

Realistic Fiction

# Ramona Quimby, Age 8

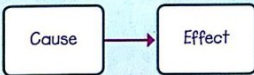
by Beverly Cleary  
illustrated by Anne-Sophie Lanquetin



## Genre Study

**Realistic fiction** stories have characters and settings that could be real. Look for

- characters with realistic problems.
- cause-and-effect relationships like those in real life.

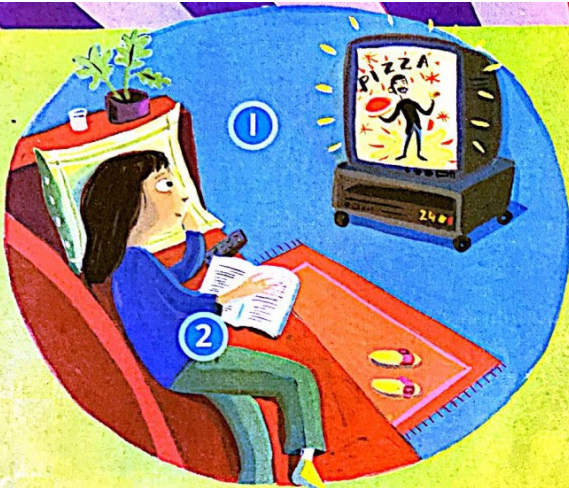


## Comprehension Strategy

**Answer questions** that you have or that your teacher asks to better understand what you read.

**CALIFORNIA STANDARDS**  
**ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS—Reading 2.2**  
 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text. *Reading 2.1* Distinguish common forms of literature (e.g., poetry, drama, fiction, nonfiction).





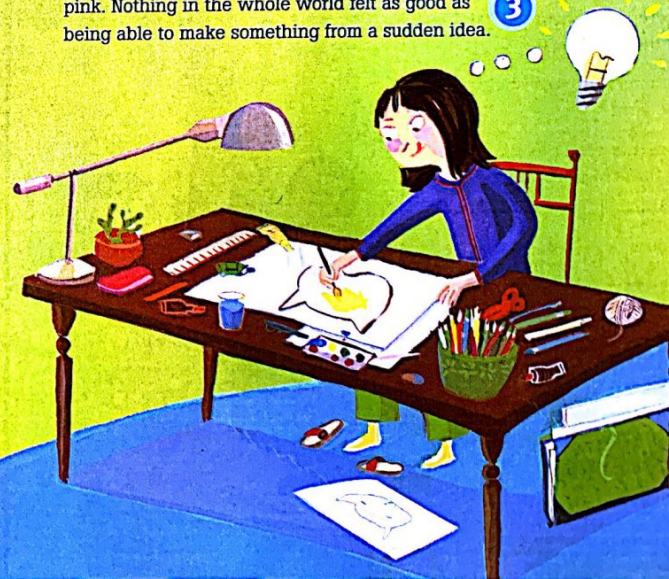
Two days ago, Ramona became sick at school and had to leave early. Now she is at home, worrying about what her classmates will think of her. She thinks that Danny might make fun of her for being sick. Ramona secretly refers to Danny as "Yard Ape" because he always seems to be noisily running around the schoolyard. 1

To pass the time at home, Ramona has been watching TV commercials. After a talk with her father, Ramona realizes that the purpose of commercials is to sell something.

In the meantime, Ramona's teacher, Mrs. Whaley, has sent a homework assignment. Ramona has to write a book report about a book called *The Left-Behind Cat*. Mrs. Whaley wants the students to pretend they are selling the book to someone. Ramona's sister, Beezus, says that most book reports sound alike, so Ramona is eager to make hers exciting. 2

### Ramona's Book Report

Ramona went to her room and looked at her table, which the family called "Ramona's studio," because it was a clutter of crayons, different kinds of paper, tape, bits of yarn, and odds and ends that Ramona used for amusing herself. Then Ramona thought a moment, and suddenly, filled with inspiration, she went to work. She knew exactly what she wanted to do and set about doing it. She worked with paper, crayons, tape, and rubber bands. She worked so hard and with such pleasure that her cheeks grew pink. Nothing in the whole world felt as good as being able to make something from a sudden idea. 3





Finally, with a big sigh of relief, Ramona leaned back in her chair to admire her work: three cat masks with holes for eyes and mouths, masks that could be worn by hooking rubber bands over ears. But Ramona did not stop there. With pencil and paper, she began to write out what she would say. She was so full of ideas that she printed rather than waste time in cursive writing. Next she phoned Sara and Janet, keeping her voice low and trying not to giggle so she wouldn't disturb her father any more than necessary, and explained her plan to them. Both her friends giggled and agreed to take part in the book report. Ramona spent the rest of the evening memorizing what she was going to say.

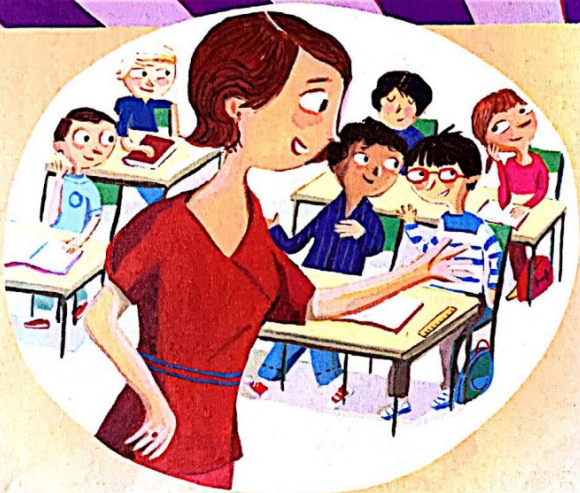


The next morning on the bus and at school, no one even mentioned Ramona's throwing up. She had braced herself for some remark from Yard Ape, but all he said was "Hi, Superfoot."

When school started, Ramona slipped cat masks to Sara and Janet, handed her written excuse for her absence to Mrs. Whaley, and waited, fanning away escaped fruit flies, for book reports to begin.







After arithmetic, Mrs. Whaley called on several people to come to the front of the room to pretend they were selling books to the class. Most of the reports began, "This is a book about . . ." and many, as Beezus had predicted, ended with ". . . if you want to find out what happens next, read the book."

Then Mrs. Whaley said, "We have time for one more report before lunch. Who wants to be next?"

Ramona waved her hand, and Mrs. Whaley nodded.

Ramona beckoned to Sara and Janet, who giggled in an embarrassed way but joined Ramona, standing behind her and off to one side. All three girls slipped on their cat masks and giggled again. Ramona took a deep breath as Sara and Janet began to chant, "Meow, meow, meow, meow. Meow, meow, meow, meow," and danced back and forth like the cats they had seen in the cat-food commercial on television.

2

1

3





"*Left-Behind Cat* gives kids something to smile about," said Ramona in a loud clear voice, while her chorus meowed softly behind her. She wasn't sure that what she said was exactly true, but neither were the commercials that showed cats eating dry cat food without making



any noise. "Kids who have tried *Left-Behind Cat* are all smiles, smiles, smiles. *Left-Behind Cat* is the book kids ask for by name. Kids can read it every day and thrive on it. The happiest kids read *Left-Behind Cat*. *Left-Behind Cat* contains cats, dogs, people—" Here Ramona caught sight of Yard Ape leaning back in his seat, grinning in the way that always flustered her.

1

She could not help interrupting herself with a giggle, and after suppressing it she tried not to look at Yard Ape and to take up where she had left off. "... cats, dogs, people—" The giggle came back, and Ramona was lost. She could not remember what came next. "... cats, dogs, people," she repeated, trying to start and failing.



Mrs. Whaley and the class waited. Yard Ape grinned. Ramona's loyal chorus meowed and danced. This performance could not go on all morning. Ramona had to say something, anything to end the waiting, the meowing, her book report. She tried desperately to recall a cat-food commercial, any cat-food commercial, and could not. All she could remember was the man on television who ate the pizza, and so she blurted out the only sentence she could think of, "I can't believe I read the whole thing!"

Mrs. Whaley's laugh rang out above the laughter of the class. Ramona felt her face turn red behind her mask, and her ears, visible to the class, turned red as well.

2

3







"Thank you Ramona," said Mrs. Whaley. "That was most entertaining. Class, you are excused for lunch."

Ramona felt brave behind her cat mask. "Mrs. Whaley," she said as the class pushed back chairs and gathered up lunch boxes, "that wasn't the way my report was supposed to end."

"Did you like the book?" asked Mrs. Whaley.

"Not really," confessed Ramona.

"Then I think it was a good way to end your report," said the teacher.





# Think Critically



- 1 What happens because Yard Ape grins at Ramona during her book report? CAUSE/EFFECT
- 2 How does the author let readers know that Ramona is creative? DRAW CONCLUSIONS
- 3 What would you do if you had to pretend to "sell" a book you didn't like? EXPRESS PERSONAL OPINIONS
- 4 How does Ramona solve her problem at the end of the book report? PROBLEM/SOLUTION
- 5 **WRITE** Write about a time you did something funny or creative. SHORT RESPONSE

**CALIFORNIA STANDARDS**  
**ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS**—Reading 2.2 Ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text; Reading 2.6 Extract appropriate and significant information from the text, including problems and solutions; Reading 3.3 Determine what characters are like by what they say or do and by how the author or illustrator portrays them; Writing 2.1 Write narratives.

## Meet the Author

# Beverly Cleary



Beverly Cleary once lived in a town so small that it didn't even have a library. When she moved to Portland, Oregon, Beverly Cleary spent a lot of time at the library.

Beverly Cleary became a librarian. Some of the children she met asked, "Where are the books about kids like us?" The answer came in Beverly Cleary's first book, *Henry Huggins*. In that book was a girl named Ramona Quimby.

Today there's a statue of Ramona Quimby in the neighborhood park where Beverly Cleary once lived. It is the same neighborhood where the books featuring Ramona take place.



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