Name: _____ Date: _____

# Be My Robot

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 400 words

"Will you be my robot?" asked Cass. Ezra blinked at his big sister in surprise. Cass wanted to show him how coding works.

"Code is a list of steps," Cass explained. "A computer follows the steps, one by one. Today, you can be the computer."

Ezra stood by the kitchen door. "Walk to the couch," said Cass. "I need every single step," Ezra beeped.

Cass tried again. "Step, step, step, then turn, then step." Ezra stepped, turned and plopped into a squishy pillow.

"Oops," said Cass, laughing. "That is called a bug. A bug is a mistake hiding in the steps."

"Why is it called a bug?" asked Ezra. Cass told him a true story from long ago.

Once, a moth got stuck inside a giant computer. The workers found it and taped it into their notebook.

The word bug already meant a mistake. So they wrote a funny note about a real bug.

Fixing a bug is called debugging. Cass carefully looked at her steps again. "I said turn too soon," she said.

Ezra ran to get his yellow rubber duck. "Tell the duck," he said. So Cass read each step out loud to the duck.

Coders really do this, too! Say your steps out loud, one at a time. The mistake often jumps right out at you.

Cass tried once more. "Step, step, step, step, then turn, then step." Ezra landed right on the couch.

"It works!" cheered Cass. The duck stayed perfectly quiet. Ezra gave it a proud little pat.

Then Cass opened her laptop to show him Scratch. It is a free program for coding. You snap blocks together, like pieces of a puzzle.

Each block is one step, like "move" or "turn." There is no hard typing at all. You just drag the blocks and snap them.

Cass drew a spotted frog and snapped on hopping blocks. Then she clicked a little green flag. The frog hopped!

"Can I try?" asked Ezra. He cannot read many words yet. But ScratchJr, a coding app, uses picture blocks instead.

With picture blocks, kids can code before they read! Ezra made a little fish swim across the screen.

The fish swam right off the edge. "Another bug!" shouted Ezra. He grinned and grabbed the yellow duck.

Now it is your turn to play robots. Give a grown-up the steps to touch their nose. Did you find a bug?

## Questions

**1. What did Cass say code is?**

A. A secret word
B. A list of steps
C. A kind of game

**2. Why did Ezra walk into the pillow?**

A. He was tired
B. There was a mistake in the steps
C. The duck pushed him

**3. What does "debugging" mean in this book?**

A. Catching moths
B. Washing a duck
C. Fixing a mistake

**4. Why did Ezra grab the duck at the end?**

A. To find his new bug by saying the steps out loud
B. To take a bath
C. To hide it from Cass

**5. Why can Ezra use ScratchJr before he reads well?**

A. It talks to him
B. Its blocks use pictures
C. It has no blocks

## Words to know

code: steps for computers
robot: step-following machine
bug: a mistake
debugging: fixing mistakes
moth: night insect

# Answer key: Be My Robot

1. B. A list of steps
2. B. There was a mistake in the steps
3. C. Fixing a mistake
4. A. To find his new bug by saying the steps out loud
5. B. Its blocks use pictures