

Tick Tock Clock

Tick. Tick. Tick. The clock on the classroom wall echoed in Kyle's brain as he stared at his math test paper. All the numbers looked jumbled up and made no sense. He took a deep breath and shook his head. Now they looked more in order. But as he picked up his pencil, the teacher called time. Kyle left the classroom without even one question answered.

Tick. Tick. The sound followed Kyle into the hall. He tried to shake it off. The test was over. It was one grade. He'd talk to the teacher and see if he could do some make up work. It would be fine.

But no matter how much Kyle tried to convince himself it would be fine, the ticking continued. It followed him to lunch as he ate his sandwich. Tick, bite. Tick, bite. It followed him to soccer club after school. Tick, kick. Tick, kick.

By the time he got home, Kyle could hardly stand the ticking. "Stop the noise!" he shouted at dinner. "What noise?" his parents asked. That wasn't a good sign.

Kyle ran up to his bedroom and shoved his head under the pillow. He could still hear the ticking. He got out his phone and called Omar. "You've gotta help me, O. I think I'm going crazy."

"I've heard about this," said Omar. "It's some kind of psychological syndrome. Or something."

“Fine. Whatever. But what do I *do* about it?” pleaded Kyle.

“Not sure,” said Omar. “Maybe try to sleep? That could be like a reset.”

Kyle did try to sleep. He tossed and turned. It was impossible to tune out the noise. Eventually he must have dozed off, because next thing he knew he was blinking in the morning sunlight as it streamed through his window. The events of yesterday came rushing back to his mind. But there was no ticking. Phew. Thank goodness things were back to normal.

Kyle had forgotten all about the ticking when he walked into math class again. The minute he set foot through the door and saw the clock, he heard it again. “No!” Kyle wailed. He didn’t think he could take another day of this. He leaped towards the wall and swung his backpack wildly. The edge of the bag caught on the clock and he ripped it off the wall. Kyle and the clock and his bag all went tumbling to the floor. He had done it. Problem solved.

But as Kyle looked up into the shocked faces of his teacher and classmates, he heard a faint noise. Tick. Tick. Tick.



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. Where did Kyle start hearing the ticking?
 - a. In math class
 - b. At lunch
 - c. At soccer club
 - d. In his bedroom

2. What does Omar suggest that Kyle do to stop the ticking?
 - a. Do his math homework
 - b. Kick the soccer ball
 - c. Go to sleep
 - d. Talk to his parents

3. Why do you think Kyle rips the clock off the wall?
 - a. Because he ran out of time on the test
 - b. Because he's afraid
 - c. Because he is destructive
 - d. Because Omar told him to

4. What do you think Kyle worries about the LEAST?
 - a. That the ticking won't stop.
 - b. That he's going crazy.
 - c. That he's going to fail the math test.
 - d. That Omar will stop being his friend.

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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