substitute	sighed	scary
muscles	tattoo	scars

Second-Grade Substitute

Josh waved to his mom, sat down, sighed, and looked out the window. He checked his watch. He would be at school in about ten minutes. His stomach was full of butterflies.

The bus stopped, and five more students got on. Maddox sat down next him and gave him a nervous look and a half-smile.

"Are you ready?" he asked him.

Josh shrugged his shoulders. Their teacher, Mrs. Whitman, was gone for the day, and they were having a substitute.

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Normally, they wouldn't mind this, but their teacher had told them that Mr. Stafford would be filling in for her. The boys had never had Mr. Stafford before, but the older kids had told them all about him.

Brendan said Mr. Stafford had tattoos all over and the biggest muscles he had ever seen! Max said that he had piercing blue eyes, a thick dark beard, big teeth and a huge scar on his face. They both said that Mr. Stafford was the biggest, meanest and scariest teacher they had ever had!

The bus came to a stop and Josh looked up. They had arrived at the school. He took a deep breath and walked off the bus.

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Josh and Maddox headed up the second-grade hallway. They were walking a little more slowly than normal. Josh noticed that Mrs. Whitman wasn't standing at the classroom door like she usually was. He sighed again, put his head down and walked into the classroom.

He looked around the room for their substitute teacher. He didn't see the big, scary man anywhere. Puzzled, he said to Maddox, "I don't see him. Do you?"

Maddox pointed, and Josh's eyes followed the direction of his finger. He spotted their substitute in the reading area with several students.

Maddox and Josh instantly felt better and smiled. Mr. Stafford didn't have huge muscles or scars. He didn't have tattoos all over him, and his eyes and teeth were normal. He didn't look scary at all.

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He was an older man, wearing grey pants, a plaid shirt, a dark green cardigan sweater and glasses. He had a warm smile and gentle laugh.

The kids all began to clap as he finished reading a story. "Second grade, I hope you enjoyed that book. Are you ready to start our day together? I'm looking forward to it!" he told them.

Josh smiled. Suddenly, he was really looking forward to it too.

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Second-Grade Substitute (exercises)

1. Choose the correct answers.

How is Josh feeling at the beginning of the story?

a. angry

b. nervous

c. excited

d. brave

What is another word for *piercing* in the story?

a. pointy

b. intense

c. sad

d. large

What does the teacher wear?

a. a red necktie

b. black boots

c. a leather jacket

d. a green cardigan

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2. Put the events in the correct order.

_____ Josh and Maddox ride the bus.

_____ The teacher reads a story.

_____ Mrs. Whitman tells the students about a substitute.

_____ Josh and Maddox look around the classroom.

3. What made Josh change his mind about the day ahead?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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