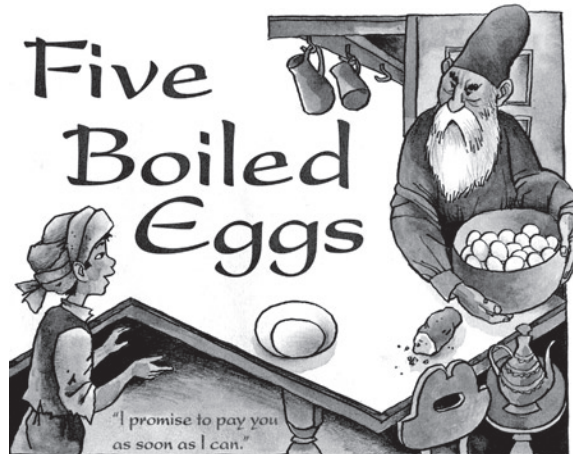


Name _____ Date _____

Read the passage “Five Boiled Eggs” before answering Numbers 24 through 29.



An Old Turkish Tale

Retold by Laura S. Sassi
illustrated by Allan Eitzen

Long ago, a poor country boy left home to seek his fortune. Day and night he traveled, stopping to eat at inns along the way. Though he ate sparingly, his money quickly dwindled until, one day, no silver *akches* remained.

Still, the boy kept walking. Soon, however, his empty belly began to ache. Staggering up to the next inn he saw, he approached the innkeeper.

“Please feed me!” he said. “I don’t have any money now, but I promise to pay you as soon as I can.”

“I’ll see what I can spare,” the innkeeper grumbled. He took five boiled eggs out of a large bowl and put them on a plate with some stale bread. “Here,” he said, plopping the platter in front of the boy.

The famished lad gratefully gobbled every morsel. Then, repeating his promise to pay back the innkeeper, he journeyed on.

Revived by his five-egg breakfast, the boy soon reached a bustling seaport. Intent on finding his fortune, he set sail on the first ship that was leaving the harbor.

Years passed, and the lad prospered. As a sea merchant, he sailed far, stopping in many exotic ports. However, he never forgot his humble beginnings or the money he owed the innkeeper.

When he finally returned home, he stopped by the old roadside inn.

Name _____ Date _____

“Kind sir,” he respectfully inquired, “how much for the five boiled eggs that you served me so long ago?”

In truth, the innkeeper did not remember him, for this fine-looking fellow looked nothing like the scrawny lad who had begged for food some ten years before. Still, eager to make a profit, he readily added up the charges. “That’ll be ten thousand akches,” he declared.

“For five eggs?” The rich stranger gasped. He had thought that he would have to pay no more than ten or twenty akches.

“Ah, but you must consider their lost worth,” the greedy innkeeper replied. “Had you not eaten those eggs, they would have hatched into hens. Those hens, in turn, would have laid eggs that would have hatched into hens. . . .” On and on he ranted until at last he reached his grand total.

When the stunned merchant refused to pay, the innkeeper declared that he would take him to court.

A trial was set for the following week. Alas, rumor had it that the judge was a close friend of the innkeeper.

“I’m ruined!” the merchant muttered as he sat in the village square. “What will I do?”

At that moment, he was approached by a sturdy little man wearing a white turban and riding a donkey. “Nasreddin Hodja, at your service,” the man said with a friendly nod. “What seems to be the problem?”

After hearing the merchant’s story, Hodja announced, “This is your lucky day! It would be my honor to defend you. I have great experience in these matters.”

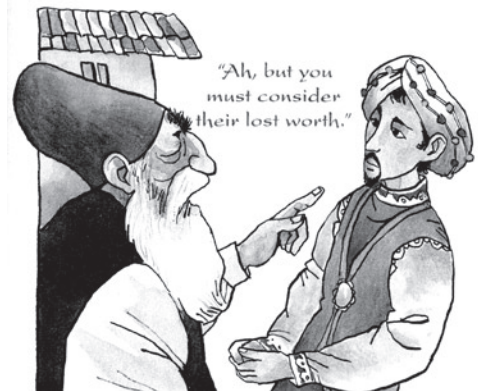
“Thank you,” the merchant said, amazed at his good fortune.

But when the court date finally arrived, Nasreddin Hodja was nowhere in sight.

“Woe is me,” mumbled the merchant.

“I’ll soon be rich!” cried the innkeeper.

“Where is Hodja?” demanded the judge, growing angrier by the minute. He was about to render judgment in the innkeeper’s favor when Hodja boldly barged in.



Name _____ Date _____

**Reading and
Analyzing Text**

“Pardon me,” he said, panting, as he hastily took the witness stand. “I would have been here sooner, but this morning I had the cleverest plan. Instead of eating my boiled corn for breakfast, I planted it. Think of the rich harvest I’ll reap!”

“That’s absurd,” the innkeeper scoffed. “You can’t grow corn from cooked kernels!”

“Indeed?” Hodja said with mock wonder. “Then, sir, how is it that you would have been able to hatch chickens from boiled eggs?”

At that, the whole room reeled with laughter.

“Order in the court!” shouted the judge, pounding his gavel and scowling at the innkeeper.

The judge then ruled that the merchant would not have to pay even one akche for the eggs. Instead, the innkeeper would have to pay a fine for wasting the court’s time with such foolishness.

Now answer Numbers 24 through 29 on your Answer Sheet. Base your answers on the passage “Five Boiled Eggs.”

- 24** Read this sentence from the passage.

Though he ate sparingly, his money quickly dwindled until, one day, no silver *akches* remained.

What does the word *dwindled* mean in the sentence above?

- F. was spent wisely
- G. lost worth over time
- H. became gradually less
- I. was placed into savings

Name _____ Date _____

- 25 Read this excerpt from the passage.

Years passed, and the lad prospered. As a sea merchant, he sailed far, stopping in many exotic ports. However, he never forgot his humble beginnings or the money he owed the innkeeper.

The excerpt above reveals that, unlike the innkeeper, the merchant is

- A. honest.
 - B. arrogant.
 - C. content with his life.
 - D. ashamed of his background.
- 26 The people in the courtroom burst into laughter when they suddenly realize how
- F. smart the merchant is.
 - G. ridiculous Hodja can be.
 - H. silly the innkeeper's claim is.
 - I. inexpensive boiled eggs really are.
- 27 In this passage, Nasreddin Hodja is shown to have both cleverness and
- A. great fame.
 - B. great wealth.
 - C. a sense of humor.
 - D. a lack of common sense.
- 28 Because he took the merchant to court, the innkeeper must
- F. pay a fine.
 - G. pay for the eggs.
 - H. buy dinner for Hodja.
 - I. apologize to the merchant.

Name _____ Date _____

- 29 Which of the following best describes a theme of this passage?
- A. Humor can often get you out of a sticky situation.
 - B. Trying to pay someone back usually turns out bad.
 - C. Sometimes it is better to be lucky than to be clever.
 - D. It is unwise to take advantage of another person's kindness.