

# Canoeing Chaos!

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

“Ramming speed!” Arthur shouted. He raised his paddle and pointed in the direction that his two friends should paddle. He planned on smashing into his brother’s boat to win this race.

In front of them, Arthur’s brother, Karl, looked up in alarm. Arthur grinned at his brother as their eyes met, and he began paddling as hard as he could. His boat lurched forward with a sudden burst of speed.

Karl’s canoe was perpendicular to Arthur’s, so they would be hit broadside, right in the middle of their boat. Karl and his friend, Aaron, tried to paddle faster, but they couldn’t move quickly enough.

## WHAM!

The two aluminum boats met in a crash and shuddered as they quickly came to a stop. Aaron quickly jerked his paddle out of the water to stop it from being snapped in two by the force of the crash. Where metal had met metal, a long crease was dented inward. Karl’s boat tipped sideways, but did not sink.

“What are you doing?” Karl demanded. He looked really angry. “This is cheating.”

Arthur laughed and pointed to the end of their canoe, which had ridden up on to the middle of his brother’s canoe. “We ran you over.”

“Oh, thanks a lot.” Karl pushed Arthur’s canoe off of theirs.

Arthur’s canoe slid back into the water and landed with a smack, but Karl’s canoe suddenly tipped. Moving the weight off the top of their boat had caused it to suddenly rock the opposite direction, dumping them into the water.

“Arthur!” Karl shouted, coming up spluttering water as his canoe sank. “I’m going to get you!” He reached for Arthur’s canoe to tip it over.

Arthur laughed and began paddling away before his brother could grab on. He kept laughing about it until an hour later, when Aaron and Karl came up behind them. They’d moved up silently but looked very determined.



“How did you get here?” Arthur demanded. His easy victory in the race seemed to vanish, and he couldn’t believe his brother had done it.

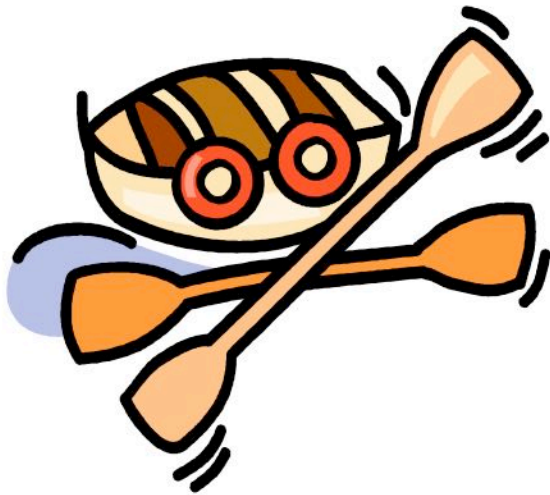
It couldn’t have been easy to drag the boat back up onto shore, and with two people paddling, they should have been slower. Somehow they’d caught up. Karl’s canoe swept past them, and as he went, he smacked the paddles from everyone’s hands.

“Try rowing with no oars!” Now it was Karl’s turn to laugh.

It took several minutes for Arthur and his two friends to move their boat by splashing their hands in the water. Their paddles were floating down the river, but they got them all back. By the time they’d done that, Karl’s boat was already around the bend and heading to the finish line. Karl was going to win.

When Arthur and his friends pulled up to the dock and tied off the boat, Karl and Aaron were both already walking around on shore. They were still wet, but they’d won. Karl walked down the dock in squishy shoes, grinning from ear to ear.

“You shouldn’t have cheated, Artie.” Karl shook his head. “You gave us all the anger and energy we needed to push hard and race past you.”



“I see that now.” Arthur sighed. “Good race, though.”

Karl nodded and held out a hand to help his brother up onto the docks. Arthur took it, hoping all was forgiven. Karl had other ideas, though. He pulled his hand free before Arthur was all the way on the dock and sent him splashing into the water.

“Things always come back to haunt you. It’s better to be nice and play fair.” Karl said when Arthur finally climbed out of the water on his own.

Maybe he was right, Arthur thought. His brother had gotten even and he’d won the race.

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. Where were Arthur and Karl?
  - A. In a field
  - B. On an ocean
  - C. At home
  - D. On a river
  
2. What does Arthur do to get an advantage in the race?
  - A. He crashes into his brother's boat.
  - B. He steals his brother's paddles.
  - C. He drills a hole in his brother's boat.
  - D. He uses a shortcut.
  
3. What happened after the boats crashed?
  - A. Arthur and Karl got into a fistfight.
  - B. Both boats sank.
  - C. Arthur's plan backfired and he sank his own boat.
  - D. Karl's boat sank.
  
4. Who won the race?
  - A. Arthur's boat
  - B. Karl's boat
  - C. It was a tie
  - D. Neither boat finished
  
5. What lesson did Arthur learn?
  - A. Play fair or someone else won't play fair
  - B. Get even and get your revenge
  - C. Don't give up
  - D. Respect your elders

# Canoeing Chaos! – Answer Key

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