

**Before you read**

**Discuss in class:** Do you like homework? Do you do it yourself, or do you get help? What homework do you usually have?

## Who Did Patrick's Homework?



1. PATRICK never did homework. "Too boring," he said. He played hockey and basketball and Nintendo instead. His teachers told him, "Patrick! Do your homework or you won't learn a thing." And it's true, sometimes he did feel like an ignoramus. But what could he do? He hated homework.
2. Then one day he found his cat playing with a little doll and he grabbed it away. To his surprise it wasn't a doll



0647CH01

*Nintendo:* a video game

*ignoramus:* an ignorant person, who lacks education



at all, but a man of the tiniest size. He had a little wool shirt with old-fashioned britches and a high tall hat much like a witch's. He yelled, "Save me! Don't give me back to that cat. I'll grant you a wish, I promise you that."

3. Patrick couldn't believe how lucky he was! Here was the answer to all of his problems. So he said, "Only if you do all my homework till the end of the semester, that's 35 days. If you do a good enough job, I could even get A's."
4. The little man's face wrinkled like a dishcloth thrown in the hamper. He kicked his legs and doubled his fists and he grimaced and scowled and pursed his lips, "Oh, am I cursed! But I'll do it."

*britches:*  
breeches, or short trousers. The writer here spells it, for fun, to rhyme with the word 'witch's'.

*dishcloth:* a cloth used for washing dishes

*hamper:* a basket with a lid

*grimaced, scowled, pursed his lips:* his face had these expressions, showing disgust, anger and disapproval

5. And true to his word, that little elf began to do Patrick's homework. Except there was one glitch. The elf didn't always know what to do and he needed help. "Help me! Help me!" he'd say. And Patrick would have to help — in whatever way.

"I don't know this word," the elf squeaked while reading Patrick's homework. "Get me a dictionary. No, what's even better, look up the word and sound it out by each letter."

6. When it came to maths, Patrick was out of luck. "What are times tables?" the elf shrieked. "We elves never need that.

*glitch* (an informal word): a fault in a machine that prevents it from working properly; here, hitch or problem

*shrieked*: gave a short, high-pitched cry



And addition and subtraction and division and fractions? Here, sit down beside me, you simply must guide me.” Elves know nothing of human history, to them it’s a mystery. So the little elf, already a shouter, just got louder. “Go to the library, I need books. More and more books. And you can help me read them too.”

7. As a matter of fact, every day in every way that little elf was a nag! Patrick was working harder than ever and was it a drag! He was staying up nights, had never felt so weary, was going to school with his eyes puffed and bleary.
8. Finally, the last day of school arrived and the elf was free to go. As for homework, there was no more, so he quietly and slyly slipped out the back door.
9. Patrick got his A’s; his classmates were amazed; his teachers smiled and were full of praise. And his parents? They wondered what had happened to Patrick. He was now the model kid. Cleaned his room, did his chores, was cheerful, never rude, like he had developed a whole new attitude.
10. You see, in the end, Patrick still thought he’d made that tiny man do all his homework. But I’ll share a secret, just between you and me. It wasn’t the elf; Patrick had done it himself!

CAROL MOORE

*nag*: one who troubles someone all the time by complaining or asking them to do something  
*drag* (an informal word): something dull and uninteresting

*slyly*: secretively

*kid* (an informal word): a child  
*chores*: work that must be done everyday, often boring  
*attitude*: a feeling about someone or something