

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

An excerpt from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum
Excerpt taken from Chapter 2 - The Council with the Munchkins

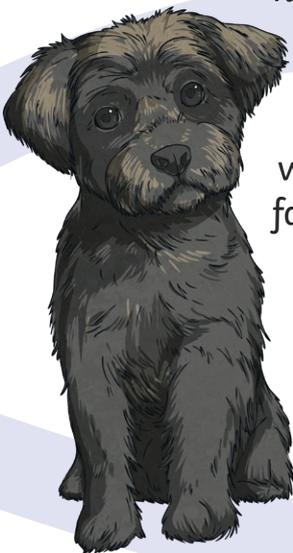
She was awakened by a shock, so sudden and severe that if Dorothy had not been lying on the soft bed she might have been hurt. As it was, the jar made her catch her breath and wonder what had happened; and Toto put his cold little nose into her face and whined dismally. Dorothy sat up and noticed that the house was not moving; nor was it dark, for the bright sunshine came in at the window, flooding the little room. She sprang from her bed and with Toto at her heels ran and opened the door.

The little girl gave a cry of amazement and looked about her, her eyes growing bigger and bigger at the wonderful sights she saw.

The cyclone had set the house down, very gently—for a cyclone—in the midst of a country of marvelous beauty. There were lovely patches of green sward all about, with stately trees bearing rich and luscious fruits. Banks of gorgeous flowers were on every hand, and birds with rare and brilliant plumage sang and fluttered in the trees and bushes. A little way off was a small brook, rushing and sparkling along between green banks, and murmuring in a voice very grateful to a little girl who had lived so long on the dry, gray prairies.

While she stood looking eagerly at the strange and beautiful sights, she noticed coming toward her a group of the queerest people she had ever seen. They were not as big as the grown folk she had always been used to; but neither were they very small. In fact, they seemed about as tall as Dorothy, who was a well-grown child for her age, although they were, so far as looks go, many years older.

Three were men and one a woman, and all were oddly dressed. They wore round hats that rose to a small point a foot above their heads, with little bells around the brims that tinkled sweetly as they moved.



The hats of the men were blue; the little woman's hat was white, and she wore a white gown that hung in plaits from her shoulders. Over it were sprinkled little stars that glistened in the sun like diamonds.

The men were dressed in blue, of the same shade as their hats, and wore well-polished boots with a deep roll of blue at the tops. The men, Dorothy thought, were about as old as Uncle Henry, for two of them had beards. But the little woman was doubtless much older: her face was covered with wrinkles, her hair was nearly white, and she walked rather stiffly.

When these people drew near the house where Dorothy was standing in the doorway, they paused and whispered among themselves, as if afraid to come farther. But the little old woman walked up to Dorothy, made a low bow and said, in a sweet voice:

"You are welcome, most noble Sorceress, to the land of the Munchkins. We are so grateful to you for having killed the Wicked Witch of the East, and for setting our people free from bondage."

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Questions

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Audience, Purpose and Mood

1. What is the purpose of this text?

2. Who is the intended audience?

3. What is the tone or mood of this text? How does this text make you feel? Give an example from the text to support your answer.

Vocabulary and Language

4. Locate the word 'jar' in the first paragraph. What does the word 'jar' mean in this context?

5. What other synonyms could be used in place of the word 'wonderful', in the second paragraph? List as many possibilities as you can in the space below.

6. What examples of personification are used in the third paragraph?

7. What simile is used in the fifth paragraph?

8. Why do you think the author chose to include these examples of figurative language?

9. In the fourth paragraph of this text, Dorothy is described as 'looking eagerly' about at her surroundings. What other synonyms could be used in place of the word 'eagerly'? List as many possibilities as you can in the space below.

10. Used in the last paragraph of this excerpt, what does the word 'noble' mean? Why has this word been used?

Inferencing and Predicting

11. What can you infer about the setting in which Dorothy has just landed? Look for clues in the text that might hint at its appearance and location.

12. How might you describe Dorothy's character and personality? Provide an example from the text to support your answer.

13. Why would the Munchkins believe that Dorothy has set them free? What inferences or predictions can you make?

14. Based on this short excerpt, what details can you work out about the setting, characters and context for this story?

15. Based on this short excerpt, what predictions can you make for the rest of the story?

Personal Response

16. Share your opinion on this text excerpt.

Answers

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The answers provided are just suggestions to be used as a guide. Students' answers may vary slightly.

Audience, Purpose and Mood

1. What is the purpose of this text?

The purpose of this text is to entertain and tell a story. The purpose of this specific excerpt from the text is to describe and introduce the setting in which Dorothy has just landed, and to introduce the reader to some new characters, the munchkins.

2. Who is the intended audience?

The intended audience of this text is probably children but it can certainly be enjoyed by adults as well.

3. What is the tone or mood of this text? How does this text make you feel? Give an example from the text to support your answer.

Students own responses, answers will vary.

A possible response could include:

This excerpt of text has an exciting and curious sort of mood. This is shown through Dorothy's sense of wonder at finding herself in a new and different place, as stated in the text: '...she stood looking eagerly at the strange and beautiful sights...'

Vocabulary and Language

4. Locate the word 'jar' in the first paragraph. What does the word 'jar' mean in this context?

In this context, the word 'jar' is used to describe a physical kind of shock or jolt.

5. What other synonyms could be used in place of the word 'wonderful', in the second paragraph? List as many possibilities as you can in the space below.

Amazing, magnificent, superb, extraordinary, unusual, astonishing, glorious, incredible, marvellous.

6. What examples of personification are used in the third paragraph?

'The cyclone had set the house down, very gently...'

'...a small brook...murmuring in a voice...'

7. What simile is used in the fifth paragraph?

'...little stars that glistened in the sun like diamonds.'

8. Why do you think the author chose to include these examples of figurative language?

The author has likely used figurative language to add excitement, interest and detail - bringing the story to life. Also, to help the reader better understand what he is trying to describe.

9. In the fourth paragraph of this text, Dorothy is described as 'looking eagerly' about at her surroundings. What other synonyms could be used in place of the word 'eagerly'? List as many possibilities as you can in the space below.

Actively, intently, anxiously, earnestly, enthusiastically, fearlessly, keenly.

10. Used in the last paragraph of this excerpt, what does the word 'noble' mean? Why has this word been used?

The word 'noble' has been used by the munchkins to describe Dorothy as they believe her to be someone very important who is honourable and quite powerful.

Inferencing and Predicting

11. What can you infer about the setting in which Dorothy has just landed? Look for clues in the text that might hint at its appearance and location.

The text tells us that it is a place filled with colour and life, full of natural beauty. It is also suggested that this place is very different from where Dorothy lives so we might assume that it is a place quite far away from where she has come.

12. How might you describe Dorothy's character and personality? Provide an example from the text to support your answer.

Dorothy seems to be a curious character and also to be a sweet and innocent little girl, as shown by this example from the text: 'The little girl gave a cry of amazement and looked about her, her eyes growing bigger and bigger at the wonderful sights she saw.'

13. Why would the Munchkins believe that Dorothy has set them free? What inferences or predictions can you make?

As this specific excerpt of the story does not go into any details, encourage students to make their own predictions or inferences based on their own knowledge of the well-known text. Answers will vary.

14. Based on this short excerpt, what details can you work out about the setting, characters and context for this story?

We can tell, so far, that this story includes elements of magic and fantasy, that the setting seems to be a wondrous place and that the characters, particularly the munchkins, are something very new to Dorothy and unlike the people of her everyday world.

15. Based on this short excerpt, what predictions can you make for the rest of the story?

Students own responses, answers will vary.

Personal Response

16. Share your opinion on this text excerpt.

Students own responses, answers will vary.