

Third Grade
MSTEP Homework Packet # 14

Sent home on _____

Return by _____

Student's Name

Name _____ Date _____

Read the stories "Come On, Raj!" and "That Time Again" before answering Numbers 13 through 18.

Come On, Raj!

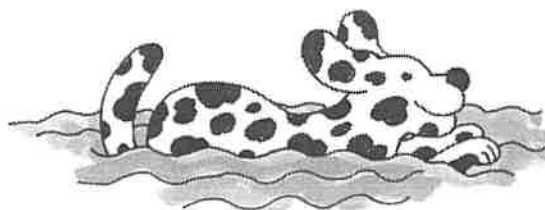
"Come on, Raj!" Neela called. Her head bobbed up and down, up and down, as she tread water. Raj stood at the end of the dock, looking longingly at his best friend. He wagged his tail and whined, pacing back and forth. How refreshing the lake looked, he thought. The August sun shined down on Raj's brown-and-white, spotted fur, making him pant. But no matter how many times Raj approached the edge of the dock and got into leaping position, his paws refused to budge. No sir, his paws said. We are staying on firm ground!

For the past half an hour, Neela had been swimming in the lake with her friends. She was splashing around and having a grand time. She called out encouraging words to her dog, tempting him with a tennis ball, his favorite toy! Still, Raj couldn't summon the courage to leave the end of the dock and jump in the lake.

The sweeter Neela spoke to him, the more he felt like he was letting her down. He was afraid she was going to give up on him and turn her attention to her friends. It was August after all, which meant *that time* again. School would start in just a few weeks. One morning, Neela would wake up and, instead of heading outside together, she would pat Raj on the head and wave goodbye. Then, she would board that big yellow monster to join her other friends. The bus, as it was called, would roar away down the street. Neela would be gone—well, gone until late afternoon, anyway.

Raj couldn't bear the thought of losing any more fun time with Neela. No matter how hard his paws tried to hold him back, he *had* to jump in the water. Raj sat back on his haunches to try and collect himself. He let out his deepest, heartiest "WOOF!" Then he stood up on all fours. He walked backward a few steps. Then he walked forward a few steps. Finally, he sprung off the dock into the air.

Squeezing his eyes shut, Raj braced himself for the landing. Splash! His head ducked under the warm water just for a moment before



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surfacing. “Way to go, Raj!” Neela cheered. “You did it!” If dogs could smile, Raj would have just then. He paddled toward his best friend. He had done it! And the water was just as refreshing as he imagined it would be. When Raj reached Neela, he swam circles around her in celebration. She laughed. She told him, “I’m so proud of you, Raj! I knew you could find the courage to jump in. We’re going to have such a fun afternoon swimming together in the lake.” And they did just that.

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That Time Again

A week later, Raj wandered into Neela's bedroom one evening. He hoped to find his best friend sprawled on her bed, reading a mystery or drawing. Raj had just eaten. He was ready to curl up next to Neela and fall asleep. From time to time, Neela would even reach over and scratch behind his ears.

Instead of finding Neela on her bed, however, Raj found her scurrying around her room. He stood in the doorway and watched her. She pulled her favorite dress out of her closet and held it up in front of her. Then, Neela turned to her desk. She grabbed a brand-new notebook and set of pencils and stuffed them into her bright green backpack. Backpack . . . Backpack . . . Raj tried to recall when he had last seen that backpack. Suddenly, he remembered. It was several months ago. Neela took that backpack back and forth from school. Oh, no! School!

Raj's brown ears drooped. He pulled his tail between his legs. The last few weeks, Raj and Neela had spent every waking hour together. They played fetch in the park, snoozed in the backyard, and swam at the lake. But now that dreaded time had come again. It was September. School was beginning again. Neela turned and spotted Raj. He let out a gloomy *Woof!*

"Oh, Raj, I know how you hate this time of year. I promise it won't be so bad. Just think about the nice long nap you can have after I leave in the morning. When I get home in the afternoon, you'll be ready to play!" Neela patted Raj's head, but Raj didn't feel any better. When Neela began chattering about all of the changes third grade would bring, Raj felt even worse. Surely, Neela would make all sorts of new friends and forget all about him!

The next morning, Raj dragged himself downstairs with Neela. He sat next to her as she ate her cereal. He watched her sadly as she rifled through her backpack to make sure she had all of her supplies. Then, Neela kissed her mother's cheek and headed for the front door. She called, "Bye, Mom! I don't want to miss the bus on the first day!" Raj's worst fear had come true. In her rush to get to school, Neela had already forgotten him. Raj hung his head. He had never felt more lonesome in his whole life.

Raj retreated to a patch of sunshine under the living room window. He shrunk down in the warm spot, but even the sunshine couldn't cheer

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him up. Suddenly, the front door burst open. Neela bounded into the house. "Raj, I forgot to say goodbye to you! I'm so sorry. Can you forgive me?" Neela asked. She knelt down next to him and rubbed his head. "I'll be home before you know it," Neela told him. Raj licked Neela's hand. His tail thumped happily against the floor, telling her she was already forgiven! Neela gave him one last scratch behind the ear before darting out the front door once again.

Raj stretched out and closed his eyes, feeling the warm sun on his back. Maybe this school thing won't be so bad after all, he thought as he yawned. After playing all summer long, taking a nap sounded good to Raj. So he did just that.

Now answer Numbers 13 through 18. Base your answers on the stories "Come On, Raj!" and "That Time Again."

- 13** Which of the following **MOST** motivates Raj to jump into the water in "Come On, Raj!"?
- (A) the hot sun and the prospect of cooling off in the water
 - (B) Raj's favorite toy – a tennis ball – that Neela is waving at him
 - (C) Neela calling to Raj to join her
 - (D) the idea of not being able to have fun with Neela when summer ends
- 14** How does the illustration in "Come On, Raj!" help you understand Raj's character?
- (F) It shows why he is nervous about jumping in the water.
 - (G) It shows how much he does not want to disappoint Neela.
 - (H) It shows how happy he is when finally jumps into the lake.
 - (I) It shows how much Raj doesn't want Neela to go back to school.

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- 15 Read this sentence from the story “That Time Again.”

Instead of finding Neela on her bed, however, Raj found her scurrying around her room.

Why does the author use the word *scurrying* instead of *moving*?

- Ⓐ to show how busy Neela is
 - Ⓑ to show that Neela is ready to relax
 - Ⓒ to show where Neela is in her bedroom
 - Ⓓ to show that Neela has been waiting for Raj
- 16 What happens right after Neela leaves the house for the FIRST time in “That Time Again”?
- Ⓕ Raj goes downstairs.
 - Ⓖ Neela’s mom pats Raj.
 - Ⓗ Raj feels sad and lonesome.
 - Ⓘ Raj yawns and goes to sleep.
- 17 Who is telling the story in “Come On, Raj!” and “That Time Again”?
- Ⓐ Raj
 - Ⓑ Neela
 - Ⓒ a narrator who can show Raj’s thoughts
 - Ⓓ a narrator who can show Neela’s thoughts

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- 18 How do the settings of “Come On, Raj!” and “That Time Again” DIFFER?
- Ⓐ “Come On, Raj!” takes place at a lake. “That Time Again” takes place at Neela’s house.
 - Ⓑ “Come On, Raj!” takes place in a park. “That Time Again” takes place at Neela’s school.
 - Ⓒ “Come On, Raj!” takes place at a pool. “That Time Again” takes place in Neela’s backyard.
 - Ⓓ “Come On, Raj!” takes place in Neela’s bedroom. “That Time Again” takes place in Neela’s kitchen.