

Reading Selection

The Long, Long Measuring Tool

Rachel was in first grade and was learning all about measuring. In school, she made a measuring tool. It was made from paper. She put black lines on the tool to divide it into smaller units. Rachel used the tool to measure things such as her cat, her Grandpa's foot, and her mother's long hair. She could measure the height of objects as well as how big they were around.



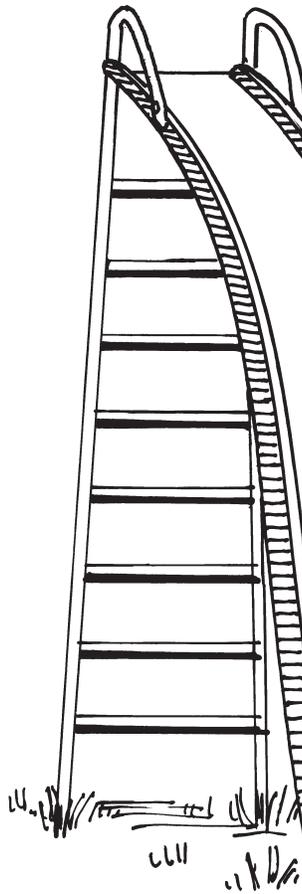
One day Rachel and her friend Keisha were measuring things in the backyard. “Hey Rachel,” said Keisha. “Let’s find out how long the slide is on your swing set.”

Pause for a few minutes and ask your students the following question:

What do Rachel and Keisha need to remember to do when they are measuring the slide?

Have students share their ideas with the class.

Rachel and Keisha used the top of the slide as the starting point. They used both of their measuring tools and placed them end to end on the slide until they got to the bottom. “Where should we stop measuring?” asked Rachel.



“Let’s stop right at this black line. It’s at the bottom of the slide and will work well as the ending spot,” said Keisha.

When Rachel and Keisha finished measuring, they found that the slide was 15 strips long. “Wow! That’s the longest thing we’ve measured,” said Keisha. “Let’s find something even longer to measure.”



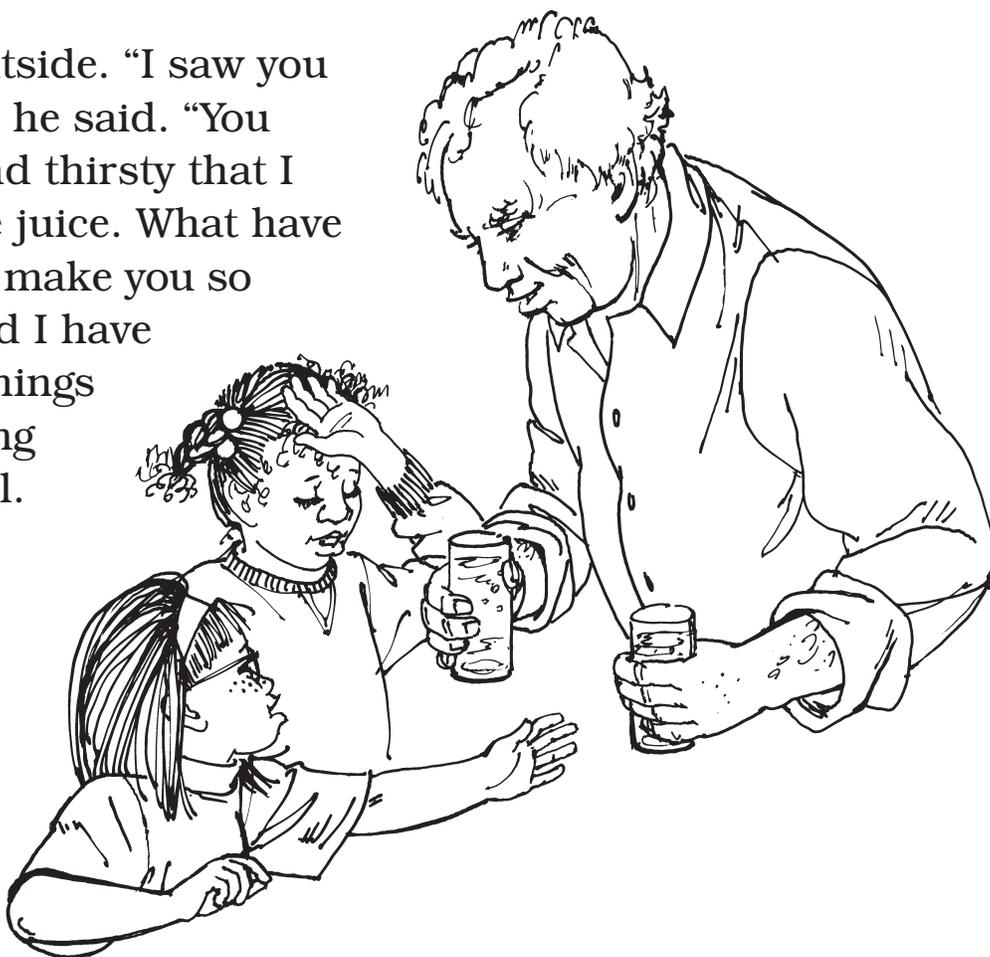
How about the garden hose?” Rachel said that it would take too long to measure the hose even with two measuring strips. “We need to think of an easier way to measure long things,” said Rachel. They sat and thought about how they could solve their problem.

Pause for a few minutes and ask students the following questions:

How could you help Rachel and Keisha solve the problem?

What would you use? How would you use it?

Grandpa came outside. “I saw you both sitting here,” he said. “You looked so tired and thirsty that I brought you some juice. What have you been doing to make you so tired?” “Keisha and I have been measuring things with our measuring tools,” said Rachel. “We’ve been measuring long things like the slide. Now we want to measure the garden hose, but it will take a long time.”



Grandpa, Rachel, and Keisha sat on the steps and thought about how to solve the problem. Suddenly Keisha said, “I have an idea. What if we made lots of measuring tools like ours and hooked them together. Then measuring the garden hose would be much easier.”

“I think that will work,” said Rachel. “But if we make the long tool out of paper, it may tear. What else could we use?”

“Let’s go into the basement and see what we can find to make the long measuring tool,” said Grandpa.

In the basement, they found an old window shade that rolled up and down. This is what they did. First, they rolled the window shade out on the floor. Then, they matched the small measuring tool on the shade and traced it with a marker. They matched it end to end until they reached the end of the shade, tracing it each time. Next, they drew the black lines on the measuring tool. They colored each strip a different color. Then, they did this two more times so that they had three long strips, each made up of 20 colored strips. Finally, they cut the long strips out and taped the ends together to make one very long measuring tool.

“Now,” said Grandpa, “you have a very long measuring tool. You can measure lots of long things and you won’t get tired!” Rachel and Keisha rolled the measuring tool up so it looked like a doughnut and went to measure the garden hose. They measured the hose and found that it was 55 strips long. “Now we have a long strip,” said Keisha. “But I don’t think it will be long enough to measure the next long object I’ve thought of.”

“Keisha,” said Rachel, “what longer thing do you want to measure now?” Keisha laughed and said, “Let’s find out how many strips it would take to go around the world!” “Let’s do that tomorrow,” said Rachel. “I’m too tired today!”



Measuring Strips

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