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Maria Gets Better

15 Maria is as smart as anyone. She can do most of her
27 school work by herself. She can learn a song by heart really
37 fast. Maria also keeps her backpack clean and her desk
47 organized. Once in a while, she will even help other
54 students in her class with their math.

63 Reading is Maria's harder subject. She knows all her
73 letter sounds, but sometimes gets mixed up when reading a
83 word like "read" out loud, which sometimes can sound like
94 the tall grass plant called a 'reed', and other times sounds
104 like the color 'red'. There are many other examples of
110 tough words like that in English.

120 English is not the first language that Maria learned to
131 speak. Before she came to the United States when she was
141 seven, Maria lived in Mexico with her family. Her Spanish
152 was perfect, but now she had to learn a whole new

162 language. Maria was nervous coming to a new school, and
170 sometimes she didn't understand what her teacher was
182 saying, but she didn't give up. She tries hard in class and
187 does all of her homework.

198 Maria goes to the library at night to study with her
210 sister Elena, who is in high school. Little by little, Maria is
219 learning to read bigger words, understand what they mean,
230 and is able to handle words like “to”, “too”, and “two”,
241 even when they all sound the same. She now knows that
252 each has a different meaning. Maria is proud of herself for
258 being patient and trying her best.