

Mike

Name _____

One day as Mike was batting a gasoline can around, the loud thuds and irritating banging noises it produced resulted in a few of his fellow chimpanzees running quickly away from the strange object and the noise it

produced. Mike understood this to mean that he had found a means to intimidate his fellow chimpanzees.

With some practice, Mike was able to run down the narrow forest paths smacking and slapping the raucous tin can in front of him as he emitted loud pant hoots. As he became more skilled in playing "gasoline can dribbling", he picked up speed and became a terrifyingly accurate "can batter". It was about this time that Mike realized that if one can made a terrible noise and frightened other chimpanzees- two cans would be even better!

Keeping this in mind, Mike began to practice his new brand of display with two cans bouncing off trees and earth as he went running madly down the path with hair standing erect, shoulders pushed back, and face molded into a fiercely determined look. Chimpanzees cringed in fear as they heard his noisy approach and saw him running at them. They scattered off the path and out of his way

The success that Mike found intimidating the members of his community with two gasoline cans, once again caused the "brainy" Mike to think. If two cans caused the big dominant males to run off the path in front of him- three cans would surely make an even greater impression on them.

Mike began to incorporate a third can in his "gasoline can dribbling" display for dominance. Large high-ranking males fled up the tree trunks when Mike began his descent down the forest path slapping, kicking, and smacking three cans in front of him! The cans caused a terrible noise. The other chimpanzees had never seen or heard anything like it. It was as if the worse thunderstorm had erupted and Mike was directing it toward them. They shrieked and tried desperately to get away from him and the terrible rattling and banging noise the cans made as they flew down the hill in their direction. Not wanting to fight with the unknown the males of Mike's

community acquiesced. Mike became the first alpha male ever to employ his brain rather than his brawn to govern his community. One year after Mike began his unusual display, he attained the position of alpha male.

He reigned as alpha male over 14 adult males and vigorously maintained his rank against their challenges. When the gasoline cans that helped him produce elaborate nerve racking displays were removed, Mike quickly turned rolling and slapping huge rocks about the ground and flailing the air with enormous tree branches to produce a much needed intimidating effect. During his more tranquil and peaceful moments, Mike generously shared meat and often groomed other high-ranking males.

Eventually, an aggressive adult male, Humphrey challenged Mike and in one decisive fight, Mike was deposed. However, Mike will always be remembered for his intelligent use of tools to frighten his community members to get to the "top".



1. Draw a cartoon that shows the main ideas or plot of the section you just read.

2. Place the ideas or events in sequential order.

3. Tell about a movie, book or actual event with a similar theme. Explain how they are related.

4. Think about characters in the story. How are any of them the same type of character that you have met in other stories?

5. Authors work with words. Look back at the story and how this author used words to make you see, feel and understand the message.

6. Identify a phrase, why you included it, and why it is effective.

7. What did the story or selection tell you about the author and her way of looking at life?

8. Authors often write pieces that are a "product of their time". How is this true of the author or piece?