Today, you will read a story titled “Ira Sleeps Over” and an article titled “A Hero for Hercules.” As you read, think about the relationships and the events of the stories. Answer the questions to help you write an essay.

Read the story titled “Ira Sleeps Over” by Bernard Waber. Then answer Questions 1 through 3.
Ira Sleeps Over
By Bernard Waber

I was invited to sleep at Reggie’s house. Was I happy! I had never slept at a friend’s house before. But I had a problem. It began when my sister said: “Are you taking your teddy bear along?”

Taking my teddy bear along!” I said. “To my friends house? Are you kidding? That’s the silliest thing I ever heard! Of course, I’m not taking my teddy bear.”

And then she said: “But you never slept without your teddy bear before. How will you feel sleeping without your teddy bear for the very first time? Hmmmmmmm?”

“I’ll feel fine. I’ll feel great. I will probably love sleeping without my teddy bear. Just don’t worry about it,” I said.

“Who’s worried?” she said.

“But now she had me thinking about it. Now, she really had me thinking about it. I began to wonder: Suppose I won’t like sleeping without my teddy bear. Suppose I just hate sleeping without my teddy bear. Should I take him?

“Take him,” said my mother.

“Take him,” said my father.

“But Reggie will laugh,” I said. “He’ll say I’m a baby.”

“He won’t laugh,” said my mother.

“He won’t laugh,” said my father.

“He’ll laugh,” said my sister.

I decided not to take my teddy bear.

That afternoon, I played with Reggie. Reggie had plans, big plans. “Tonight,” he said, “when you come to my house, we are going to have fun, fun, fun! First I’ll show you my junk collection. And after that we’ll have a wrestling match. And after that, a pillow fight. And after that we’ll do magic tricks. And after that we’ll play checkers. And after that we’ll play dominoes. And after that we can fool around with my magnifying glass!”

“Great!” I said. “I can hardly wait. By the way,” I asked, “what do you think of teddy bears?”
“Good night,” said my mother.

“Good night,” said my father.

“Sleep tight,” said my sister.

I went next door where Reggie lived.

That night Reggie showed me his junk. He showed me his flashlight, his collection of bottle caps, a chain made of chewing gum wrappers, some picture postcards, an egg timer, jumbo goggles, a false nose and mustache, and a bunch of old rubber stamps and labels from his father’s office. We decided to play office with the rubber stamps. After that we had a wrestling match. And after that we had a pillow fight. And after that Reggie’s father said: “Bedtime!”

“Already?” said Reggie.

“Already,” said his father.

We got into bed. “Good night,” said Reggie’s father.

“Good night,” we said.

Reggie sighed. I sighed. “We can still tell ghost stories,” said Reggie.

“Do you know any?” I asked.

“Uh-huh,” said Reggie.

Reggie began to tell a ghost story: “Once there was this ghost and he lived in a haunted house only he did most of the haunting himself. This house was empty except for this ghost because nobody wanted to go near this house, they were so afraid of this ghost. And every night this ghost would walk around this house and make all kinds of clunky, creaky sounds. Aroompt! Aroompt! Like that. And he would go around looking for people to scare because that’s what he liked most to do: scare people. And he was very scary to look at. Oh was he scary to look at!”

Reggie stopped. “Are you scared?” he asked.

“Uh – huh,” I said. “Are you?”

“What?” said Reggie.

“Are you scared?”

“Just a minute,” said Reggie, “I have to get something.”
“Did you say Foo Foo?”

“Uh – huh,” said Reggie.

“Just a minute,” I said, “I have to get something.”

“What do you have to get?” Reggie asked.

“Oh, something,” I answered.

The next minute, I was ringing my own doorbell. The door opened. “Ira!” everyone said. “What are you doing here?”

“I changed my mind,” I answered.

“You what!” said my mother.

“You what!” said my father.

“You what!” said my sister. (She was still up.)

“I changed my mind,” I said. “I decided to take Tah Tah after all.” I went upstairs.

Soon I was down again with Tah Tah.

My sister said, “Reggie will laugh. You’ll see how he’ll laugh. He’s just going to fall down laughing.”

“He won’t laugh,” said my mother.

“He won’t laugh,” said my father.

“He won’t laugh,” I said.

I came back to Reggie’s room. “I have a teddy bear too,” I said. “Do you want to know his name?” I waited for Reggie to say, Uh – huh. Reggie didn’t say anything. I looked at Reggie. He was fast asleep. Just like that, he had fallen asleep. “Reggie! Wake up!” I said. “You have to finish telling the ghost story.” But Reggie just held his teddy bear close and went right on sleeping.

And after that – well, there wasn’t anything to do after that. “Good night,” I whispered to Tah Tah. And I fell asleep too.
1. Part A

What was one of the greatest lessons Ira learned about himself?

a. it’s okay to be nervous the first time you do something
b. be yourself, don’t worry about what others think
c. always bring a friend
d. stand up to bullies

Part B

Which statement **best** supports the answer to Part A?

a. “I changed my mind... I decided to take Tah Tah after all.”
b. “What if Reggie wants to know your teddy bear’s name. Did you think about that?”
c. “Suppose I just hate sleeping without my teddy bear.”
d. “Reggie will laugh. You’ll see how he’ll laugh. He’s just going to fall down laughing.”

2. Part A

In Paragraphs 15-21, Reggie tells Ira about his plans for their sleepover. How does Ira feel?

a. happy
b. anxious
c. scared
d. amused
Part B

Which detail from “Ira Sleeps Over” supports the answer to Part A?

a. “Ghost stories...scary, creepy spooky ghost stories.”
b. “I began to think about my teddy bear.”
c. “I had never slept at a friend’s house before.”
d. “He’ll laugh.”

3. Part A

Ira’s feelings change from the beginning of the story to the end of the story. How do they change?

a. He becomes scared when they tell ghost stories.
b. He is happy that Reggie has a teddy bear.
c. He becomes more confident in being himself.
d. He is surprised that Reggie has a teddy bear too.

Part B

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

a. “Are you scared?”

b. “‘He won’t laugh,’ I said.”
c. “I looked again. It was a teddy bear.”
d. “‘I have a teddy bear too,’ I said.”
Read the article titled “A Hero for Hercules” by Barbara Stavetski. Then answer Questions 4 through 6.
There's some of Goofus and Gallant in us all. When the Gallant shines through, we show our best self.

Gallant Kids

A Hero for Hercules

When Caide Wileczek heard about a dog named Hercules, he wanted to help. Hercules was a three-year-old American bulldog who had been rescued by the New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NJSPCA). The dog was going to need a lot of medical care to survive—and the NJSPCA was working to raise funds to cover the expensive treatment.

Caide loves animals. His family has always owned dogs. "I had to do something to help Hercules," says Caide.

So he decided to raise money with a lemonade stand. He made lemonade and baked brownies, cookies, and cupcakes to sell. "I also made a giant card for Hercules," Caide recalls. "Anyone who made a donation would get to sign the card."

Helping Hercules Heal

Caide's friends and family helped spread the news about the lemonade stand, and many people showed up to buy treats that day, including the NJSPCA officers who'd rescued Hercules. "The stand ran out of baked goods," says Caide. "But friends, neighbors, even people I didn't know donated more stuff to sell."

When a local newspaper published an article about Caide's lemonade stand, more money for Hercules poured in to the NJSPCA. "I didn't care if someone gave a penny or a million dollars," says Caide. "All donations were welcome." Caide's goal was to raise $500, but he wound up raising $3,748.33, which was enough to cover all of Hercules's medical expenses.

A week after the fund-raiser, Caide visited the veterinary hospital where Hercules was being treated and gave the furry dog a hug. Hercules was already improving—thanks to Caide!

Hercules's story has a happy ending. A veterinary technician who had cared for Hercules at the hospital became so fond of him that she adopted him.

Even after Hercules had healed, donations continued to arrive at the NJSPCA, sent by people who had been moved by Hercules's story and Caide's efforts to help him. That extra money, labeled "Hercules's Fund," was used to pay for medical care for other dogs who needed help.

Highlights is proud to know this Gallant Kid.

—Barbara Stavetski

Caide Wileczek raised money to help a rescued dog named Hercules.
4. Part A

What does donation mean as it is used in Paragraph 3 of “A Hero for Hercules?”

a. wish  
b. card  
c. compliment  
d. something you give to help others

Part B

Which statement best supports the answer to Part A?

a. “I had to do something to help Hercules,’ says Caide.”  
b. “So he decided to raise money with a lemonade stand.”  
c. “I didn’t care if someone gave a penny or a million dollars,’ says Caide. All donations were welcome.”  
e. “A week after the fund-raiser, Caide visited the veterinary hospital where Hercules was being treated and gave the furry dog a hug.”

5. Part A

Which statement best describes the public’s immediate response to the article that was published in the local paper about Caide’s lemonade stand?

a. People viewed Caide as a hero.  
b. There was a large increase in donations.  
c. Caide’s lemonade stand became famous.  
d. Hercules was adopted.
Part B

Which statement best supports the answer to Part A?

a. "Hercules was already improving—thanks to Caide."

b. "A veterinary technician who had cared for Hercules at the hospital became so fond of him that she adopted him."

c. "Even after Hercules had healed, donations continued to arrive at the NJSPCA, sent by people who had been moved by Hercules’s story and Caide’s efforts to help him."

d. "Caide’s friends and family helped spread the news..."
6. Caide and Reggie both helped others overcome a challenge.

Write an essay that explains how Caide and Reggie helped others through their words and actions in the stories. Use what you learned about them to support your essay.