

Quickread



Deep Delivery

"I love my job. I get to drive a submarine!" you think, as you climb aboard the one-man vessel. To you, diving down in the ocean deep is awesome. In fact, you are having a blast working for the Remote Transit Company, just before your first year of high school starts. RTC delivers fragile freight to tricky places.

As an RTC driver, you haul cargo to underwater research pods. Your trips are full of amazing sights and eerie quiet. Yet, you must be careful. There

is one danger that could be the end of you: the giant squid. That's why your pay is so good. Not too many kids will take on the risk. Being crushed by the powerful tentacles of a sea monster doesn't seem like a good time. RTC has to pay well to find fearless drivers.

Thankfully, you haven't seen a squid in your few trips from Seashell Harbor to Atlantis 12. It's a dome-shaped building on the Pacific Ocean floor. There, scientists do secret experiments for the government. You hear that they are using rare species of sea life. These are animals that can be found nowhere else.

Today, as the propellers of your sub push you downward, you see what you never really thought you would. About fifty feet away is none other than the hungriest looking creature you can imagine. It is closing on you fast. You know in a moment its long, sticky arms will be wrapping around your metal submersible. That is, unless you act quickly. "You're not getting this delivery kid. Not today," you vow. You take one hand away from the steering wheel and tap the touchscreen computer on your dashboard. You must contact RTC Central Command.

In seconds, the face of your supervisor, Mr. Haddock, shows on the screen via video call. You begin evasive driving. This is what you are trained to do. You jerk the control column sharply to the left, and push up on a lever to increase your speed. That seems to do the trick. It puts some distance between you and the squid. "This is Haddock. What's wrong, Driver 17?"

"Squid. Biggest I've ever seen. Tell me how to lose this thing."

"Relax," orders Mr. Haddock. "This is the first one you've seen. You don't know if it's big or not." You gaze into your rear-view mirror. The squid is back. It is clearly chasing you now. You are being hunted.

Sweat pours from your brow. Your heart beats rapidly. "I bet I could go faster if I dropped the package."

"No!" yells Mr. Haddock. "Do that and you're fired. We can never lose a customer's cargo. On your dashboard is a red button. It has a picture of a cloud on it. Press it as the squid gets within ten feet. Do it too soon, and it won't work. Do it too late, and well..."

You look at the button. All this time, you have wondered what it does. But,

you never thought to ask. Now, you are about to find out. When the squid is close enough, you are a prize fighting boxer going for a knockout. Your fist hits the button that hard.

At first, you don't think anything has happened. There are no sounds of bombs going off. There are no harpoons being shot out at that ugly squid. "Is the button broken?" you wonder. But, just then, you notice a brownish pool of liquid. It fills the water behind you.

"Did you do it?" asks Mr. Haddock. "Did you release the repellent?"

"Yeah. Phew. I think it worked. The squid is gone," you say. You sit back in your seat. A feeling of relief washes over you.

"That's synthetic squid stink. The same kind a squid squirts when it feels scared. It tricks the creature into thinking it should flee. But, it costs a fortune. It only works half the time."

"Got it," you say. "Moving on to make my delivery." You tap an area on the screen to close the call with your boss. Then, you steer the shipment back on track. "After this, I think I might get a new job," you whisper.

Review Quiz

1. What was the direct effect of you suggesting you should drop the package?

- Cause & Effect (RL.3)
- A You were fired from your job.
 - B The submarine lost all power.
 - C Mr. Haddock yelled at you.
 - D The squid swam closer to the submarine.

2. After reading the story, it wouldn't make sense to say that—

- Inferencing (RL.1)
- A you won't be a driver for RTC much longer.
 - B RTC doesn't train its drivers very well.
 - C Mr. Haddock was hoping the squid would get you.
 - D your submarine probably couldn't outrun the squid.

3. You and the squid are the same in that you—

- Compare/Cont. (RL.3)
- A both travel underwater.
 - B both live in the Pacific Ocean.
 - C both are slimy.
 - D both have a boss to answer to.

4. From where, to where, do you usually travel when making a delivery?

- Recalling Details (RL.1)
- A From Atlantis Harbor to Seaswell City.
 - B From a building under the sea to a harbor on the beach.
 - C From your house to the Atlanta Dome.
 - D From Seashell Harbor to Atlantis 12.

5. Who was a supporting character (one with a lesser, helpful role) in this story?

- Character (RL.3)
- A Mr. Haddock.
 - B You.
 - C The squid.
 - D RTC.

Review Quiz

6. Which of the following statements about your character is merely an opinion?

- Fact or Opinion? (RL.1)
- A You are a submarine driver for the Remote Transit Company.
 - B You should not have been so easily frightened by the squid.
 - C Your boss, Mr. Haddock, helped you lose the squid.
 - D This was the first time you had ever before seen a squid.

7. You say “Phew” when the squid is gone. This is an example of—

- Figurative Lang. (RL.4)
- A personification (the giving of human traits to something that isn’t human).
 - B hyperbole (an extreme exaggeration).
 - C alliteration (words that start with the same sound used close together).
 - D onomatopoeia (a word that mimics the sound to which it refers).

8. Which term can replace eerie in paragraph 2 and retain the same meaning?

- Vocabulary (RL.4)
- A exciting.
 - B maddening.
 - C spooky.
 - D natural.

9. Which detail is part of the story’s exposition (background information)?

- Exposition (RL.10)
- A That you will start high school in the fall.
 - B That there is a touchscreen computer in your submarine.
 - C That after dealing with the squid, you may want a new job.
 - D That you went on to deliver your cargo after the squid encounter.

10. What could be the lesson, or theme, of this story?

- Theme (RL.2)
- A Sometimes high-paying jobs aren’t worth the tradeoffs.
 - B Piloting a submarine is harder than it looks.
 - C Don’t trust your boss. He or she is always out to ruin you.
 - D Always be ready for a squid attack.

Open Response

1. Would you like to drive a submarine as your job someday? Do you think it would be fun, or would it be hard work? What do you imagine you would most enjoy about driving one? What about it might you not like?

2. If you could live under the sea in a big house with clear, glass outside walls, would you want to? Why or why not? What could be the good things and bad things about living down on the cold, dark ocean floor?

3. What might have happened if the squid had caught up to you, instead of you getting away? Do you think it could have actually crushed your submarine? Should you have really been so scared? Explain your opinion.

4. The giant squid is an actual animal that lives in our oceans. Do some research on the Internet and learn all you can about this creature. What are some of the most interesting squid facts you have discovered?

5. In the story, it is mentioned that you're making deliveries to people who are doing secret tests, or experiments, on rare sea life. Do you think it is okay for people to use animals as test subjects? If so, why? If not, why not?
