

Today, you will read a story titled “Oliver Button is a Sissy.” As you read, think about the actions of the characters and the events of the stories. Answer the questions to help you write an essay.

Read the story titled “Oliver Button is a Sissy” by Tomie DePaola. Then answer Questions 1 through 3.

**Oliver Button is a Sissy**  
**By Tomie DePaola**

- 1 Oliver Button was called a sissy. He didn't like to do things that boys are supposed to do. Instead he liked to play in the woods and jump rope. He liked to read books and draw pictures. He even liked to play with paper dolls. And Oliver Button liked to play dress-up. He would go up to the attic and put on costumes. Then he would sing and dance and make believe he was a movie star.
- 2 “Oliver,” said his papa. “Don't be such a sissy! Go out and play baseball or football or basketball. Any kind of ball!”
- 3 But Oliver Button didn't want to play any kind of ball. He didn't like to play ball because he wasn't very good at it. He dropped the ball or struck out or didn't run fast enough. And he was always the last person picked for any team. “Oh, rats!” the captain would say. “We have to have Oliver Button. Now we'll lose for sure.”
- 4 “Oliver,” said Mama, “you have to play something. You need your exercise.”
- 5 “I get exercise, Mama,” said Oliver. “I walk in the woods, I play jump rope, and I love to dance. Watch!”

- 6 So Mama and Papa sent Oliver Button to Ms. Leah's Dancing School. "Especially for the exercise," Papa said.
- 7 Oliver Button got a nice, black, shiny pair of tap shoes. And he practiced and practiced.
- 8 But the boys, especially the older ones, in the schoolyard teased Oliver Button. "What are those shiny shoes, sissy?" they said. "La-de-doo, you gonna dance for us?" And they grabbed Oliver's tap shoes and played catch with them, until one of the girls caught them.
- 9 "Gotta have help from *girls*," the boys said teasingly.
- 10 And they wrote on the school wall, "Oliver Button is a sissy."
- 11 Almost every day, the boys teased Oliver Button. But Oliver Button kept on going to Ms. Leah's Dancing School every week, and he practiced and practiced.
- 12 One day a talent show was announced. "Oliver," said Ms. Leah, "there is going to be a talent show at the movie theater on Sunday afternoon, one month from now. I would like you to be in it. I asked your mother and father, and they said it was up to you."
- 13 Oliver Button was all excited. Ms. Leah helped him with his routine. Mama made him a costume. And Oliver Button practiced and practiced.

- 14 Finally it was Friday before the big day. “Class,” the teacher said. “On Sunday afternoon there will be a big talent show at the movie theater. And one of your classmates is going to be in it. I hope you will all go and cheer for Oliver Button.”
- 15 “Sissy!” whispered the boys.
- 16 On Sunday afternoon, the movie theater was full. One after the other, all the acts were performed. There was a magician and an accordion player, a baton-twirler and a lady who sang about moon, June, and kissing. Finally it was Oliver Button’s turn. The piano player started the music, and the spotlight came on. Oliver Button stepped into it.
- 17 “Dum-de-dum,” the music went. “Dum-de-dum-de-dum.” Oliver tapped and tapped. “Dum-de-dum-de-dum-dum-DUM.” Oliver bowed, and the audience clapped and clapped.
- 18 When all the acts were over, everybody came out on stage. The master of ceremonies began to announce the prizes. “And now, ladies and gentlemen, the winner of the first prize – the little girl who did the beautiful baton-twirling, ROXIE VALENTINE!” The audience cheered and whistled.
- 19 Oliver Button tried not to cry.
- 20 Mama, Papa, and Ms. Leah gave Oliver big hugs. “Never mind,” said Papa, “we are taking our great dancer out for a great pizza. I’m so proud of you.”
- 21 “So are we!” said Mama and Ms. Leah.

- 22 Monday morning Oliver Button didn't want to go to school. "Now, now, Oliver," Mama said, "that's silly. Come on and eat your breakfast. You'll be late."
- 23 So Oliver went to school. When the school bell rang, Oliver Button was the last to go in. Then he noticed the school wall. "Oliver Button is a star!"

**1. Part A**

What does the word **sissy** mean as it is used in Paragraph 1 of “Oliver Button Is a Sissy?”

- A. not athletic
- B. girlish
- C. talented
- D. smart

**Part B**

Which statement best supports the answer to Part A?

- a. “Then he would sing and dance and make believe he was a movie star.”
- b. “He liked to read books and draw pictures.”
- c. “He didn’t like to do things that boys are supposed to do.”
- d. “Go out and play baseball or football or basketball.”

**2. Part A**

The way that Oliver reacts to being teased tells a lot about his character. What word best describes his personality?

- a. lazy
- b. confident
- c. clumsy
- d. shy

## Part B

Which statement best supports the answer to Part A?

- a. "'Oliver,' said Mama, 'you have to play something. You need your exercise.'"
- b. "Almost every day, the boys teased Oliver Button. But Oliver Button kept on going to Ms. Leah's Dancing School every week, and he practiced and practiced."
- c. "He didn't like to play ball because he wasn't very good at it. He dropped the ball or struck out or didn't run fast enough."
- d. "Oliver Button tried not to cry."

### 3. Fill in the table.

- a. "Oliver Button tried not to cry." (Paragraph 17)
- b. "Oliver Button is a star!" (Paragraph 21)
- c. "But Oliver Button kept on going to Ms. Leah's Dancing school every week, and he practiced and practiced." (Paragraph 10)
- d. "He didn't like to do things that boys are supposed to do." (Paragraph 1)

<u>Line From the Text</u>	<u>What the line makes the reader think</u>
	Oliver doesn't care what other people think. He does what he likes anyway.
	Oliver is different from most kids. He gets teased about it.
	People can change. The boys won't tease Oliver anymore.
	Some things <u>do</u> bother Oliver, even though he doesn't like to show that his feelings are hurt.

Read the story titled "The Velveteen Rabbit" by Margery Williams. Then answer questions 4 through 6.

## *The Velveteen Rabbit*

By Margery Williams

Near the house where they lived there was a wood, and in the long June evening the Boy liked to go there after tea to play. He took the Velveteen Rabbit with him, and before he wandered off to pick flowers, or play at brigands among the trees, he always made the Rabbit a little nest somewhere among the bracken, where he would be quite cosy, for he was a kind-hearted little boy and he liked Bunny to be comfortable. One evening, while the Rabbit was lying there alone, watching the ants that ran to and fro between his velvet paws in the grass, he saw two strange beings creep out of the tall bracken near him.

They were rabbits like himself, but quite furry and brand-new. They must have been very well made, for their seams didn't show at all, and they changed shape in a queer way when they moved; one minute they were long and thin and the next minute fat and bunched, instead of always staying the same like he did. Their feet padded softly on the ground, and they crept quite close to him, twitching their noses, while the Rabbit stared hard to see which side the clockwork stuck out, for he knew that people who jump generally have something to wind them up. But he couldn't see it. They were evidently a new kind of rabbit altogether.

They stared at him, and the little Rabbit stared back. And all the time their noses twitched.

"Why don't you get up and play with us?" one of them asked.

"I don't feel like it," said the Rabbit, for he didn't want to explain that he had no clockwork.

"Ho!" said the furry rabbit. "It's as easy as anything," And he gave a big hop sideways and stood on his hind legs.

7 "I don't believe you can!" he said.

8 "I can!" said the little Rabbit. "I can jump higher than anything" He meant when the Boy threw him, but of course he didn't want to say so.

9 "Can you hop on your hind legs?" asked the furry rabbit?

10 That was a dreadful question, for the Velveteen rabbit had no hind legs at all! The back of him was made all in one piece, like a pincushion. He sat still in the bracken, and hoped that the other rabbit wouldn't notice.

11 "I don't want to!" he said again.

12 But the wild rabbits have very sharp eyes. And this one stretched out his neck and looked.

13 "He hasn't got any hind legs" he called out. "Fancy a rabbit without any hind legs" And he began to laugh.

14 "I have!" cried the little Rabbit. "I have got hind legs! I am sitting on them"

15 "Then stretch them out and show me, like this!" said the wild rabbit. And he began to whirl around and dance, till the little Rabbit got quite dizzy.

16 "I don't like dancing," he said. "I'd rather sit still!"

17 But all the while he was longing to dance, for a funny new tickly feeling ran through him, and he felt he would give anything in the world to be able to jump about like these rabbits did.

18 The strange rabbit stopped dancing, and came quite close. He came so close this time that his long whiskers brushed the Velveteen Rabbit's ear, and then he wrinkled his nose suddenly and flattened his ears and jumped backwards.



19 "He doesn't smell right!" he exclaimed. "He isn't a rabbit at all! He isn't real!"

20 "I *am* Real!" said the little Rabbit. "I am Real! The Boy said so!" And he nearly began to cry.

21 Just then there was a sound of footsteps, and the Boy ran past near them, and with a stamp of feet and a flash of white tails the two strange rabbits disappeared.

22 "Come back and play with me!" called the little Rabbit. "Oh, do come back! I *know* I am Real!"

23 But there was no answer, only the little ants ran to and fro, and the bracken swayed gently where the two strangers had passed. The Velveteen Rabbit was all alone.

24 "Oh, dear!" he thought. "Why did they run away like that? Why couldn't they stop and talk to me?"

25 For a long time he lay very still, watching the bracken, and hoping that they would come back. But they never returned, and presently the sun sank lower and the little white moths fluttered out, and the Boy came and carried him home.

26 Weeks passed, and the little Rabbit grew very old and shabby, but the Boy loved him just as much. He loved him so hard that he loved all his whiskers off, and the pink lining to his ears turned grey, and his brown spots faded. He even began to lose his shape, and he scarcely looked like a rabbit any more, except to the Boy. To him he was always beautiful, and that was all that the little Rabbit cared about. He didn't mind how he looked to other people, because the nursery magic had made him Real, and when you are Real shabbiness doesn't matter.

**4. Part A**

What does **shabby** mean as it is used in paragraph 26 of The Velveteen Rabbit?

- a. fat
- b. ugly
- c. magical
- d. worn

**Part B**

Which statement best supports the answer to Part A?

- a. "because the nursery magic made him real."
- b. "he even began to lose his shape."
- c. "his brown spots faded."
- d. "to him he was always beautiful."

**5. Part A**

The Velveteen Rabbit has never seen a live rabbit until he meets two of them in the garden. How does this affect him?

- a. He is afraid of them.
- b. He doesn't like them.
- c. He begins to doubt that he is real.
- d. He stops wanting to be real.

**Part B**

Which detail from the story best supports the answer to Part A?

- a. "He saw two strange beings creep out of the tall bracken near him."
- b. "They stared at him, and the little Rabbit stared back."
- c. "But all the while he was longing to dance, for a funny new tickly feeling ran through him."
- d. "'I am Real! The Boy said so!' And he nearly began to cry."

## 6. Part A

How does the Velveteen Rabbit feel about himself at the end of the story?

- A. He is embarrassed by his looks.
- B. He is proud of himself.
- C. He feels good about himself.
- D. He feels ignored.

## Part B

Which detail from the story best supports the answer to Part A?

- A. "Weeks passed, and the little Rabbit grew very old and shabby...he even began to lose his shape, and he scarcely looked like a rabbit anymore."
- B. "'I can,' said the little Rabbit. 'I can jump higher than anything.'"
- C. "He didn't mind how he looked to other people, because the nursery magic had made him Real."
- D. "For a long time he lay very still, watching the bracken, and hoping that they would come back."



A blank sheet of lined paper with 20 horizontal lines, suitable for writing or drawing.



