

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

COMPREHENSION GUIDE



ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Comprehension Guide
by Ned Bustard



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ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

How to use this Guide

This guide is intended to help you study, understand, and enjoy *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. You might ask if a guide is really necessary to read a book. Is the student not just working to improve reading skills while being taught to enjoy reading a book? Certainly, it is the case that the more a child reads, the more he should improve his skills, but quantity is not the only issue. Once a child has received adequate phonetic training he should learn how to read a book. Most educators using this guide will be teaching children in the grammar stage, generally understood to be during the elementary years in a classical education. (For a thorough understanding of classical Christian education we recommend reading *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* or *The Case for Classical Christian Education*, both by Douglas Wilson.) The basic goals of reading in the grammar stage are as follows:

The student should be able to:

1. Fluently read a given selection orally.
2. Show an increased desire for reading.
3. Show comprehension on a literal and inferential level.
4. Demonstrate an increased vocabulary.
5. Identify basic Biblical values in the literature being read.
6. Identify various styles (myths, poems, fantasy, fiction, nonfiction, etc.)

Answers to the questions are found in the back of the guide. Although the answers in the guide appear in an abbreviated form, the students' answers should be in complete sentences, and they should restate the question in their answer.

Example:

Question: How does Alice offend the Caterpillar?

Answer: Alice offends the Caterpillar by saying that three inches "is such a wretched height to be."

Such writing practice trains the student to answer thoroughly, completely, and with proper grammar. Another reason is to encourage integration. We want students to understand that how they write something is as important as what they write.

You may wonder how to grade the student's work in this guide. Keep it simple. Unless otherwise indicated you should assume that each question is worth five points.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland—a story "with lots of nonsense in it"—was conceived of one warm afternoon by Charles Dodgson to entertain three young girls named Alice, Lorina and Edith on a boat trip in Oxford, England. The story was continued on two other boat trips, and in the end it was written down as "Alice's Adventures Under Ground."

Later, when Dodgson's friend George MacDonald read the manuscript to his children, MacDonald's six-year-old son said that he "wished there were 60,000 copies of it." So Dodgson revised and expanded the original tale by adding chapters, changing some poems, and adding jokes. Some of these new elements not found in "Alice's Adventures Under Ground," were "The Caucus Race," "Pig and Pepper," "A Mad Tea-Party," and the Cheshire Cat. The story also got a new Mouse Tale and title: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (Dodgson thought that "Alice's Adventures Under Ground" might seem to be a book containing 'instruction about mines'). *Wonderland* was published in 1865, exactly 3 years after the first boat trip, under Dodgson's pen name of Lewis Carroll.

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND

Chapter One—Down the Rabbit-Hole

1. Why did Alice find her sister's book useless?

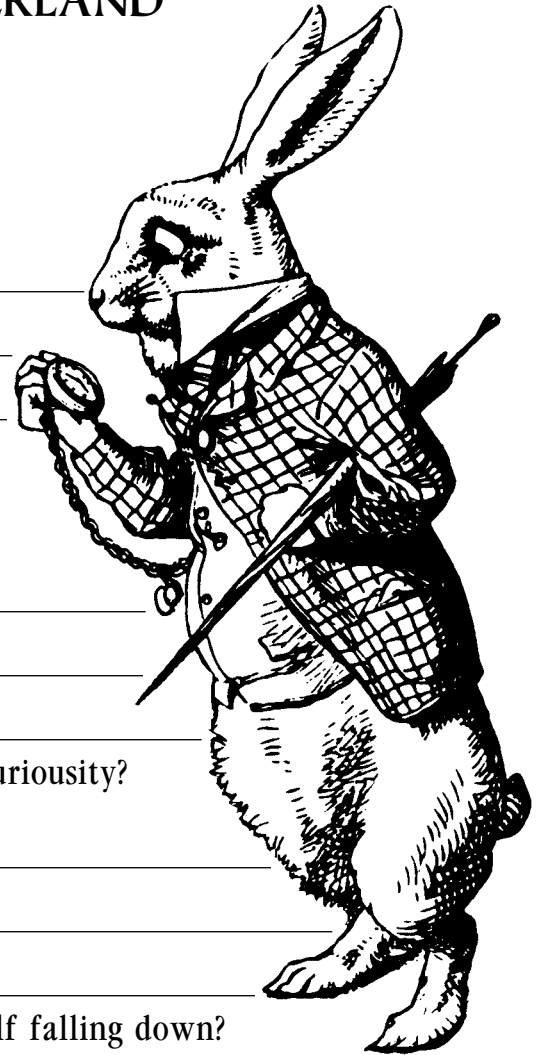
2. What project was Alice thinking to undertake when a talking rabbit ran by her?

3. What did the Rabbit do which made Alice burn with curiosity?

4. What was lining the rabbit-hole that Alice found herself falling down?

5. What did Alice try to do when "falling through the earth?"

6. Whom did Alice think could answer the question of whether cats eat bats?



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7. What did Alice find on the three-legged glass table in the hall of locked doors?

8. What wise precaution did Alice make before drinking the cherry-tart, custard, pineapple, roast turkey, toffy and hot buttered toast-tasting liquid?

9. What had Alice forgotten to do before shutting up like a telescope?

10. After Alice scolded herself, what did she find to eat in the little glass box under the table?

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Chapter One, Project 1—Currant Cake

Ingredients

1 cup currants or raisins
2-1/4 cups sugar
4 sticks of butter, softened
6 large eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
juice of 1 lemon

Directions

Preheat oven to 325°F. Toss currants with 1 tablespoon of flour to coat; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter with an electric mixer on medium speed for 30 seconds. Slowly add sugar and cream until smooth. Add eggs one at a time, beating 1 minute after each addition, scraping bowl often. Add 1/4 cup of flour, salt, and lemon juice. Mix for 30 seconds. Add remainder of flour and mix on low to medium speed just till combined. Stir in currants or raisins.

Grease 2 baking sheets with butter. Place into oven and heat just until butter melts. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto warm baking sheets, pressing flat each cake. Cakes are best when very thin. Bake at 325°F for 7 to 10 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool cakes on a wire rack.



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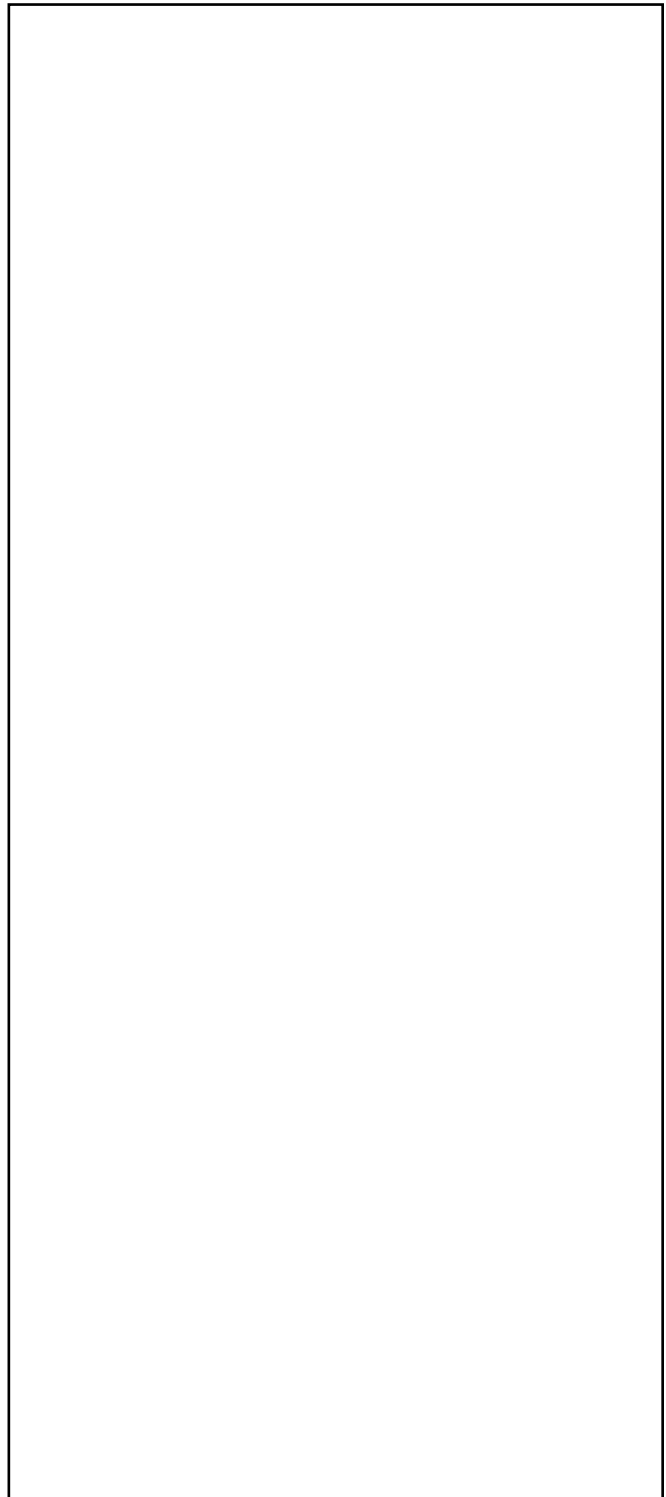
Chapter One, Project 2—Fantasy Literature

fantasy: imaginative fiction featuring especially strange settings and grotesque characters

Samuel Taylor Coleridge made up the phrase “suspension of disbelief” (in his book *Biographia Literaria*), by which he meant a willingness in the reader to set aside their critical thinking in order to enjoy a story. The reader accepts that in reading the story they will need to give up on it seeming to be like the real world—to the point of not making any sense or even bothering to be believable at all—for the sake of enjoying the story. Nowhere is this seen more than in fantasy literature. Yet the key to fantasy working is tightly bound to its ability to help the reader suspend disbelief. To do this, the story’s elements need to be believable in context.

On the lines below make a list of some of the fantasy characters and elements you have encountered so far in this story. Then create your own fantasy character. Write a couple of sentences to describe this creature then draw a picture of your creation.

My Creature:



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Chapter Two—Pool of Tears

1. What “curiouser and curiouser” effect did eating the small cake have on Alice?

2. To whom was Alice planning on mailing a new pair of boots to at Christmas, which was located at the Hearthrug near the Fender?

3. Whom does Alice frighten and make drop a pair of kid gloves and a fan?

4. Alice has gone through so many changes that she doesn't know who she is. Why does the prospect of being Mabel make her begin to cry?

5. What causes Alice to shrink?

6. In what did Alice think she might drown?

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7. Why did Alice's question "Ou est ma chatte?" frighten the creature Alice meets while swimming?

8. Why did the Mouse find Alice's conversation about the farmer's terrier offensive?

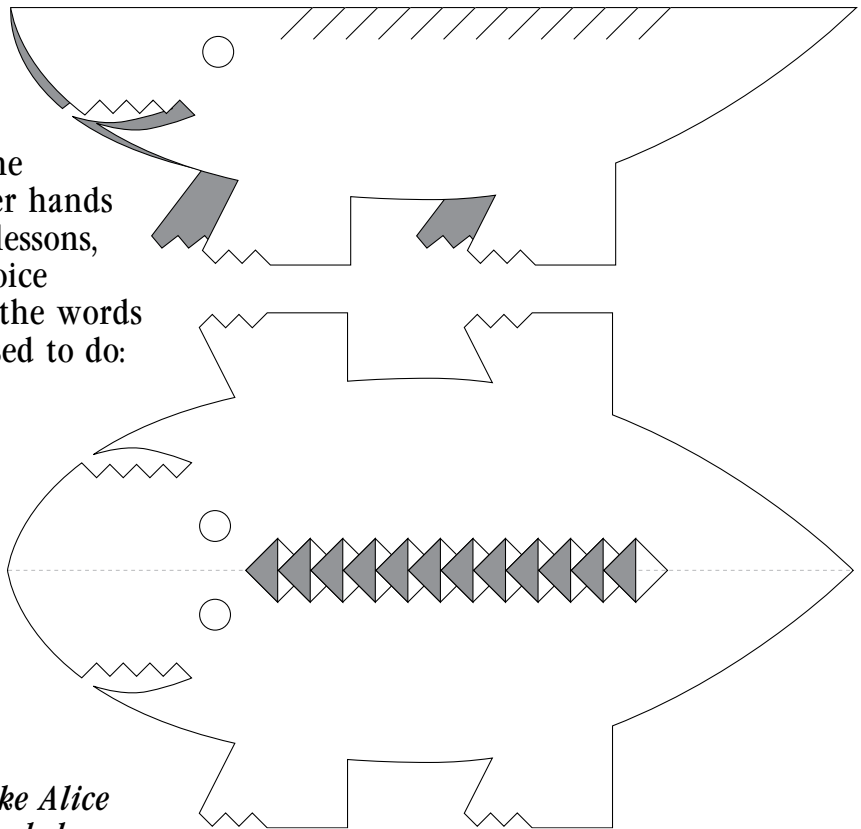
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Chapter Two, Project—The Little Crocodile

In chapter two, Alice was worried that she must have changed into Mabel. To reassure herself that she was still Alice, she attempted to recite a poem she had memorized. So she crossed her hands on her lap as if she were saying lessons, and began to repeat it, but her voice sounded hoarse and strange, and the words did not come the same as they used to do:

“How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!
“How cheerfully he seems to
grin,
How neatly spread his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in
With gently smiling jaws!”

Make a golden scaled crocodile like Alice described, following the directions below:



Materials

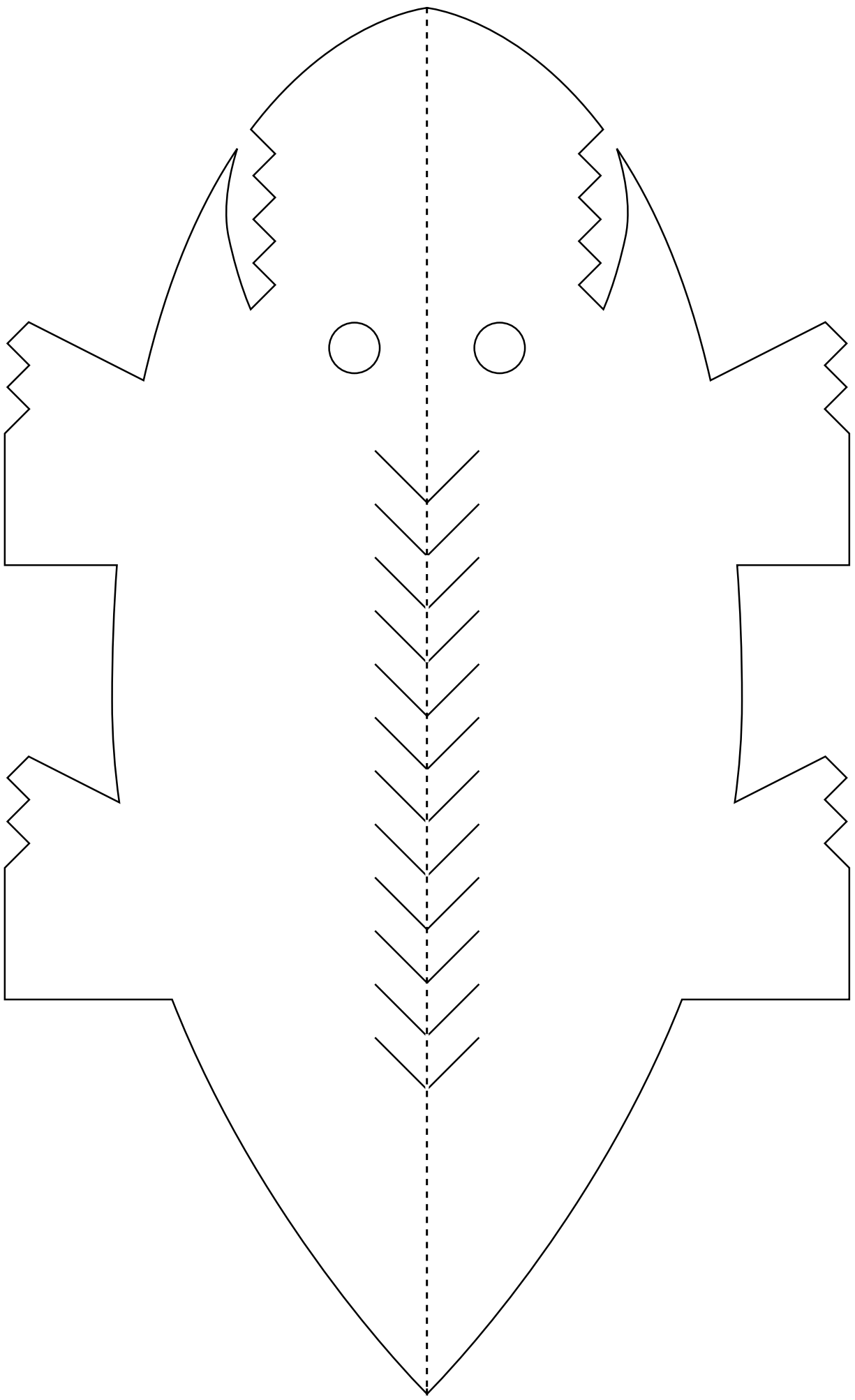
paper

scissors

crayons or markers

Directions

Photocopy the pattern on the next page onto thick paper. Color all over the paper to create a “golden” and “shining” crocodile texture. Fold the paper lengthwise along the dotted lines. Cut along the outside edge, then cut small slits on the folded side as indicated. Unfold the paper and fold the slits forward. Fold the crocodile in half again.



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Chapter Three—A Caucus-Race and a Long Tale

1. Why did the Lory—which is an Australian parrot—insist to Alice that they follow its plan to dry them after swimming out of Alice's tears?

2. Why did the Mouse think that listening to a recitation concerning William the Conqueror would dry them off?

3. Who suggested a Caucus-race as a means to dry them all off?

4. In England a caucus is usually a derogatory term used for the organization of an opposing political party. How was this ridiculous race run?

5. Who won the Caucus-race?

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Chapter Three, Page 2

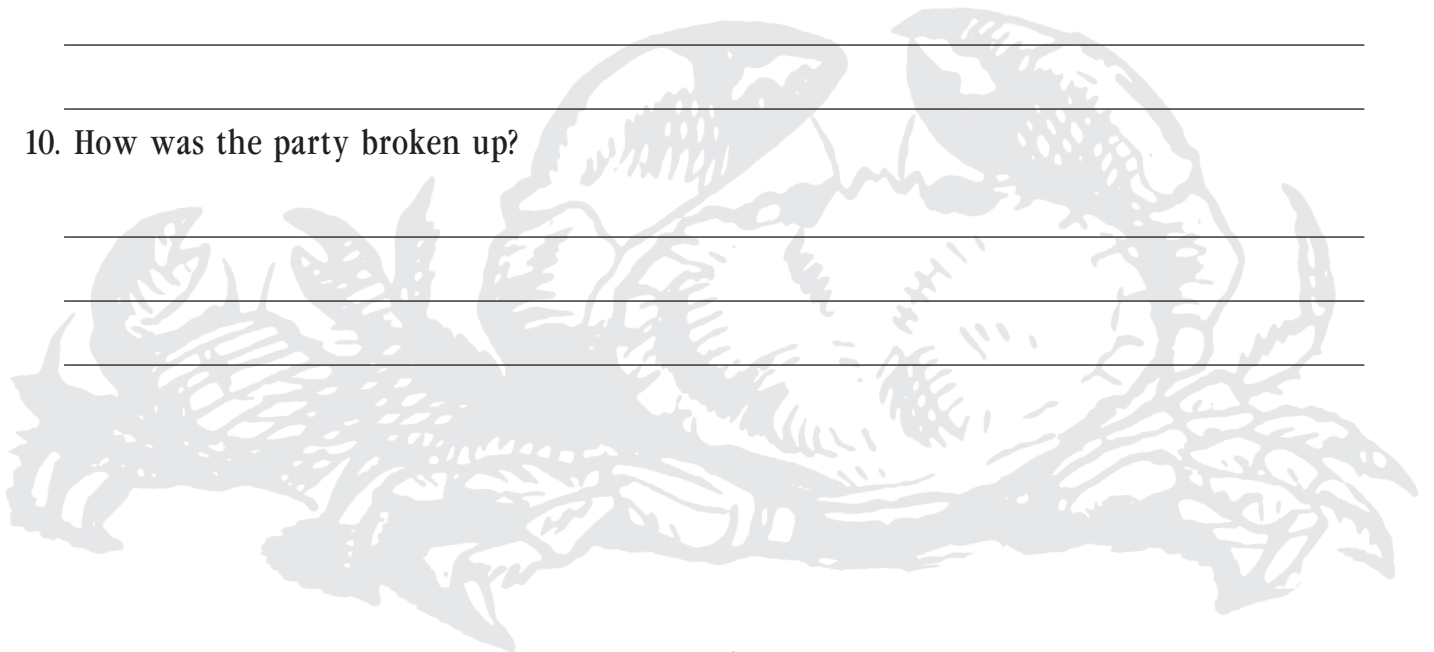
6. Why was this conclusion to the race unfair to Alice?

7. With what prize did the Dodo award Alice?

8. How was the story the Mouse told Alice and the others a “sad tail?”

9. What moral did the old crab glean from the Mouse's sudden offense and departure?

10. How was the party broken up?





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