**The Last Minute**

**SUMMARY** A girl named Katy puts off reading a book for an assigned book report. When she is forced to finish her book and write about it during one very stressful weekend, Katy vows to never again leave any assignment until the last minute.

**LESSON VOCABULARY**
- butterflies collection
- enormous scattered
- shoelaces strain

**INTRODUCE THE BOOK**

**INTRODUCE THE TITLE AND AUTHOR** Discuss with students the title and the author of *The Last Minute*. How does the cover illustration support the title? What situations might the author have in mind for Katy based on these elements?

**BUILD BACKGROUND** Have students discuss situations in which they put off assignments or tasks until the last minute. What challenges did they face while trying to meet their deadlines?

**PREVIEW/USE TEXT FEATURES** As students look through the illustrations, have them focus on the characters’ poses and facial expressions. Then discuss what they think the characters are doing.

**READ THE BOOK**

**SET PURPOSE** Have students set a purpose for reading *The Last Minute*. This purpose may be guided by students’ own experiences with completing school assignments at the last minute. Ask them to think about what they learned from these experiences and what Katy, the main character of the book, might learn from hers.

**STRATEGY SUPPORT: QUESTIONING** Remind students that asking good questions about important text information in a story is a good way to become a better reader. *Questioning* can take place before, during, and after reading a story. After previewing and setting a purpose for reading *The Last Minute*, encourage students to ask themselves a question to keep in mind as they begin. Model: I wonder what this will be about.

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

**PAGE 4** Katy’s friend, Pam, began working on her book report early. How do you think Pam’s report turned out? Why? *(Possible response: Pam’s report probably turned out well because she gave herself enough time to finish it.)*

**PAGES 6–10** What drew Katy’s attention away from writing her report? In what order did these activities happen? *(Katy was first distracted by soccer practice, then by watching TV, and then by working on a coin collection, the need to clean up her room, and a soccer game.)*

**PAGE 15** What did Katy promise to do after she handed in her book report? Why? *(Katy promised to never leave anything until the last minute again because cramming for her book report was so stressful.)*
REVISIT THE BOOK

READER RESPONSE

1. Possible evidence: Pam read her book right away; she suggests that Katy go to the library to get a book; tells Katy that she always leaves things until the last minute. Possible conclusion: Pam plans ahead and is also a very good friend.

2. Answers will vary but should reflect the confusion and regrets that Katy’s procrastination caused her.

3. The base words are inform and collect.
   Possible sentences: When are you going to inform your teacher of your book selection? Chris decided to collect baseball cards.

4. Possible answer: Start my homework earlier.

EXTEND UNDERSTANDING Tell students that a plot is an organized pattern of events in a story. Use simple story maps with students to help them determine and note the most important events of the story. For example, point out that Katy’s soccer game on page 10 is important because it is yet another obstacle that prevents Katy from writing her report on time, whereas the place where her teammates decide to have ice cream afterward is not important to the pattern of the story.

RESPONSE OPTIONS

WRITING Tell students that Katy might have had fewer problems if she had created and followed a timetable of things to do for her book report. Invite students to select a real-life assignment with a deadline and create a timetable of things they must do in order to meet the deadline.

WORD WORK Create sentences with each of the vocabulary words, but leave a blank space where each vocabulary word should be. Provide students with a word bank of vocabulary to complete the sentences.

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION

Many people face deadlines as part of their daily routines. Discuss what kinds of jobs involve deadlines and why it is important for people with those jobs to manage their time carefully.

Skill Work

TEACH/REVIEW VOCABULARY
Ask students to find how each vocabulary word is used in the book. Encourage them to use the illustrations for clues to define the vocabulary in their own words.

TARGET SKILL AND STRATEGY

DRAW CONCLUSIONS Explain to students that an author may not tell exactly what a story is about but leave it up to the reader to figure out, or draw a conclusion. The Last Minute, for instance, almost gets lost in details about Katy and her book report. Ask students to tell what they believe is the most important idea behind this story.

QUESTIONING Have students revisit and answer the questions they asked themselves before they began to read The Last Minute. Then have them generate a final question, such as I wonder what the author wanted me to remember from this story.

ELL Ask students to identify words in the book that they are struggling with. Help them create a glossary based on these words.

ADDITIONAL SKILL INSTRUCTION

SEQUENCE Tell students that a story’s sequence tells the order in which events occur. Using sequence skills to keep track of which events happened first, next, and last is essential for a correct understanding of books such as The Last Minute. Ask volunteers to explain how the events of the beginning and middle of the story have a dramatic effect on its ending.
Draw Conclusions

- When you **draw a conclusion**, you think about facts and details and decide something about them.

**Directions** Read the following passage from *The Last Minute*. Insert one fact about Katy in the first box and another fact about her in the second box. Write your conclusion in the last box.

**Fact**

Tuesday came, and Katy watched TV for a few hours after school. Then she worked on her coin collection until bedtime. She loved her shiny coins.

“It’s too late to read now,” she decided.

“Tomorrow I’ll start it for sure.”

Pam told her she couldn’t come over after school the next day. “I have to work on my book report. Are you liking your horse book?”

**Fact**

“I’m going to start it today,” Katy said.

“Boy!” Pam exclaimed. “You always leave things until the last minute!”

“It’s not the last minute,” Katy told her.

“I still have four whole days left.”

That night Katy had to clean her room. When he finished she was too tired to read. The next night she could only understand a few pages before she went to sleep.

**Conclusion**
Check the Words You Know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>butterflies</th>
<th>collection</th>
<th>enormous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scattered</td>
<td>shoelaces</td>
<td>strain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. butterflies
   wings  insects  flutters  Monarchs
2. collection
   group  set  scattering  book
3. enormous
   huge  tiny  medium  giant
4. scattered
   grouped  separated  sprinkled  sorted
5. shoelaces
   ribbons  soles  ties  shoestrings
6. strain
   achieve  try  strive  complete

Directions Write a paragraph that includes at least four of the vocabulary words.

The Last Minute