

Science Fair Mix-Up



Haley browsed the books in the school library. She had promised to help Marcus, her neighbor's son, with his science fair project that was due next week. She would need to learn a little about the subject, or she wouldn't be able to help Marcus.

Her eyes landed on a bright red spine, and she grinned. This was the perfect one! She snatched the book and walked to the self-checkout kiosk. She used her library card to borrow the book about volcanoes and then hurried to the bus.

At home, she dropped her backpack and went to her room to read the book. She needed to know all she could about volcanoes.

The next afternoon, Haley helped Marcus prepare his volcano. She set out all the supplies he would need for school by proportioning out the white, powdery baking soda along with a small cup and lid that held vinegar. With this formula, the sodium bicarbonate in the baking soda would react with the carbonic acid in the vinegar. This reaction would cause the volcano to seem to erupt.

Together, they made a project board with fun facts about volcanoes. The board gave information about tectonic plates, lava, and magma. It also talked about famous volcanic eruptions in history. Haley made sure Marcus understood her instructions, and she promised she would come to witness his project in action. He was very capable, and she knew he would do well.

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At last, the day of the science fair arrived. Haley managed to get to the school just in time to watch Marcus showcase his volcano. When the time came for him to demonstrate his project, he poured the white powder into the volcano's base. Next, he poured in the vinegar.

Haley held her breath, her heart leaping with excitement. She waited, but nothing happened. Marcus shuffled restlessly.

Mr. Neil, the science teacher, stepped forward. "May I see the bag that holds the baking soda, please?" He swiped at the powder left over and then tasted it.

"I found the problem," he said. "I surmise that you brought all-purpose flour instead of baking soda. It doesn't have the same reaction with vinegar."

Haley felt her cheeks heat. Poor Marcus! She had messed up.

Mr. Neil patted Marcus's shoulder kindly. "Don't feel bad. You still made a great project."

Haley wished she hadn't mixed up Marcus's ingredients, but at least he wasn't upset. Mr. Neil was right. Marcus had made a great project, and she was very proud of him!

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1) What was Marcus's project?

2) What information did the project board have?

3) Match each cause to its effect.

A) Haley needed to help Marcus with his project.

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• Marcus couldn't see any chemical reaction.

B) Marcus brought all-purpose flour instead of baking soda.

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• Haley felt her cheeks heat.

C) Haley had messed up.

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• Haley borrowed a book from the library.

4) Was the mix-up a problem?

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- 5) Identify the figure of speech used in the underlined part of the sentence below.

Haley held her breath, her heart leaping with excitement.

- A) simile
- B) personification
- C) onomatopoeia