

Charlotte's Web by E. B. White(age group: 13-14; 7th grade)

“Fern loved Wilbur more than anything. She loved to *stroke*¹ him, to feed him, to put him to bed. Every morning, as soon as she got up, she warmed his milk, tied his *bib*² on, and held the bottle for him. Every afternoon, when the school bus stopped in front of her house, she jumped out and ran to the kitchen to fix another bottle for him. She *fed*³ him again at *supper*⁴, and again just before going to bed. Mrs. Arable gave him a feeding around noontime each day, when Fern was away in school. Wilbur loved his milk, and he was never happier than when Fern was warming up a bottle for him. He would stand and *gaze*⁵ up at her with adoring eyes.

For the first few days of his life, Wilbur was allowed to live in a box near the *stove*⁶ in the kitchen. Then when Mrs. Arable *complained*⁷, he was moved to a bigger box in the *woodshed*⁸. At two weeks of age, he was moved outdoors. It was *apple-blossom*⁹ time, and the days were getting warmer. Mr. Arable fixed a small *yard*¹⁰ especially for Wilbur under an apple tree, and gave him a large wooden box full of *straw*¹¹, with a doorway cut in it so he could walk in and out as he pleased.

"Won't he be cold at night?" asked Fern.

"No," said her father. "You watch and see what he does."

Carrying a bottle of milk, Fern sat down under the apple tree inside the yard. Wilbur ran to her and she *held*¹² the bottle for him while he sucked. When he had finished the last *drop*¹³, he

¹ to stroke (past. *stroked*) = a mângâia, a dezmierda

² bib = bavetă, bărbiță

³ to feed (*feed-fed-fed*) = a hrăni

⁴ supertime = vremea cinei

⁵ to gaze (past. *gazed*) = a privi lung

⁶ stove = sobă

⁷ to complain = a (se) plânge (de)

⁸ woodshed = magazie de lemne

⁹ blossom = înflorire

¹⁰ yard = curte

¹¹ straw = paie

¹² to hold (*hold-held-held*) = a ține (în mână)

¹³ drop = picătură

*grunted*¹⁴ and walked sleepily into the box. Fern *peered*¹⁵ through the door.

Wilbur was *poking*¹⁶ the straw with his *snout*¹⁷. In a short time he had *dug*¹⁸ a tunnel in the straw. He *crawled*¹⁹ into the tunnel and disappeared from sight, completely covered with straw. Fern was *enchanted*²⁰. It *relieved*²¹ her mind to know that her baby would sleep covered up, and would stay warm.”

(*Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White)

¹⁴ to grunt (past. *grunted*) = a grohăi

¹⁵ to peer (past. *peered*) = a se uita atent la

¹⁶ to poke (past. *poked*) = a împinge

¹⁷ snout = rât

¹⁸ to dig (*dig-dug-dug*) = a săpa

¹⁹ to crawl (past. *crawled*) = a (se) târî

²⁰ enchanted = încântat(ă)

²¹ to relieve = a despovăra, a destinde, a relaxa

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

A. Understanding the story:

1. Read the text.

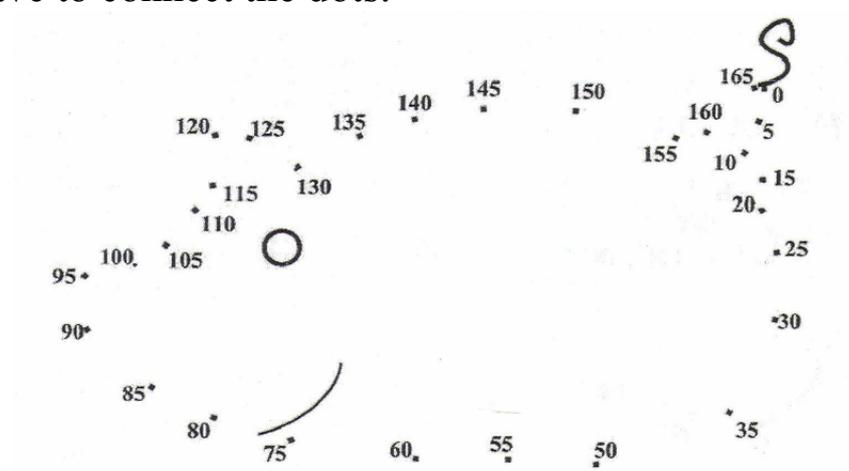
2. Answer the following questions:

- a) Whom did Fern love?
- b) What did Wilbur love to eat/drink?
- c) Where did Wilbur live for the first days of his life?
- d) Where was he moved afterwards?
- e) When was Wilbur moved outdoors?
- f) Where was Wilbur's yard situated?
- g) What would Wilbur do after finishing the last drop of milk?
- h) After moving Wilbur outdoors, why was Fern worried?

3. Read the following key-words. After reading them, try to guess which animal is Wilbur.

milk, box, woodshed, yard, straw, to grunt, snout, to crawl, baby.

The answer to this question is in the following drawing. You only have to connect the dots:



4. Arrange the following events in chronological order:

- a) For the first few days of his life, Wilbur was allowed to live in a box near the stove in the kitchen.
- b) Wilbur was poking the straw with his snout.
- c) Fern's mind was relieved to know that her baby would sleep covered up, and would stay warm.
- d) Every afternoon, when the school bus stopped in front of her house, Fern jumped out and ran to the kitchen to fix another bottle for Wilbur.
- e). Fern fed Wilbur again at suppertime, and again just before going to bed.
- f) Every morning, as soon as Fern got up, she warmed Wilbur's milk, tied his bib on, and held the bottle for him.
- g) Mrs. Arable complained, and Wilbur was moved to a bigger box in the woodshed.
- h) At two weeks of age, Wilbur was moved outdoors.

5. Which of the following statements are true (T) and which are false (F)?

- a) Fern hated Wilbur. (...)
- b) Wilbur would drink apple juice every morning. (...)
- c) Mrs. Arable would not feed Wilbur. (...)
- d) Fern was warming the milk before giving it to Wilbur. (...)
- e) For the first few days of his life, Wilbur was allowed to live in a box near the stove in the kitchen. (...)
- f) Mr. Arable fixed a small yard especially for Wilbur under a cherry tree. (...)
- g) Wilbur's large wooden box was full of carpets.
- h) In the end, Fern is relieved to know that Wilbur would stay warm while sleeping.

B. Word study:

1. Find words/groups of words in the text that refer to:

a) places:

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b) time:

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c) verbs:

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Try to combine one word from each of the 3 categories in order to form sentences.

e.g. *Every morning* (time) *I love* (verb) *to stay in bed* (place).

2. Re-arrange the following groups of words until they become sentences:

a) anything Fern than Wilbur more loved

b) the through Fern door peered

c) to box was allowed live in Wilbur a

d) getting days the warmer were

e) she him supertime fed at again

f) under sat the down tree Fern apple

g) straw his poking the Wilbur with snout was

h) tunnel he into crawled the

3. Complete the following sentences with one suitable words:

- a)** Fern loved to (strike/struck/stroke) Wilbur, to (food/fed/feed) him, to put him (to/in/on)..... bed.
- b)** When Mrs. Arable (complaint/complained/complains)....., he was (move/moves/moved) to a bigger box in the (woodshell/woodshut/woodshed).....
- c)** Mrs. Arable (gave/give/gaved)..... him a (food/feeding/feeling) around noontime each day, when Fern (is/are/was) away in school.
- d)** Every morning, as soon as she (get/gets/got) up, she (warmed/warmeth/warms) his milk, (ties/tie/tied) his (bob/babe/bib) on, and held the bottle for him.
- e)** Every afternoon, when the school bus (stopped/stops/stop)..... in front of her house, she (jump/jumps/jumped) out and (runs/ran/run) to the kitchen to fix another bottle for him.
- f)** Wilbur was (packing/poking/picking) the straw with his (snow/snout/knot) In a short time he had (digs/dig/dug) a tunnel in the straw.

C. Creative writing

1. Try to create a beginning of the story. You should mention facts such as: the place of the action, the time when it takes place, the protagonists, who is Wilbur? How did Fern find him? Your answer should not be longer than 5 lines.

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2. Imagine what would have happened if Fern had not found Wilbur. Write your answer in maximum 4 lines.

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3. Try to write a short plot of the whole story. What happens in the end? What does Wilbur do? What does Fern do? Write your answer in 5 lines.

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4. Why do you think the title of the story is *Charlotte's Web*? Answer in maximum 3 lines.

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5. If you were offered the chance to change the title, what would it be? Give at least 3 versions of your own title.

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)