. There was a picture of the renaissance man, Leonardo DaVinci, and a poster that said that "war is evil."
- 6. What did the homework machine look like? Pp. 31-32** It looked like a computer with a scanner and a printer.
- 7. How did Sam react to the first printout of a sample homework assignment? P. 32** He laughed out loud. Brenton thought the other three kids lacked vision.
- 8. What did Brenton do next? Pp. 34-37** He had the scanner scan the assignment on "Our Solar System," the homework worksheet. The D Squad sat and waited. Three of them were sure this test of the homework machine would fail.

## Chapter 2 Continued

- 9. What did the kids think of Brenton's demo? Pp. 38-39** They were stunned. Judy couldn't believe her eyes. Kelsey, who had suspected a trick, was convinced of the machine's ability. Sam was convinced because the answers came out of the machine in Brenton's handwriting.
- 10. Why did Brenton say he did his homework with his invention? P. 39** Homework was time-consuming. He needed the time to work on truly humanitarian endeavors.
- 11. Who was Miss Rasmussen at a loss to teach? Pp. 40-41** Brenton had her at a loss because he was SO brilliant. She thought he was bored in her class. Brenton said he didn't use the homework machine for his catapult project.
- 12. What were Sam's, Judy's and Kelsey's assessments of the catapult project? Pp. 42-43** Sam loved it. Judy thought that it was a way for them to learn about war. Kelsey said her catapult really stunk.
- 13. What did Brenton say about his homework machine? P. 43** It was a very simple machine, and given the tools that the computer had with the internet, he was surprised that someone hadn't thought of it sooner.
- 14. What kind of an e-mail did Brenton get once he started using his homework machine? Pp. 44-45** He received a mysterious e-mail which said this person would like to meet Brenton, and it was signed P. Milner.

## **Student's Guide**



**Introduction Police Chief Rebecca Fish,  
Grand Canyon, Arizona Pp. 1-2**

1. Who was involved in the weirdest case Chief Fish ever experienced? Pp. 1-2

**Chapter 1 September pp. 3-24**

**Vocabulary**

humiliating (5)

discrimination (6)

bigotry (6)

trivial (9)

destined (11)

unique (13)

self-esteem (15)

democracy (9)

totalitarian (19)

fatigue (19)

incompetence (19)

virtually (19)

motivated (22)

**devote** a lot of time (22)

fatal (24)

blunder (24)

**Comprehension Questions**

1. Who was Sam Dawkins? Pp. 3-4
2. What did Kelsey Donnelly, who was also in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, say about having to make a statement? Pp. 4

## Chapter 1 Continued Page 2

3. Who was Judy Douglas? P. 5
4. Who or what did Judy's mom blame for the proceedings? P. 6
5. What did Brenton, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, have to say about the case? Pp. 6-7
6. What was Judy's first impression of Miss Rasmussen? P. 7
7. What was Sam's take on the first day at school in Miss Rasmussen's class? P. 8
8. What was Judy's take on Brenton? Pp. 8-9
9. What did Sam say about Brenton's observations? Pp. 9-10
10. What was Kelsey's comment about Brenton? P. 10
11. What purpose did Brenton say he served in a weird way? P. 11
12. What did Miss Rasmussen say about the Grand Canyon in September?  
Pp. 11-12
13. How did Miss Rasmussen arrange her class? Pp. 12-13
14. What kind of club did Brenton think of starting, and why did he decide against it? Pp. 14

## Chapter 1 Continued Page 3

15. What was Judy's take on the three other kids in the D Squad? Pp. 15-16
16. Why was Ronnie Teotwawki glad the D Squad got in trouble with the police?  
P. 16
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18. What worksheet did Miss Rasmussen give a copy of to every student?  
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19. What kind of homework assignment did Miss Rasmussen give her students after she handed out "The Ten Commandments of Homework?" Pp. 18-19
20. What grade did Miss Rasmussen give Snik on his homework assignment? P. 20
21. What did Sam's parents think about Sam getting a haircut? Pp. 20-21
22. Who likes homework? Pp. 21-22
23. When did Sam claim that he first heard of the homework machine? Pp. 22-24

## Chapter 2    October    Pp. 25-45

### Vocabulary

pestering (27)

hospitable (29)

bogus (32)

time-consuming (39)

catapult (40)

projectile (40)

proportional (41)

modified (43)

### Comprehension Questions

1. What did Judy and Kelsey think when they heard about Brenton's homework machine? Pp. 25-27
2. What did Judy try to get Sam to do? P. 27
3. Why did Brenton agree to let the D Squad see his machine? P. 28
4. What reaction did Brenton's mom have when he brought three kids home after school the first time? P. 29
5. What did Sam think of Brenton's room? P. 30
6. What did the homework machine look like? Pp. 31-32
7. How did Sam react to the first printout of a sample homework assignment? P. 32
8. What did Brenton do next? Pp. 34-37

## **Chapter 2 Continued**

9. What did the kids think of Brenton's demo? Pp. 38-39
10. Why did Brenton say he did his homework with his invention? P. 39
11. Who was Miss Rasmussen at a loss to teach? Pp. 40-41
12. What were Sam's Judy's and Kelsey's assessments of the catapult project?  
Pp. 42-43
13. What did Brenton say about his homework machine? P. 43
14. What kind of an e-mail did Brenton get once he started using his homework  
machine? Pp. 44-45

## **Student's Workbook**

**Introduction Police Chief Rebecca Fish,  
Grand Canyon, Arizona Pp. 1-2**

1. Who was involved in the weirdest case Chief Fish ever experienced? Pp. 1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 1 September pp. 3-24**

**Vocabulary**

humiliating (5) \_\_\_\_\_

discrimination (6) \_\_\_\_\_

bigotry (6) \_\_\_\_\_

trivial (9) \_\_\_\_\_

unique (13) \_\_\_\_\_

self-esteem (15) \_\_\_\_\_

democracy (19) \_\_\_\_\_

fatigue (19) \_\_\_\_\_

incompetence (19) \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 1 Continued Page 2

3. Who was Judy Douglas? P. 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Who or what did Judy's mom blame for the proceedings? P. 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What did Brenton, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student, have to say about the case? Pp. 6-7 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

8. What was Judy's take on Brenton? Pp. 8-9 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What did Sam say about Brenton's observations? Pp. 9-10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What was Kelsey's comment about Brenton? P. 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. What purpose did Brenton say he served in a weird way? P. 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What did Miss Rasmussen say about the Grand Canyon in September? Pp. 11-12 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. How did Miss Rasmussen arrange her class? Pp. 12-13 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Chapter 1 Continued Page 3

14. What kind of club did Brenton think of starting, and why did he decide against it?

Pp. 14 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. What was Judy's take on the three other kids in the D Squad? Pp. 15-16 \_\_\_\_\_

16. Why was Ronnie Teotwawki glad the D Squad got in trouble with the police? P. 16 \_\_\_\_\_

17. Why did the trouble get started according to Kelsey? P. 16 \_\_\_\_\_

18. What worksheet did Miss Rasmussen give a copy of to every student? Pp. 17-18 \_\_\_\_\_

19. What kind of homework assignment did Miss Rasmussen give her students after she handed out "The Ten Commandments of Homework?" Pp. 18-19 \_\_\_\_\_

20. What grade did Miss Rasmussen give Snik on his homework assignment? P. 20 \_\_\_\_\_

21. What did Sam's parents think about Sam getting a haircut? Pp. 20-21 \_\_\_\_\_

22. Who likes homework? Pp. 21-22 \_\_\_\_\_

23. When did Sam claim that he first heard of the homework machine? Pp. 22-24 \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 2    October    Pp. 25-45

### Vocabulary

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### Comprehension Questions

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\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why did Brenton agree to let the D Squad see his machine? P. 28 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What reaction did Brenton's mom have when he brought three kids home after school the first time? P. 29 \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. What did Sam think of Brenton's room? P. 30 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What did the homework machine look like? Pp. 31-32 \_\_\_\_\_

7. How did Sam react to the first printout of a sample homework assignment? P. 32 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 2 Continued

8. What did Brenton with the “Our Solar System” worksheet? Pp. 34-37 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Workbook Answer Key

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## Chapter 1 Continued Page 2

3. **Who was Judy Douglas? P. 5** She was a 5<sup>th</sup> grade GT student who claimed things got out of control. She worried about her permanent record and becoming a lawyer.
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23. When did Sam claim that he first heard of the homework machine? Pp. 22-24 Brenton said he did his homework on his invented homework machine.

## Chapter 2 October Pp. 25-45

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## Chapter 2 Continued

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12. **What were Sam’s Judy’s and Kelsey’s assessments of the catapult project? Pp. 42-43** Sam loved it. Judy thought that it was a way for them to learn about war. Kelsey said her catapult really stunk.
13. **What did Brenton say about his homework machine? P. 43** It was a very simple machine, and given the tools that the computer had with the internet, he was surprised that someone hadn’t thought of it sooner.
14. **What kind of an e-mail did Brenton get once he started using his homework machine? Pp. 44-45** He received a mysterious e-mail which said this person would like to meet Brenton, and it was signed, P. Milner.

## **Key Questions**

### ***Key Questions***

Answer these questions in complete sentences. Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ch. 1 Describe the four members of the D Squad. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Ch. 2 What did the homework machine look like? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Ch. 3 How did the machine print out the homework in each kid's own handwriting? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Ch. 4 Why did everyone wear red socks to school on one specific Thursday? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Ch. 5 To what addiction that her mom had did Judy liken her addiction to Belch? \_\_\_\_\_

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### *Key Questions Answer Key*

Answer these questions in complete sentences.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ch. 1 Describe the four members of the D Squad. **They were all 5<sup>th</sup> graders.**

**a. Sam was new in school. He had long hair. His nickname was his last name spelled backwards.**

**b. Kelsey said that it was not like we robbed a bank.**

**c. Judy was a GT student. She was worried she might not get into law school after this.**

**d. Brenton was a real genius.**

2. Ch. 2 What did the homework machine look like?

**It looked like a computer with a scanner and a printer.**

3. Ch. 3 How did the machine print out the homework in each kid's own handwriting?

**Brenton had the scanner take samples of each kid's handwriting. The computer programmed the scan to produce each kid's homework in their own handwriting.**

4. Ch. 4 Why did everyone wear red socks to school on one specific Thursday?

**Brenton became interested in why fads get started. So by using his computer, he inserted the message "wear red socks" on the internet everywhere he could.**

5. Ch. 5 To what addiction that her mom had did Judy liken her addiction to Belch?

**Judy likened her addiction to Belch like her mom's addiction to smoking. Her mom had tried one cigarette and liked it. Then eventually she was hooked.**

## Vocabulary Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Use the following blanks to list and define vocabulary words chosen from the included word list.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Answer five comprehension questions in complete sentences.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Vocabulary and Comprehension Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Use the following blanks to list and define vocabulary words chosen from the word list.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Meaning: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Answer three comprehension questions in complete sentences.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_