

Reading task 1:

Learning Objective: We are learning to summarise what we read.

The Parent Agency

Barry Bennett hates being called 'Barry' and has made a list of ten other things he hates. Barry feels that his friends have better names, better clothes, better birthdays and definitely better parents. Barry wishes he had better parents and is transported to a world where children choose their own.

In the first extract, Barry is planning his birthday party and his younger twin sisters, who he refers to as TSE, The Sisterly Entity, are winding him up with their dad.

Extract

'... so I thought maybe on my birthday, next Saturday, when I wake up, it would be good if waiting outside was an Aston Martin DB6...' Barry was saying, in between forkfuls of low-sugar, low-salt baked beans on jacket potato.

'An Aston Martin! Write that down, Ginny!'

'I'm writing it down, Kay!'

Barry carried on looking at his dad. He had chosen not to recognise his younger twin sisters. Barry often snuck a glance at his dad's Daily or Sunday Express, as he knew that James Bond would have to be aware of when dangerous stuff was happening in the world, and he had read that some countries did this to other ones, sometimes. So similarly he did not call his eight-year-old twin sisters Ginny and Kay but The Sisterly Entity or TSE for short.

He did, however, out of the corner of his eye, catch them doing that sarcastic thing they did, when one of them - Barry didn't like separating TSE into two, as that was kind of recognising that they existed, but if he had to, he would refer to them as Sisterly Entities One and Two - would pretend to write down something he said, as if it was really important. Which of course was their way of saying that it wasn't important at all. Barry really hated it when they did that.

'... so, Dad, on our birthday can you take us somewhere in a Rolls-Royce? Which you can keep in the garage next to the Aston Martin!' said Sisterly Entity One.

'Ha ha ha!' laughed Sisterly Entity Two, who was still running her index finger across her palm as part of the pretending-to-write-down-stupid-stuff-Barry-says mime.

'Yeah, well, they're not that expensive to hire. I checked online,' said Barry, trying as much as possible not to look at them. 'And then maybe you can have, like, a tuxedo Dad ready for me to wear and a cake with 007 on it, and all my friends can come dressed as Bond villains, and maybe you can have the film soundtrack playing, and you, Dad, you can be Q, showing me gadgets, like a jet pack and a pen that's actually a gun, and - '

'Sorry, Barry, what?' His dad put down his Sunday Express.

'Weren't you listening? Da-ad!'

'Barry, please don't say 'Dad' like that.'

'Like what?'

'Like when you give it two syllables. And go right down on the second one. On the -ad.' This was Barry's mum speaking.

Task

1. Read the first extract again.

If you had to identify the top five things that happened in this extract what would they be? Skim and scan the extract and consider which events or findings are the most important. You may have more than five to start with.

2. Once you have decided on the five things, write a short paragraph that summarises the extract.

Reading task 2:

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Extract

'Write that face down, Ginny!'

'I'm... a... really... stupid... looking... boy...' said Sisterly Entity Two, moving her finger slowly across her palm.

And suddenly a feeling that had been welling up inside Barry for... well, since his dad had closed the door on Jake and Taj and Lukas just before tea, but in another way for much longer than that, maybe ever since he'd understood that, unfortunately, his name was Barry - a feeling that he wanted to both cry and shout and break something all at the same time - exploded out of him.

'I hate you because you're boring! And tired ALL THE TIME! And always TELLING ME OFF FOR NOTHING! And saying, 'That's a swear,' when all I've done is say 'BUM!''

'Barry. That's a swear!' said his mum.

'NO IT ISN'T! And because you're so much nicer to THEM...' He pointed at TSE. They both grinned at the same time. '...than to ME! And because...' Barry realised by now that he was doing the list in his bedroom. He decided to miss out Numbers 8 and 9 - 'Not being glamorous' and 'Being poor' - since even in his rage he knew that they might just sound a bit too horrible out loud. especially as loud as he was speaking now. 'And... YOU NEVER, EVER MAKE MY BIRTHDAY REALLY GOOD!!'

There was a short pause after he shouted this. Then Sisterly Entity One said:

'Write that down, Ginny.' ^["SEP"]

'I'm writing it down, Kay.'

'Right,' said Barry's dad. 'Well, if that's how you feel, we won't have a screening of Casino Royale on your birthday!'

'GREAT!' shouted Barry and he threw the DVD across the room. It spun round in the air as it made its way towards the sink. Barry was secretly quite proud of the throw; his wrist had flicked sharply as he'd released the disc, like an Olympic discus champion.

'BARRY!!' his dad shouted. So loudly that, for the first time this dinner time, Barry's mum looked up from the dishwasher. Just in time to be hit in the eye by a copy of Casino Royale, starring David Niven.

'OW!' she said, falling backwards and out of sight again.

Barry heard a bump. Then one of the egg-timers, the red one, fell of the kitchen counter and smashed.

'Uh-oh', he thought.

'RIGHT, BARRY, THAT'S IT! GO TO YOUR ROOM!' said his dad, pointing upstairs - stupidly, really, as Barry knew the way.

'ALL RIGHT I WILL!' Barry shouted back.

And because he was a little frightened by now, he ran out of the kitchen as fast as he could, swerving at the last minute to avoid the bits of glass and sand from the egg-timer which was sprinkled all over the floor.

Task

1. Read the second extract again.

As a reader, how are you feeling about Barry's reaction in this extract? Are you satisfied and think that he is justified? Or do you think that he has over-reacted? Do you blame him for his reaction or has he gone one step too far?

2. Skim and scan the extract and make a list of what he has done (shouted at siblings, accused parents of being boring etc).

3. Once you have weighed up your evidence, write a short paragraph that explains what you think about Barry's reaction.

Reading task 3:

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Complete the following Summarising challenge cards.

Summarise this paragraph in twelve words or less.

In 1803, the United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France. The Louisiana Territory stretched from the Mississippi River all the way to the Rocky Mountains. This purchase more than doubled the size of the United States. Over the next ninety years, thirteen new states would be carved from this land.

Summarise this paragraph in twelve words or less.

Giant river otters live in South America. Families of giant river otters live in dens that they dig into the banks of rivers and lakes. Mother river otters give birth to their babies in their dens. Baby river otters are called cubs. Cubs are born blind and helpless. They do not leave the den until they are about two months old.

Summarise this paragraph in twelve words or less.

The tallest tree in the world is a giant redwood located in Humboldt Redwoods State Park in Northern California. This tree is 380 feet (116 m) tall. That's more than twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty! Only a few people know exactly where this tree is. The people who discovered it have kept it a secret so that people will not damage it.

Summarise this paragraph in twelve words or less.

After traveling for more than eight months through space, Curiosity, the NASA land rover, landed on the planet Mars, on August 5, 2012. Curiosity has six wheels and seventeen cameras, as well as other research equipment. Its mission is to explore the planet and send the information it gathers back to Earth.