

## The Distorting Mirror

Once upon a time, a lion caught a cat. Opening his mouth wide, the lion was on the point of eating the cat up when it raised its voice in protest.

"Why do you want to eat me?" asked the cat.

"Why? Simply because I'm big and you're small," the lion replied with laughter.

"What? You're big and I'm small?" the cat responded in pretended surprise. "You must be dim-sighted. In fact, I'm big and you're small."

On hearing this, the lion was thrown into confusion.

"You've seen only your paws but not your whole body; how can you know what your actual size is?" the cat said.

"You are right! I can't see my own body; how can I know what my actual size is?" the lion thought.

"There's a mirror in my house," the cat said. "Come along with me and look at the mirror yourself, and you'll see how big you are."

As the lion had never seen himself in a mirror, he agreed. He went with the cat to the cat's house.

The mirror in the cat's house was a trick mirror. One side of it was convex and the other was concave. All one needed to do to change sides was to press the button.

"Oh, dear Lion!" called the cat. "Look at yourself in the mirror and see whether you're big or small."

When the lion stood in front of the convex side of the distorting mirror, he was shocked to see how small and short his figure was. He was as small as a mouse.

"How big are you, then, my dear Lion?" asked the cat. "Please stand aside and let me look at myself in the mirror now."

The cat stealthily pressed the button to make the other side of the mirror turn towards him. He looked enormous in the concave mirror.

The lion stole a look at the cat's reflection. When he caught sight of the big, tall cat making believe to attack him, he stood rooted to the spot for a moment.

Then, frightened out of his wits, the lion turned and fled into the forest, and never came back again.

## Vocabulary

1. on the point of: just about to
2. to eat someone/something up: to eat someone or something completely
3. to respond: to answer
4. in surprise: surprisingly
5. dim-sighted: unable to see clearly
6. confusion: uncertainty
7. odd: strange
8. reflection: image reflected from a mirror or water
9. distorting: changing from a natural shape or condition
10. to press: to push firmly against something
11. convex: curved outwards
12. concave: curved inwards
13. to reverse: to go back
14. to curve: to bend
15. figure: shape
16. stealthily: quietly and secretly
17. to stand rooted to the spot: to be fixed as if by roots; to be made motionless by great fright
18. to steal a look at someone/something: to look at someone or something quickly
19. to catch sight of: to see for a moment
20. to make believe: to pretend
21. to be frightened out of one's wits: to be greatly frightened
22. to flee: to run away

## Comprehension

Answer each of the following questions in a complete sentence.

1. What was the lion going to do when he caught the cat?

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2. According to the cat, who was bigger?

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3. Could the lion know his actual size? Why?

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4. Why was the cat's mirror unusual?

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5. How could one make the mirror turn around?

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6. How did the lion feel when he looked at his reflection?

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7. Why did the cat look very big?

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8. What did the lion do when he first saw the cat's reflection?

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9. Where did the lion go in the end?

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## Vocabulary Exercise 1

Fill in each blank with a word or expression from the vocabulary section on page 2. Be sure to use the correct word or verb form.

1. Metals \_\_\_\_\_ when heated.
2. A \_\_\_\_\_ person cannot see well without spectacles.
3. The old lady looked \_\_\_\_\_ in her high-heeled shoes.
4. If you stand beside a lake, you can see your \_\_\_\_\_.
5. When two masked men rushed into the shop, the lady shopkeeper \_\_\_\_\_ in terror.
6. Small boys and girls like to \_\_\_\_\_ that they are heroes and heroines.
7. You must wash the \_\_\_\_\_ side of the shirt collar more carefully, as it is often very dirty and sweaty.
8. The thief \_\_\_\_\_ entered the house through the unlocked back door.
9. When the boy saw the wild dog running towards him, he was \_\_\_\_\_ and cried out loudly.
10. The workers \_\_\_\_\_ from the burning factory.
11. There was \_\_\_\_\_ as to who was right.
12. When the wild boar was \_\_\_\_\_ attacking the hunter, the hunter shot it dead.
13. The moment the mouse \_\_\_\_\_ the cat, it ran away.
14. On the bus, a young man \_\_\_\_\_ a pretty lady sitting opposite him.
15. The inside of a spoon is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Vocabulary Exercise 2

Complete each sentence with a word derived from the word in bold.

1. The lion said it with **laughter**. He said it \_\_\_\_\_. He \_\_\_\_\_ and said it. He said it with a \_\_\_\_\_ face.
2. The old man seemed to be **dim-sighted**. He saw things \_\_\_\_\_. He had \_\_\_\_\_ eyesight. He was suffering from \_\_\_\_\_ of eyesight.
3. He was **shocked** to see how small his figure was. The smallness of his figure gave him a great \_\_\_\_\_. It was \_\_\_\_\_ for him to see how small his figure was. He looked at the smallness of his figure \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The idea threw him into **confusion**. He found such an idea \_\_\_\_\_. It gave him much \_\_\_\_\_. He was therefore \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The cat asked the question in **surprise**. He asked it \_\_\_\_\_. He asked in a \_\_\_\_\_ manner. He found the situation \_\_\_\_\_.

## Vocabulary Exercise 3

The word 'dim-sighted' is a compound adjective formed by 'adj + noun + -ed'. Complete the sentences with other compound adjectives containing '-sighted'.

|               |               |              |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| near-sighted  | far-sighted   | long-sighted |
| sharp-sighted | short-sighted |              |

1. The woman could not see the time on that clock. She was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Everyone supported Tim's \_\_\_\_\_ plan.
3. His staff are \_\_\_\_\_, though he is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Most \_\_\_\_\_ people have the same problem.
5. One has to be \_\_\_\_\_ to be a detective.

## Comprehension Cloze Passage

In the rewritten story below, fill in each blank with a suitable word from the original story or a word of your own choice.

A lion caught a cat and (1) \_\_\_\_\_ to eat him, but the cat (2) \_\_\_\_\_ the lion to justify his cruel (3) \_\_\_\_\_.

The lion simply replied that he (4) \_\_\_\_\_ a bigger animal and had the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ to feed on anything smaller and (6) \_\_\_\_\_.

The cat did not agree, saying (7) \_\_\_\_\_ the lion was not really bigger (8) \_\_\_\_\_ suggesting that he should (9) \_\_\_\_\_ himself in a (10) \_\_\_\_\_.

(11) \_\_\_\_\_ lion accepted and (12) \_\_\_\_\_ to the cat's house, where he (13) \_\_\_\_\_ the opportunity to see his own (14) \_\_\_\_\_.

The lion was (15) \_\_\_\_\_ shocked to see how small (16) \_\_\_\_\_ was. What was worse, the (17) \_\_\_\_\_ reflection looked very much bigger.

The lion left (18) \_\_\_\_\_ the forest and did not return.

**Answers:****Comprehension**

1. He was going to eat the cat up.
2. According to the cat, he himself was bigger.
3. No, he could not as he could not see his own body.
4. One side of the mirror was concave while the other side was convex.
5. One could make it run around by pressing a button.
6. He was very surprised at how small he was.
7. His reflection appeared on the convex side of the mirror.
8. He stood motionless in fright.
9. He went into the forest.

**Vocabulary Exercise 1**

1. distort
2. dim-sighted
3. odd
4. reflection
5. stood rooted to the spot
6. make believe
7. reverse
8. stealthily
9. frightened out of his wits
10. fled
11. confusion
12. on the point of
13. caught sight of
14. stole a look at
15. convex

**Vocabulary Exercise 2**

1. laughingly; laughed; laughing
2. dimly; dim; dimness
3. shock; shocking; in shock
4. confusing; confusion; confused
5. surprisingly; surprised; surprising

### **Vocabulary Exercise 3**

1. near-sighted/short-sighted
2. far-sighted/long-sighted
3. short-sighted/near sighted; far-sighted
4. short-sighted/near-sighted
5. sharp-sighted

### **Comprehension Cloze Passage**

1. wanted
2. asked
3. action
4. was
5. right
6. weaker
7. that
8. and
9. see
10. mirror
11. The
12. went
13. had
14. reflection
15. greatly
16. he
17. cat's
18. for