

# Families: So Different, Yet the Same

## Literal Comprehension

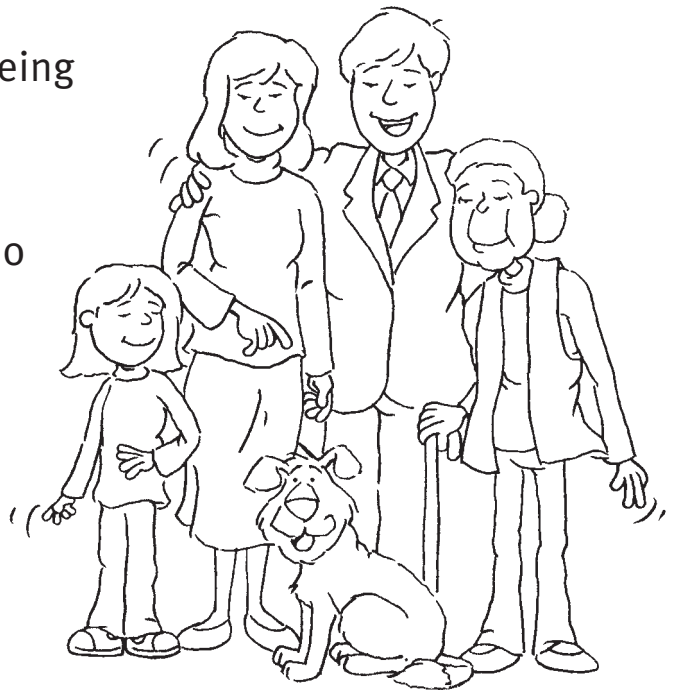
- 1 Who might make up a family of two?
- 2 Who do some families have living with them?
- 3 What different types of houses do people live in?
- 4 What are all families made up of?
- 5 What different feelings can all people have?
- 6 What are two things all people need, no matter where they live?
- 7 Do all families in the world live where it is safe?

## Inferential Comprehension

- 1 How is life different for families throughout the world?
- 2 What are some choices different families make?
- 3 What challenges do some families face?

## Reflection

- 1 Who makes up your family?
- 2 What is the best thing about being a member of your family?
- 3 Do you think there is anything you can do to help families who live where there is not enough food or water for everyone? If so, what can you do?



# Families: So Different, Yet the Same

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## Activity Card 1

Make a chart about your family. Draw a picture or paste a photograph of each family member onto a sheet of paper. Underneath, write why each person is special to you.

## Activity Card 2

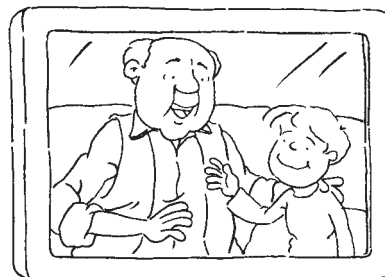
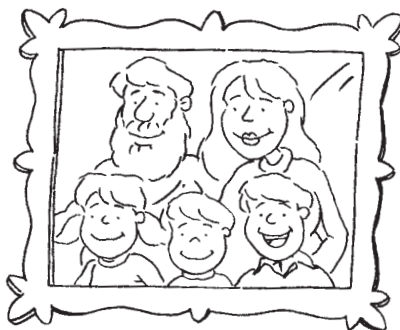
Use information from the text to help you make and decorate a poster telling about different types of families.

## Activity Card 3

Draw a concept map about families. In the centre of your page, write the word *FAMILIES*. Surround it with words or sentences that tell about families—what they are, what they do, what they need, what they look like and where they live.

## Activity Card 4

Cut out pictures, letters and words from newspapers and magazines to make a collage about families.



# Mario Changes His Mind

 by Ralph Condon

Mario loved everything about his life in Italy—his school, his friends, and living with his parents and his *nonna* and *nonno*, or grandmother and grandfather. His grandparents still led their daily lives as though it were the 1940s—growing every vegetable they ate and washing everything by hand, even though his parents had installed a washing machine! It was like his grandparents were living in a history book or out of a time capsule. But it was the life they knew and cherished.

It was **understandable**, then, that when Mario's father announced that they were going to live in Australia, Mario was shattered. "To live where?" he gasped, as he stared at his father.

"Sydney, Australia. My work is sending me there."

Even when he was assured his grandparents would join them, Mario remained reluctant. He had learned a little about Australia at school, and what he began to imagine did not make him feel any better. He knew there were creatures called kangaroos in this faraway land. He pictured them hopping down the streets of Sydney, sweeping at him with their thick, heavy tails. He'd heard about Vegemite. Why would anyone put a thick black spread on anything they were going to eat? Was this to replace his nonna's **delicious** morning pastries? And what about his football? He'd heard they played a different game with an egg-shaped ball in Australia!

"No! I cannot go," he said to his father. "This is where I live! This is where my friends live! Please don't make me go."

The next day he was feeling **miserable** at school. When he told his teacher about his problem, Signora Lombardo had the perfect answer. She lent Mario a DVD about Australia. That night, as he watched the DVD and saw the beautiful beaches, the rainforests, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Uluru, the Italian restaurants and the wildlife, he asked his father, "Papa, how soon can we go to Australia? I will make new friends!"

## Literal Comprehension

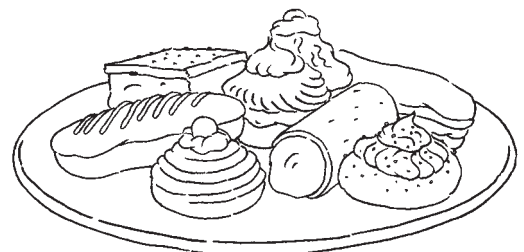
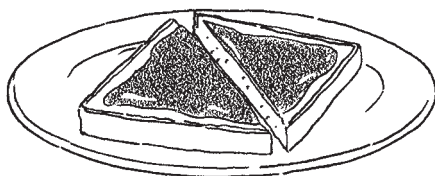
- 1 Where did Mario live?
- 2 Why did Mario's family have to move to Australia?
- 3 Who was going to join them in Australia?
- 4 What did Mario imagine the kangaroos would do?
- 5 Why did Mario tell his father he couldn't go?
- 6 Who had the answer to Mario's problem?
- 7 After he watched the DVD, what did Mario ask his father?

## Inferential Comprehension

- 1 What does the author mean when he says, "It was like his grandparents were living in a history book or out of a time capsule"?
- 2 Why did Signora Lombardo lend Mario the DVD?
- 3 Before he watched the DVD, did Mario have a good understanding of what Australia was like?
- 4 How did the DVD help Mario change his mind?

## Reflection

- 1 How would you feel if you had to go and live in a different country?
- 2 What things would you miss most about Australia?
- 3 If you knew someone was moving to Australia, what would you tell them about this country?



# Mario Changes His Mind

## Activity Card 1

Make your own travel brochure that shows some special features of Australia. Include places that you would recommend to visitors or newcomers to Australia.

## Activity Card 2

Write the next part of this story. Imagine Mario has arrived in Australia. Write about his reactions to the new country.

## Activity Card 3

Use books and the Internet to help you find information about two household appliances Mario's grandparents may have used, for example, the radio, washing machine or refrigerator. Write a comparison between these appliances and those we use today.

## Activity Card 4

Pretend you have just arrived in Australia from another country. Write a letter to a friend back in your home country telling them what you have discovered about Australia and how you feel about being in this new land.

Grandpa's backyard was a magical place. We had so many family celebrations in what we, as children, believed was an enchanted garden. For birthdays, Christmas and New Year's Eve it was the place to be. You couldn't help but feel happy as you wandered around the stone paths, searched for hidden statues and walked across the creaky old bridge to feed the fish in the pond. But my favourite place was the little wooden shed right in the back corner.

The shed belonged to Grandpa and me. Grandpa was a bit of a "men in the shed; women in the kitchen" type of man. We spent a lot of time in the shed. It was where we made toys you'd never find in shops.

I remember one day Grandpa said we were going to make something special. We went into the shed and climbed onto our work stools—big old wooden ones Grandpa had bought at a second-hand shop. He picked up a piece of wood and told me we needed to give it shape. He tapped away with his chisel and hammer, making a point at one end. When he was happy he gave me some sandpaper and told me to rub the wood until it was smooth. "This," he said, "will be a boat that will float for a hundred years!"

Then I knew why he'd carved it the way he had. In an old jar he found a long, thin screw. With a rusty hand drill he made a hole in the top of the wood and, taking turns, we twisted the screw down tight. This became the mast. A dented tin of paint contained the perfect blue for this wonderful vessel. We found a piece of cloth and tied it to the mast. It was ready to sail.

It floated in Grandpa's pond until he died and it was a talking point at every family get-together (when, of course, Grandma did most of the cooking!). Now it sits beside the pond in our backyard. The wood is a bit cracked and the sail is torn but I think it will last another 85 years.

# Grandpa's Shed

## Literal Comprehension

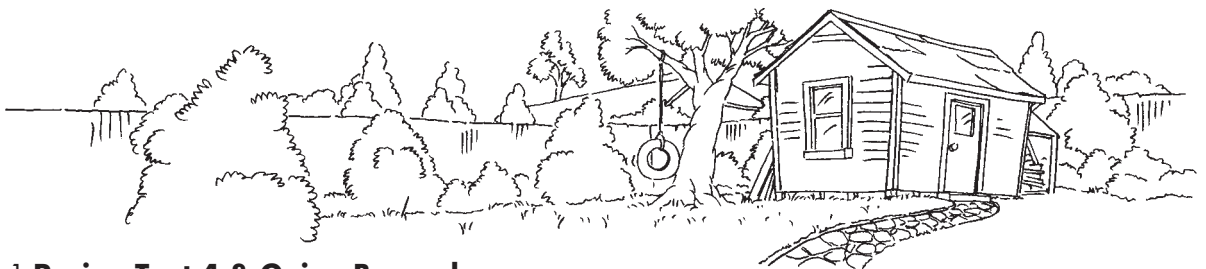
- 1 What family celebrations took place in Grandpa's backyard?
- 2 What did Grandpa and the narrator make in the shed?
- 3 Where did Grandpa get the work stools?
- 4 What did Grandpa use to shape the boat?
- 5 How long did Grandpa think the boat would float?
- 6 Where is the boat now?
- 7 What does the boat look like today?

## Inferential Comprehension

- 1 Why was Grandpa's backyard a "magical" place?
- 2 What is meant by, "Grandpa was a bit of a 'men in the shed; women in the kitchen' type of man"?
- 3 What words would you use to describe Grandpa?

## Reflection

- 1 What celebrations does your extended family get together for?
- 2 What is something special you enjoy doing with an older member of your family?
- 3 What toy do you have that you would like to keep forever? Why?
- 4 Do you think there are particular jobs that men should do and others that women should do? Why or why not?



## Activity Card 1

Think of a special family celebration. Write a recount about this celebration, including what it was for, who was there, who prepared the food and what activities you did.

## Activity Card 2

Make a comic strip that shows you and your family having a conversation around the kitchen table. It could involve everyone sharing what they have done during the day or talking about a forthcoming celebration.

## Activity Card 3

Draw a plan of your own “magical” backyard where you would like to take part in family celebrations. Label some special features. Mark your favourite place in the garden.

## Activity Card 4

Write a profile of an older member of your family. Include the relationship you have with this person, their age, a description of what they look like, where they live and what they like to do. Draw a picture of this relative.