

# Hic!

by George R. Paterson



1 You never know when they'll start. Maybe you're reading. Maybe you're playing a game. You're minding your own business. All of a sudden you go *hic*! A few seconds pass. You go *hic* again.

2 "Uh-oh! It's the hiccups. I hope they—*hic*—go away soon!"

3 The hiccups aren't an illness. They're just something that happens. One of the muscles that helps you breathe starts jerking for no good reason. (Parts of your body do that sometimes.) That's when you *hic*. The hiccups are as unwelcome as a bad cold. They're a big bother.

4 At first, they may seem funny. You may be sitting in class. You keep going *hic, hic, hic*. Your friends may start to giggle. *Hic, hic, hic*! What if they don't stop? Then it's not so funny. If they go on too long, hiccups can make you feel bad. They can make you feel as bad as any illness. They can hurt!

5 Most people think they know how to stop hiccups. Just ask them. They'll tell you to hold your breath. They may tell you to breathe into a paper bag for a few minutes. Or drink a whole glass of water while you hold your breath. Or drink water from the far side of a glass. (That's hard!) Or get someone to scare you by making a loud noise. Some of these cures seem to work. You might as well try them. One of them might help you.

6 Doctors can't do much for the hiccups. There are a few medicines that help to stop the hiccups



sometimes. But most doctors just tell you to wait. Wait until the hiccups go away. That's fairly good advice because most of the time they last only a short while.

7 Charles Osborne wasn't so lucky. He hiccupped every one and a half seconds for sixty-nine years and five months—from the autumn of 1922 to February of 1990—before his hiccups went away. That's 1,460,000,000 times—or one billion four hundred sixty million *hics*!

8 What finally cured him? No one knows. Maybe he scared himself with an extra loud *HIC*!

## COMPREHENSION

**A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 This story mainly tells how
  - a** holding your breath stops the hiccups.
  - b** Charles Osborne cured himself of the hiccups.
  - c** people get the hiccups and try to get rid of them.
- 2 No one really knows how to cure the hiccups because
  - a** they aren't an illness, so no one cares.
  - b** no one knows exactly why they start.
  - c** most doctors just tell you to wait.

- 3 The hiccups are like an illness because you
  - a** know why you get each one.
  - b** don't like to get either one.
  - c** can get rid of both easily.
- 4 Because they went on for about sixty-nine years, Charles Osborne's hiccups probably
  - a** started hurting him just before they stopped.
  - b** stopped bothering him.
  - c** only happened at night.
- 5 The only sure cure for hiccups is
  - a** time.
  - b** water.
  - c** loud noises.

## LEARN ABOUT WORDS

**B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 parts of a minute (1)
- 2 take air into your body and let it out again (3)
- 3 making sudden movements (3)
- 4 not wanted (3)
- 5 trouble; cause of worry (3)
- 6 laugh in a silly way (4)
- 7 sickness (4)
- 8 healed; made well (8)

**C** **too** = also

**two** = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings are called homophones. *Too* and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

9 **know** (3)

Charles had \_\_\_\_\_ more hiccups.

10 **weight** (6)

He had to \_\_\_\_\_ a long time for his hiccups to stop.

## THINK ABOUT IT

- D** sadness = sad + **ness**  
thankful = thank + **ful**

The letters *-ness* and *-ful* are called suffixes. A suffix is one or more letters added to the end of a root or base word. Suffixes change the word's meaning. The suffix *-ness* means "state of being." The word *sadness* means "state of being sad." The suffix *-ful* means "full of." The word *thankful* means "full of thanks."

Each word in **bold type** needs a suffix. Choose the correct suffix *-ness* or *-ful*. Write the new word.

- 1 Hiccups may happen while children play. Children who are **play**\_\_\_\_ get hiccups.
- 2 Hiccups don't make you ill. They aren't an **ill**\_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 If they last, hiccups start to hurt. They become **hurt**\_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Hiccups can stop if you suddenly feel fear. Being **fear**\_\_\_\_\_ can stop hiccups.
- 5 A loud *hic* might have scared Charles Osborne. The **loud**\_\_\_\_\_ of the *hic* cured him.

- E** An analogy shows how two things are related.

*Air* is to *sky* as *water* is to *sea*.

Read the sentences. Which word in the box completes each analogy? Write the word.

breathe   medicine   jerk cured   giggle
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- 6 Eyelid is to blink as muscle is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 7 Cry is to weep as laugh is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 8 Water is to hiccups as \_\_\_\_\_ is to illness.
- 9 Food is to eat as air is to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 10 Asleep is to awake as sick is to \_\_\_\_\_.