

The Camel That Would Not Walk

PASSAGE · FICTION

SKILLS TRAINED

Working memory

Delayed recall

Comprehension

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

About 12 minutes

- 1 Read the passage twice, slowly. Take about three minutes.
- 2 Turn to the next page and cover this one. No looking back.
- 3 Write what you remember, then mark it on the last page.

Yusuf and his grandfather were crossing the edge of the desert. They had three camels. Two walked happily. The third one, Zara, stopped in the middle of the path and sat down.

Yusuf pulled on the rope. Zara did not move.

His grandfather laughed. “You cannot argue with a camel,” he said. “You can only wait.”

So they waited. They drank tea in the shade. The sun moved slowly across the sky.

After an hour, Zara stood up on her own and began to walk. She walked all afternoon and did not stop once.

That night Yusuf asked why she had sat down.

“She was tired before you were,” his grandfather said. “She knew it first.”

Cover the passage before you start.

Looking back turns this into a copying exercise. Getting it slightly wrong from memory is what makes it work.

PART A Tell it back

Write down everything you can remember about what Zara did and what Yusuf's grandfather said.

PART B 4 questions

1 How many camels did they have?

2 What was the camel's name?

3 What did Yusuf and his grandfather do while they waited?

4 What reason did the grandfather give for Zara sitting down?

PART C Mark your own work

Now go back to the passage. Tick every answer you got right. You do not need the same words as the answer below — if you wrote the same idea in your own words, it counts.

- ☐ 1 · Three.
- ☐ 2 · Zara.
- ☐ 3 · They drank tea in the shade.
- ☐ 4 · She was tired before they were. She knew it first.

FACTS RECALLED IN PART A

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QUESTIONS CORRECT

— / 4

DATE

THE STRATEGY Chunk it up

Do not try to hold the whole story at once. Stop at the end of each part and say to yourself what just happened, in one short sentence. Four small pieces are much easier to carry than one big one.

WHERE YOU ALREADY DO THIS

When you learn a new phone number, do you say it as one long number or in small pieces?

FOR THE PARENT OR TEACHER · Let your child read the passage alone, but stay nearby. During Part A, do not prompt — the struggle to retrieve a half-remembered fact is exactly what builds the memory. Count the facts they recall and compare that number across several sets rather than worrying about any single score.