

**Objective** sight words (career, switch, delicious, sprinkled, squeezed, direction, carefully, scrambled, crowds, controlled, directing); concepts (predict, hypothesize, insight, scientific log, rubric summary, “in the name of science”, routinely)



Vocabulary	
career	carefully
switch	scrambled
delicious	crowds
sprinkled	controlled
squeezed	directing
direction	

## Tara's Terrarium

By: Sue Peterson

Tara was looking forward to the science fair this Monday. Science was her favorite subject and someday Tara wanted to follow in her mother and grandmother's footsteps to be a scientist for her future career.

Tara had planned out her experiment about plants and followed the scientific rubric that her teacher, Mrs. Winston, had outlined. Last night Tara realized that her experiment would not work. The plants that were in the dark basement and were not watered seemed to be growing better than the plants that were in the sun and being watered daily. Tara knew that science experiments were to predict something

was going to happen and to hypothesize why something would happen. But how would Tara explain this?

She needed to switch gears and come up with a different idea. Tara had stayed up through the night to do some research on plant experiments. With a little luck and some scientific insight, this might just work out.

After a delicious breakfast of hot oatmeal sprinkled with brown sugar, Tara finished her freshly squeezed orange juice and was ready to go. The experiments needed to be set up Monday morning so she needed to hurry.

Dusting off a large glass jar from the basement, Tara was headed in a new direction. “This will work out great!” Tara shouted as she ran up the stairs. Then she carefully placed a thin layer of sand followed by some black, rich dirt into the jar. She grabbed some of the plants that had grown well from her first experiment and tucked a few into the dirt. It took a little longer than she had thought because the top of the jar was quite narrow.

Tara carefully placed the hermit crabs into the sand. They scrambled into their shells, a little frightened in their new environment. Tara filled a small container of water and placed it against some rocks. She made a mental note to refill the water daily so the crabs could have enough water if they needed some. Then she sprinkled some of the crab food powder near the shells.

It was almost late afternoon and Tara needed to add notes to her scientific log. She copied the dates from the weekend into the log and wrote all of the details of how her first experiment did not quite work out. Then she wrote a summary of what her new experiment was all about. She was careful to follow the rubric that Mrs. Winston had reviewed. She was going to grade the experiments right before the science fair opened to the crowds of people who routinely came to view it.

Tara almost forgot. She did not want anything to happen this time. There would be no excuse for her changing her experiment again. Tara placed the small section of screen she had found in the garage on top of the jar and tightly added a rubber band around the opening. The crabs would be sure to get enough air and they would be safe. She did not want anything to happen to the crabs. After all, they were her brother's. She had hoped he wouldn't care if she borrowed them for a few days. It was "in the name of science" and she thought that Ted would understand.

Tara wrote about the terrarium she created: *A terrarium is a container designed to hold small plants and animals in a controlled condition.* (A "controlled" condition is a way of directing what is going to happen.) She wrote about the

beach environment she created for the crabs. Luckily, she already knew a lot about crabs.

When her log was completed, she placed it next to her terrarium. She was happy to be finished and quite pleased that her experiment worked out after all. Then she ran off to find Ted and to thank him for the crabs.



## Practice

### Language Work

A. Write the words.

career \_\_\_\_\_

switch \_\_\_\_\_

sprinkled \_\_\_\_\_

squeezed \_\_\_\_\_

scrambled \_\_\_\_\_

B. Use each word in a sentence. Underline the word used.

delicious \_\_\_\_\_

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direction \_\_\_\_\_

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carefully \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

controlled \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

directing \_\_\_\_\_

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C. Matching. Draw a line to connect the word to its meaning.

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. career                   | a) to guess what will happen                                  |
| 2. predict                  | b) a written record of a scientist                            |
| 3. hypothesize              | c) to do over and over again                                  |
| 4. insight                  | d) your life's profession                                     |
| 5. scientific log           | e) the reason to justify taking the crabs in the story        |
| 6. "in the name of science" | f) a step in an experiment to what is going to happen and why |
| 7. routinely                | g) having deep wisdom and understanding of something          |

- D. Phonics work. The word “routinely” is spelled with the vowels “ou” in the first syllable to make the “ew” sound. Write two more words that are spelled with the “ou” letters that make the “ew” sound. Circle the “ou” letters.

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- E. Word Search. Find these words in the puzzle: career, switch, sprinkled, squeezed, directing, carefully, controlled.

D	E	E	V	W	H	F	T	D	J	K	L	Q	G	G
J	V	D	Y	E	E	D	I	W	M	Z	B	R	G	N
L	N	A	E	E	Y	R	E	D	X	P	T	C	H	I
C	A	C	I	L	E	W	S	L	N	Z	U	N	Y	T
W	A	V	N	C	I	R	P	U	B	E	L	J	S	C
S	T	R	T	Y	F	C	R	B	C	M	D	J	W	E
O	S	I	E	X	M	L	I	A	Q	O	A	M	I	R
F	O	G	H	E	W	Q	N	O	I	F	X	R	T	I
N	G	O	O	B	R	K	K	M	U	Z	K	U	C	D
L	V	Z	X	T	K	Y	L	G	F	S	S	J	H	S
L	S	Q	U	E	E	Z	E	D	S	G	Q	Y	I	I
E	N	I	E	A	R	W	D	Y	E	K	L	E	S	G
C	O	N	T	R	O	L	L	E	D	A	J	K	M	G
A	T	V	S	N	R	X	X	W	G	O	Y	X	A	Z
Y	L	L	U	F	E	R	A	C	X	R	X	D	I	B

**Multiple-Choice Questions** (Put an X in front of the correct answer.)

1. In the text, what was **one** of the main reasons that Tara wanted to be a scientist some day?  
☐ a. She has a brother with hermit crabs.  
☐ b. She likes animals.  
☐ c. She wants to experiment.  
☐ d. Her mother and grandmother are scientists.
2. According to the text, why didn't Tara's first experiment work out for the Science Fair?  
☐ a. She did not have enough time.  
☐ b. She did not have enough plants.  
☐ c. She could not explain the hypothesis and the results.  
☐ d. She had too much other homework.
3. Which one of these is **not** mentioned in the story as necessary to make Tara's terrarium?  
☐ a. a jar  
☐ b. a sand, dirt, rocks  
☐ c. water  
☐ d. a screen and rubber band  
☐ e. insects

**Definitions** (Write the meaning of each word as it is used in the text.)

1. switch

2. sprinkled

3. squeezed



**Extended Response** (Answer in complete sentences.)

1. How do you know that Tara is a good problem solver?

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2. At the end of the text, Tara runs off to find her brother. Why did she use her brother's crabs without permission?

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3. Can you explain 2 or more reasons why Tara's first experiment did not work out?

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## Answer Sheet

Answers for Matching, Multiple-Choice Questions, and Extended Response

### **Tara's Terrarium**

#### **Matching**

**1(d); 2(a); 3(f); 4(g); 5(b); 6(e); 7(c)**

#### **Multiple-Choice Questions**

- 1. d**
- 2. c**
- 3. e**

#### **Extended Response (Accept reasonable answers.)**

- 1. Tara was able to change her science project and make it work at the last minute.**
- 2. Tara knew it would be okay to take her brother's crabs because she needed them for school and she just did not have the time to ask her brother ahead of time.**
- 3. Write 2 or more reasons: Sometimes it is difficult to understand why a science experiment does not work out the way you think it will. Maybe if Tara had more time, the plants in the dark and without water would not do as well in the end. Or Tara may have over-watered the plants upstairs or perhaps the sunlight was too strong for them. These are just some of the reasons why Tara did not get the results she had hoped.**