

Determine Theme

Student Directions: As you read “The Expedition,” think about which details in the text are most important. What message do you think the author wants you to take away from this story?

The Expedition

- 1 “Will you two do me a favor?” Mom asked Arthur and Sally,
who were sitting on the floor in front of a mountain of building
blocks.
- 2 Sally looked up from the fort they were building and asked,
“What kind of favor?” She plucked a block from the pile just
before Arthur could grab it.
- 3 “Hey!” he said, leaning forward and reaching for the block in
Sally’s hand. “I need that!”
- 4 “Tough, I got it first.”
- 5 “I was reaching for it before—”
- 6 “About that favor,” said Mom patiently, holding out a shopping
tote toward Arthur and Sally. “I promised to lend your Aunt Katy
this book for her book group, and she has to finish it by tomorrow
night. I’d like you to bike over and give her the book.”
- 7 “I’ve got a better idea,” said Arthur. “We can be explorers, like
Lewis and Clark, and go through the woods.”
- 8 “Actually, that’s a pretty good idea, big brother,” said Sally.
Their house was on the edge of a large park with shady trails
winding through it. Aunt Katy lived on the other side of the park.
- 9 They filled water bottles and wrapped cookies to eat on the
road. Mom brought the book over when they were putting on their
backpacks. As they walked through their backyard toward the trail,
Arthur said, “I’ll be William Clark, because he was an excellent
guide, and you can be Meriwether Lewis.”
- 10 “I’ll be Sacagawea! She was the real guide on that trip.”
- 11 Arthur snorted. “Like you know where to go!”
- 12 “I know that we go left,” said Sally, pointing at a trail.
- 13 “No way. Right!”
- 14 “Left!”
- 15 “I’m leading this expedition, and I say right.” Arthur walked
off so quickly that Sally had to run to catch up with him.
- 16 They walked along, arguing. Then—
- 17 *Crackle, crackle . . .*
- 18 The noise came from their left. They looked at each other
nervously.

Determine Theme

The Expedition, *continued*

19 *Snap . . . snap . . . crackle.*

20 “What’s that?” Sally whispered.

21 “Scared, Sacagawea?” Arthur tried to sound brave, but he did think the noises were strange.

22 They kept going.

23 *Crack . . . snap . . .*

24 “It might be following us,” Arthur admitted.

25 “Run!” shrieked Sally. They fled in panic. Instead of staying on the trail, they veered off. The crunching noises followed until—*crash!*—a deer leaped out ahead of them and bolted away. The park got quiet.

26 Sally and Arthur waited to catch their breath.

27 “Where are we?” asked Sally.

28 “I don’t know,” Arthur admitted. “And we’ve been gone twenty minutes already.”

29 “Maybe we’d better go home and bike to Aunt Katy’s,” said Sally.

30 “Yeah, but . . . how do we get home?”

31 Arthur and Sally looked all around.

32 “Are those the bushes we ran through?” Arthur asked.

33 “With the broken twigs? I think so! Let’s go that way,” said Sally.

34 At the path, Arthur said, “I remember passing that tree with the giant trunk earlier.”

35 They decided to eat a cookie and drink water to keep up their strength as they walked.

36 They made sure to look carefully at everything around them.

37 “We definitely passed that big rock,” Arthur said.

38 “I remember that twisty tree root that looks like a face.”

39 “Me too!”

40 Before long, they were in their backyard again.

41 “That was an exciting expedition,” said Sally.

42 “Yeah,” Arthur said. “Race you to Aunt Katy’s!” He ran toward his bike.

43 “You’ll never win,” Sally called, hurrying after him. “I’ll beat you by a mile!”