

Phyllis and the Fossil Finders

“At least two good things about a storm: more game progress online for now, and a better chance of fossil-finding later,” Jacob said with a grin as he adjusted the headset on his ears.

“Yeah, I’m with you on the first one of those, Jay. You’re still on your own for the second, though!” Faizal chuckled.

“D’you think this rain is ever going to stop?” Nakeisha moaned as her avatar ransacked the corridors of a newly discovered stronghold and collected more glowing fire opal.

Outside Jacob’s window, water ran down the seaside village road in rapid streams. Below the steep cliffs, the sea pounded the bay with ferocious waves.



“Doesn’t seem like it! Feels like it’s been chucking it down for weeks,” said Faizal. He was following Nakeisha’s character on her path of destruction through the fortress in their online game, *Raider’s Peril*. They had been playing for hours that morning already.

“Actually,” Jacob chipped in via his microphone, “the storm arrived on Wednesday night so it’s only been two-and-a-bit days. The TV forecast said it should have passed by now. I’m pretty sure it will stop eventually.” He glanced out through the window at the swirling black sky over the coast. He admired the view from his ‘den’, where his computer was set up.



Having no brothers or sisters meant that the spare room in Jacob’s house was something that his friends all envied. Books lined the shelves along one entire side, and his dinosaur and fossil posters covered most of the opposite wall. Every available surface was crowded with dinosaur models, remains of science experiment kits or Jacob’s rocks and shells. His hamsters, Steg and Rex, even had rocks and shells inside their cage. All three of his best friends liked playing *Raider’s Peril*; only Jacob was such a big fan of science, though.

“OK, Mister Weatherman, we get it.” Faizal’s voice laughed through everyone’s headphones. “Where’s Gabi, anyway? Didn’t she say that she’d be online again this morning?”

“Gone for another hospital check-up with her stepmum,” said Nakeisha. “Said she’s been feeling really tired and dizzy again this week. Reckoned she’d be done by lunch, though, so she’ll probably be back any time now. I hope we can go outside again when she is.”



Questions

1. What is the name of the online game that the children are playing? Tick **one**.

- Fossil Finders
 Raider's Peril
 Steg and Rex
 Mister Weatherman

2. When did the storm arrive? Tick **one**.

- two weeks ago
 Wednesday morning
 Wednesday night
 yesterday

3. Draw **three** lines to match each child with what they are doing.

Jacob

moaning

Faizal

chuckling

Nakeisha

grinning

4. Fill in the missing words.

Below the _____ cliffs, the sea _____ the bay with _____ waves.

5. What item has Nakeisha's character collected in the game?

6. What word tells the reader that this isn't the first time Gabi has been to the hospital for a check-up?

7. Name 3 things that Jacob has in his den.

Answers

1. What is the name of the online game that the children are playing? Tick **one**.

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2. When did the storm arrive? Tick **one**.

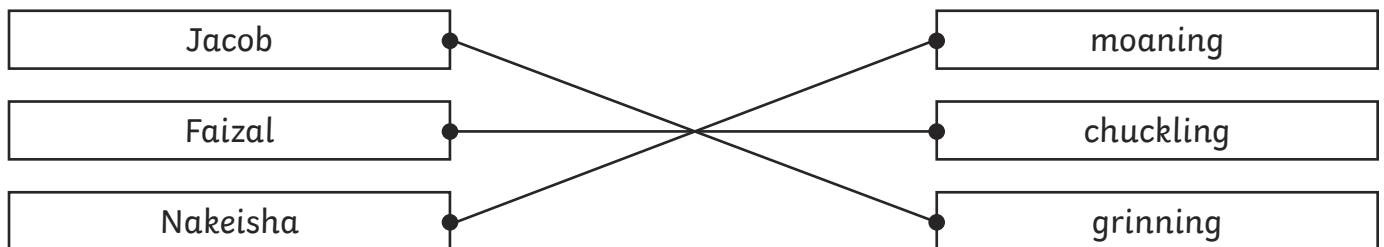
two weeks ago

Wednesday morning

Wednesday night

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3. Draw **three** lines to match each child with what they are doing.



4. Fill in the missing words.

Below the **steep** cliffs, the sea **pounded** the bay with **ferocious** waves.

5. What item has Nakeisha's character collected in the game?

(glowing) fire opal.

6. What word tells the reader that this isn't the first time Gabi has been to the hospital for a check-up?

another

7. Name 3 things that Jacob has in his den.

Accept any 3 of the following: books, dinosaur/fossil posters, dinosaur models, science experiment kits, rocks/shells, a hamster cage, Steg and Rex.

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“Feels like we’re just not as effective without her on here. Hope she’s OK,” said Faizal as their characters raided treasure chests in an underground dungeon. “Anyone thought of a new guild name for us yet?”

Jacob had pitched his idea before but wasn’t ready to let it drop yet. “I still think ‘Fossil Finders Four’ is the coolest,” he said.



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4. **“At least two good things about a storm: more game progress online for now, and a better chance of fossil-finding later,”** Jacob said with a grin as he adjusted the headset on his ears.

Which one of these does Faizal agree is good? Tick **one**.

- more game progress online
- a better chance of fossil-finding later

5. What item has Nakeisha's character collected in the game?

6. Find and copy **a word or phrase** that shows that the sea was powerful.

7. Look at the paragraph that begins, **'Outside Jacob's window...'**. Find the word that tells you that the water was travelling quickly.

8. What does Jacob have in his den?

Answers

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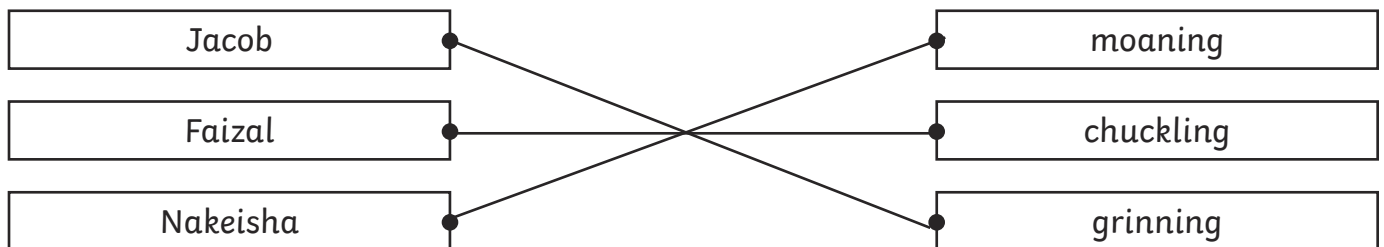
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5. What item has Nakeisha’s character collected in the game?

(glowing) fire opal

6. Find and copy **a word or phrase** that shows that the sea was powerful.

Accept variations of the following: The sea pounded the bay with ferocious waves.

7. Look at the paragraph that begins, **‘Outside Jacob’s window...’**. Find the word that tells you that the water was travelling quickly.

rapid

8. What does Jacob have in his den?

Accept variations of the following: books, dinosaur/fossil posters, dinosaur models, science experiment kits, rocks/shells, a hamster cage, Steg and Rex.

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Jacob had pitched his idea before but wasn’t ready to let it drop yet. “I still think ‘Fossil Finders Four’ is the coolest,” he said.

Faizal shot him down. “Not that again. Maybe if we were all fossil finders and not just you!”

Jacob’s thumb was poised over the joystick on his controller, ready to grab a topaz spear from the stronghold wall. Before he got the chance, however, his head spun sideways towards the den window again. A jagged fork of lightning zipped through the sky and flashed through the blur of midday rain. The lightning connected with the headland along the bay and vanished into the mist again as quickly as it had arrived.



Questions

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 - Raider's Peril
 - Steg and Rex
 - Mister Weatherman
- “At least two good things about a storm: more game progress online for now, and a better chance of fossil-finding later,” Jacob said with a grin as he adjusted the headset on his ears.** Which one of these does Faizal agree is good? Tick **one**.
 - more game progress online
 - a better chance of fossil-finding later
- What are the children raiding in the underground dungeon?

- Why has Gabi gone for a check-up with her stepmum?

- What word tells the reader that the others were jealous of Jacob's den?

- Find evidence from the text that the storm was powerful.

- All three of his best friends liked playing *Raider's Peril*; only Jacob was such a big fan of science, though.**
 What examples from the text show that Jacob was a fan of science?

- What impression do you get of the character of Faizal?
 Use evidence from the text in your answer.

Answers

1. What is the name of the online game that the children are playing? Tick **one**.

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Which one of these does Faizal agree is good? Tick **one**.

more game progress online

a better chance of fossil-finding later

3. What are the children raiding in the underground dungeon?

treasure chests

4. Why has Gabi gone for a check-up with her stepmum?

She has been feeling tired and dizzy again.

5. What word tells the reader that the others were jealous of Jacob's den?

envious

6. Find evidence from the text that the storm was powerful.

Children's own responses which use evidence from the text, for example: 'it says the sea pounded the bay with ferocious waves'; 'the sky is described as black and swirling'; 'a jagged fork of lightning zipped through the sky and flashed through the blur of midday rain'.

7. **All three of his best friends liked playing *Raider's Peril*; only Jacob was such a big fan of science, though.**

What examples from the text show that Jacob was a fan of science?

Children's own responses which use evidence from the text, for example: 'He has a room that it says is covered in dinosaur and fossil posters and every available surface was crowded with dinosaur models, science experiments and rock and shells.'

8. What impression do you get of the character of Faizal?

Use evidence from the text in your answer.

Children's own responses which use evidence from the text, for example: 'he is a happy, positive character because it says he laughs and chuckles a lot'; 'he is a good friend because he is worried about Gabi and he says he hopes she is OK'; 'he likes to joke because he calls Jacob 'Mister Weatherman' and jokes about his idea for a guild name.'