



CK Reporter of the Week
Christopher Smit, Boulder

Big Transformer means big fun

"Transformers: The Last Knight Mega 1-Step Turbo Changer Dragonstorm" is a big name for a big toy!

I have not seen "Transformers: The Last Knight," the movie the toy is based on, but I have seen other movies in the Transformers series, so I understand the basics.

At first glance, the three-headed dragon/knight toy seems really big and awesome.

It is a bit hard to carry around because of the large size.

The directions for putting it together are extremely vague: Only a few pictures with a little text, but luckily there were only a few steps. It says "Adult Assembly Required."

The battery compartment (two AAA batteries) was shown in the directions but was hard to find on the toy itself.

There are only three pieces to attach/detach, and they are the tail and the two wings. These pieces are large and the same red/black color combination, so you probably won't lose them.

This toy looks pretty cool. The dragon has attachable wings and an attachable tail.

It is very intricate and detailed in many ways. The way it works is you take the lever on its back, pull down on the legs, and on the lever, and it turns from a dragon



into a Transformer knight and back in one step. It is easy to figure out.

The dragon has "Cyberfire-breathing technology," a light in its mouth that shows hidden symbols on other Cyberfire figures.

It is similar to a UV light pen where you can only see the hidden symbols if you shine the light on them directly.

It also has a button, located at his heart, which you push for more than 20 phrases and sounds featured in the movie the toy is based on.

It also makes phrases and sounds from the movie when you convert from dragon to knight, or back.

I like this toy a lot. It is expensive, but if you are a big Transformers fan, then I would recommend it, since it is fun to play with, very durable, and overall amazing.

It is listed for ages 5 and up, but I would recommend ages 8 and up because it is a bit advanced, and there are some places where you might pinch your fingers when you are playing with it.



By Ben Vanourek,
11, a CK Reporter
from Littleton

Toymaking kit is fun, but takes some practice



Some toys are easy to use, but others, not so much.

The "SmooShins Surprise Maker Kit" is a plastic set for making squishy characters from a mold using a slimy material that hardens and grows.

It comes with three color pouches to add color to the slime: one pink, one orange and an extra pink one for practice.

It also comes with two molds inside plastic eggs, two character stands, and a squeeze tool, plus a larger egg that you put the smaller eggs inside to hold them in place.

The finished SmooShins look kind of like girls wearing animal suits.

The first step of making a SmooShin is to put the plastic egg into the larger one.

This can be done later, but I would recommend doing it first because it can take a while to fit the pieces together and the next steps must be done quickly.

The second step is to pop the color pouch and mix it with the slime in a minute and 30 seconds.

It can be hard to mix the color pouch, so younger kids might need help with this part.

Next, you need to squeeze the colored slime into the mold. This part is also done fast and the colored slime must be completely squeezed into the mold in 30 seconds or else it will harden.

You can use the squeeze tool to make it easier to get the slime into the mold.

Then, you need to wait for the character to grow inside the mold for 4 hours or overnight.

While I was waiting for the slime to grow, I mixed my practice color pouch.

Because I already had a SmooShin being made and I wanted to know what it was made of, I cut it open, which was not a good idea.

The inside of the pouch is slimy, sticky and hard to get off your hands. Because I didn't want to waste it,

though, I poured it into an egg container and left it overnight to see how much it would grow.

The next morning, I opened the molds.

First, I checked on the egg container. The colored slime inside had hardened and almost doubled in size.

After that, I opened the mold for the SmooShin. I probably didn't squeeze the slime out of the color pouch completely because it came out looking half-eaten.

Now that I was finished making the first SmooShin, I started on the second one. I wasn't fast enough, though, and the slime hardened before I could squeeze it into the mold.

I liked this toy overall and it seemed to work the way it's supposed to; you just need to practice with it a little. (I also liked the box a lot and turned it into a carriage for my stuffed dog.)

You can get more color pouches and molds for the surprise maker, so I probably will get more and see if I can get the SmooShins to come out properly.



By Nandi Strieker,
10, a CK Reporter
from Antonito

We asked you, you told us:

Music goes wherever most of our readers go!

We were curious about how much you sing, and we may have phrased our question poorly, but we did find out that just over three-quarters of CK readers do like to sing; at least of the ones who answered our question.

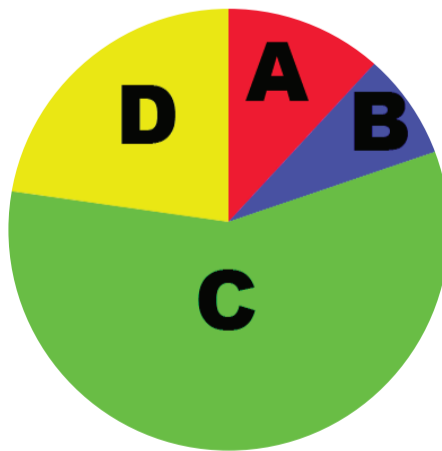
More than half sing with friends, for fun, but here's where we messed up: Those same readers might also sing in chorus or music class. We asked where you sing *most!*

Ah well, we'll phrase the next question better!

Here's what we asked you, and what you told us:

Where do you do most of your singing?

- A. In a chorus or choir. 12%
- B. In music class at school. 8%



C. Alone or with my friends, just for fun. 58%

D. Maybe a birthday party, but I'm probably faking it. 23%

Now here's our next question:

What are your plans for Halloween night?

- A. I'll go trick-or-treating.
- B. A party at somebody's house.
- C. An event at school or in the community.
- D. Nothing – I don't celebrate it.

To answer this question, go to
<http://nextgen.yourhub.com>

Writing Is Cool!

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If disaster struck here, would you be ready?

Seeing the hurricane damage, first in Texas, then in Florida, then in Puerto Rico, can make you sad, but it can also make you think.

You feel sad because of empathy, the emotion that lets you put yourself in someone else's place and feel what they must be feeling.

That's the emotion that makes people want to give to charities that are helping in those places, or, closer to home, to volunteer in soup kitchens and to donate to local food banks and homeless shelters.

But what if the disaster were even closer to home? What if you didn't have to imagine being in that situation? What if you were?

That should make you think about your own safety in an emergency.

One good thing about living in Colorado is that hurricanes don't often come our way.

But we do have tornados, blizzards and wildfires, and they can be severe.

If disaster struck, what would happen at your house?

There are things you can do to be ready for a disaster, whether it is the kind that strikes your whole community, or just your own family.



A family in Puerto Rico examines what is left of their home. (AP Photo/Carlos Giusti)

For instance, every family should have a plan of how to get out of the house in a fire, and a place chosen to meet outside so you know who is safe and who might need help.

And the same important rule you've learned for fires applies to other sudden emergencies like tornados: Get to safety and don't stop to grab your things.

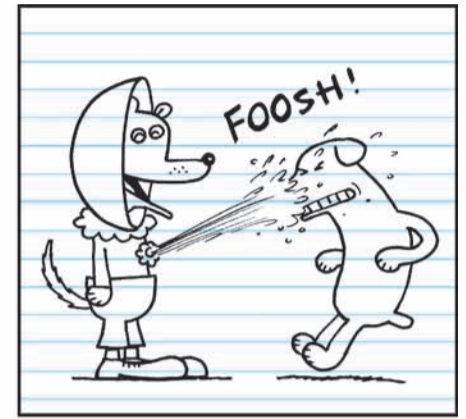
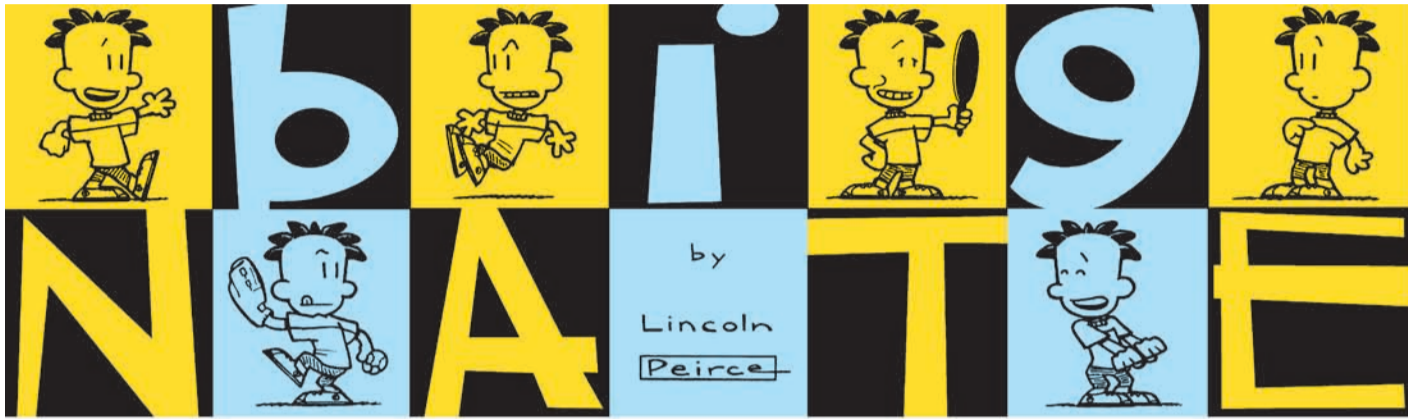
Other types of emergencies can end up with you in your home and safe, but without electricity and with no way to get out to find supplies.

That's why you should not wait until you are out of food to go to the store: Always have enough on hand to feed yourself for three days.

You should also keep your cell phone charged for the same reason. Don't let it run down!

There are other precautions that will help your family stay safe, both for sudden emergencies like fires and tornados, and for the kind you may have time to see coming if you're lucky, like blizzards and wildfires.

Be smart and be ready: Come to <http://www.ColoradoNIE.com> and look at today's links for some good advice on emergency preparedness!



Sudoku

	5				
			3		2
2		1			
		4		1	
			1		3
4		3			

Rules: Every row across, every column down and each of the six smaller boxes must contain numerals 1,2,3,4,5 and 6, one time and one time only.
The solution to this week's puzzle is on Page 3.

Brainteaser

On this date in 1871, the Chicago Fire burned itself out after three days in which it destroyed 17,500 wooden buildings – a third of the city – and left 100,000 people homeless, so our answers this week will begin with "C."

- Home to the Browns, the Indians, the Cavaliers and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame
- Afro-Caribbean music that has grown to include reggae, ska and other forms
- Author of the Ramon Quimby books, as well as "The Mouse and the Motorcycle"
- A relative of broccoli and cabbage, this vegetable produces a large, dense white flower that is often eaten raw with dip or steamed and covered with cheese sauce
- Woodwind instrument jazz musicians refer to as a "licorice stick"
- Three-headed dog of Greek mythology who guards the gates of the Underworld
- This East High graduate plays War Machine (James "Rhodey" Rhodes) in Marvel Universe action movies, but is known for many other roles as well
- The capital of Australia
- Ordway is the seat of this county, located between Lincoln and Otero counties
- Ancient war machine used to hurl large rocks at opposing forts and castles

(answers on Page 3)

Cute, popular invasive species threatens rare birds in Australia



Like North America, Australia has a long history of invasive species that were brought in with good intentions but soon got out of control.

Foxes and rabbits, for instance, were brought in by hunters, and the cane toad was imported by sugar cane growers who thought it would protect their crops. These invaders have become pests.

Now biologists are concerned about an invasive species that was intended to kill the rats and mice that were accidentally brought to Australia by settlers, but which also got out of control.

Researchers have begun to estimate the number of birds killed by cats, and it's disturbing, particularly among rare types of birds that nest on

the ground.

The biggest problem is feral cats, domestic cats that were born in the wild and live the life of a full-time predator in a land where they don't belong.

The researchers estimate that cats kill 377 million birds a year, or about one million birds every day.

Pet cats also kill plenty of birds, and biologists are urging people who own cats not to let them roam.

Meanwhile, cats living in the wild threaten to wipe out some of Australia's rare, unusual bird species.

Similar research in the United States has also shown that domestic cats – both tame pets and wild, feral cats – have a very negative effect on bird populations in this country. photo/Jennifer Barnard

Beyond These Pages!

Hot Links to Cool Sites!

NASA's Space Place

<http://tinyurl.com/ckspace>

NIE Special Report

<http://tinyurl.com/ckniereport>

Headline Geography

<http://tinyurl.com/ckgeography>

Pulse of the Planet

<http://tinyurl.com/ckpulseplanet>

How to become a NextGen Reporter!

<http://tinyurl.com/colokidsreporter>



To read the sources for these stories

Emergency Preparedness

Cats and birds

go to <http://www.tinyurl.com/ckstorylinks>

Sudoku Solution

3	5	2	4	6	1
1	4	6	3	5	2
2	6	1	5	3	4
5	3	4	2	1	6
6	2	5	1	4	3
4	1	3	6	2	5

Brainteaser Solution



(see Page 2)

10 right - Wow!

7 right - Great!

5 right - Good

3 right - See you next time!

1. Cleveland 2. calypso 3. (Beverly) Cleary 4. cauliflower 5. clarinet
6. Cereberus 7. (Don) Cheadle 8. Canberra 9. Crowley 10. catapult

CORRECTION

In last week's issue, the photo on the story about Blake Bates was taken by Zoe Zizzo. We put the wrong photographer's name on it, and we apologize to Zoe and to our readers.

Ariadne and the Magic Thread

Chapter Five: Among the Hostages

Our story so far: Ariadne only wanted to walk with the hostages to protect them until they got to the prison, but Theseus has asked her to help him save their lives.

Ariadne was hoping to walk through the throne room without being stopped, but King Minos looked up from the long table where he was sitting working.

He had been reading from some clay tablets and scratching figures into the soft clay on a damp tablet in front of him.

"What would you think of a trip to Byblos?" he asked, but didn't wait for an answer.

"I want to set up a trade," he explained. "Tools for cotton. You've helped out when we were working with merchants here. Do you think you're ready to go make a deal with the Phoenicians?"

"I don't know ..." she started to say, but he impatiently waved his own question away.

"Of course you are," he said. "We'll talk about it when the festival is over. It's time you started doing these things."

"Yes, of course," she responded quietly.

"What's that? Are you going out?" he asked suddenly, looking from the basket on her arm to the window, where he could clearly see that night had fallen.

"No. Well, just next door," Ariadne stammered. "I'm just taking some things to the prison."

"What have you got in there?" He leaned forward to peer at the basket.

Ariadne lifted the top cloth slightly. "Just some things for the women. Some lotions and ... some other things they might need."

"I see," Minos nodded. "Well, don't stay over there too long. They're not really any of your business, you know."

"Yes, Father," she said, and started for the door, but he spoke up again and she stopped.

"Do you remember when you were little, and you used to bring home baby birds that had fallen from their nests?" he asked. "They never lived, did they? But you would cry each time. No matter how many times it happened, you always cried."

"These are not birds."

Minos sprang to his feet. "They are animals!" he shouted. "They are the animals who killed your brother!"

He slammed his fist on the table, and one of the clay tablets fell and shattered on the tile floor. As the king bent to gather the pieces, Ariadne slipped out of the room.

* * *

A guard unlocked the door to the women's cell. Ariadne went in and began to take out linens and small bottles of oils and lotions, placing them on a bench by the door.

The young women stopped talking, but nobody moved to approach the Minoan princess or to look at the things she had brought. Most of them stared at her. The tall girl who had briefly caught her eye on the pier now turned to the wall.

Ariadne picked up one of the small bottles and went over to Korinna, the girl with the blue scarf. "This will help take the salt from your skin," she said in Greek.

Korinna just looked at her.

"I know what it is like to be out at sea for several days," Ariadne added, and tried to hand her the bottle. The girl still did not move, and Ariadne said, "I've been told you are a singer."

"Who would sing in this place?" Korinna asked, but took the bottle. She pulled the stopper from the top and tipped the bottle to get a bit of lotion to smell.

"Do you want to hear her sing?" one of the girls called out, and Ariadne looked over. "Put Theseus in the Labyrinth first, and she'll sing happily!"

"Do you hate him so?" Ariadne asked.

The girls all giggled. "No, we like Theseus," another answered.

"Don't you think he's handsome?" someone asked. "Admit it. He's very handsome, isn't he?" They were all looking for her answer, and she blushed slightly.

"Well, yes, of course he is," she said, and there was more laughter.

Korinna poured some of the lotion into her hand and smoothed it over her arm. "Every girl in Athens has a crush on Theseus," she said.

Ariadne looked from one to another. "Then why do you want him put in first?" she asked.

The girl was rubbing lotion into her other arm. "If Theseus goes first, nobody has to die." She smiled up at Ariadne. "Except the Minotaur."

"You're all as crazy as he is!" Ariadne exclaimed. "Nobody can defeat the Minotaur! If Theseus tries to fight it, he will die!"

Korinna laughed. "Well, he's already going to die, if you're right. But the Minotaur can't be any worse than the giant wild sow of Crommyn. Theseus was still a little boy when he killed that beast!"

"Is he any worse than Periphetes, with his terrible bronze club?" another said. "Periphetes robbed so many travellers on the road to Athens that no-one dared go there without an army. Until Theseus walked the road alone and made it safe again."

A girl called out from the other side of the room. "Have you heard of Procrustes? He used to bring guests to his home to sleep in his iron bed. If they were too short, he stretched them out and tore their arms and legs until they fit. If they were too tall, he chopped off their hands and feet so they fit his bed!"

"He fits perfectly in his grave, thanks to Theseus," the girl with the scarf said.

"And Kerkeuon the wrestler," someone said.

"And Sciron, who threw people off a cliff into the sea," someone else said.

"And the bull of Marathon!" cried another.

Korinna handed the bottle back to Ariadne.

"Go feed our prince to your Minotaur," she said. "See how the meal sticks in his throat!"

The Greek women all began laughing, and their laughter was not kind. Ariadne pounded on the door, calling for the guard to come let her out.

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