

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Three Hearts and One Better Sentence

*Interesting facts can reveal a surprisingly useful lesson.*

At the Lakeshore Aquarium, Elliana and Ari stopped beside a giant Pacific octopus named Ruby. Ruby was folded into a rocky den like a reddish-brown blanket with eight curious arms. A sign announced that an octopus has three hearts. Two hearts pump blood toward the gills, and one pumps blood through the rest of the body. Its blood is blue because it uses a copper-rich protein to carry oxygen. Ari stared at the sign. 'Three hearts and not one of them has to do math homework,' he said.

That afternoon, Elliana sat at the kitchen table working through a hard subtraction problem. She had already erased twice. The numbers looked crowded, and she could feel frustration building. Mommy came over to help and wrote an 8 beside the problem. Elliana squinted at it. Instead of taking a breath or asking calmly, she snapped, 'Why did you draw your 8 like that? I can't read your writing!'

The room became quiet. Mommy had stopped what she was doing to help. The question itself was not the main problem; Elliana truly was having trouble reading the number. The problem was the sharp voice and the blaming words. Frustration explained why she felt upset, but it did not excuse speaking rudely. A feeling can arrive without permission. Words and actions are still choices.

Ari looked up from his book. 'Ruby had three hearts,' he said, 'but I think this moment needs one calm mouth.' Elliana almost told him to mind his own business. Her shoulders were tight, and her face felt hot. Then she remembered how Ruby changed color and texture when reacting to the world around her. An octopus can use special skin cells to change its appearance quickly. That reaction can help it hide, communicate, or warn. People also show stress on the outside, but they can learn to pause before their stress turns into an attack.

Mommy said, 'You may be frustrated. You may ask me to rewrite the number. You may not speak to me disrespectfully.' Her voice was firm, not mean. Elliana wanted to defend herself by saying that the 8 really was hard to read. But proving that fact would not erase the rude delivery. She put down her pencil, unclenched her hands, and took three slow breaths.

Then she tried a repair. 'Mommy, I'm sorry I spoke to you that way. I'm frustrated because I don't understand the problem. Could you please write the 8 again and show me the regrouping one more time?' The information was almost the same, but the sentence was completely different. It named the problem, respected the helper, and asked for what she needed.

Mommy rewrote the number and explained the first step. Elliana finished the subtraction. She still did not enjoy the problem, and the bad mood did not disappear like a magic trick. Good behavior did not require her to pretend she was cheerful. It required her to handle the bad mood without throwing it at someone else.

Later, Elliana drew a tiny octopus beside the corrected answer. She gave it three hearts and one speech bubble: I AM FRUSTRATED. PLEASE HELP ME. Ari added another bubble: ALSO, PLEASE DO NOT MAKE ME DO EIGHT TIMES EIGHT. Elliana laughed, then answered, 'Sixty-four.' A difficult moment had not become perfect, but it had become respectful. That was the better choice.

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**Three Hearts and One Better Sentence - Circle the best answer.****1. What is the main idea of the story?**

- A. Octopuses should do homework.
- B. Frustration is real, but respectful words are still a choice.
- C. Mommy should stop helping with math.
- D. Ari wants to visit a lake.

**6. What does Mommy allow Elliana to do?**

- A. Be rude if the work is difficult
- B. Refuse every problem
- C. Feel frustrated and ask for the number to be rewritten
- D. Blame anyone who helps

**2. How many hearts does an octopus have?**

- A. One
- B. Two
- C. Three
- D. Eight

**7. Which action helps Elliana pause?**

- A. She throws the pencil.
- B. She takes three slow breaths.
- C. She hides the worksheet.
- D. She argues about the handwriting.

**3. Why is octopus blood blue?**

- A. It carries blue ink.
- B. It uses a copper-rich protein to carry oxygen.
- C. It drinks ocean water.
- D. Its skin makes the blood blue.

**8. Which sentence is the best repair?**

- A. 'Your 8 is terrible.'
- B. 'Do it for me now.'
- C. 'I'm frustrated. Could you please rewrite the 8 and help me?'
- D. 'This is all your fault.'

**4. What first causes Elliana's bad mood to grow?**

- A. A difficult subtraction problem
- B. A missing aquarium ticket
- C. Ari taking her pencil
- D. Mommy leaving the room

**9. What does the story say good behavior requires?**

- A. Pretending to be cheerful
- B. Never feeling angry
- C. Handling a bad mood without throwing it at someone else
- D. Finishing work without help

**5. What was wrong with Elliana's first comment?**

- A. She asked for help.
- B. She used a sharp voice and blaming words.
- C. She noticed a number 8.
- D. She spoke too quietly.

**10. Which statement best expresses the moral?**

- A. A true complaint may be delivered any way you want.
- B. Being frustrated explains a feeling but does not excuse disrespect.
- C. People with bad moods should stop talking all day.
- D. Difficult work should always be skipped.

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## Lesson 17 Answer Key

### Comprehension Answers

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. C  |
| 2. C | 7. B  |
| 3. B | 8. C  |
| 4. A | 9. C  |
| 5. B | 10. B |

## Think Beyond the Story

1. Rewrite Elliana's first comment as a calm, respectful request.

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2. Name two body clues that may warn you that frustration is growing.

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3. What can you do after rude words have already come out? Include both an apology and a repair.

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