

## **First Plane Ride Alone**

Graham's eyes popped open early one morning. He sat up in bed. He looked at his packed bag in the corner of his bedroom. Today was the day he was going to visit his grandparents!

Graham was not looking forward to visiting his grandparents even though he did care about them. The problem was that he was going to fly on an airplane by himself to go see his grandparents! This was the first airplane ride he could remember. His mom and dad said he had ridden on a plane when he was a baby, but Graham couldn't remember the trip.

Graham dressed quickly and went down to eat breakfast with his mom and dad. Dad asked, "Are you excited about riding in a plane by yourself?"

"A little", said Graham although he was very nervous about it. He didn't really want his parents to know the truth about his feelings.

After breakfast, Graham put his bag into the trunk of the car. Mom, Dad, and Graham drove to the airport. As they got closer to the airport, Graham could see planes taking off and landing. They parked the car in the parking garage. Graham got his bag out of the trunk. He and his parents walked to the airport terminal.

Graham watched the people at the airport. He noticed some people were dressed in suits and carried briefcases. Other people were not dressed up. They were dressed in jeans and sweatshirts like he and his parents were. He wished he could get back in the car and go home, but he tried not to let his parents see his fear.

Graham and his parents got in line at the ticket counter. Graham filled out a luggage tag. He put it on his bag. Mom said the luggage tag would help the airport workers find his bag if it got lost. Graham worried that his bag would get lost. Mom told the man that Graham would be flying alone for the first time today. The man gave Graham a button. It said "Junior Flyer." Graham pinned the button to his shirt. The man gave Graham his plane ticket. Then, the man took Graham's bag.

As he saw his bag disappear on a big cart with a lot of other bags, Graham felt himself get even more scared. He was surprised that nobody else seemed to know how he was feeling.

The man who gave Graham the button told him where to go to get on his plane. He pointed to the second floor of the airport. He said, "You will need to go up there to wait for your plane."

When they got upstairs, Graham looked at the signs to find his gate. "Over here," he said to his parents. He was trying to act very brave.

Graham's parents followed Graham. They walked down a long hall lined with stores and restaurants. "Let's buy you something to eat on the plane," Mom said. They went into a small store. Graham chose a sandwich and an apple for the plane ride. They left the store and continued walking down the hall.

Graham saw a line of people with tickets in their hands at the end of the hall. He saw a man who looked like a police officer. He was talking to the people at the end of the line. Graham got a little more scared. He held his dad's hand tightly.

Suddenly, his Dad looked down at him. He seemed to be trying not to smile. He explained that the people who looked like police officers were really security guards for the airport. "Their job is to make sure that no one brings anything that's not safe onto the plane," Dad explained. "They are here to take care of us all."

Graham took a deep breath. He held his head up high and stood in line with his parents. Finally, it was Graham's turn. The security guard waved to Graham that it was his turn. Mom said, "We can't go any further with you."

Graham hugged his Mom and Dad. His parents both had tears in their eyes. Graham was embarrassed. "I'm almost nine years old. I'll be fine. Don't worry," Graham said. Graham turned and walked towards the security guard. He was nervous, but he didn't want his parents to know.

The security guard asked Graham to empty his pockets. Graham was going to have to walk through the metal detector. He took everything out of his pockets. He put it all in a bowl. The security guard asked Graham to take off his "Junior Flyer" pin too. Then the security guard told Graham to walk through the metal detector. Graham was nervous that the alarm would sound. He was glad when it didn't.

The guard gave back Graham's things. Graham put everything back into his pockets. He pinned his button back onto his shirt. Graham was very nervous now. He looked at his parents. They were watching from behind the security gate. He waved to them and felt himself get calmer.

Just as Graham was about to get on his plane, he heard a loud voice making an announcement. "All flights for today have been called off," the loud voice said. "There is a big storm coming, and it will be too windy for the planes to fly."

At first, Graham felt a huge rush of relief. He could hardly believe his good luck! He started to smile as he thought about going home. Soon, though, he realized that he had another problem. He wasn't sure how he was going to reach his parents.

Graham looked down the long hallway full of people. Everywhere he looked, people seemed upset. They were frowning down at their watches. Some were talking angrily on their cell phones. Almost nobody was smiling. Graham started to walk down the hallway,

looking for the gate where he had left his parents. Suddenly, he realized that he had another problem. Everything was starting to look the same. He couldn't remember which gate he had come in. He started to feel scared again.

Graham wished his parents were right there with him. He wished he had not already gone through the gate and left them behind. He wasn't sure what to do. It was the first time he could remember being in an airport, and he was lost.

First, he walked quickly to the end of the hallway. Everywhere he looked, angry people were rushing around. Nobody seemed to have the time to help him. He didn't know how he would ever get home because he couldn't even seem to find the way out of the airport!

Suddenly, he felt a small pinch on his chest. He looked down and saw that his Junior Flyer pin was coming undone. The pointed part was no longer hooked in. Then Graham had an idea. He remembered what his dad had said about the man in uniform.

He rushed down the hall looking for a security guard. When he finally saw one, Graham smiled a huge smile. He wasn't scared any more. He walked right up to the security guard and waited to be seen. The man in the uniform looked down right away and saw Graham's Junior Flyer pin. "Why hello," he said. "How can I help you today?"

Graham explained the problem, and the man picked up his radio. Before long, Graham heard the loud voice making another announcement. This time, the loud voice was calling his parents. It was asking them to come back to Security Gate 8 for a very important package.

Graham looked up at the security guard and smiled. He knew he was safe now.

- 1. What did the airline give Graham to show that he was flying alone?**
  - A. His plane ticket.
  - B. A ticket for his bag.
  - C. A Junior Flyer button.
  
- 2. What did the security guard notice right away that made him pay attention to Graham when he came for help?**
  - A. Graham looked like he was scared and lost.
  - B. Graham was wearing his Junior Flyer pin.
  - C. Graham wasn't with his parents or an adult.

- 3. What will Graham probably do if he ever gets lost in an airport again?**
- A. Follow the crowd to a gate.
  - B. Go back to the plane.
  - C. Find a security guard.
- 4. After his flight was called off, when did Graham first realize that he had a new problem?**
- A. When he saw all the angry and upset people crowding in the hallways.
  - B. When he couldn't remember the gate he came in when he left his parents.
  - C. When he walked to the end of the hallway and couldn't find anyone to help him.
- 5. What caused the people in the airport to be upset and angry?**
- A. Their flights were called off for the whole day.
  - B. They would have to wait to catch the next flight.
  - C. They didn't know which gate to go to for a new flight.
- 6. What is this story mostly about?**
- A. How a young boy changed his mind about going on a plane ride.
  - B. A young boy's experience at an airport on his first flight alone.
  - C. What happened to a young boy when he got lost at a large airport.
- 7. What was Graham like during the time he was at the airport?**
- A. He was nervous and afraid of just about everything.
  - B. He was excited about being there and forgot to be scared.
  - C. Some things made him a little nervous but mostly he was fine.
- 8. How did Graham act when his parents asked if he was excited about the plane ride?**
- A. He said he was a little excited, but really he was very excited.
  - B. He said he was a little excited, but really he was very nervous.
  - C. He said he was a little excited, but he didn't really care if he went or not.

- 9. Why did Graham probably want to keep his parents from knowing how he really felt about the plane trip to his grandparents?**
- A. He was afraid it would make him look weak.
  - B. He thought they might cancel the plane trip.
  - C. He didn't want them to be worried about him.
- 10. How was Graham feeling about the plane ride before leaving the house?**
- A. He wanted to visit his grandparents, but he didn't want to do it alone.
  - B. He didn't want to visit his grandparents or fly on a plane by himself.
  - C. He was excited about flying in an airplane to visit his grandparents.
- 11. When did Graham have to go on his own at the airport?**
- A. When he was in line to show his ticket to a guard.
  - B. When he was ready to get in line to get on the plane.
  - C. When he was ready to go through the metal detector.
- 12. What was the biggest problem for Graham?**
- A. The airport closed down.
  - B. He was afraid to fly alone.
  - C. He got lost in the airport.
- 13. What did it mean when Graham's father tried not to smile when Graham held his hand tightly after seeing a man in a blue uniform?**
- A. His father understood and thought it was cute that Graham was scared of the police officer who was really a security guard.
  - B. His father thought it was silly for Graham to be so scared of a police officer who was really a security guard.
  - C. He couldn't figure out why Graham squeezed his hand and thought it was funny that Graham would do that.
- 14. What did Graham wish when he saw people coming in and out of the airport?**
- A. That he was dressed up more like everyone else.
  - B. That he could get back in the car and go home.
  - C. That he was already at his grandparents' house.

- 15. What caused Graham to be worried that his travel bag would be lost?**
- A. He filled out a tag so the airport would know it was his bag.
  - B. He had to put the tag on his bag, and a worker took the bag.
  - C. His mom said the tag would help to find his bag if it got lost.
- 16. When did Graham begin to feel a little calmer?**
- A. When he saw his parents behind the gate waving to him.
  - B. When he heard that it was almost time to get on the airplane.
  - C. Right after he got through the security gate without a problem.
- 17. How did Graham feel about his flight being called off because of a bad storm?**
- A. He thought it was wonderful and was ready to go back home.
  - B. He thought it was good for him but bad for the other people.
  - C. He was glad he didn't fly but sad that he wouldn't see his grandparents.
- 18. What were Graham's parents like?**
- A. They didn't care that Graham was scared as long as he got on the airplane.
  - B. They knew Graham was scared and tried to make him feel good about the trip.
  - C. They didn't have any idea that Graham was nervous or scared about the trip.
- 19. At the end of the story, what was something Graham might have forgotten about when he thought he was safe?**
- A. Maybe the security guard might need to leave for some reason, and Graham would be alone.
  - B. His parents wouldn't know what the important package was that they were to pick up.
  - C. His parents might already be on their way home and wouldn't have heard the announcement.

20. What was Graham probably feeling after his flight was called off and he didn't know how to reach his parents?
- A. Happy, scared, and mixed up all at the same time.
  - B. Only mixed up because he didn't know what to do next.
  - C. Only happy because what scared him the most was over.