

Notes

Practice with Hints

Skim The title often points to the main idea of the passage.

Skim Why does the author use *italics* here?

Solve Do you know what bird-watching is? If not, try to *Read Ahead*.

Use the Notes column to take notes and use SALSA™ strategies. There are a few hints to get you started.

Max Tries Something New

Max thought he might go insane if he heard one more cricket chirp. He lived in the city with police sirens and constantly honking horns that didn't bother him. But these crickets—*chirp, chirp, chirp*—Argggh!

His mother had rented a cabin out in the mountains for the entire summer, declaring that a little nature would be good for him. "You'll get accustomed to it," she laughed. "You just have to discover something new to interest yourself." The long days of summer stretched out before him with no friends, video games, or even cable television! Max grunted, and went back to watching a boring movie. At least it drowned out the crickets.

The next afternoon, his mother showed up with Mr. Johnson following behind. Grandpa and he had been good friends for years, and he owned a cabin a little ways down the road. "I was telling Mr. Johnson how bored you are," his mom said. "And he kindly offered to take you bird-watching."

Max couldn't believe his ears! Bird-watching would be boring and pointless, and a thousand bugs would bite him. They probably wouldn't even see any birds! But good manners won out, and the guy was his grandfather's friend, so Max said, "Uh, that would be great, I guess."

Max and Mr. Johnson trudged into the woods for a long time until Mr. Johnson stopped abruptly. "There!" he exclaimed, pointing upward at a red flash that disappeared a second later.



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“What was that?” Max asked, trying to find it again.

“With those red feathers it’s a cardinal, of course!” Mr. Johnson shook his head. “Do you know the names of any birds?”

“Ummm...bald eagles... and pigeons?” Max suggested.

“You’re a real city kid, aren’t you?” Mr. Johnson laughed. He took out two pairs of binoculars and handed one to Max. “I used to be a city kid, too,” Mr. Johnson said. “I grew up watching the pigeons from my apartment window. Now I watch all kinds of birds, because watching them makes you really see nature.”

“And,” Mr. Johnson went on, “sometimes there’s that special thrill of seeing a rare bird. I’ve been looking for a painted bunting for almost 20 years, and every day I go looking could be the day I finally spot one!”

They crouched down and waited in silence. They had to stay quiet so they could hear the trilling cardinals, the sad mourning doves, and the cheery robins. Max decided that it was weirdly peaceful to hang out with somebody without talking. With each bird they heard or saw, Mr. Johnson made a few notes in a worn notebook as he whispered details about it. After several hours of watching, Max could identify four or five different birds by himself.

As they walked back along the path to the cabin, Max kept his eyes glued to the trees. A clear, musical call led his eye to an oak tree in which sat a bird with a red belly, green wings, and a purple head. He pulled Mr. Johnson’s arm excitedly and pointed to it. Mr. Johnson’s jaw dropped. “It’s a painted bunting!” he whispered in awe. The two of them stared respectfully at it until, a few seconds later, the bird flew away.

When they reached Max’s cabin, Max started to return his borrowed binoculars. “Keep ’em, partner,” Mr. Johnson said happily. “I never would have spotted that painted bunting without your sharp eyes.”

Max’s mom was waiting on the porch, and she smiled when he showed her his new binoculars. “I told you that trying something new would be fun.”

“Sure, sure,” said Max, not wanting to admit that it was true. They sat silently on the porch together as the daylight faded. The crickets chirping and the owls hooting actually sounded kind of nice, like they were playing music just for Max to hear.

Ask Does Max seem to be enjoying this experience? How is it different from his usual activities?

Look If the title of the passage appears in the passage itself, you should make a note.

Assemble The concluding sentence is often a place for the author to sum up an important idea or message.

- 1** What causes Max to spot the painted bunting?
- (A) He has Mr. Johnson's binoculars.
 - (B) He sees a flash of red in the trees.
 - (C) He hears it calling.
 - (D) Mr. Johnson is looking for it.



Hint—What is Max doing right before finding the bird?

- 2** What kind of bird did Max and Mr. Johnson see first?
- (A) a cardinal
 - (B) an owl
 - (C) a mourning dove
 - (D) a robin



Hint—Look back through the story and underline each bird mentioned. Which one comes first?

- 3** What is most likely true of Max?
- (A) His favorite thing to do is play video games.
 - (B) He has a pet bird at home.
 - (C) He has never been bird-watching before.
 - (D) His mom thinks he is lazy.




Hint—Inferences need evidence. Which answer choice is supported by story details?

- 4** Which of the following is most likely to happen next?
- (A) Max and his mom will move to the country for good.
 - (B) Max will go bird-watching again with Mr. Johnson.
 - (C) Max will go bird-watching every day when he gets back home.
 - (D) Max will never go bird-watching again.




Hint—Consider what you know both from the story and how people act. Which answer has the most support?


- 5** Which statement is a fact?
- (A) trying something new is always good for you
 - (B) seeing a painted bunting is exciting
 - (C) bird-watching will help you really understand nature
 - (D) a cardinal has red feathers

 *Hint*—Many people agreeing with a statement doesn't make it a fact. Facts can be proven.

- 6** The author seems to
- (A) be biased in favor of trying new things.
 - (B) be biased against trying new things.
 - (C) think that there are equally good reasons to try new things or to not try them.
 - (D) not have any opinion about whether Max should have tried something new.

 *Hint*—Does the author show Max as happy or unhappy after he tried something new?

7 What did Max think bird-watching would be like? How did it turn out to be different? Support your answer with details from the story.

 *Hint*—Check your notes. Where in the passage does the author show how Max feels about bird-watching?