

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

An Idea for Tucker

Mrs. Flippen's class sat listening to a talk being given by a local author. Tucker sat slumped in one of the library chairs. Most of the students wanted to hear about the writer's work. Tucker did not.

"Why bother?" Tucker thought to himself. He always received low marks on his writing assignments, no matter how hard he worked on them. He could never think of anything interesting to write about.

"Does anyone have any questions?" Mrs. Flippen asked her class.

Tucker raised his hand, "How do you know what to write about?"

"Well, sometimes I don't," the author replied. "It takes a lot of hard work to come up with ideas." She reached down and pulled a battered looking book from a cloth bag on the floor. "I find making a scrapbook helps."



Tucker sat up a little straighter in his seat. “What’s in the book?” he asked.

“I fill it with pictures, stories, and notes about things that interest me.” The writer opened the scrapbook on her knee. She tipped it up for the class to see as she turned some of the pages. “When I need an idea, I look through the book instead of staring at a blank page.”

Tucker thought about the author’s scrapbook as he walked home. He thought about staring at a blank page each time he tried to write a story. Digging in his closet, Tucker found an old binder. He filled the binder with notepaper from his desk.

After supper, Tucker cut some pictures out of the newspaper. Then he drew some pictures of his own. He cut and pasted stories from his old magazines. Then he looked up the words he did not know and wrote down their meaning.



In the days and weeks that followed, Tucker collected more ideas. He found that the more he collected, the easier it became to find things to collect. He wrote down a unique name when he heard one; he wrote down the plays at a school football game; he copied out some facts from a book on animals; he wrote down a joke that he had heard and the lyrics to a song. Tucker's book of ideas grew fatter and fatter.

One morning, Mrs. Flippen told the class about a writing contest. The local author who had spoken to the class was donating books as prizes. There would be a prize for the best story in each grade. Tucker wanted to win. He wondered if he had found enough ideas to make a good story?

That night, Tucker looked through his book instead of staring at a blank page. At first, nothing happened. Slowly, he began to fit pieces together like a puzzle. He picked a setting for his story from a picture. He used the name from an article for his character. Tucker's story started to grow. He worked on it every night until it came time to hand in the story.



Tucker waited while each teacher read the stories for her grade. He waited for them to pick the winners. He waited for the principal to call out his name, but no one called Tucker's name. His story did not win.

"Why did I try?" he thought to himself and slumped in his chair.

"I know you are disappointed, Tucker," Mrs. Flippen said. "I want you to know I really liked your story, and you made it difficult to pick a winner. Your story might not be the best in the class this time, but it is your best work so far."

Tucker smiled at Mrs. Flippen and went to congratulate his classmate on her winning story. Maybe she would tell him where she got her story ideas.



Exercises:

1. True or False?

Tucker always received good grades on his writing assignments.	True	False
Tucker cut out pictures from the newspaper.	True	False
Tucker cut facts out of a book on animals.	True	False
The author donated gift cards as prizes.	True	False
Tucker wanted to win the writing contest.	True	False
Tucker went to congratulate his classmate on her story.	True	False

2. Fill in the blanks.

- a. The author pulled a _____ book from a _____ on the floor.

b. The author filled her scrapbook with _____,
_____, and _____ about
things that interested her.

c. Tucker looked up the _____ he did
not know and _____ down their
_____.

3. List three things Tucker put in his scrapbook.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

4. Make a list of three things you would put in an idea
scrapbook.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

Answers:

1. True or False?

Tucker always received good grades on his writing assignments.	True	<u>False</u>
Tucker cut out pictures from the newspaper.	<u>True</u>	False
Tucker cut facts out of a book on animals.	True	<u>False</u>
The author donated gift cards as prizes.	True	<u>False</u>
Tucker wanted to win the writing contest.	<u>True</u>	False
Tucker went to congratulate his classmate on her story.	<u>True</u>	False

2. Fill in the blanks.

- a. The author pulled a battered-looking book from a cloth bag on the floor.
- b. The author filled her scrapbook with pictures, stories, and notes about things that interested her.
- c. Tucker looked up the words he did not know and wrote down their meaning.

3. List three things Tucker put in his scrapbook.

pictures from the newspaper, stories from his magazines, the meanings of words he did not know, a unique name he heard, plays at a school soccer game, facts from a book on animals

4. Answers will vary.