

Birthday Blues

A Reading A-Z Level N Leveled Book
Word Count: 667

Connections

Writing

Elena's sister shares some ideas to help Elena feel better. What would you tell Elena to help her feel better? Write a letter to Elena sharing your thoughts.

Math

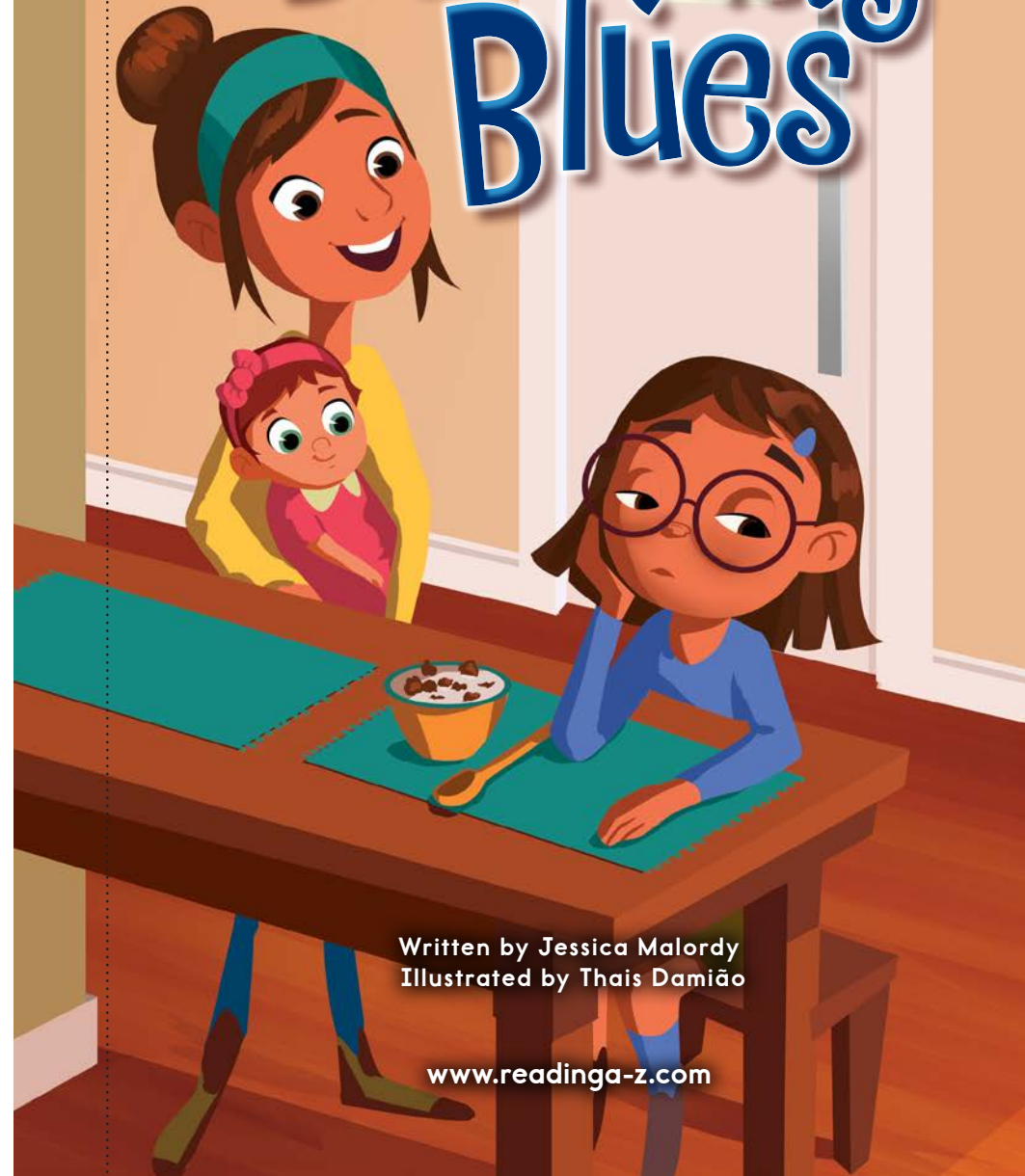
Make a tally chart showing each of your classmates' birthday month. Use the information to make a bar graph. Then write two math problems that can be solved using the bar graph.

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Focus Question

What does Elena learn in the story?

Words to Know

attention	frustration
congratulations	muttered
distracted	point

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Correlation

LEVEL N

Fountas & Pinnell	L
Reading Recovery	20
DRA	28



Elena had been counting down to her birthday all month. Every morning, she crossed another day off the calendar.

"Guess what, Mom?" she exclaimed. "Just two more days until I turn eight!"

"That's wonderful," her mother replied, but she sounded **distracted**. "Elena, honey, can you hand me that dish towel? Isabella just spit up," she said.

Elena sighed. Her new sister was just one week old, and she was already a pest. It seemed to Elena as though she was always in need of **attention**.





“Why the long face, squirt?”
asked Nina, Elena’s big sister.

“Oh, no reason,” Elena replied.

She didn’t know how to explain how forgotten she felt. All week, friends and family had stopped by to meet Isabella. Everybody seemed to think she was adorable. They wanted to hold her, and coo over her, and kiss her. Nobody seemed to notice that Elena was even in the room!

The next day, as soon as the mail arrived, Elena ran to get it. There were three colorful cards inside the mailbox.

“Birthday cards!” Elena cheered. Then she took a second look and frowned. None of the cards were addressed to her.





“They’re **congratulations** cards in honor of the new baby,” her dad explained.

Elena rolled her eyes. “What about my birthday?” she asked.

“Are we going to have a party this weekend? Mom promised we could!”

Elena’s father didn’t have a chance to answer. He heard Isabella crying, and he rushed off to help.



The next morning, Elena woke up and crossed the last day off the calendar. She wondered if anybody would remember that today was her birthday.

“Hey there, squirt,” said Nina.

“Want to come take Isabella for a walk?”

“Not really,” Elena **muttered**, but she put on her sneakers anyway.

Together, the sisters pushed the stroller around a nearby park.

“So, how does it feel to be a big sister?” Nina asked.

“I hate it!” Elena exploded, her **frustration** pouring out like a flood. “All anybody does is pay attention to the baby! She’s not even that interesting. I wish she had never been born at all!”



“Want to know a secret?” Nina asked. “When you were born, I felt the exact same way.”

“Really?” Elena asked. Nina was such a kind and loving big sister. It was hard to imagine her wishing Elena had never been born.

“Of course!” Nina said. “I even asked Mom if we could send you back to the hospital! I’ve got another secret for you, though.”

“What’s that?” Elena asked.

“Being a big sister is awesome!”
Nina exclaimed. “You’ll watch
Isabella grow, and you’ll teach
her all sorts of things. Remember
how I taught you to ride a bike?”

“I can’t teach a baby how to ride
a bike,” Elena pointed out.

“Not yet, silly,” Nina said. “When
she’s older, you’ll have as much
fun together as we do.”



In the stroller, Isabella gave a little
kick as if to prove Nina’s **point**.

“Most importantly, there’s nobody
who loves you like a sister,” Nina
added. She gave Elena a big hug.
“And you’re the only one who gets
to be a big sister and a little sister!
How cool is that?”

They were almost back home. Elena felt a lot better already . . . but she did have one last worry.

“What if Mom and Dad don’t have time for all three of us?” she burst out. “What if I’m the one who gets forgotten?”

“No one is going to forget you,” Nina promised as they approached the house. “That’s not how love works.”



When Elena opened the door, she heard voices shout, “SURPRISE!”

Her parents, family, and friends were all standing around wearing party hats. There was a pile of presents on the table.

“Happy Birthday, Elena!” her mother said, kissing her on the cheek.



“Eight years old! You’re growing up so fast!” her father said, giving her a hug.

“See?” said Nina, with a smile. “I told you they wouldn’t forget you! Happy birthday, squirt.”

Glossary

attention (<i>n.</i>)	special care or notice given to someone or something (p. 4)
congratulations (<i>n.</i>)	an expression of praise or good wishes for an achievement or on a special occasion (p. 7)
distracted (<i>adj.</i>)	unfocused or unable to pay attention to something (p. 4)
frustration (<i>n.</i>)	a feeling of disappointment or distress, particularly about being unable to change something (p. 9)
muttered (<i>v.</i>)	said quietly under one’s breath (p. 8)
point (<i>n.</i>)	an important idea or argument (p. 12)