

How the Firefly Got Its Light

Center for Urban Education ©2009

4th Grade Fiction

This is a story based on an old folktale.

This is a story about long ago. There was a little fly. It wanted to be special. The fly was sad. It did not feel special. It looked at the bee and thought it was great. "Look at how big it is. Hear it buzz." It looked at the butterfly and said, "See how pretty. Look at the colors. Look at the big wings. I am just like all the other flies."

The fly stayed awake one night. It was worried. It was sad. All the other flies were sleeping. A moth was awake. So was a mouse. They did not notice the fly. It was too small. It was hard to see in the dark.

The fly saw the stars. They were shining. "I want to shine like that. That would be special."

The moon heard the fly. The moon said, "Little fly. You can help me. If you do, I will help you. I will make you shine."

"How can I help?"

The moon said, "You can be my friend. I am lonely at night. I come out when it is dark. Most animals are asleep. If you stay awake every night I will help you shine. Then you can be my friend."

"Yes, yes," the fly said. So the moon helped it. The moon told the fly the secret. The moon told the fly how to shine.

The next night, the fly stayed awake. It used the secret. It was shining. On, off, it made its body light. It looked like magic.

"Look," said the mouse. "Look at that fly. How special." The mouse said, "I'd like to shine, too." His mother said, "NO! That would be dangerous. You know we need to be able to hide."

The fly was very glad. The fly told the moon, "I will always be your friend. When you come out at night, I will be here. I will shine my light to welcome you." Then the fly went to sleep. "Finally. Now I have what I need."

Identify, analyze, and infer motive – Fiction

Questions developed by Center for Urban Education for use by Chicago Public Schools 2008-2009.

Choose the best answer for each question.

1. Why did the fly ask the moon for help?

- a. The fly was sad.
- b. The moon was shiny.
- c. The fly was lonely.
- d. The fly had a dream.

3. Why did the fly go to sleep?

- a. The moon was going away.
- b. The fly was not worried any more.
- c. The fly was sad.
- d. The other flies were sleeping.

2. Why did the moon help the fly?

- a. The moon liked the fly.
- b. The moon wanted a friend.
- c. The moon wanted the fly to change.
- d. The moon was sad.

4. Why would a fly want to be special?

- a. There are many flies.
- b. It wanted to shine.
- c. It had no friends.
- d. It was lonely.

5. Write your own answer to this question. A motive is a reason for doing something. What did the mouse's mother tell the mouse not to shine?

TEACHER NOTES: Develop Students' Skills: Exercise Thinking

These questions have not been validated, so decisions about student's achievement should not be made based on their responses. They are intended to exercise skills. Recommended activities include: students work in pairs to choose the best response; give students the questions without the responses so they generate their own answers; students make up additional questions; students make up questions like these for another passage.

Answers: You can remove this answer key and then give it to students and ask them to figure out the basis for the correct response.

Item	1	2	3	4
Answer	a	b	b	a

Question 5 is open-ended. Here is a suggested response.
To protect the mouse. Because if the mouse was shiny other animals could catch it.