



Aryeh and the Bossy Cousin

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities

Aryeh and the Bossy Cousin

Every summer, Aryeh's cousin Shmuel comes to stay for two weeks.

Shmuel is eleven, which is three years older than Aryeh. He is tall and loud and certain about everything. He knows the best way to build a fort. He knows the proper way to play catch. He knows exactly how every game ought to go.

"No, no, no," Shmuel says on the first day. "You're holding the bat wrong."

"I like to hold it this way," says Aryeh.

"It's wrong. Here. Give it to me."

He takes the bat. He shows Aryeh. He won't give it back until Aryeh copies him exactly.

Aryeh grits his teeth. He does it Shmuel's way. But a hot, sticky feeling rises in his chest.

On the second day, they play with Lego. Aryeh is building a rocket. Shmuel looks over his shoulder.

"That's not how rockets look. Here, let me fix it."

"I'm not done."

"It's wrong. Move over."

He reaches in, takes the pieces, and rebuilds the whole thing. It looks fine, Aryeh has to admit. But it isn't his rocket anymore.

On the third day, Aryeh stays in his room. Mommy comes to check on him.

"What's wrong, Aryeh?"

"Shmuel is so bossy," he says. "He tells me what to do all the time. I don't get to do anything my way."

"Have you told him?"

"No. He's older. He'll just say I'm wrong."

"Hmm," says Mommy. "What would you like to say to him?"

Aryeh thinks. "I'd like him to ask before he takes things. And I'd like to try my own ideas."

"Those are very reasonable requests. Would you like to practice saying it?"

They practice in the mirror. "Shmuel," says Aryeh, standing straight. "I like playing with you. But I don't like it when you take my things. Please ask first."

"Great," says Mommy. "Say it again, a little slower."

Aryeh says it again.

The next morning, he finds Shmuel on the porch, building a fort out of cushions. Aryeh's heart is pounding.

"Shmuel, can I talk to you?"

"Sure."

Aryeh takes a breath. He says it exactly as he's practiced. His voice is a little shaky but clear.

Shmuel's eyebrows go up. He is quiet for a moment.

"Oh," he says. "I didn't realize. I just thought I was helping."

"I know. But sometimes I want to figure it out myself."

Shmuel scratches his head. "That makes sense. I don't like it when my older brother does that to me."

"He does?"

"All the time. It drives me crazy." Shmuel laughs. "I guess I didn't realize I was doing it too."

Aryeh grins. "Thanks for understanding."

"Okay, new deal," says Shmuel. "You tell me when you want help. And I'll ask first."

"Deal."

That afternoon, they build a rocket together. Aryeh designs it. Shmuel hands him the pieces when he asks. When it is done, it looks even better than before, with a big silver nose and a side door that opens.

"Best rocket I've seen," says Shmuel.

On the last day, as Shmuel packs up his bag, he says, "I'll see you next summer. And I'll try not to be bossy."

"I'll remind you," says Aryeh, smiling.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. How old is Shmuel?

2. What does Aryeh build with Lego?

3. What does Aryeh say he wants Shmuel to do?

4. What do they agree on?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Aryeh practices in the mirror with Mommy. Fact / Guess
2. Shmuel wants to be mean. Fact / Guess
3. Shmuel's older brother bosses him too. Fact / Guess
4. The rocket has a side door that opens. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. How does Aryeh feel when his cousin bosses him?

2. Why does practicing help?

3. How can you tell someone what you need politely?

Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: COUSIN, ROCKET, LEGO, BOSSY, POLITE, ASK

Y	W	R	G	D	D	M	U	C	I	U
L	B	C	D	G	A	E	H	Y	H	I
E	C	P	V	C	Y	K	V	S	I	S
R	O	O	N	A	S	K	B	S	I	C
D	U	G	J	M	V	E	I	O	E	W
P	S	E	V	V	V	T	P	B	R	G
I	I	L	S	F	V	I	M	G	O	V
I	N	N	P	N	I	L	W	T	C	C
S	L	W	R	T	M	O	B	C	K	O
Y	N	E	D	Y	L	P	P	G	E	A
M	M	Y	H	U	I	O	E	B	T	J



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. NCIOSU = _____

2. CKREOT = _____

3. HCROP = _____

4. OCHNSIUS = _____

5. USEMMR = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"Please ask first."

"I'd like to try it my way."

"Can I show you my idea?"

Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Polite Voice Chart

#	What bugged me	What I said	What happened
Time 1			
Time 2			
Time 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw the rocket with the silver nose and the side door.





Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Eleven
2. A rocket
3. Ask first before taking things
4. Aryeh says when he wants help, and Shmuel asks first

Fact or guess: 1 Fact; 2 Guess; 3 Fact; 4 Fact

Scrambled words: COUSIN, ROCKET, PORCH, CUSHIONS, SUMMER

Think and write: answers will vary; talk them over together.