

The Sheep-Pig

Farmer Hogget has been sent by his wife to deliver her cakes to the Produce Stall at the Village Fête. As he gets there, he hears a loud squealing noise and decides to investigate.

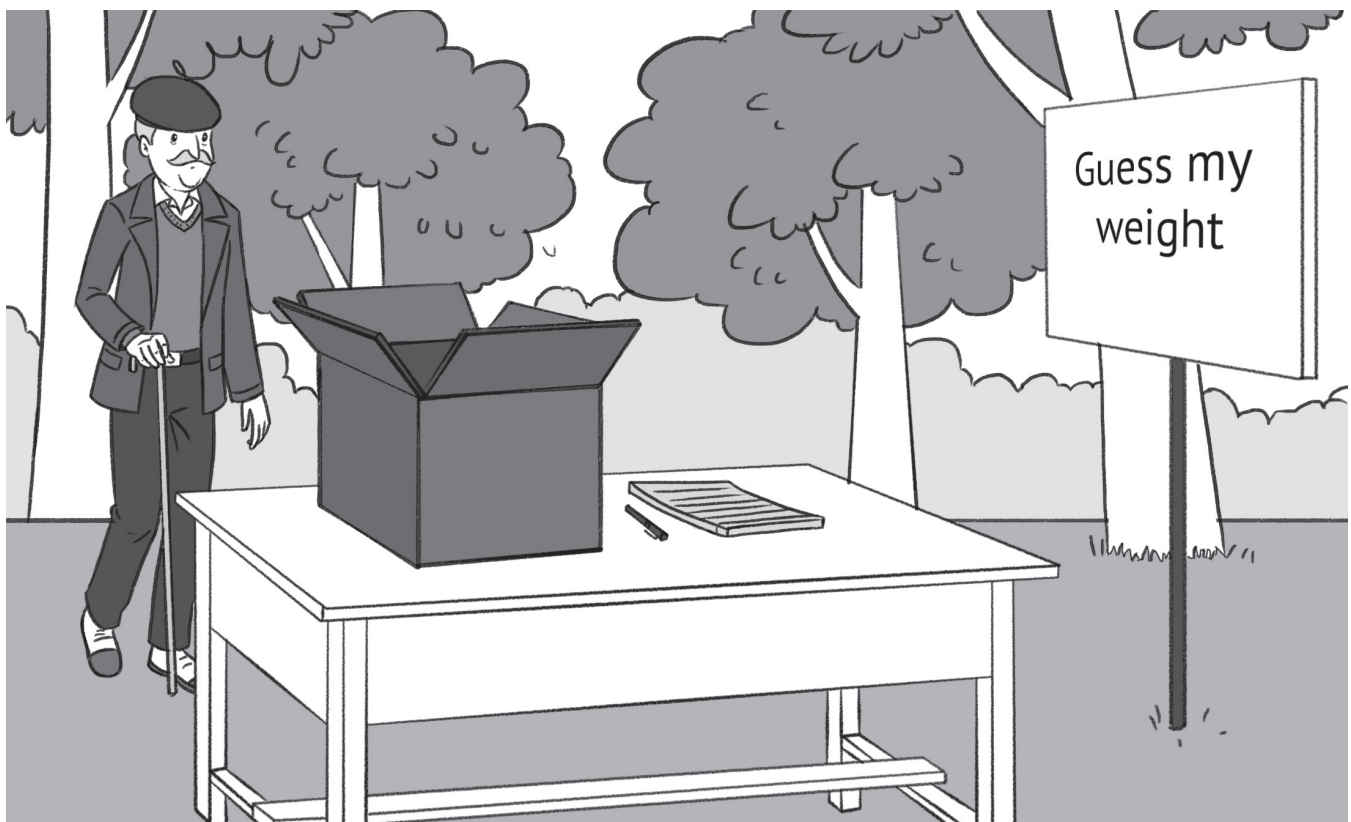
When he had driven down to the village and made his delivery to the Produce Stall, Farmer Hogget walked across the green, past the Hoopla Stall and the Coconut Shy and the Aunt Sally and the skittles and the band, to the source of the squealing noise, which came every now and again from a small pen of hurdles in a far corner, against the churchyard wall.

By the pen sat the Vicar, notebook in hand, a cardboard box on the table in front of him. On the hurdles hung a notice — ‘Guess my weight. Ten pence a go.’ Inside was a little pig.

As Farmer Hogget watched, a man leaned over and picked it out of the pen. He hefted it in both hands, frowning and pursing his lips in a considering way, while all the time the piglet struggled madly and yelled blue murder. The moment it was put down, it quietened. Its eyes, bright, intelligent eyes, met the farmer’s. They regarded one another.

One saw a tall thin brown-faced man with very long legs, and the other saw a small fat pinky-white animal with very short ones.

“Ah, come along, Mr Hogget!” said the Vicar. “You never know, he could be yours for ten pence. Guess his weight correctly, and at the end of the day you could be taking him home!”



“Don’t keep pigs,” said Farmer Hogget. He stretched out a long arm and scratched its back. Gently, he picked it up and held it before his face. It stayed quite still and made no sound.

“That’s funny,” said the Vicar. “Every time so far that someone has picked him up he’s screamed his head off. He seems to like you. You’ll have to have a guess.”

Carefully, Farmer Hogget put the piglet back in the pen. Carefully, he took a ten pence from his pocket and dropped it in the cardboard box. Carefully, he ran one finger down the list of guesses already in the Vicar’s notebook.

“Quite a variation,” said the Vicar. “Anything from twenty pounds to forty, so far.” He wrote down “Mr Hogget” and waited, pencil poised.

Once again, slowly, thoughtfully, the farmer picked the piglet up.

Once again, it remained still and silent.

“Thirty-one pounds,” said Farmer Hogget. He put the little pig down again. “And a quarter,” he said.

“Thirty-one and a quarter pounds. Thank you, Mr Hogget. We shall be weighing the little chap at about half past four.”

“Be gone by then.”

“Ah well, we can always telephone you. If you should be lucky enough to win him.”

“Never win nothing.”

As he walked back across the green, the sound of the pig’s yelling rang out as someone else had a go.

“You do never win anything,” said Mrs Hogget at tea-time, when her husband, in a very few words, had explained matters, “though I’ve often thought I’d like a pig, we could feed him on scraps, he’d come just right for Christmas time, just think, two nice hams, two sides of bacon, pork chops, kidneys, liver, chitterling, trotters, save his blood for black pudding, there’s the phone.”

Farmer Hogget picked it up.

“Oh,” he said.



Name: Class: Date:

1 Look at the opening paragraph. Name **two** things that Farmer Hogget walks past as he crosses the green.

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2 What was making the squealing noise?

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3 How much does it cost to guess the weight of the pig?

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4 Why does the Vicar say that the pig seemed to like Farmer Hogget?

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5 What is inside the cardboard box on the table? How do you know?

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6 How much does Farmer Hogget guess the pig weighs?

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7 Why does Mrs Hogget think it would be a good thing to have a pig?

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8 What evidence is there that Farmer Hogget likes the pig? Give **two** reasons.

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9 What impression do you get of Farmer Hogget? Explain fully, referring to the text in your answer.

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10 Do you think Farmer Hogget will win the pig? Tick **one**.

Yes No Maybe

Explain your choice fully using evidence from the text.

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