Name: Date: Score: / 6

The Substitute: Reading Comprehension

Fiction story · about 260 words

Read the story. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

👩‍🏫 The Substitute

When Mrs. Alvarez broke her leg in October, the fifth graders at Lincoln Elementary got a substitute teacher named Mr. Finch. He was tall and thin, wore bow ties, and spoke so softly that kids in the back had to lean forward to hear him. Within a week, some students had started calling him "Mr. Pinch" behind his back because he never smiled.

Jordan joined in at first. It was easy to laugh. But one afternoon, Jordan stayed after class to ask about a math problem. Mr. Finch explained it with drawings, then paused. "I used to be an engineer," he said. "I designed bridges for thirty years. When I retired, I wanted to help kids see how math builds real things."

He pulled out a photo of a long steel bridge stretching across a river. "This one took four years," he said, and for the first time, Jordan saw him smile.

The next day, Jordan asked Mr. Finch if he could tell the class about the bridge. Mr. Finch hesitated, then agreed. He brought in blueprints and showed how triangles make bridges strong. Then he gave each group spaghetti and marshmallows and challenged them to build a bridge that could hold a textbook.

The room was louder and happier than it had been all month. Even the kids who had made fun of him were asking questions.

When Mrs. Alvarez returned in December, the class threw Mr. Finch a goodbye party. They gave him a card shaped like a bridge. Inside, they had written: "Thanks for building more than bridges."

1. **Main idea:** What is the story mostly about?

   A. a class visits a bridge B. a boy becomes an engineer

   C. students learn to appreciate a substitute teacher after getting to know him

   D. a teacher breaks her leg skiing

2. **Detail:** Why did some students call him "Mr. Pinch"?

   A. He gave too much homework. B. He was always late. C. He pinched them. D. He never smiled.

3. **Detail:** What job did Mr. Finch have before?

   A. chef B. pilot C. doctor D. engineer who designed bridges

4. **Detail:** What did the class use to build bridges?

   A. blocks B. wood and nails C. paper and glue D. spaghetti and marshmallows

5. **Character:** How did Jordan's feelings about Mr. Finch change?

   A. He went from liking him to disliking him. B. He went from teasing him to respecting him.

   C. He never changed. D. He was always afraid of him.

6. **Inference:** What does "Thanks for building more than bridges" mean?

ANSWER KEY

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   Mr. Finch also built trust, friendships, and a love of learning in the class.