

# AN ARMY OF MOLES



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# Table of Contents

|                                                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introductory Questions.....                                       | 3  |
| An Army of Moles.....                                             | 4  |
| Reading Comprehension Questions.....                              | 12 |
| An Army of Moles — story and reading comprehension questions..... | 16 |
| Essential Vocabulary.....                                         | 29 |
| True or False.....                                                | 32 |
| What is the Correct Synonym?.....                                 | 34 |
| What is the Correct Antonym?.....                                 | 35 |
| Words and Meanings.....                                           | 36 |
| Idioms and Phrases.....                                           | 38 |
| Gap Fill Exercise.....                                            | 40 |
| Discussion Questions.....                                         | 42 |
| Role Play: An Army of Ants Radio Play.....                        | 46 |
| Speaking Exercise: Hot Seat – What Really Happened?.....          | 54 |
| Debate: Parental Authority and Chores.....                        | 57 |
| Writing.....                                                      | 61 |
| Reading Comprehension Questions — model answers.....              | 63 |
| True or False — answers.....                                      | 68 |
| What is the Correct Synonym — answers.....                        | 69 |
| What is the Correct Antonym — answers.....                        | 70 |
| Words and Meanings — answers.....                                 | 71 |
| Idioms and Phrases — answers.....                                 | 72 |
| Gap Fill Exercise — answers.....                                  | 73 |
| Credits.....                                                      | 74 |

# Introductory Questions

1. Do you have to do chores at home? What kind of chores do you usually do?
2. Do your parents (or did your parents, when you were younger) let you choose when and how you do your chores, or do they set strict rules?
3. Have you ever put off doing something you knew you had to do eventually? What happened in the end?
4. Do you or your family have a garden? What kinds of problems can gardens sometimes have — weather, pests, animals?
5. Do you think it's possible to fully protect something you care about from unexpected problems, or do things sometimes go wrong no matter how well you prepare?

# An Army of Moles

Craig lay on his bed.

He could hear his father raising his voice downstairs. He clenched his teeth and waited for his father to come up to his room.

His feet stomping up the stairs. The token knock on the door. Then his father barging in his room.

‘Craig.’ He stood in the doorway. ‘The garden. Are you going to do it?’

Craig folded the comic shut, slow, like it cost him something.

‘Yes, Dad,’ he said. ‘I said I will do it. And I will.’

His father didn’t move. Craig knew from experience that that was not the end of it.

He would need an exact time and full details of when Craig would do it. He would ask for a signature on a contract if he could get away with it.

‘When?’ asked his father.

Craig rubbed a hand over his face. No use in putting this off.

‘Alright,’ he said. ‘I’m doing it.’

And he swung his legs to the floor and got to his feet.

Craig gave his father a tight smile.

‘You win.’

Of course, that would not go down well with the old man.

‘It's not about winning. You said you'd do it. Now do it.’

Craig loped downstairs. He tried to block the constant moaning from his father out of his ears.

Actually, Craig didn’t mind mowing the lawn. He liked to be outside.

But it was just the way these chores and tasks were arranged for him by his father. There was no negotiation.

At least three big jobs like this a week. Plus all the smaller little tasks like washing up or dusting the shelves.

He had no choice in the matter.

Craig went to the garage and pulled out the mower.

This was his father's pride and joy. Like it was a vintage car or something.

He dragged it out into the back garden and when he raised his head he stopped in his tracks.

The garden was filled with holes.

Little piles of earth placed next to each hole.

Craig let go of the mower's handle and slowly walked out onto the lawn.

Dozens and dozens of holes.

They just filled every part of the lawn.

Just as he was taking it all in, he saw the head of a mole staring back at him. Then disappear back underground.

Then another head popped up. And another, a few feet away. Then one more, closer to the house.

Craig understood, all at once, that he wasn't looking at one mole, but a hundred of them.

All, in turn, looking back at him.

He crouched down at the edge of one of the holes.

Underneath, faintly, he could hear something — a scratching, shifting sound, like the whole garden was breathing.

Craig straightened up. Just moles, he told himself. A bad infestation, that's all. Dad would go mad, but it was nothing that couldn't be fixed.

He nudged one of the earth piles with his shoe. It gave way more than he expected, like the ground underneath wasn't solid at all.

He called out to his father.

‘Dad...’ he shouted. ‘You might want to see this.’

He heard the inevitable moaning, then quick footsteps to the back door.

Craig didn’t even look behind to see his father’s face. He would just wait to hear what he said.

‘What? What the...’

After that, there followed a few sounds that were not actual words. Just attempts to say something that ended in small chokes or like his father had lost the ability to speak.

He turned to face him.

‘I saw a mole just over there,’ said Craig. He pointed to one of the many holes in the garden. ‘I think he’s been pretty busy.’

His father didn’t even look at him.

His mouth fell open and his eyes blinked at the scene that lay before him.

‘What happened?’ he finally managed to say.

‘A mole, Dad,’ said Craig. ‘A very busy mole.’

His father went to the edge of the lawn, shaking his head.

‘But I placed some mole deterrent. I protected it. I did all the right things.’

Craig couldn’t help himself.

‘You can’t stop the force of nature, Dad.’

His father turned to him.

‘You. You could have helped with this. If you had cut the lawn when I said to do it. Maybe it would have stopped... all this.’

And he waved his hands at the full range of tiny earth mountains on the lawn.

‘I have worked so hard...’ his father began to wail. ‘I’ve done all the right things.’

His father stepped out onto the lawn.

Craig watched as the weight of his steps seemed to make an indent in the grass. Like it was soft.

Like there was little support beneath the lawn itself.

His father took two more steps out into the middle of the lawn and then there was a low rumbling sound.

Then a loud whoooooofff.

And his father descended into a giant hole amid a cloud of soil and dust.

The entire lawn collapsed into a great big hole. There was no lawn at all now.

His father standing inside the hole, his head just about where the lawn had once been.

He stared up at Craig, waiting for an answer Craig didn't have.

Craig stared on in disbelief. This was not the work of just one

mole.

It was an entire army of them.

They had just dug the entire garden away.

All gone overnight.

‘My garden,’ said his father. ‘My beautiful garden.’

Then there came another sound of a slight earthquake and all the flowerbeds collapsed.

Then the rock garden at the back.

It all disappeared into the big gaping hole in the middle.

‘No,’ said Craig’s father, quietly to himself. ‘This can’t be happening.’

Craig stared on in total astonishment.

‘Dad, do you still need me to do the mowing?’ he asked. ‘Or should I just get the hose and fill it with water? We could make a duck pond.’

Then a louder sound as the two cherry trees at the back collapsed in the hole.

‘My garden,’ said his father. ‘My pride and joy.’



# Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who is the main character in this story?
2. Who is the second character that appears?
3. What does Craig's father want Craig to do?
4. What is Craig holding in his hands?
5. What information does Craig's father want to know from Craig?
6. Does Craig agree to cut the lawn?
7. Where does Craig go in this section of the story?
8. Does Craig like or dislike cutting the lawn?
9. What aspect does he dislike about it?
10. How many big chores does Craig usually have to do each week?

11. What kind of smaller tasks does he have to do?
12. What does he get from the garage?
13. How is this machine described in the story?
14. What does Craig see in the garden?
15. What is next to each hole in the ground?
16. How many holes can Craig see?
17. What else does he see?
18. Are there more of these creatures in the garden?  
How many?
19. What sound can Craig hear under the grass?
20. How does Craig justify this?
21. How does he think his father will react?
22. What does Craig notice when he nudges the earth  
with his shoe?
23. Who does Craig call out to?
24. What response does his father give?

25. Does Craig look at his father when he comes outside?
26. How does his father respond upon seeing the garden?
27. What explanation does Craig give him?
28. Does his father look at Craig?
29. What two physical expressions does he make in this section of the story?
30. What does his father say he did to prevent moles coming into the garden?
31. How does Craig respond to this?
32. Who does Craig's father blame for the state of the garden?
33. Where does his father go?
34. What does his father's voice do as he speaks? What does this tell us about how he's feeling?
35. What clue does the text give us that something is

wrong with the ground, before the collapse happens?

36. What three sounds happen in order as his father falls?

37. What happens to Craig's father as he goes to the middle of the garden?

38. What happens to all the garden?

39. How long does Craig believe it took the moles to dig up all the garden?

40. What are the next two things to collapse into the big hole?

41. What question does Craig ask his father?

42. Do you think he is being serious with this question?

43. What collapses at the end of the story?

# An Army of Moles — story and reading comprehension questions

## Section 1

Craig lay on his bed.

He could hear his father raising his voice downstairs. He clenched his teeth and waited for his father to come up to his room.

His feet stomping up the stairs. The token knock on the door.

Then his father barging in his room.

‘Craig.’ He stood in the doorway. ‘The garden. Are you going to do it?’

Craig folded the comic shut, slow, like it cost him something.

‘Yes, Dad,’ he said. ‘I said I will do it. And I will.’

His father didn’t move. Craig knew from experience that

that was not the end of it.

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

1. Who is the main character in this story?
2. Who is the second character that appears?
3. What does Craig's father want Craig to do?
4. What is Craig holding in his hands?

## **Section 2**

He would need an exact time and full details of when Craig would do it. He would ask for a signature on a contract if he could get away with it.

‘When?’ asked his father.

Craig rubbed a hand over his face. No use in putting this off.

‘Alright,’ he said. ‘I’m doing it.’

And he swung his legs to the floor and got to his feet.

Craig gave his father a tight smile.

‘You win.’

Of course, that would not go down well with the old man.

‘It's not about winning. You said you'd do it. Now do it.’

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

5. What information does Craig's father want to know from Craig?
6. Does Craig agree to cut the lawn?

## **Section 3**

Craig loped downstairs. He tried to block the constant moaning from his father out of his ears.

Actually, Craig didn't mind mowing the lawn. He liked to be outside.

But it was just the way these chores and tasks were arranged for him by his father. There was no negotiation.

At least three big jobs like this a week. Plus all the smaller little tasks like washing up or dusting the shelves.

He had no choice in the matter.

Craig went to the garage and pulled out the mower.

This was his father's pride and joy. Like it was a vintage car or something.

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

7. Where does Craig go in this section of the story?
8. Does Craig like or dislike cutting the lawn?
9. What aspect does he dislike about it?
10. How many big chores does Craig usually have to do each week?
11. What kind of smaller tasks does he have to do?
12. What does he get from the garage?
13. How is this machine described in the story?

## **Section 4**

He dragged it out into the back garden and when he raised his head he stopped in his tracks.

The garden was filled with holes.

Little piles of earth placed next to each hole.

Craig let go of the mower's handle and slowly walked out onto the lawn.

Dozens and dozens of holes.

They just filled every part of the lawn.

Just as he was taking it all in, he saw the head of a mole staring back at him. Then disappear back underground.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

14. What does Craig see in the garden?
15. What is next to each hole in the ground?
16. How many holes can Craig see?
17. What else does he see?

### **Section 5**

Then another head popped up. And another, a few feet away. Then one more, closer to the house.

Craig understood, all at once, that he wasn't looking at one mole, but a hundred of them.

All, in turn, looking back at him.

He crouched down at the edge of one of the holes. Underneath, faintly, he could hear something — a scratching, shifting sound, like the whole garden was breathing.

Craig straightened up. Just moles, he told himself. A bad infestation, that's all. Dad would go mad, but it was nothing that couldn't be fixed.

He nudged one of the earth piles with his shoe. It gave way more than he expected, like the ground underneath wasn't solid at all.

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

18. Are there more of these creatures in the garden? How many?
19. What sound can Craig hear under the grass?
20. How does Craig justify this?
21. How does he think his father will react?
22. What does Craig notice when he nudges the earth with his shoe?

## **Section 6**

He called out to his father.

‘Dad...’ he shouted. ‘You might want to see this.’

He heard the inevitable moaning, then quick footsteps to the back door.

Craig didn’t even look behind to see his father’s face. He would just wait to hear what he said.

‘What? What the...’

After that, there followed a few sounds that were not actual words. Just attempts to say something that ended in small chokes or like his father had lost the ability to speak.

He turned to face him.

‘I saw a mole just over there,’ said Craig. He pointed to one of the many holes in the garden. ‘I think he’s been pretty busy.’

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

23. Who does Craig call out to?

24. What response does his father give?
25. Does Craig look at his father when he comes outside?
26. How does his father respond upon seeing the garden?
27. What explanation does Craig give him?

## **Section 7**

His father didn't even look at him.

His mouth fell open and his eyes blinked at the scene that lay before him.

'What happened?' he finally managed to say.

'A mole, Dad,' said Craig. 'A very busy mole.'

His father went to the edge of the lawn, shaking his head.

'But I placed some mole deterrent. I protected it. I did all the right things.'

Craig couldn't help himself.

'You can't stop the force of nature, Dad.'

## Reading Comprehension Questions

28. Does his father look at Craig?
29. What two physical expressions does he make in this section of the story?
30. What does his father say he did to prevent moles coming into the garden?
31. How does Craig respond to this?

### Section 8

His father turned to him.

‘You. You could have helped with this. If you had cut the lawn when I said to do it. Maybe it would have stopped... all this.’

And he waved his hands at the full range of tiny earth mountains on the lawn.

‘I have worked so hard...’ his father began to wail. ‘I’ve done all the right things.’

His father stepped out onto the lawn.

Craig watched as the weight of his steps seemed to make

an indent in the grass. Like it was soft.

Like there was little support beneath the lawn itself.

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

32. Who does Craig's father blame for the state of the garden?

33. Where does his father go?

34. What does his father's voice do as he speaks?  
What does this tell us about how he's feeling?

35. What clue does the text give us that something is wrong with the ground, before the collapse happens?

## **Section 9**

His father took two more steps out into the middle of the lawn and then there was a low rumbling sound.

Then a loud whoooooofff.

And his father descended into a giant hole amid a cloud of soil and dust.

The entire lawn collapsed into a great big hole. There was no lawn at all now.

His father standing inside the hole, his head just about where the lawn had once been.

He stared up at Craig, waiting for an answer Craig didn't have.

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

36. What three sounds happen in order as his father falls?

37. What happens to Craig's father as he goes to the middle of the garden?

38. What happens to all the garden?

### **Section 10**

Craig stared on in disbelief. This was not the work of just one mole.

It was an entire army of them.

They had just dug the entire garden away.

All gone overnight.

‘My garden,’ said his father. ‘My beautiful garden.’

Then there came another sound of a slight earthquake and all the flowerbeds collapsed.

Then the rock garden at the back.

It all disappeared into the big gaping hole in the middle.

‘No,’ said Craig’s father, quietly to himself. ‘This can’t be happening.’

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

39. How long does Craig believe it took the moles to dig up all the garden?

40. What are the next two things to collapse into the big hole?

## **Section 11**

Craig stared on in total astonishment.

‘Dad, do you still need me to do the mowing?’ he asked.

‘Or should I just get the hose and fill it with water? We

could make a duck pond.'

Then a louder sound as the two cherry trees at the back collapsed in the hole.

'My garden,' said his father. 'My pride and joy.'

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

41. What question does Craig ask his father?
42. Do you think he is being serious with this question?
43. What collapses at the end of the story?

# Essential Vocabulary

|                 |              |                 |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| clenched        | stomping     | barging         |
| token knock     | loped        | moaning         |
| negotiation     | vintage      | dragged         |
| piles           | dozens       | infestation     |
| deterrent       | wail         | indent          |
| rumbling        | descended    | collapsed       |
| gaping          | astonishment | inevitable      |
| chokes          | disbelief    | scratching      |
| shifting        | straightened | nudged          |
| solid           | scene        | earthquake      |
| flowerbeds      | duck pond    | force of nature |
| pride and joy   | tight smile  | blinked         |
| constant        | breathing    | old man         |
| mouth fell open |              |                 |

## Vocabulary Practice Exercise

Follow the steps below to help you learn and remember

new words and phrases more effectively:

1. Write each new word or phrase in your vocabulary notebook.
2. Look up the meaning of each word in your dictionary. Write a clear and simple definition next to the word.
3. Create your own sentence using the word or phrase correctly. Try to make the sentence meaningful and connected to your own life or experiences.

## **Examples**

**Clenched** – *squeezed tightly together, often because of anger, fear, or tension.*

**Example sentence:** *My hands clenched into fists as I waited nervously for the exam results.*

**Stomping** – *walking with loud, heavy steps, often because you are angry or frustrated.*

**Example sentence:** *My little brother went stomping up the stairs after losing the video game.*

## **Why do this?**

Doing this regularly will help you improve all areas of your English — reading, writing, speaking, and listening. By writing definitions and making your own examples, you are actively using the language, which helps it stick in your memory.

# True or False

Read the statements below and decide if they are True or False.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

1. Craig is reading a book when his father barges into his room.
2. Craig's father wants to know exactly when Craig will cut the grass.
3. Craig doesn't mind mowing the lawn.
4. Craig has to do at least five big chores a week.
5. Craig discovers that the garden is filled with holes.
6. Craig sees only one mole in the garden.
7. Craig can hear a scratching sound coming from

underground.

8. Craig's father says he did nothing to protect the garden from moles.

9. Craig's father falls into a hole in the middle of the lawn.

10. At the end of the story, Craig seems worried and afraid.

# What is the Correct Synonym?

Look at the table below.

Match the word on the left with the correct synonym on the right.

A synonym is a word of similar meaning.

| Words        | Synonyms    |
|--------------|-------------|
| clenched     | unavoidable |
| stomping     | pulled      |
| barging      | complaining |
| moaning      | wide-open   |
| dragged      | shock       |
| collapsed    | thumping    |
| gaping       | doubt       |
| astonishment | bursting    |
| inevitable   | tightened   |
| disbelief    | fell        |

# What is the Correct Antonym?

Look at the table below.

Match the word on the left with the correct antonym on the right.

An antonym is a word of opposite meaning.

| Words        | Antonyms     |
|--------------|--------------|
| clenched     | avoidable    |
| dragged      | stood        |
| collapsed    | relaxed      |
| gaping       | occasional   |
| astonishment | bent         |
| inevitable   | closed       |
| disbelief    | hollow       |
| solid        | belief       |
| constant     | pushed       |
| straightened | indifference |

# Words and Meanings

Look at the words below.

Match each word with the correct meaning underneath.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

## Word Bank

infestation • deterrent • rumbling • gaping •  
astonishment • inevitable • disbelief • negotiation • vintage  
• nudged

## Meanings

- a) making a deep, continuous, rolling sound
- b) certain to happen and impossible to avoid
- c) a large number of insects or animals invading a place, causing damage
- d) pushed gently, especially with the elbow or foot

- e) the feeling of being unable to believe something
- f) old and valued for its high quality, especially something from the past
- g) a feeling of great surprise
- h) something that discourages an action by making it seem unattractive or dangerous
- i) very wide open
- j) discussion aimed at reaching an agreement

# Idioms and Phrases

Look at the phrases below.

Match each phrase with the correct meaning underneath.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

## Phrases

pride and joy • force of nature • no use in putting it off •  
mouth fell open • you win • tight smile

## Meanings

- a) a smile that looks forced or uncomfortable, rather than relaxed
- b) an expression showing shock or surprise
- c) a powerful, natural event or process that cannot be stopped or controlled
- d) something a person is extremely proud of and loves

very much

e) there is no point delaying something any longer, since it has to be done anyway

f) an expression used to admit defeat or accept that someone else has gotten their way

# Gap Fill Exercise

Look at the word bank below.

Use each word from the word bank to complete the sentences below.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

## Word Bank

mole • lawn • mower • garden • collapsed • dust •  
earthquake • duck pond • holes • army

## Sentences

a) The children built a small \_\_\_\_\_ in the corner of the yard for the ducks to swim in.

b) A cloud of \_\_\_\_\_ rose into the air as the building came down.

c) After weeks of rain, the \_\_\_\_\_ was too wet to cut with the mower.

d) Scientists recorded a minor \_\_\_\_\_ that shook windows across the town.

e) The gardener pulled out an old \_\_\_\_\_ to cut the overgrown grass.

f) Underground, a single \_\_\_\_\_ can dig tunnels that stretch for many metres.

g) The bridge \_\_\_\_\_ suddenly, sending debris into the river below.

h) The general commanded an \_\_\_\_\_ of thousands of soldiers.

i) The field was covered with dozens of small \_\_\_\_\_ dug by rabbits.

j) The old shed in the \_\_\_\_\_ was full of tools and forgotten toys.

# Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Craig's father is too strict, or is he right to expect Craig to do his chores without argument?
2. If you discovered a garden full of mysterious holes one morning, what's the first thing you would do?
3. Why do you think Craig doesn't openly refuse his father, even though he clearly resents having no choice in the matter?
4. Craig says he doesn't actually mind mowing the lawn — it's the lack of choice that bothers him. Do you think that's a common feeling among teenagers?
5. The father says, "I placed some mole deterrent. I protected it. I did all the right things," but it doesn't help. What do you think the story is saying about our ability to control nature?
6. Do you think Craig's father is more upset about the garden itself, or about losing control over something

he was proud of?

7. Craig tells himself "it's nothing that couldn't be fixed" even as things get worse. Have you ever convinced yourself a problem was smaller than it really was, only to be proven wrong?
8. How do you think the relationship between Craig and his father might change after this event?
9. Do you think the story's ending is meant to feel funny, sad, or a mix of both? What makes you think that?
10. Can you think of any real-life examples where people prepare carefully for something, only for chance or nature to defeat their efforts anyway?
11. Craig gives his father a "tight smile" and says "You win" near the start of the story. What does this tell us about how he usually deals with conflict?
12. Do you think it's fair for Craig's father to blame him for not cutting the lawn sooner?
13. The father describes the garden as his "pride and joy." Have you or someone you know ever put a lot of time and effort into something that was later ruined or lost

unexpectedly?

14. What do you think this story is really about, beneath the surface — is it just about moles, or something bigger?
15. Do you think Craig feels any sympathy for his father as the garden collapses, or is he secretly enjoying the chaos?
16. Should parents involve their children more in decisions about chores and responsibilities, or is a stricter approach sometimes necessary?
17. What other stories, films, or shows do you know that use dark humor to deal with a disaster, loss, or misfortune?
18. Do you think the moles in the story represent something else, such as the consequences of neglect, or forces beyond our control?
19. If you were in Craig's position at the very end, would you have asked your father the same question about the mowing, or handled it differently?
20. What do you think Craig will remember most about

this day when he's older?

# Role Play: An Army of Ants Radio Play

In this activity, you will perform a radio play based on the story.

The situation: Craig has been putting off cutting the lawn again. His father finally loses patience and sends him out to do it — but when Craig gets to the garden, he finds something no one expected.

## **Characters:**

**Craig** — a teenager who doesn't really mind doing chores, but hates being told exactly when and how to do them.

**Father** — strict and particular; he expects things to be done properly, and on his terms.

**Narrator** — sets each scene, describes the action, and reads out all the sound effects.

**Your task:** Get into groups of three. Choose your roles.

Take some time to read through the script, practise your lines, and think about how your character sounds — angry, nervous, sarcastic, panicked.

***When you're ready, perform your radio play for the class.***

## **RADIO PLAY: AN ARMY OF MOLES**

Roles: Narrator • Craig • Father • Sound Effects (SFX)

### **SCENE ONE — CRAIG'S BEDROOM**

NARRATOR: Early evening. Craig is lying on his bed, deep in a comic. Downstairs, a voice is rising.

SFX: (muffled shouting downstairs, indistinct)

SFX: (heavy footsteps, stomping up a staircase)

SFX: (one quick, light knock on a door — then it bursts open)

FATHER: Craig.

FATHER: The garden. Are you going to do it?

CRAIG: Yes, Dad. I said I will do it. And I will.

FATHER: That's what you said yesterday.

CRAIG: And I'm saying it again today.

FATHER: When, exactly?

CRAIG: Dad, does it matter? I'll do it.

FATHER: Of course it matters. "I'll do it" isn't a time. I want to know when.

CRAIG: (sighs) Fine. Now. I'll do it now.

FATHER: Now?

CRAIG: Right now. Alright?

NARRATOR: Craig swings his legs off the bed and stands. He gives his father a tight smile.

CRAIG: You win.

FATHER: It's not about winning. You said you'd do it. Now do it.

CRAIG: (muttering, half under his breath) It's always something with you.

FATHER: What was that?

CRAIG: Nothing. I'm going.

SFX: (footsteps heading downstairs)

FATHER: (calling after him) And don't leave clippings all over the path this time!

SFX: (door closes)

END OF SCENE ONE

## **SCENE TWO — THE GARDEN**

SFX: (a door opens, footsteps on grass, then a mower being dragged along a path)

NARRATOR: Craig drags the mower out into the back garden. He stops dead.

SFX: (mower wheels stop suddenly)

CRAIG: (under his breath) What...

NARRATOR: The garden is filled with holes. Small piles of earth sit beside every one of them.

CRAIG: (to himself, louder) No way. No way, that's not — that's not possible.

SFX: (rustling earth, faint scratching sound)

CRAIG: (freezing) Was that— hang on. Hang on, is that a—

NARRATOR: A mole's head pops up from one of the holes. It stares at him. Then it's gone.

CRAIG: (half-laughing, half-panicked) Okay. Okay, that's one mole. One mole did NOT do all this.

SFX: (more rustling — multiple directions)

CRAIG: Oh — oh, come on. There's another one. And another—

NARRATOR: More heads rise from the ground, one after another. Craig understands, all at once — this isn't one mole. It's a hundred.

CRAIG: (quietly, stunned) A hundred. There's got to be a hundred of you.

SFX: (low scratching, shifting sound, almost like breathing)

CRAIG: (crouching down) Can you hear that? It's like the whole garden's — breathing.

CRAIG: (straightening up, trying to convince himself) It's fine. It's just moles. Bad infestation. Dad's going to lose it, but — it's nothing that can't be fixed.

SFX: (a shoe nudging loose earth — soft crumbling sound)

CRAIG: (alarmed) Whoa — okay, that's not — that ground should NOT do that.

CRAIG: (calling out) Dad! Dad, you need to come and see this!

SFX: (distant groaning/moaning, then quick footsteps approaching)

FATHER: (off, approaching) What now? What is it this —

SFX: (footsteps stop abruptly)

FATHER: (breathless) What— what the—

NARRATOR: His mouth falls open. His eyes blink at the scene in front of him.

FATHER: (barely able to speak) What... happened?

CRAIG: A mole, Dad. A very busy mole.

FATHER: (shaking his head, walking toward the edge of the lawn) No. No, I put down deterrent. I did everything right. Everything.

CRAIG: You can't stop the force of nature, Dad.

FATHER: (turning on him) You. You could've stopped this. If you'd cut the grass when I told you to, none of this —

CRAIG: (cutting in) You think mowing the lawn would've stopped this?

FATHER: (not listening, voice rising) I've worked so hard on this garden. So hard. I did all the right things!

SFX: (footsteps on grass — heavier, slower)

NARRATOR: His father steps out onto the lawn. Each step leaves a small indent, like the ground beneath is soft. Unsteady.

CRAIG: (noticing, tense) Dad — Dad, wait, maybe don't —

SFX: (low rumbling, building)

FATHER: (alarmed) What's that sound—

SFX: (a huge "WHOOOOOFFFF" — collapsing earth, dust and debris)

NARRATOR: The entire lawn collapses into a giant hole. Craig's father stands inside it, head level with where the grass used to be.

FATHER: (shell-shocked, quiet) My garden. My

beautiful garden.

SFX: (a second rumble — smaller collapses)

NARRATOR: The flowerbeds go next. Then the rock garden at the back.

FATHER: (to himself, disbelieving) No. No, this can't be happening.

CRAIG: (after a pause, almost gentle — but clearly enjoying it a little) Dad... do you still need me to do the mowing? Or should I just get the hose and we make a duck pond instead?

SFX: (one final crash — two trees toppling into the hole)

FATHER: (defeated, quiet) My garden. My pride and joy.

SFX: (silence, wind)

END OF SCENE TWO

# **Speaking Exercise: Hot Seat – What Really Happened?**

## **The situation:**

Something strange has happened in Craig's garden, and people want answers. The class will take on three roles: some of you will play Craig, some of you will play Craig's father, and the rest will be the interviewers.

## **Setting up**

Divide the class into three groups: Craig, Father, and Interviewers.

One chair goes at the front of the class — the hot seat.

## **Round One — The Craigs**

One student from the Craig group sits in the hot seat.

The Interviewers ask them questions about what happened — what he saw, what he did, how he felt, what he said to his father.

After a few questions, that Craig sits back down, and the next student from the Craig group takes the hot seat.

Repeat until every student from the Craig group has had a turn.

## **Round Two — The Fathers**

Now students from the Father group take turns in the hot seat, one at a time.

The Interviewers ask them questions — what he noticed, how he reacted, who he blames, what he plans to do now.

Repeat until every student from the Father group has had a turn.

### **Some questions Interviewers might ask:**

- Craig, what exactly did you see when you went into the garden?
- Did you try to warn your father?
- Father, what did you do to try to protect the garden beforehand?
- Who do you think is really to blame for what happened?

- What are you going to do now?

# **Debate: Parental Authority and Chores**

**Motion: "Parents should be able to give their children chores without negotiation."**

## **Before the debate — think about the story**

In "An Army of Moles," Craig's father insists on an exact time for the lawn to be cut and refuses to accept "I'll do it" as an answer. Craig says there is "no negotiation" in his house, and he has no choice in the chores he's given.

## **Setting up the debate**

The class is divided into two teams: For the motion and Against the motion. Teams are assigned — you do not choose your own side.

Each team prepares their arguments together.

Each team chooses 2–3 speakers to present.

## **Useful language for this topic**

### **For the motion:**

Without clear rules, chores simply don't get done.

Structure and discipline teach children responsibility.

It's a parent's job to set expectations, not negotiate them.

Too much discussion turns a simple task into an argument.

Children will always push back if given the chance — that's normal, but it doesn't mean they should get their way.

### **Against the motion:**

Being included in decisions builds trust between parent and child.

Nobody — child or adult — works well under total control.

A little negotiation doesn't mean chaos; it means respect.

Rules that are simply imposed, with no discussion, breed resentment rather than responsibility.

Craig says he doesn't mind the chore itself — only that he has no say in it. Isn't that a reasonable thing to want?

### **Useful vocabulary:**

authority, negotiation, responsibility, discipline, structure, independence, compromise, resentment, obligation, fairness

### **Debate format**

Opening statements — one speaker per team (1 minute each)

Main arguments — remaining speakers present their points (1–2 minutes each)

Rebuttal round — each team responds to the other side's strongest point (1 minute each)

Closing statements — one speaker per team sums up (1 minute each)

### **After the debate**

Take an informal class vote: which side was more

convincing? Discuss why opinions differ — and whether anyone's personal opinion changed after arguing the opposite side.

## **Timing**

For a 50-minute class, allow around 5 minutes to introduce the motion, 10 minutes for team preparation, 20–25 minutes for the debate itself, and the remaining time for the post-discussion and class vote.

# Writing

The story ends with Craig's father staring into the ruins of his garden, and Craig asking if he still needs to do the mowing. But the story doesn't have to end there.

**Your task:** Write a continuation of "An Army of Moles." Decide what happens next.

## **You might think about:**

- What happens between Craig and his father immediately after the story ends?
- Does the damage stay limited to Craig's garden, or does it spread further — to neighbours, to the street, to the whole town?
- Does anyone find a way to deal with the moles, or do they just have to live with the consequences?
- How does the relationship between Craig and his father change, if at all?

There's no single right direction to take this — it could stay small and personal, focused on the conversation between Craig and his father, or it could grow into something much bigger. Follow whichever idea interests you most.

**Length:** around 300–500 words (adjust as needed for your class)

**For next lesson:** Be ready to read your continuation aloud to the class. We'll discuss the different directions everyone took the story in, and you'll get feedback on your writing.

# Reading Comprehension Questions — model answers

1. The main character in this story is Craig.
2. The second character that appears is Craig's father.
3. Craig's father wants Craig to cut the grass in the garden.
4. Craig is holding a comic in his hands.
5. Craig's father wants to know exactly when Craig is going to cut the lawn.
6. Yes, Craig agrees to cut the lawn and tells his father he is doing it straight away.
7. Craig goes downstairs and then out to the garage.
8. Craig doesn't actually mind cutting the lawn.
9. Craig dislikes the fact that he has no choice in doing these chores and that there is no negotiation with his father.

10. Craig usually has to do at least three big chores each week.
11. The smaller tasks Craig has to do include washing up and dusting the shelves.
12. Craig gets the lawnmower from the garage.
13. The lawnmower is described as his father's pride and joy, like it was a vintage car.
14. Craig sees that the garden is filled with holes.
15. Next to each hole in the ground there is a little pile of earth.
16. Craig can see dozens and dozens of holes filling every part of the lawn.
17. Craig also sees the head of a mole staring back at him before it disappears underground.
18. Yes, there are many more of these creatures in the garden, and Craig realises there are around a hundred of them.
19. Craig can hear a faint scratching, shifting sound under the grass, as if the whole garden was breathing.

20. Craig tells himself that it is just a bad infestation of moles and that it is nothing that couldn't be fixed.
21. Craig thinks his father will go mad when he finds out about the moles.
22. Craig notices that the earth gives way more than he expected, as if the ground underneath isn't solid at all.
23. Craig calls out to his father.
24. His father responds with moaning, followed by the sound of quick footsteps coming to the back door.
25. No, Craig doesn't look behind him to see his father's face; he waits to hear what his father says instead.
26. His father makes sounds that aren't actual words, as if he has lost the ability to speak.
27. Craig tells his father that he saw a mole and that it has been pretty busy.
28. No, his father doesn't look at Craig.
29. His father's mouth falls open and his eyes blink at the scene in front of him.

30. His father says he placed mole deterrent and did all the right things to protect the garden.
31. Craig responds by telling his father that he can't stop the force of nature.
32. Craig's father blames Craig, saying that if he had cut the lawn when he was told to, it might have stopped all this from happening.
33. His father goes out onto the lawn, towards the middle of the garden.
34. His father's voice begins to wail as he speaks, which shows how upset and overwhelmed he is feeling.
35. The text tells us that Craig's father's steps make an indent in the grass, as though there is little support beneath the lawn.
36. First there is a low rumbling sound, then a loud "whooooofff," and then the sound of his father descending into the hole amid a cloud of soil and dust.
37. Craig's father falls through the lawn and descends into a giant hole in the ground.

38. The entire lawn collapses into a great big hole, so that there is no lawn left at all.
39. Craig believes the moles dug up the entire garden overnight.
40. The next two things to collapse into the big hole are the flowerbeds and the rock garden at the back.
41. Craig asks his father if he still needs him to do the mowing, or whether he should just fill the hole with water to make a duck pond instead.
42. No, Craig does not seem to be being serious; his question comes across as a deadpan joke, given the disaster that has just happened.
43. At the end of the story, the two cherry trees at the back collapse into the hole.

## True or False — answers

1. False. In fact, Craig is reading a comic when his father barges into his room.

2. True.

3. True.

4. False. In fact, Craig has to do at least three big chores a week.

5. True.

6. False. In fact, Craig realises he is looking at around a hundred moles, not just one.

7. True.

8. False. In fact, Craig's father says he placed mole deterrent and did all the right things to protect the garden.

9. True.

10. False. In fact, Craig seems calm and even jokes with his father about making a duck pond.

# What is the Correct Synonym — answers

| Words        | Synonyms    |
|--------------|-------------|
| clenched     | tightened   |
| stomping     | thumping    |
| barging      | bursting    |
| moaning      | complaining |
| dragged      | pulled      |
| collapsed    | fell        |
| gaping       | wide-open   |
| astonishment | shock       |
| inevitable   | unavoidable |
| disbelief    | doubt       |

# What is the Correct Antonym — answers

| Words        | Antonyms     |
|--------------|--------------|
| clenched     | relaxed      |
| dragged      | pushed       |
| collapsed    | stood        |
| gaping       | closed       |
| astonishment | indifference |
| inevitable   | avoidable    |
| disbelief    | belief       |
| solid        | hollow       |
| constant     | occasional   |
| straightened | bent         |

# Words and Meanings — answers

| Words        | Meaning |
|--------------|---------|
| infestation  | c       |
| deterrent    | h       |
| rumbling     | a       |
| gaping       | i       |
| astonishment | g       |
| inevitable   | b       |
| disbelief    | e       |
| negotiation  | j       |
| vintage      | f       |
| nudged       | d       |

# Idioms and Phrases — answers

pride and joy — d

force of nature — c

no use in putting it off — e

mouth fell open — b

you win — f

tight smile — a

## Gap Fill Exercise — answers

| Words      | Sentence |
|------------|----------|
| mole       | f        |
| lawn       | c        |
| mower      | e        |
| garden     | j        |
| collapsed  | g        |
| dust       | b        |
| earthquake | d        |
| duck pond  | a        |
| holes      | i        |
| army       | h        |

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