

A Fair Feeder



- 1 Clarissa and Roberto watched as a blue jay flapped around the birdfeeder set out for the songbirds. The jay flashed its bright blue wings, searching for a way to get at the food, but the birdfeeder was designed to keep blue jays from taking all the seeds. While most songbirds could sit and eat from the tiny perches attached to the birdfeeder, the perches were too small for the blue jays. The birdfeeder's tiny openings, big enough for only the smallest songbirds, also frustrated the jays.
- 2 *It doesn't seem fair*, thought Clarissa.
- 3 "That poor blue jay will never get a decent meal! Why would anyone make a birdfeeder that a blue jay can't use?" she asked her brother, Roberto.
- 4 He shook his head. "Blue jays are terrific birds, but they do have a bad reputation. Many people believe that blue jays devour much more than seeds, nuts, and insects. They believe that jays eat baby birds. Some people also think they are loud and annoying because they make noise at night and early in the morning."
- 5 Clarissa frowned. "Do blue jays actually eat baby birds?"
- 6 "I seriously doubt it. In one scientific study, biologists examined the contents of jays' stomachs and found that about 99% of the birds' diet consisted of nuts and insects," Roberto explained. He studied biology in college and enjoyed sharing facts about animals with his little sister.
- 7 "In my opinion, blue jays are really fascinating birds. For example, some of them fly south for the winter, but others spend the entire winter right where they are; no one seems to know why. Scientists also have observed captive blue jays using strips of newspaper as tools to rake food into their cages," said Roberto.
- 8 *How cool. Birds that use tools*, thought Clarissa.
- 9 The persistent blue jay was back, but now it was hopping on the ground and searching desperately for dropped seeds. *That's it!* She closed her notebook and got up.
- 10 "I'm going to build that blue jay a birdfeeder of its own!" Clarissa declared. She headed to the computer and began her research. Nearly every Web site focused on building feeders that would prevent jays from getting the seeds. Clarissa considered e-mailing those sites to explain that blue jays were beautiful and smart and deserved more respect.
- 11 After an hour of searching, Clarissa finally located the information she needed, even though some of it surprised her. For example, she discovered that blue jays love peanuts; they

Use “A Fair Feeder” to answer questions 1–4.

7.2B (Vocabulary—Context) M

1. What does the word persistent mean in paragraph 9 of the story?
 - A Alert
 - B Cunning
 - C Determined
 - D Thoughtful

7.7D (Literary—Influence of Setting) M

2. What part of the setting influences Clarissa’s decision to make a birdfeeder for the blue jays?
 - A Clarissa sees a blue jay that cannot get food from the birdfeeder, and she feels that is not fair.
 - B Clarissa finds the supplies for making a birdfeeder in her family’s garage, and she wants to show that she is resourceful.
 - C Roberto talks about how blue jays are terrific but have a bad reputation, and Clarissa feels she must always agree with him.
 - D Clarissa’s access to the internet makes it easy to research how to make a blue jay feeder, and she wants to prove she can make one.

7.9E (Author’s Purpose—Identify Literary Devices) M

3. The reader knows that “A Fair Feeder” is told from the third-person limited point of view because the narrator reveals the thoughts and feelings of—
 - A only Clarissa
 - B only Roberto
 - C both characters
 - D neither character