

Name: _____

The Luck of the Owl

by Anita N. Amin

After dinner, Olivia sat at the kitchen table, staring at her pumpkin. The contest at school was tomorrow. But she still didn't know how to decorate her pumpkin. What was she going to do?

"Olivia, come and see this!" Her dad barged in, waving binoculars.

Olivia sighed. He must've seen another bird, she thought. Dad was obsessed with bird-watching. To her, a bird was just a bird.



She followed Dad to the back door.



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Olivia stepped back. "What was that?" Whatever it was, it sounded mean and hungry.

Olivia scanned the spot where the screech had come from. She could make out a tree hollow with something moving in it. "An owl! But I thought owls hoot."

"Some hoot," Dad said. "Some screech. Some whistle. Some hiss... There are all kinds of owl calls."

"But aren't owls bad luck?" Olivia asked, remembering Mom's comment.

Dad paused. "Some people think owls are good luck. Others think they're bad luck."

"I hope you're right – that owls are good luck." She needed good luck for the contest.

"The contest!" An idea suddenly hit her. "That's how I'll decorate my pumpkin!"

She gathered some bark and fallen leaves. She carried them to the kitchen table.

She noticed her pumpkin was the same color as the owl's eyes. She drew two circles on the pumpkin. Then she found two black buttons and pasted one in each circle. "The eyes are done."

Next, she glued some bark above and between the eyes. "The horns and beak are done."

Finally, she glued the leaves onto her pumpkin. "The feathers are done."

She sat back and admired her owl-pumpkin. "Just one more thing..."

Holding a tape recorder, Olivia listened by the back door. After a long silence, she frowned. Had the owl flown away?

Screeeeech.

Finally! Olivia taped the screech. Now, she was ready for the contest.



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Dad hugged her. "Sorry, kiddo. I know you wanted to win. I guess the owl really was bad luck."

"But," Olivia continued, proudly holding up a ribbon, "I won an honorable mention!" She reread her note from the judges: *Nice use of nature.*

Dad smiled. "So the owl brought you good luck."

Olivia smiled. "No, I made my own luck. But the owl did inspire me."

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1. Olivia is having a problem at the beginning of the story. What is it?
 - a. She is afraid to go outside in the dark.
 - b. She can't find anything to wear for a Halloween costume.
 - c. She doesn't know how to decorate her pumpkin for the school contest.
 - d. Her dad thinks bird-watching is a waste of time.

2. According to the reading passage, what are some of the different noises owls make?



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4. Read the following excerpt from the story.

She studied her pumpkin and bit her lip. Some of the leaves had shriveled up and crumbled off.

Based on your knowledge of the story, what emotion is Olivia experiencing in this passage?

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| a. worry | b. excitement |
| c. annoyance | d. delight |

5. What materials does Olivia use to decorate her pumpkin?

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The words below are scrambled words from "The Luck of the Owl," by Anita N. Amin. Unscramble each word and write it on the line. Check back in the story to make sure each word is spelled correctly.

1.

c	b	r	n	a
o	i	l	u	s

Clue: device that you look through
to see faraway objects

A red-bordered banner featuring a cartoon superhero character on the left and text on the right. The superhero is wearing a blue suit with a red cape and a shield-shaped logo on his chest with the letters 'MJS'. The text on the right says 'Preview' in large red letters, followed by 'Please log in to download the printable version of this worksheet.' in smaller black text.

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Clue: constantly thinking about something;
extremely preoccupied with something

4.

h	v	l	r	e
i	s	e	d	

Clue: crinkled and shrunken

5.

o	l	a	e	o
h	b	n	r	

Clue: respectable; worthy of praise

Name: _____

The Luck of the Owl

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In the story, "The Luck of the Owl" by Anita N. Amin, Olivia wins an honorable mention for her owl-decorated pumpkin. When Olivia's dad suggests that the owl they saw brought her "good luck," Olivia replies, "No, I made my own luck."

On the lines below, discuss what you think Olivia means when she says she "made her own luck." Do you believe in making your own luck? How is that different than believing in good luck or bad luck?



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ANSWER KEY

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1. Olivia is having a problem at the beginning of the story. What is it? **c.**
 - a. She is afraid to go outside in the dark.

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Olivia uses buttons for the eyes, bark for the horns and beak, and leaves for the feathers.

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binoculars

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