

Here, three seventh graders worked on their idea development and organization skills as they wrote and revised the following “Silly Animal Problem” stories. Read each story, then work with a partner to decide where you think each author’s best example of good idea development and organization lies. Be prepared to share with the whole class.



### **Sammy the Balloon Squirrel**

by Simon, 7<sup>th</sup> grader

It all started one cold winter eve in a homey little hollowed out tree in the Acorn Acres province.

“Wahhh! Waahhhh!” cried baby Sammy the Squirrel.

“Hushhh,” whispered mama squirrel. “Hush.”

Sammy took his first few steps. His eyes immediately met the acorn stash. *Crunch, crunch, crunch!* And from that day forward, Sammy the Squirrel was nuts for acorns.

By the time Sammy was an adult, he was the biggest, fattest and hungriest squirrel of them all. He was eating all the acorns in the forest. This deeply frustrated the mayor of Acorn Acres, Chipmunk Charlie.

“Sammy, you need to stop eating all the acorns. The others are forced to eat dirt. They’re as skinny as a twig...in a bad way.”

“Yah, yah, yah!” But that only made Sammy even madder and he ate 10 times as much as usual. He was devouring whole trees. He was huge, huge, huge. Then he ate a particularly good-tasting tree. It was honey flavored. It was Honey B’s tree. Now Sammy was in big trouble with a bee!

“You enormous squirrel, you ate my hive!”

“Oh shucks, I’m sorry...NOT! Ha ha ha!” he chuckled. “I’ll never stop eating!”

“Errrrrr!” screamed Honey. She immediately began formulating a plan with Mayor Charlie.

The next day, Sammy was on a rage eating homes and trees, and washing them down with a river or two.

“It must stop now!” Charlie shouted.

Honey stuffed a can of helium in a hollowed out tree, and Sammy devoured it. His body began to fill with helium. He was bigger than ever. He floated up to the sky filled with helium and Honey flew by and pricked him just enough with her stinger to pop a hole in Sammy.

All the acorns came raining down to the starving citizens of Acorn Acres, and Sammy was forever remembered, but mostly on balloon designs.



### **Spots and Stripes**

by Kendall, 7<sup>th</sup> grader

“1...2...3... 4,” Risky started to stutter as he counted his thick black spots that were up and down his long legs, front and back. He had spots, all the way down his back, and up his neck. Risky had spots all over... which was very strange because he was a zebra...and zebras normally have stripes... actually all zebras have stripes, and it was unheard of for a zebra to have spots. Risky also had big black, beady eyes that almost looked like two extra spots. He loves to dance, especially a certain dance. The moon walk would be his favorite.

Risky loved his mama, so they often spend lots of time together. One day Risky and mama were walking through the thick marsh and all the other animals began to point and laugh at Risky. Mama zebra began to get red in the cheeks. Risky didn’t noticed they were doing it until he looked at mama. That one encounter made him feel ashamed of his spots.

Many years later, when Risky was much older, he was much wrinklier than he had been in the years before. Risky and his lion friend, Lufuanda, went to the beach to catch some sun. They lay out there in the sand all day!

At the end of the long day, Risky went to go rinse off the sand that he had all over his tail, and when he hit the water, his reflection caught the corner of his eye. What he saw amazed him! He had gotten so wrinkly his spots started to stretch along with his wrinkles, so they looked like stripes! He was overjoyed at the sight!

When Risky got home and began to do his normal routine that he always did before bed, that’s when he began to miss his spots; he had nothing to count. Risky went to mama and told her about the problem, and she reminded him that he would always have his two best spots...the ones in his eyes.



## Hal Hummingbird

by Blaize, 7<sup>th</sup> grader

Hal the Hummingbird was sitting in his flowerpot, gazing at the sky and crying. He wished he was flying among the sun, the clouds, and most of all, the other hummingbirds. Unfortunately, Hal fell out of a nest at an early age and fractured his left wing. The doctor said he would be unable to fly for the rest of his life. Since Hal could not fly from flower to flower to get food, he lived in a flowerpot.

One hot, summer day, when the flower in Hal's flowerpot had little nectar and Hal was starving, a fat, juicy bumblebee landed in the flowerpot. A starving Hal snatched the bee in half a millisecond and was careful not to get stung. "Stop," yelled the bee, "I can help you! I'm an inventor." Hal was a little confused, but he released the bee.

"Thanks. My name is Bob. To reach me, go 21.8 yards north, turn right and keep going until you find an oak tree. Turn thirty degrees counter clockwise and go that way for 43.5 seconds. Look to the left and you'll see the Aspen tree in which my hive is located. Bye," buzzed Bob as he flew away.

Hal was still hungry (and confused) until his friend, Frank, another hummingbird, came. "You know what migration is, don't you Hal?" asked Frank. "It's when all of the hummingbirds fly south to escape the cold and eat Mexican food. Unfortunately, with your bad wing, you'll have to stay and endure the cold. Don't worry. I'll bring a taco back for you."

A month later, and it was almost time for migration. Hal was very worried because he couldn't fly. Suddenly, Hal thought of Bob and spent four hours tracking him down on foot. When Hal finally found Bob, he explained his problem. Bob thought that his new invention might help. It was called a plane, and it turned out to be a machine that flies. Hal used it to fly away and find Frank.

They flew south, and over the Gulf of Mexico to "escape the cold and eat Mexican food".

The assignment that inspired this writing can be found at the WritingFix website:

[http://writingfix.com/Picture\\_Book\\_Prompts/Dogbreath1.htm](http://writingfix.com/Picture_Book_Prompts/Dogbreath1.htm)