7TH GRADE
SBA REVIEW

AT THE BEACH

Critical Thinking - Analyzing information, Problems, solutions
Gather and use information
Credibility of Characters
At the Beach

Abuelito's Story

by

Lulu Delacre

1 I remember those evenings well when I was a young boy in Cuba, those balmy island nights before a trip to Guanabo Beach. The spicy aroma of \textit{tortilla española} that Mami had left to cool would waft through the house as I lay in my bed. But I was always too excited to sleep. All I could think about was the soft white sand, the warm foamy water, and Mami's delicious \textit{tortilla}. Ahhh. A day at the beach. It was full of possibilities.

2 One Saturday in May, I was awakened at the crack of dawn by sounds of laughter. My aunts, Rosa and Olga, had arrived with hammocks, blankets, and an iron kettle filled with Aunt Rosa's steaming \textit{congrí}. And best of all, they had arrived with my cousins: Luisa, Mari, and little Javi. Uncle Toni had come, too.

3 While the grown-ups unloaded the car, we eagerly jumped out and ran toward the sea, peeling off our clothes along the way.

4 When we reached the edge of the ocean, the water felt cold. I waded farther in and went under to warm up quickly. When I emerged I saw Luisa, Mari, and little Javi, all standing still in the clear water. They were watching the schools of tiny gold-and-black striped fish rush between their legs. Then they swam over to join me and together we rode the big waves.

5 I was getting very hungry, and for a moment I thought of returning with him to sneak a bite of Mami's \textit{tortilla}. But then I had a better idea.

6 "Let's explore the reef!" I said.
1 tortilla española—a Spanish omelet eaten at breakfast or as a light dinner, and often served at picnics
2 congri—a Cuban dish of red beans and rice
3 him—The narrator, Fernando, was walking with Uncle Toni as he approached the other children.
“¡Sí! I" everyone agreed. “Let’s go!”

When we got to the marbled rocks, Luisa looked concerned. “Our moms told us not to come this far,” she said.

“I know the way well,” I replied. “Besides, nobody will notice. They’re too busy talking.”

I looked in the distance and saw Mami and my two aunts in the shady spot they had picked. They had set up a nice camp. The hammocks were tied to the pine trees, the blankets were spread over the fine sand. No one would miss us for a long time.

“Watch out for sea urchins!” I warned as I led the group on our climb. The spiny black sea urchins hid inside the crevices and cannies of the rough boulders. It was very painful if you stepped on one. Luisa and Mari followed behind me. They were careful to only step on the rocks I stepped on. Little Javi came last. He stopped constantly to look at the cobitos, the tiny hermit crabs that scurried around on the rocks, and at the iridescent tropical fish that were concealed in the deepest tide pools. I had to keep checking behind me to make sure he didn’t stray from our path.

Just then, I turned around to watch helplessly as Javi slipped on an algae-covered rock.

“¡Cuidado!” I warned. But it was too late.

“¡Ay!” he shrieked, and then began to cry uncontrollably.

Cautiously, we all hurried back to help Javi. Luisa and Mari crouched down to examine his foot.

“He stepped on a sea urchin!” Mari cried. “Now what are we going to do?”

“We should have never followed you,” Luisa lamented. “We’ll all be punished.”

At that moment I did not want to think of what the punishment would be. What if we couldn’t have any of Mami’s tortilla? All I knew was that we had to help Javi right away. I looked around and found a piece of driftwood.

“Luisa,” I ordered. “Hold his leg still while I remove the urchin from his foot.”

Luisa held Javi’s leg still as Mari held his hand and tried to comfort him. But Javi’s desperate cries were now drowning out the sound of the sea.

I pulled and tugged, but the urchin wouldn’t budge. It was stuck to Javi’s foot by the tips of its spines. Javi was scared and in pain. And we were too far from our parents to ask for help. What if we couldn’t get Javi back? I struggled relentlessly until I was finally able to remove the spiny creature from his foot.

Gently, Luisa poured some sea water over Javi’s foot. That was when she noticed there was still a piece of the sea urchin’s spine lodged in it. Javi wasn’t going to be able to walk back and he was much too heavy for us to carry. We had to remove that piece of spine so that he could walk on his own.

“I have an idea,” said Luisa suddenly. She removed her hair barrettes and held them like tweezers. Then, with the smallest movement, she pulled the broken spine out. With that solved, we started back.

I helped Javi walk on his sore foot. He wept and limped with every step. Our walk back seemed endless. As we got closer I realized that we would have to explain how it was that we went to the reef in the first place. I would surely end up with no tortilla if we told the truth.

“What will we do now?” Mari asked.

“We’ll have to tell our parents what happened,” said Luisa matter-of-factly.

“No!” I said emphatically. “We’ll be punished for sure.”

We walked the rest of the way in silence. The sound of crashing waves, children playing, and seagulls’ calls became a background drone to Javi’s cries.

When we finally reached our parents, Javi was crying louder than ever. Aunt Olga took one look at him and gasped. “¡Niños! Children! What’s happened to Javi?”

Mari looked at Luisa. Luisa looked at me. Javi cried even louder.
"Well . . . ," I hesitated. By now everyone was staring at me. "We were walking along the beach looking for cockles and urchin shells," I began, "when I found a live sea urchin attached to a piece of driftwood. So I called the others. Javi came running so fast that he stepped on it by accident."

Luisa and Mari stared at me in disbelief. I didn’t think they liked my story.

"Let me see your foot, Javi," Aunt Olga said, kneeling next to her son.

Mami and Aunt Rosa looked on as Aunt Olga examined Javi’s foot closely. Then she gave him a big hug and a kiss. "He’s fine," she said at last. "It looks like the children were able to pull it out."

And at this good news, Javi’s tears disappeared and were replaced by a big broad smile. "I’m hungry," he said.

"Then let’s have lunch," Aunt Olga suggested.

I was dumbfounded. Not only had they believed me, but we were also going to eat Mami’s tortilla!

Mami handed me a plate filled with my favorite foods. The tortilla smelled delicious. But I was unable to eat. I looked up at Luisa and Mari who were quietly picking at their food. I watched Mami as she served herself and sat next to my aunts. I looked at my plate again. How could I enjoy my food when I knew I had done something I wasn’t supposed to do? There was only one thing I could do now. I stood up, picked up my plate, and went right over to Mami.

"What’s wrong, Fernando?" Mami asked.

I looked back at Luisa and Mari and swallowed hard. Then, I handed Mami my untouched plate.

"You wouldn’t have given me this if I had told you the truth," I said.

Mami looked puzzled. The whole group grew silent and watched me struggle. I was very embarrassed.

"It was my fault," Luisa said. "I should have stopped them."

"And I went along," said Mari.

"No, no, it was my idea to go to the reef," I said. Then I told everyone about our adventure at the reef. When I was finished, Mami looked at me with tear-filled eyes.

"You are right, Fernando," she said. "I should punish you for doing something you knew not to do. Somebody could have been seriously hurt."

"I know," I whispered, "and I’m sorry." But then the glimmer of a smile softened Mami’s expression. She slid her arm over my shoulders as she said, "You know, Fernando, anyone can make mistakes. But not everyone has the courage to admit it. Gracias. Thank you for telling the truth."

That afternoon, under the shade of the pine trees, the nine of us sat down on the old blankets for lunch. We had congri, bread, and Mami’s famous tortilla española. And do you know something? That day it tasted better than it ever had before.
AT THE BEACH
QUESTIONS

1. In what way could the author’s description of tortilla española in paragraph 1 of the story be considered foreshadowing?

   a. It indicates that the author knows how tortilla española tastes and smells
   b. It suggests that tortilla española will be important to the plot of the story.
   c. It explains why family traditions are important to the action in the story,
   d. It shows that the author is interested in foods made by different cultures.

2. How can the reader tell that Fernando has been to the beach many times?

   a. He knows his way along the reef.
   b. He enjoys eating mami’s tortilla española.
   c. He thinks the adults’ camp looks nice.
   d. He swims farther and faster than his cousins.

3. How does the author best reveal Luisa’s character?

   a. By emphasizing her desire to tell the truth
   b. By providing a list of supplies she brings to the beach.
   c. By explaining how she helps the adults set up camp.
   d. By noting the type of barrettes she wears in her hair.

4. How does the author show that Luisa and Mari’s opinion of Fernando changes when he tells his version of what happened to Javi?

   a. Luisa and Mari add details to the story.
   b. Luisa and Mari stare at Fernando in shock
   c. Luisa and Mari tell the truth about what happened
   d. Luisa and Mari tell Fernando how they feel about the story

5. Which of these best describes Fernando’s conflict in the story?

   a. A conflict between past and present
   b. A conflict between right and wrong
   c. A conflict between self and community
   d. A conflict between innocence and experience

6. What is the main purpose of this story?

   a. To inform the reader about dangers at the beach?
   b. To make the reader feel sad about a young boy’s actions
   c. To entertain the reader by describing a day at the beach
   d. To teach the reader new games to play with friends and family.
7. Which of these events from the story *best shows* that Mami is an understanding person?

a. She makes delicious *tortilla espanola*.
b. She finds a shady spot on the beach that will make a nice camp.
c. She lets Fernando have *tortilla espanola* for lunch.
d. She watches Aunt Olga examine Javi’s injured foot.

8. Explain how Luisa helps solve Javi’s problem with the sea urchin. Give one detail from the story to support your answer.
9. Explain whether or not the description of Javi's crying is realistic. Give one detail from the story to support your answer.

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10. In the story, the author emphasizes the importance of family relationships. Explain how Fernando comes to better appreciate his family and learns to be more considerate of other people. Use details from the story to explain your answer.

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# ANSWERS

**DAY AT THE BEACH**

1. B  
2. A  
3. A  
4. B  
5. B  
6. C  
7. C  
8.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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| 2     | The student explains how Luisa helps solve Javi's problem and gives one example from the story to support the response. The student may give one of the following examples (other responses from the story should be acceptable as well, as long as the example supports the explanation of how Luisa helps solve Javi's problem):  
  - Luisa holds Javi's leg still while Fernando pulls on the sea urchin.  
  - Luisa pours sea water over Javi's foot.  
  - Luisa figures out how to use her hair barrettes as tweezers to take out the last piece of sea urchin. |
<p>| 1     | The student explains how Luisa helps solve Javi's problem, but does not give an example from the story to support the response, or vice versa. |
| 0     | The response is incorrect or irrelevant. |</p>
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| 2     | The student explains whether or not the description of Javi's crying is realistic and gives one detail from the story to support the response. The student may give one of the following details (other responses from the story should be acceptable as well, as long as the example supports the explanation of whether or not Javi's crying is realistic):  
  Javi's crying is realistic:  
  - He cries after he steps on the sea urchin because it hurts.  
  - He is held down while the sea urchin is being removed from his foot, and he is scared and in pain.  
  - At first the sea urchin would not come out. After it was removed, Luisa poured water over Javi's foot, which burned because of the salt in the water.  
  Javi's crying is unrealistic:  
  - Javi cries "uncontrollably."  
  - Javi's crying is "drowning out the sound of the sea."  
  - The other sounds of the beach "became a background drone to Javi's cries." |
| 1     | The student explains whether or not the description of Javi's crying is realistic, but does not give a detail from the story to support the response, or vice versa. |
| 0     | The response is incorrect or irrelevant. |

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| 4     | The student gives a thorough explanation of how the author emphasizes the importance of family relationships, and explains how Fernando comes to better appreciate his family and learns to be more considerate of other people. The student includes details to support the answer. Details may include, but are not limited to, the following:  
  The author emphasizes the importance of family relationships by showing what it is like to be part of a large family that participates in activities together and shares family traditions  
  - Fernando comes to better appreciate his family for their traditions and their love and acceptance of one another.  
  - Fernando learns to be more considerate of other people after experiencing Javi's accident and working with his cousins to resolve the situation.  
  - Fernando learns to be more considerate of other people after seeing his cousins' reactions to his telling a lie about going to the reef.  
  - Fernando learns to be more considerate of other people after seeing how his family accepts him even after he admits to telling a lie. |
<p>| 3     | The student gives an adequate explanation of how the author emphasizes the importance of family relationships, and explains how Fernando comes to better appreciate his family and learns to be more considerate of other people. The student includes some details for support. The response is not as complete or in-depth as a score point 4 response. |</p>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The student gives a partial explanation of how the author emphasizes the importance of family relationships, and explains how Fernando comes to better appreciate his family and learns to be more considerate of other people, but support is skeletal and lacks organization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The student gives a bare explanation of how the author emphasizes the importance of family relationships, and explains how Fernando comes to better appreciate his family and learns to be more considerate of other people, but includes little or no detail for support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The student demonstrates no attempt to address the prompt, or the response is incorrect or irrelevant.</td>
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