



Reading level 1

Interpret Meaning

Beans

An old farmer was becoming frail. He decided to give his farm to a younger man. He had two nephews but he was not sure if he could trust either of them. He invited them to his farm and gave them a test.

He gave each nephew a pot and a handful of beans. He told the nephews to plant the beans in their pot and come back in one month. He told them that he would then decide who was the most suitable man to take over his farm.

One month later the two nephews came back.

The first nephew showed the farmer his pot. 'I worked very hard, Uncle. I gave my beans sun and water just like you said. Look at my plants now. They are healthy and green and are almost up to my knee.'

The second nephew showed the farmer his pot. 'I don't understand, Uncle. I gave my beans sun and water just like you said, but nothing has grown. I don't deserve the farm.'

The farmer reached into his pocket for the keys to his farm. 'Thank you my nephews. This little test has shown me who I can trust.' He handed the keys to his second nephew. 'The beans had already been cooked. They were never going to grow.'

How did the first nephew behave when he showed the farmer his pot?

- A He pretended to be angry.
- B He was rude to the farmer.
- C He boasted about his plants.
- D He teased the second nephew.

Answer: C. He boasted about his plants.

Explanation

The student is required to interpret explicitly stated information when there is a conflicting argument. After reading the whole text, the reader knows that when the first nephew is speaking to the farmer, he is being deceitful by boasting about the size and health of the plants he claims to have grown. The reader must, along with dismissing the other wrong options, decide whether the deceit or the boasting constitutes the nephew's behaviour.

The explicit evidence in the text is that the nephew behaves and speaks as if he is very proud of his efforts. This behaviour is part of his lie, but it is how he is acting in the text. 'He was rude to the farmer' is an attractive, wrong option because being deceitful might be construed as being disrespectful or rude. However, the nephew never behaves rudely, he purposely tries to conceal the truth by behaving as if he had grown the plants himself.

Text complexity

The text has many familiar aspects. It is a short, linear, fable about an uncle testing the honesty of his nephews by setting them a task of growing some plants from beans he gives them. The vocabulary is a range of familiar words with a few words that may be slightly less familiar e.g. 'frail' and 'suitable'.

The key aspect of complexity in this text comes from its level of subtlety. The main idea, that the Uncle is testing his nephew's honesty not their farming skills, is obviously implied by explicit information given in the last sentence of the story. So, to understand the story, the reader must review the events they have just read and reinterpret them in the light of this new information.