



Menachem Tries Something New

Ages 6-9
A story and 9 activities



Menachem Tries Something New

Menachem likes things the way they are.

He likes plain pasta with butter. He likes the red bike at the park, never the blue one. He likes the same chair at the same table at the same time every day.

"Menachem is a creature of habit," says Totty.

So when Mommy announces, "Tonight we're trying something new for supper," Menachem frowns.

"What kind of new?"

"It's called couscous. It's tiny little grains, and it comes with vegetables."

Menachem folds his arms. "No, thank you."

"You haven't even tried it."

"I don't like it."

"How do you know?"

"It looks weird."

Mommy sits down next to him. "Let's make a deal. You take one bite. Just one. If you don't like it, you never have to eat it again."

Menachem thinks about it. One bite isn't a lot. But the unknown part makes his stomach tighten. What if it tastes terrible? What if he gags?

"One bite?" he says.

"One. I promise."

Totty brings the bowl to the table. It is steaming and golden, with little orange carrots and green peas. Menachem pokes it with his fork. The grains stick together, soft and fluffy.

He lifts a tiny forkful to his nose and sniffs. It smells like warm butter and a bit like cinnamon.

He closes his eyes. He puts it in his mouth.

It is soft. A little sweet. A little buttery. It isn't bad. In fact, it is kind of good.

He opens his eyes. "It's okay."

"Just okay?"

"Kind of yummy."

Mommy beams. "Would you like another bite?"

"Maybe," says Menachem, trying to keep his face serious. He takes a second bite. Then a third.

By the end of the meal, he's eaten half a bowl.

"I tried something new," he says, pleased.

"And?" says Totty.

"And it was a good new."

After supper, he helps Totty clear the table, and Totty says, "I notice you ate with a smile." Menachem shrugs, but he is grinning.

The next day, at school, there is a new game in the yard. It is called gaga ball, played in a wooden ring where you slap a ball and try to get others out. Menachem stands at the edge, watching. It looks fast and loud.

His friend Zevi waves. "Come play!"

"I don't know how."

"I'll show you. One round."

Menachem's tummy tightens. But then he remembers the couscous. A bite, he tells himself. One round.

He steps into the ring. The ball whizzes by. He jumps out of the way. He slaps it back, missing the first time, hitting it the second.

By the end of the round, he is laughing so hard he gets hiccups.

"Again!" he says.

On Friday, Mommy makes couscous for Shabbos. Menachem takes a big scoop. At the table, Totty says, "A year ago, you would have said no."

"A year ago, I didn't know what I was missing," says Menachem. "I like trying things now. Even if I only take one bite."

At bedtime, he sits in his usual chair, thinking. Tomorrow, I'm going to ask to try the blue bike.



Activity 1 of 9

Remember the story

1. What does Menachem like for supper?

2. What new food does Mommy make?

3. How many bites is the deal?

4. What new game does he try at school?



Activity 2 of 9

Fact or guess? (circle one)

1. Menachem always chooses the red bike. Fact / Guess
2. Couscous tastes terrible. Fact / Guess
3. Menachem gets hiccups from laughing. Fact / Guess
4. Mommy makes couscous again on Friday. Fact / Guess



Activity 3 of 9

Think and write

1. What is something new you tried that you liked?

2. Why does a one-bite deal help Menachem?

3. What is something new you could try this week?



Activity 4 of 9

Word search (find all 6)

Words: COUSCOUS, NEW, BITE, GAGA, CHAIR, TRY

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



Activity 5 of 9

Scrambled words (from the story)

1. COOUSUCS = _____

2. CROASRT = _____

3. IHCAR = _____

4. KEBI = _____

5. AAPST = _____



Activity 6 of 9

Say it out loud

Practice each line in a calm, steady voice:

"I'll take one bite."

"That was a good new."

"Can you show me one round?"



Activity 7 of 9

My chart

My Try It Chart

#	New thing	What I thought	What happened
Try 1			
Try 2			
Try 3			



Activity 8 of 9

Draw it

Draw Menachem in the gaga ball ring, laughing as the ball whizzes past.





Activity 9 of 9

Answers

Remember the story:

1. Plain pasta with butter
2. Couscous
3. One
4. Gaga ball

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

Scrambled words: COUSCOUS, CARROTS, CHAIR, BIKE, PASTA

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