

Name _____

Date _____

The Howler-Monkey Contest Nobody Won

A loud animal fact and a lesson about using a calm human voice.

Elliana and Ari were supposed to be finishing a quiet afternoon assignment at the kitchen table. A small disagreement began over whose pencil had rolled onto the floor. Instead of stopping to check, both children reached for it and started talking at the same time. Talking became arguing. Arguing became yelling. Within a minute, each twin was trying to become louder than the other, as if the loudest voice would automatically win. It did not. It only made the problem harder to solve.

Hugo, the boss-man puggle, walked out of the room with the tired expression of a dog who had heard enough. Emma hid behind a chair. Merlin barked at the pencil, which was the only object in the room that had remained quiet.

Mommy stepped between the twins and spoke clearly: 'Stop. Separate spaces. Eight quiet minutes. The timer starts when your bodies and voices are calm.' Neither child followed the direction. Elliana shouted that the time-out was unfair. Ari yelled an answer from across the room. They came out of their spaces, argued about who had started the fight, and complained about the timer. Each protest delayed the beginning of the reset. The original disagreement had taken less than a minute, but refusing the time-out made the consequence much longer.

When the house finally became quiet, Mommy placed an animal fact card on the table. It showed a black howler monkey with its mouth open. Howler monkeys have an enlarged hyoid bone in their throats. The hollow space helps make their calls extremely loud. Under certain conditions, a call can travel about three miles through a forest. The monkeys use morning calls to tell other groups where they are. This helps troops keep space between them and can prevent wasteful fighting over the same feeding area.

'A howler monkey has a reason for being loud,' Mommy said. 'Its call carries information across a forest. Your screams were not giving useful information. They were drowning out every chance to listen.'

Ari looked toward the quiet pencil. 'So being louder did not make me right?' he asked. 'Correct,' Mommy said. 'And being angry did not remove your responsibility to obey the reset direction.'

This time, Elliana and Ari went to separate spaces. They followed five steps: stop moving toward the argument, separate, quiet the voice, breathe slowly, and plan respectful words. A time-out was not a contest, a defeat, or a chance to keep arguing from another room. It was a safety reset. The full eight minutes counted only after each child was calm.

When the timer ended, they returned one at a time. Elliana said, 'I was frustrated, but I should not have screamed or ignored Mommy.' Ari said, 'I was angry, but I should not have yelled at Elliana or answered Mommy disrespectfully.' They checked the pencil and found Ari's name on it. Elliana returned it without another speech. Ari apologized for grabbing. Both apologized to Mommy for turning one direction into a long argument.

Mommy explained that repair has four parts: name what you did, admit it without excuses, fix what you can, and choose a better action for next time. The twins practiced one useful sentence: 'I am too upset to solve this yet. I will take my reset and talk when I am calm.'

The dogs slowly returned. Hugo settled beneath the table, Emma came out from behind the chair, and Merlin stopped guarding the pencil. Elliana and Ari finished their work in ordinary voices. They had learned that self-control is not staying calm only when life feels fair. It is choosing safe, respectful behavior even while angry. A three-mile monkey howl may be impressive. A respectful human sentence is far more useful inside a house.

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The Howler-Monkey Contest Nobody Won - Circle the best answer.**1. What is the main lesson of the story?**

- A. The loudest person wins an argument.
- B. Anger does not excuse screaming, disrespect, or refusing a reset.
- C. Every disagreement needs a long speech.
- D. Dogs should decide who is right.

6. How can howling help monkey troops?

- A. It teaches young monkeys to read.
- B. It makes fruit grow.
- C. It helps groups locate one another and avoid wasteful fights.
- D. It turns every dispute into a contest.

2. What started the disagreement?

- A. Both children reached for a pencil.
- B. Merlin took the homework.
- C. Mommy turned off a game.
- D. Hugo barked at Ari.

7. Which sentence is the most respectful way to handle strong anger?

- A. 'You are wrong, and I will scream until you listen.'
- B. 'I am too upset to solve this yet. I will reset and talk when calm.'
- C. 'I do not have to listen because I am angry.'
- D. 'Everyone else started it.'

3. What is special about a howler monkey's hyoid bone?

- A. It helps the monkey climb.
- B. It stores food.
- C. Its enlarged hollow space helps make calls very loud.
- D. It changes the monkey's fur color.

8. Which list gives the five reset steps in the story?

- A. Run, yell, blame, interrupt, leave
- B. Explain, debate, complain, bargain, shout
- C. Grab, argue, follow, win, celebrate
- D. Stop, separate, quiet the voice, breathe, plan respectful words

4. How far can a howler monkey call travel under some conditions?

- A. About three feet
- B. About three yards
- C. About one mile
- D. About three miles

9. What are the four parts of repair?

- A. Hide it, deny it, blame someone, leave
- B. Name it, admit it, fix what you can, choose better next time
- C. Win, celebrate, explain, repeat
- D. Wait, forget, laugh, continue

5. Why did the time-out take longer than eight minutes?

- A. The twins kept arguing and did not begin the quiet reset.
- B. The timer was broken.
- C. Mommy forgot the time.
- D. The dogs hid the timer.

10. Which detail best shows that the conflict was truly over?

- A. Both children became louder.
- B. Mommy displayed the monkey card.
- C. The twins apologized, repaired the problem, and finished in ordinary voices.
- D. Merlin barked at the pencil.

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Lesson 21 Answer Key

Comprehension Answers

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

Behavior Repair - Complete after the questions are checked

1. Write the exact respectful sentence you can use the next time you are angry with your sibling.

2. List the five reset steps. Then circle the step that is hardest for you.

3. When Mommy gives a time-out direction, what will you do immediately so eight minutes does not become a much longer consequence?
