

Big Hope

A tiny horse helps sick kids.

Kimberly's brother has a **disease**, or an illness, called cancer. He has to stay at a hospital in San Diego. Kimberly, 9, and her parents stay near the hospital at a special house for families of hospital patients. Not every day is a happy day, but recently a tiny visitor made a big difference for Kimberly.

Kimberly met Thumbelina, the world's smallest horse. She met the animal at the Ronald McDonald House in San Diego. "She was amazing," Kimberly told *WR News*. "It is surprising to see such a small horse."



Courtesy Michael Goessling

Thumbelina is friends with the dogs that live on their farm in Missouri.

Thumbelina is a **miniature horse**. She is also a dwarf for her breed, making her extra small. Thumbelina is only 17.5 inches tall. She is about the size of a medium-sized dog.

Don't let her size fool you! Thumbelina has a big job to do. The tiny horse is visiting dozens of children's hospitals, camps, and schools. She is helping to

raise \$1 million for sick children like Kimberly's brother, who was too sick to meet her. She will return home to her farm in Missouri to rest.

Thumbelina's owner, Michael Goessling, travels with her. "Thumbelina has the ability to make everything OK for these kids, at least for a little while," he told *WR News*.

It's true—good things really do come in small packages!

Fun Facts About Thumbelina

- Thumbelina was born on May 1, 2001.
- She lives on a farm in Missouri. The farm is called Goose Creek Farms.
- Thumbelina eats twice a day. She eats 1 cup of grain and a handful of hay for breakfast and dinner.
- There are about 50 full-size horses that live on Thumbelina's farm. She likes to play with them. She is even friends with the dogs that live there!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Thumbelina is travelling around the country and visiting children because

- A she is helping to raise money for sick children
- B she is a dwarf for her breed and very small
- C she lives on a farm in Missouri and likes to go to other places
- D she is a friend of Ronald McDonald, who lives in San Diego

2. Which of the following does the author describe last in the passage?

- A the reason Kimberly's brother is in the hospital
- B interesting facts about Thumbelina
- C how Kimberly felt when she met Thumbelina
- D the big job that Thumbelina is doing

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A Kimberly and her family will get a miniature horse of their own
- B Kimberly and her family did not have a chance to meet Thumbelina
- C Kimberly and her family are sad that Kimberly's brother is sick
- D Kimberly and her family do not live full time in San Diego

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question below: "Thumbelina is a miniature horse. She is also a dwarf for her breed, making her extra small."

What does the word **miniature** mean?

- A friendly
- B helpful
- C small
- D amazing

5. What would be another good title for this passage?

- A Thumbelina the Helpful Horse
- B Kimberly and Her Brother
- C Visiting Schools, Camps and Hospitals
- D Dwarf Horses and What They Do

6. What is special about Thumbelina?

7. What word would the author probably use to describe Thumbelina’s personality? Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Kimberly is often sad about her brother’s sickness _____ meeting Thumbelina made Kimberly and her brother really happy.

- A so
- B because
- C but
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Kimberly met Thumbelina the tiny horse at the Ronald McDonald House in San Diego because Thumbelina was on a tour to raise money for sick children.

Who? Kimberly

What? _____

Where? _____

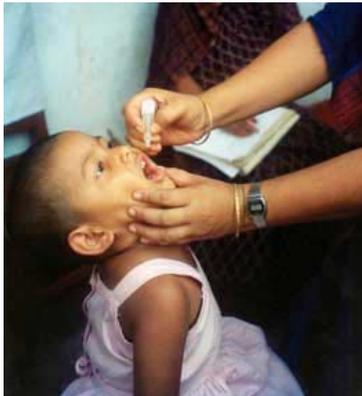
10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

Vocabulary word: disease (dis · ease): illness or sickness.

10a. Read the sentences below and underline the word **disease**.

1. When my sister had the disease of pneumonia, she had to go to the hospital.
2. Many people with the disease of cancer fight hard to be cured.
3. If people eat unhealthy foods with high fat content over many years, they can develop heart disease.
4. The U.S. government sometimes warns citizens not to travel to certain countries if there is a serious disease there.
5. Sometimes people get diseases from breathing bad air, and other times they can get diseases from drinking bad water.

10b. Which of the following pictures shows a person with a disease?



11. Is a headache considered to be a disease? Why or why not?

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 690

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: The author describes the world's smallest horse, Thumbelina, and the work she does as a therapy horse. She is visiting hospitals, camps, and schools to raise money for sick children.

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- B Kimberly and Her Brother
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- D Dwarf Horses and What They Do

6. What is special about Thumbelina?

Suggested answer: She is the world's smallest horse. She is a dwarf for her breed, which makes her extra small. She is only 17.5 inches tall. Thumbelina is also special because she is raising money to help sick children. [paragraphs #2, 3, 4]

7. What word would the author probably use to describe Thumbelina's personality? Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Suggested answer: The author would probably say that Thumbelina is friendly, since she meets so many kids and they love meeting her. She also loves playing with the full-size horses and the dogs on the farm where she lives. [paragraphs #2, 4, 8]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Kimberly is often sad about her brother's sickness _____ meeting Thumbelina made Kimberly and her brother really happy.

- A so
- B because
- C **but**
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

Kimberly met Thumbelina the tiny horse at the Ronald McDonald House in San Diego because Thumbelina was on a tour to raise money for sick children.

Who? Kimberly

What? **met Thumbelina**

Where? **at the Ronald McDonald House in San Diego**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

Vocabulary Word: disease

Step 1: Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (dis · ease)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is disease. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "disease."]

Step 2: Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Disease means illness or sickness."
- b. Teacher says: "In the text, a little girl's brother has the disease of cancer. This means he has the illness or sickness of cancer. Usually the word disease is used to describe a serious kind of sickness, the kind that might need to be treated in a hospital."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "disease."]

Step 3: Practice word

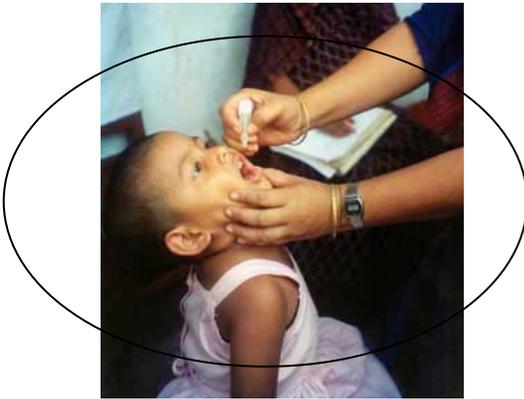
Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the first sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to your students.

- 10a.** 1. When my sister had the disease of pneumonia, she had to go to the hospital.
2. Many people with the disease of cancer fight hard to be cured.
3. If people eat unhealthy foods with high fat content over many years, they can develop heart disease.
4. The U.S. government sometimes warns citizens not to travel to certain countries if there is a serious disease there.
5. Sometimes people get diseases from breathing bad air, and other times they can get diseases from drinking bad water.

Step 4: Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which of the following pictures more likely shows a person with a disease?



- 11.** Is a headache considered to be a disease? Why or why not?

Suggested answer: No, a headache would not be considered a disease because it is not as severe an illness or sickness. A headache would not require medical attention or treatment in most cases.

Suggested Additional Vocabulary: miniature, tour(ing)