

# Growing Minds in Language Arts #4

## Lessons for Stimulating Thinking

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# Teacher's Guide For "The Noon Hour"

## ABOUT THE ACTIVITY

"The Noon Hour" is based on the kind of mystery that often turns out to be amusing. How your students will solve the problem of Mr. Johnson's unusual behavior depends upon their individual imaginations. Some may see deviousness in the silence of his office, and others may imagine that he is simply napping.

### Level 1: Sketching the scene in Mr. Johnson's office

In the story, Jeremy's curiosity gets the better of him and he dares to open Mr. Johnson's office door to find out what has happened to his boss. Your students are to sketch the scene that greets his eyes. You will probably find the sketches interesting and entertaining. It is important that your students do their thinking and sketching on their own.

### Level 2: Offering an explanation for Mr. Johnson's behavior

After making a sketch of Mr. Johnson's office and thus giving a solution to the mystery, your students are to write an explanation of his behavior. The explanation can be brief, especially if the sketch reveals the solution.

### Level 3: Describing a puzzling experience

The writing to be done at the end of this activity is to be as lengthy as the student chooses. The idea is for the story about Mr. Johnson to trigger a memory and thus motivate the student to write. By being rather informal about this task, I hope your students will write in a spontaneous and natural way. Any polishing of their writing can be left up to them. If you can encourage them to proofread, rewrite, and then have someone critically read the second draft, this will be a successful activity.

**Targeted Learner Outcomes:** The student will:

- draw a sketch of Mr. Johnson's office
- explain why Jeremy couldn't get a response from Mr. Johnson
- describe a puzzling experience

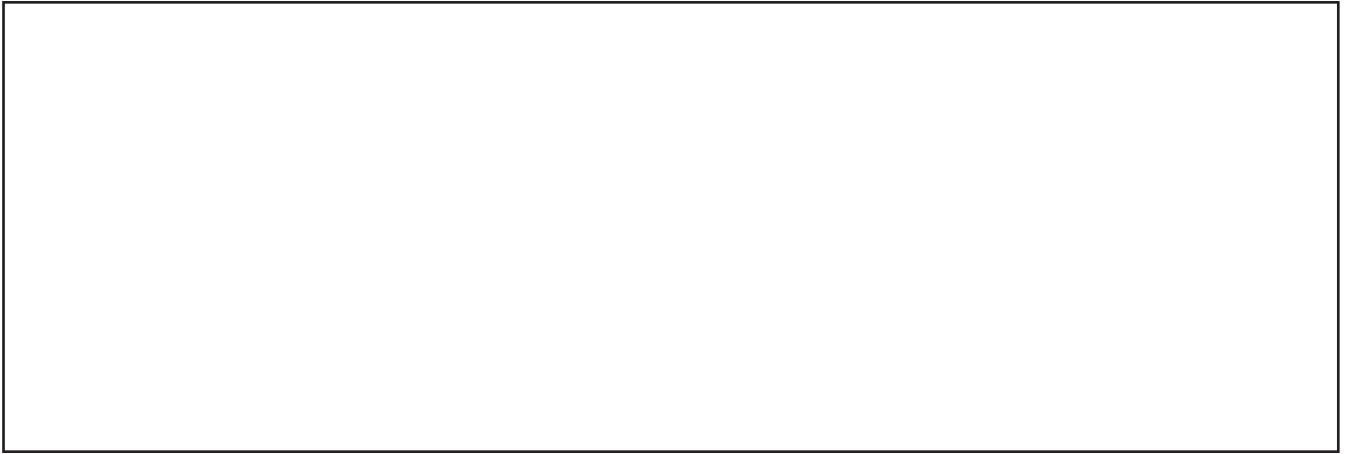
## The Noon Hour

**A.** Mr. Johnson was fond of taking a nap in his office after lunch. His staff was quite familiar with this habit; when his door was closed during the noon hour, they didn't disturb him. If a call came for Mr. Johnson, whoever answered the telephone just wrote down the message and didn't forward the call to him.

So, on this Tuesday, no one paid much attention to the fact that the door to Mr. Johnson's office was closed at 1:30. By 2:15, however, several of the staff became aware that the door was still shut, and commented about it. Since Mr. Johnson almost always opened his door by 1:00, people became concerned. Mr. Johnson was nothing if not a punctual employer. In spite of their concern, no one had knocked on the door by 3:30. Mr. Johnson was also an intimidating kind of boss.

Finally, at closing time, Jeremy, the junior member of the office staff, decided he'd risk it. He knocked on the door rather gently. No sound came from within. He knocked harder. Still nothing could be heard inside Mr. Johnson's office. Feeling both frustrated and highly curious, Jeremy opened the door.

What do you think he saw? Draw a sketch of it.



**B.** What explanation do you have for what Jeremy saw?

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**C.** Life is full of little mysteries like the one about Mr. Johnson. Usually the mystery is quickly cleared up, but sometimes we don't get the solution for quite a while; and occasionally the mystery is never solved. Have you had any experiences that puzzled you recently? Briefly describe one.

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