

A Big Opportunity Requires Passing a Test (Part 1)

(Story word: commercial, route, especially)

It had been many years since Carole had been in school. She was in her fifties, and the last thing she thought she would ever be doing again was taking exams. The idea of studying for a test was quite intimidating. But, a big opportunity awaited her if she passed the commercial driver's license test.

It was Carole's best friend Cynthia who had inspired her. Cynthia had a school bus route and loved it. Over the years, she had told Carole so many funny stories about the kids in their community. Once Cynthia had established the rules on the bus, she said interacting with the kids was a breeze.

On the way to school, Cynthia said, kids tended to be sleepy and quiet. But coming home, especially on Fridays, they were rowdy. So long as kids followed Cynthia's most

important rules—staying seated, putting away dangerous and sharp objects (especially pencils) in their backpacks, and refraining from antagonizing other kids—Cynthia tolerated loud chatting.

Each year, there would be new kids on the route that were fun to get to know. This year she told a lot of stories about Grace, an exuberant kindergartner with a big personality. Whenever Grace was not on the bus, she wanted to make sure that Cynthia had noticed her absence. She would say, “Miss Cynthia, did you miss me yesterday?” Then, she would tell Cynthia all about her trip to the dentist or wherever she had been.

Carole lived on a farm, as Cynthia did, and her life was already busy. Her husband Frank was semi-retired, but they had lots of animals to care for. They had three dogs, two cats, and four pet goats. They also raised chickens and sold their extra eggs at the farmers market.