

Back to the Basement

Darius carried his laundry basket to the basement. His dad said he had to do the wash before he could play video games. The pile of clothes was so high that it teetered back and forth as he walked down the stairs. When he plunked it on top of the washer, a sock fell off the top of the pile and landed behind the machine. Great.

Darius tried to move the machine out from the wall so he could reach the sock. It was hard work, but he finally made enough of a space for his arm to fit. His hand groped along the floor for the sock, but he felt nothing. Where did it go? He peered behind the machine but all he saw was darkness. So he moved it out from the wall even further and stepped behind. No sock.

Losing the sock was annoying, but Darius figured it would turn up sometime. So he stepped out and prepared to load the rest of the laundry into the machine. But now, what had looked like a regular washing machine a minute ago was just a big metal tub. Propped against one side of the tub was a metal board with ridges along the front. What was happening?

Darius called for his dad but no one answered. He looked around the room and noticed some other changes. The basement floor, instead of being painted concrete like always, was just dirt. The shelves, instead of being filled

with old junk, held jars of peaches, tomatoes, and green beans. Something weird was going on.

Darius looked at the laundry basket full of clothes. Where were his gym shorts? His AlphaDog t-shirt? His neon hoodie? This basket was filled with weird looking tan and brown shirts. And the basket was made from some reeds or something, not from the familiar white plastic.

Panic rose up into Darius's throat. Had he stepped through to some other dimension? And if so, how would he get home? He stepped back around the washtub and stood next to the wall. When he looked down, his sock was there. Where had it come from? He picked it up and stepped out again.

Darius was relieved to see that the washing machine was back. The shelves were full of junk again, and there was concrete under his feet. Phew. He scooted the machine back towards the wall as far as it would go. As he started to load his clothes into the washer, a shirt fell out and slipped down the crack. "Nope," thought Darius, "not worth it. I never liked that shirt anyway."



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Why was Darius doing his laundry?
 - a. So he could play video games
 - b. Because his sock was lost
 - c. Because his neon hoodie was dirty
 - d. So he could have dinner

2. What fell behind the washing machine?
 - a. His gym shorts
 - b. His AlphaDog t-shirt
 - c. His sock
 - d. His neon hoodie

3. Which of the following is NOT a clue that Darius went back in time?
 - a. There was canned food on the shelves
 - b. The sock had disappeared
 - c. The floor was made of dirt
 - d. There was a washtub instead of a washing machine

4. Why do you think Darius didn't try to retrieve his shirt at the end?
 - a. Because he didn't like it
 - b. Because it wasn't his AlphaDog shirt
 - c. Because he didn't want to move the washer again
 - d. Because he didn't want to risk going back in time again

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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