

Pigeon Express

My uncle told me that long ago people used carrier pigeons to take messages to other people. He actually has some carrier pigeons. They live in a coop on the roof of his apartment building. They aren't everyday pigeons—they have been trained.

My uncle had carrier pigeons when he was a child. He grew up and went into the army, but now he works at a store. He has always loved those carrier pigeons. So when he got enough money, he bought some and trained them himself.

Every day, my uncle writes a note to his sister. His sister lives on the south side and my uncle lives on the west side. He tells his sister about his day in his notes. He says it's not urgent to tell her the news. He just likes using the carrier pigeons.

His sister thinks this is silly. When the pigeon comes, she takes the note and reads it but does not send anything back. Afterwards, the bird comes back to my uncle's coop.

One day there was a sudden rainstorm after the pigeon left my uncle's coop. It rained so hard and so long that everything was flooded. The pigeon did not come back immediately, so my uncle started to worry about the pigeon. He worried about his sister, too. But then the pigeon came back. It was very wet. It had a note in a plastic bag. The note said, "I am ok."

Later that summer, there was another problem. The power was out. We did not have any telephone service. My uncle said, "See, pigeons can work all the time. They don't need electricity." He wrote that in a note, too. He tied that note to the pigeon. Then he sent that note to his sister.

About an hour later, the pigeon came back. It had another note on it. "You're right," it said. "I have learned that you can count on pigeons. But I still want my telephone back."

The phone lines were back the next day. We were not worried, though. We knew we could always count on our pigeon express.

CCSSR1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

These are questions you can ask and answer about any story. Write your answers on another page.

1. Sequence: Which event happened first? Which happened last?
2. Character Traits: Name one character. What is one trait you infer that character has? Explain why you think that.
3. Motive: What is something that person does? Why do you think that person does that?
4. Summarize: Summarize the story in four sentences. Tell about the characters and what they do.
5. Main Idea: What do you think is the main idea of the story? Why?