

## How to Have an Adventure



To have an adventure, first you need to have a dog. You also need to have a small backpack, some juice, and a sandwich, in case your adventure makes you hungry. Although you don't need a map, a route, or a plan—it's best to have no plan at all, in fact—it's never a bad idea to have a goal. For instance, you could want to know what happens to the golf balls that are collected from the sand traps each evening. Or you may wish to learn what it's like to play on the school playground when no one else is there. Or you might want to find out which Mexican restaurant in town sells the best taco. (If you are trying to have this adventure, you will not need a sandwich.)

Kurt had a backpack, juice and a sandwich. He had the best dog in the world, a sad-eyed bulldog named Roscoe. And he had a goal. Having already solved the mysteries of the missing golf balls, the empty playground, and the taco tasting, he had something far more adventurous in mind for this sweltering summer Sunday. With Roscoe at his side, Kurt was going to venture where no boy had gone before. He was going to answer questions that no one but he dared ask. He was going to confront the bees.

Ever since his family moved to town, Kurt had wondered where the honey came from. In their last town, Kurt's mother bought honey at the store in a little plastic bear, the same as everyone else. But since the big move—that's what Kurt's dad always called it, “the big move”—their honey came in a jar, with a crooked label that had obviously been applied by hand. “Hilltop Hives,” it said. “Locally Made, Locally Eaten.”

“How local is this honey?” he asked his mom the night before, as he spread it on a biscuit.

“Pretty local,” she said. “The woman who makes it lives somewhere in town.”

“On a hill?”

“Yep. The one behind the movie theater.”

That was all Kurt needed. He had his plan.

The hill behind the movie theater was not a big one. It was easy to walk up it if you took the main road—you could even ride your bike—but nobody ever had an adventure by walking on roads. While the usher wasn't looking, Kurt and Roscoe walked around the back of the movie theater, where the dumpsters were: a concrete corner littered with broken glass and empty soda cans.

“The guys who work here must drink a lot of soda,” said Kurt. “But if they work at a movie theater, how come they don't just get big fountain drinks for free?” He wrote this question down in his notebook, to be answered on a future adventure. He helped Roscoe over the wall—the old dog didn't climb as well as he used to—and heaved himself after. The concrete scratched his palms a little, but Kurt did not worry about it. An adventurer fears no pain.

As they scrambled up the hill face, Kurt sweated and Roscoe panted. Halfway up, they paused for a juice break. “On an adventure,” Kurt reminded Roscoe, “it's vital to stay hydrated.” The dog panted in agreement as he sipped his juice. “Okay, buddy,” said Kurt as he wiped the juice from his chin. “Onward!” They went onward together, stepping over gnarled tree roots and under low-hanging branches, until they reached the top. Kurt peered over the edge of the hill, to make sure nothing dangerous lay ahead. It was then that he saw the alien.

“Oh, wow,” he said.

The creature wore a bulky white spacesuit, with a screen on the helmet that obscured its face. It held a wheezing brown weapon, which sprayed smoke all around.

“That is a pretty freaky alien,” Kurt said. “And probably really dangerous. Let's go see.”

Kurt swallowed his fear, and a little more juice, as he approached the creature. Intent on whatever it was doing with the smoke-weapon, the alien did not turn around. Kurt was very close to it now. The alien didn't see him—it wasn't too late to turn around. He sweated, from fear instead of heat, and decided it would be safer to run away. He was about to turn around when Roscoe chimed in.

“Bark!” said Roscoe. “Bark bark bark.”

The alien whirled around. It definitely saw them now. The alien grabbed Kurt's hand and pulled him back towards the hill. Roscoe followed, because that is what dogs do. Kurt screamed, but only a little. A good adventurer never loses his cool.

“What are you doing here?” said the alien.

“Having an adventure!” said Kurt.

A strange sound came from behind the alien's mask, a throaty rippling sound, like gift wrap being ripped. The alien, Kurt realized, was laughing. It raised its hands to the helmet, and lifted the mask.

“Welcome to Hilltop Hives,” said the alien, who was—Kurt now saw—not an alien at all. It was a lady, with short brown hair and crinkles around her smile. “I’m Brenda. I’m sorry for grabbing your wrist like that. But bees can be very dangerous if you’re allergic.”

“I’m not allergic to anything, and I’m not afraid of anything.”

“What about him?” she said, pointing at Roscoe.

“He’s not afraid of anything except for thunder.”

“Well then. Want to meet the bees?”

First, Brenda gave Kurt a bee-suit of his own—with heavy canvas gloves and a helmet just like hers, with a screen that let in light but kept out bees. It was hot in the suit, but he liked being hot better than being stung. Once he was outfitted, they approached the hives. There were six of them, each taller than Kurt, with boxes and boxes piled on top of each other. Brenda explained to Kurt that she takes care of the hives and protects them so that the bees have a safe place to make their honey.

“Each one of those is full of bees?” asked Kurt.

“Yep,” she said. “Tens of thousands.”

“Wow. You have more pets than anyone I know.”

She opened one of the hives, moving very slowly, so as not to upset the creatures inside.

Within the box were eight slats, each covered in honeycomb, and full of swiveling, swarming, wagging bees. Kurt's eyes went wide as she explained to him how the bees worked, how they lived and died, and how every moment of their life was spent making honey in service of their queen.

“What do they make the honey out of?” he asked.

“Pollen,” she said. “From flowers.”

“Where do they get the flowers?”

“Everywhere! I grow flowers all around the hill, without using any harmful chemicals that can kill the bees. But the bees don’t just use the flowers on the hill here. They fly up to five miles each day to find new flowers, then come home and tell the other bees about it, using a special kind of dance.”

“You’re joking.”

“I never joke about honey.”

Kurt peered closely at a cluster of quivering bees. It did look a little bit like they were dancing.

“Five miles,” he said. “There's a lot you can see in five miles.”

“No kidding,” she said. “For bees, every day is an adventure.”

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where do Kurt and Roscoe go on their adventure?

- A inside a movie theater
- B a planet in outer space
- C the emergency room of a hospital
- D a hill with lots of bees

2. What is the plot of this story?

- A An alien comes to earth, hides on the top of a hill, and kidnaps a boy.
- B A boy goes on an adventure to Hilltop Hives and meets the bees there.
- C A dog gets lost, a boy goes looking for it, and he finds it in a Mexican restaurant.
- D A woman puts on a bee-suit, decides to take off the helmet, and gets stung.

3. Read this sentence from the story: "For bees, every day is an adventure."

What evidence from the story supports this statement?

- A The hives that Kurt sees are taller than he is.
- B The honey that Kurt's family eats comes from Hilltop Hives.
- C Kurt sees a creature with a wheezing brown weapon that sprays smoke.
- D Bees fly up to five miles every day to find new flowers.

4. Why does Kurt think Brenda is an alien when he first sees her?

- A Brenda has short brown hair and crinkles around her smile.
- B As Kurt is about to turn around and run away after climbing the hill, Roscoe barks.
- C Brenda is wearing something that looks like a white space suit with a helmet hiding her face.
- D Brenda explains to Kurt how bees work, how they live and die, and how they spend their lives making honey.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A the dangers of talking to people you do not know
- B the harmful effects that pollution has on animals
- C the excitement of having an adventure
- D the fun of growing up and becoming an adult

6. Read the following sentence: "Kurt **swallowed his fear**, and a little more juice, as he approached the creature."

What does it mean that Kurt **swallowed his fear**?

- A Kurt kept his fear under control
- B Kurt touched his throat with one hand
- C Kurt was too afraid to keep going
- D Kurt screamed for help

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Kurt wants to find the bees; \_\_\_\_\_, he does.

- A however
- B particularly
- C initially
- D ultimately

8. According to the story, what do you need to have an adventure?

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9. What is an example of an adventure that Kurt went on before his adventure at Hilltop Hives?

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10. Based on the story, what does it mean to have an adventure? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

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## Teacher Guide &amp; Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 780

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8. According to the story, what do you need to have an adventure?

**Suggested answer:** According to the story, you need a dog, a small backpack, some juice, and a sandwich to have an adventure. A goal is optional.

9. What is an example of an adventure that Kurt went on before his adventure at Hilltop Hives?

**Suggested answer:** Answers may vary but should come from the story. Students may cite such examples as playing on an empty playground and finding out which Mexican restaurant sells the best taco in town.

10. Based on the story, what does it mean to have an adventure? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

**Suggested answer:** Answers may vary, as long as they are supported by the story. Students may define having an adventure as undergoing a new experience. Most, if not all, of Kurt's adventures involve having a new experience or learning something new. Every day is an "adventure" for bees because they fly up to five miles to find new flowers.