

First Day Jitters

Read the story. Then answer the questions on the next page.

- 1 Maya stood outside Room 12 with her new backpack on both shoulders. Her family had moved in August, and she did not know one person at Pine Hill School. **Her heart was a drum.** She took a deep breath, counted to three, and pushed the door open.
- 2 Every head turned to look at her, and the only empty desk was in the far corner by the window. “That desk is **ten miles away**,” Maya thought. She looked down at the floor and walked past row after row of strangers.
- 3 The teacher, Mr. Okafor, smiled at the class. “We have a new student today,” he said. “Let’s play a quick game to **break the ice**. Tell us your name and your favorite snack.” One by one, the students stood up beside their desks and took turns.
- 4 A girl with two long braids went just before Maya. “I’m Rosa,” she said, “and my favorite snack is mango with chili powder.” Maya looked up in surprise, because that was her favorite snack too. When she said so, Rosa grinned at her from across the room. Maya’s worry **melted like snow in the sun**.
- 5 **Ding!** The recess bell rang. Rosa waved Maya over to the door. She showed her the swings, the climbing wall and the best spot for four square. When the bell rang again, Rosa asked, “Do you want to sit with me at lunch?” Maya smiled for the first time that day and said yes.



First Day Jitters: Questions

Go back to the bold words in the text. Think about what the author really means.

1. What does the author mean by **“Her heart was a drum”**?
 - ☐ Maya played the drums at her old school.
 - ☐ Her heart was beating hard and fast.
 - ☐ She heard music in the hallway.
2. **“break the ice”** is an example of which kind of figurative language?
 - ☐ onomatopoeia
 - ☐ idiom
 - ☐ simile
3. What does Mr. Okafor mean by **“break the ice”**?
 - ☐ help everyone feel comfortable and start talking
 - ☐ crack some ice for cold drinks
 - ☐ make the classroom warmer
4. What does Maya mean by **“ten miles away”**?
 - ☐ The desk is in a different building.
 - ☐ She will need to take a bus.
 - ☐ The walk to the desk feels very long.
5. **“melted like snow in the sun”** is an example of which kind of figurative language?
 - ☐ idiom
 - ☐ onomatopoeia
 - ☐ simile
6. The author says Maya’s worry **“melted like snow in the sun”**. Write your own simile to describe how Maya felt at the end of the story.

First Day Jitters: Answer Key

Answers are in green. The proof is where to find each answer in the text.

1. What does the author mean by “Her heart was a drum”?

- ☐ Maya played the drums at her old school.
- ☒ **Her heart was beating hard and fast.**
- ☐ She heard music in the hallway.

Proof A drum makes a strong, steady beat, and that is how Maya’s heart felt because she was nervous.

2. “break the ice” is an example of which kind of figurative language?

- ☐ onomatopoeia
- ☒ **idiom**
- ☐ simile

Proof It is a common saying, and there is no real ice in the classroom.

3. What does Mr. Okafor mean by “break the ice”?

- ☒ **help everyone feel comfortable and start talking**
- ☐ crack some ice for cold drinks
- ☐ make the classroom warmer

Proof The game helps students who do not know each other relax and begin to talk.

4. What does Maya mean by “ten miles away”?

- ☐ The desk is in a different building.
- ☐ She will need to take a bus.
- ☒ **The walk to the desk feels very long.**

Proof The desk is only across the room, but the walk feels long because everyone is watching her.

5. “melted like snow in the sun” is an example of which kind of figurative language?

- ☐ idiom
- ☐ onomatopoeia
- ☒ **simile**

Proof It compares the way her worry went away to snow melting, using the word “like”.

6. The author says Maya’s worry “melted like snow in the sun”. Write your own simile to describe how Maya felt at the end of the story.

Answers will vary. Example: Maya felt as light as a balloon.
