

#1

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 1 through 5.

Equal Inheritance

by Leo Tolstoy

A certain merchant had two sons. The elder son was his favorite, and he intended to leave all his wealth to this son when the merchant died. The mother felt sorry for her younger son, and she asked her husband not to tell the boys of his intention. She hoped to find some way of making her sons equal. The merchant heeded her wish and did not make known his decision.

One day the mother was sitting at the window weeping. A traveler approached the window and asked her why she was weeping.

"How can I help weeping?" she said. "There is no difference between my two sons, but their father wishes to leave everything to one and nothing to the other. I have asked him not to tell them of his decision until I have thought of some way of helping the younger. But I have no money of my own, and I do not know what to do in my misery."

Then the traveler said to her, "There is help for your trouble. Tell your sons that the elder will receive the entire inheritance, and that the younger will receive nothing. Then they will be equal."

The younger son, on learning that he would inherit nothing, went to another land, where he served his apprenticeship and learned a trade. The elder son lived at home and learned nothing, knowing that someday he would be rich.

When the father died, the elder son who did not know how to do anything spent all his inheritance. However, the younger son, who had learned how to make money in a foreign country, became rich.

1. The merchant believes that compared to his elder son, his younger son is

- A** less important
- B** irresponsible
- C** untrustworthy
- D** less intelligent

2. Which word best describes how the mother feels after hearing her husband's decision?

- F** cautious
- G** helpless
- H** shocked
- J** uncertain

3. Which statement best describes the theme of the story?

- A** Inheriting money brings bad luck.
- B** Siblings should learn to get along with one another.
- C** Learning how to earn money is better than having money given to you.
- D** Some people have to work hard for success; others have success handed to them.

4. Which quotation from the story foreshadows, or predicts, the conclusion of the story?

- F** "The elder son was his favorite, and he intended to leave all his wealth to this son when the merchant died."
- G** "She hoped to find some way of making her sons equal. The merchant heeded her wish and did not make known his decision."
- H** "Tell your sons that the elder will receive the entire inheritance, and that the younger will receive nothing. Then they will be equal."
- J** "The elder son lived at home and learned nothing, knowing that someday he would be rich."

5. Read this sentence from the story.

The mother felt sorry for her younger son, and she asked her husband not to tell the boys of his intention.

Which word means about the same as "intention"?

- A** hope
- B** plan
- C** reason
- D** regret

Directions

Read this article about the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Then answer questions 6 through 11.

The ASPCA: A Brief History

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is the oldest humane organization in America. It was founded in 1866 by Henry Bergh, a wealthy resident of New York City. Bergh was horrified by the cruelty toward animals that he observed daily on city streets, particularly with respect to the large number of working horses in New York City, as well as its many stray cats and dogs.

Bergh decided to act. He enlisted the support of some of New York City's wealthiest and most elite citizens. Together they wrote and signed the charter that stated their mission: to alleviate pain, fear, and suffering among all animals. The newly founded ASPCA realized they needed more than kind words to confront what they saw as a growing problem. Therefore, the organization, through its founding members, persuaded the New York State legislature to pass the country's first effective animal anti-cruelty law.

From a small organization of a few concerned citizens, the ASPCA has developed into a nationally-recognized force in protecting animals. In New York City, the ASPCA continues to rescue and shelter animals and to educate school children and the general public about animals and their care. It now runs a full-service veterinary hospital in the city as well. Beyond New York City and State, the ASPCA has led many national movements to help animals by informing the public about animal welfare issues and asking for changes in federal laws.

And what of Henry Bergh? His vision lives on today at the ASPCA. For over 135 years, the ASPCA has taken a leading role in promoting the humane treatment of animals. In carrying on the work started by Bergh, the ASPCA promotes both the spirit and the letter of the law. Henry Bergh would be amazed.

6 The author **most likely** wrote this passage to

- F** persuade readers to propose new state laws
- G** ask readers to support veterinary hospitals
- H** show readers how to found a national organization
- J** inform readers about an organization and its history

7 The mission of the ASPCA is “to alleviate pain, fear, and suffering among all animals.” The word “alleviate” means about the same as

- A** advertise
- B** identify
- C** reduce
- D** study

8 According to the passage, the ASPCA was most likely created to

- F** find new homes for animals
- G** start a hospital for animals
- H** protect animals from mistreatment
- J** educate the public about animal diseases

9 Read this sentence from the passage.

The ASPCA promotes both the spirit and the letter of the law.

“Spirit” as it is used in this sentence means about the same as

- A** ideas and attitude
- B** a feeling of anger
- C** rules and procedures
- D** a sense of power

10 Read this excerpt from the passage.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is the oldest humane organization in America.

“Humane organization” in this context **most likely** means that the organization

- F** was founded by individuals
- G** has been accepted by most people
- H** is run on kindhearted principles
- J** has existed for a long time

11 The last line of the passage says, “Henry Bergh would be amazed.” What probably would amaze Bergh most?

- A** the mission of the ASPCA
- B** the growth and spread of the ASPCA
- C** the passage of the first effective animal anti-cruelty law
- D** the creation of a veterinary hospital for animals

Directions

Read this poem. Then answer questions 12 through 16.

The Horseman

by Gretchen Schol

My grandfather owned
The last livery stable
In Long Prairie, Minnesota.
He kept the workhorses,
The Shires and Clydesdales
That they used to use
For logging, until the last
Farmer got a Ford truck
And waved at my grandfather
As he stood by his stable.
He sold the horses; the
Barn went for lumber.
And the old man went
Home from the livery stable
For the last time. He bought
A Ford and learned to drive it.
But he would never start it
Without flicking invisible reins,
And when he braked, he always
Closed his eyes and whispered, "Whoa."

reins = narrow
straps used to
guide a horse



12

This poem is written from the point of view of a

- F** character in the poem who plays a major role
- G** character in the poem who is not involved in the events
- H** narrator who has a personal connection to the poem
- J** narrator who discusses the events from an impersonal position

13

Read these lines from the poem.

... He bought
A Ford and learned to drive it.
But he would never start it
Without flicking invisible reins,

What do these lines imply about the main character in the poem?

- A** He is unwilling to let go of the past.
- B** He is frustrated by the steering wheel.
- C** He is annoyed that he cannot change old habits.
- D** He is worried that he will forget how to drive a wagon.

14

Which statement suggests that the main character in the poem has begun to accept the changes in his life?

- F** He learns to drive.
- G** He owns a livery stable.
- H** He keeps his workhorses for a while.
- J** He pretends he is driving a wagon.

6

Go On

15

Which lines from the poem does the poet use to imply a time period that has since passed away?

- A** "The last livery stable
In Long Prairie, Minnesota."
- B** "He kept the workhorses,
The Shires and Clydesdales"
- C** "... waved at my grandfather
As he stood by his stable."
- D** "... He bought
A Ford and learned to drive it."

16

Which technique is used throughout the poem?

- F** rhyme
- G** repetition
- H** free verse
- J** common rhythm

Directions

During the 1800s, many people opposed to slavery helped runaway slaves escape to free states and territories. The method they used was called the "Underground Railroad." It was not a train, but a series of safe houses where runaways could find food, shelter, and encouragement on their journey. Read the excerpt about Ann, a runaway slave staying in the home of Mr. Bigelow. Then answer questions 17 through 20.

Stealing Freedom

by Elisa Carbone

The days seemed to go on forever. She ate each meal slowly, alone in the stuffy room, trying to make it last as long as possible. And she took a long time dressing, changing into her nightgown each night and into the beautiful yellow dress each morning. It seemed a shame to wear the best clothes she'd ever owned with no one to see her in them except the spiders hanging in the corners.

The rest of her time she spent looking through the peephole, watching the street outside with its lazy procession of people, horses and carriages, sheep, goats, chickens, and cows. They were near the corner of Seventh and E streets, Mr. Bigelow said, just a few blocks away from Pennsylvania Avenue, where President Pierce lived in the White House.

How strange, she thought, to be free and yet to be a prisoner. She would gladly have made herself busy with washing and cooking and sweeping. Anything would be better than this boredom.

One evening, during a talk with Mr. Bigelow, while he stood on the second rung of the ladder and she rested her chin on her hands at the edge of the trapdoor, she looked into the living room at the walls lined with bookshelves. The books were fat and black, some with gold lettering on their spines.



"What are all of those books about?" she asked.

"Ah. Those are my law books. They are there to give off a musty odor and convince all my visitors that I am, indeed, a very educated man."

"There must be a lot of laws to fill so many books," she said.

Mr. Bigelow gazed at his library and scratched a sideburn. "Strange, isn't it? I am a man of the law, and yet, by the law, I am a criminal and deserve to be thrown in prison."

They were both silent for a time.

"Well, enough lamenting for me. It's time for bed," said Mr. Bigelow, and turned to step off the ladder.

"Wait," said Ann urgently. She didn't think she could stand another day of staring alternately at the ceiling and out the peephole. "Your books—might I borrow one to read?"

"Why, my dear child, I had no idea you could read!" he said, astonished. "But those books . . ." He looked at the long black rows. "They're no more interesting than watching ice melt." He gave a perplexed sigh, then suddenly brightened. He marched over to a low corner shelf and pulled out a small red book. He blew dust off of it and brought it back to her. "I saved this from when I was a boy, in case I ever had a son of my own."

Ann held the book and read the title embossed in silver on the front cover: *Robinson Crusoe*.

"It's really a story for boys, but it's the best I can offer," said Mr. Bigelow.

Ann turned the book over in her hands, feeling the smoothness and coolness of it. Mr. Bigelow must have seen the look of

excitement and longing on her face, because he said, "I suppose now you'll want a candle."

"Oh, could I?" She could scarcely believe her good fortune.

He gave her a very short, stubby candle. "This is to make sure you get some sleep tonight," he explained.

She thanked him profusely, and gladly retired to her bed. There, by the light of the candle, she opened the book. She ran her hands over the silky pages, then turned to the text and began: "Chapter 1. I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family. . . ."

She was carried away to the world of a young man's decision to seek adventure on the high seas, a terrible storm, and his narrow escape from a sinking ship. She read until the candle flickered, sputtered, and died. But even in the dark, images of grand ships and raging storms lasted in her mind until they mixed with her dreams.

17 The sentence "They're no more interesting than watching ice melt" is an example of

- A** foreshadowing a future event
- B** personifying an object
- C** a comparison for dramatic effect
- D** a flashback to a previous time

18 Based on information in the passage, what can you conclude about Mr. Bigelow?

- F** He earns a living by helping former slaves.
- G** He works in an office outside his home.
- H** He does not like to read or study.
- J** He has no children and lives alone.

19

Which statement best explains why Mr. Bigelow gives Ann a short candle?

- A** She is a fast reader and will not need light for long.
- B** He is worried that someone outside will see the candlelight.
- C** He wants to be sure that she does not stay up too late reading.
- D** She might start a fire if she falls asleep while the candle burns.

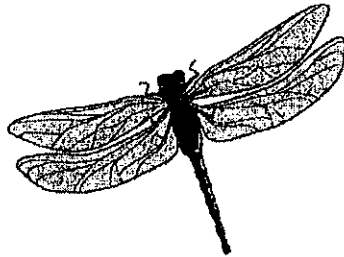
20

Why would the book *Robinson Crusoe* most likely be of particular interest to Ann?

- F** It belonged to someone's son, and she misses her family.
- G** It is about someone who is having an adventure.
- H** It was the largest book on the shelf.
- J** It is about the law, and she hopes to pursue law as a career.

Directions

Read this article about an ancient form of poetry. Then answer questions 21 through 26.



Haiku

A Song of the Earth

by Hazel Root Cassey

Have you ever listened to the plop of a raindrop before it snakes its way down your windowpane or caught the hum of a locust on a steamy summer's eve or tuned in to the crispy rattle of dry leaves chasing each other as the first winter wind cracks his frosty whip? You might call these small, subtle sounds earth songs. Is it possible to capture earth songs, to put them into words?

Long ago, poets in Japan listened, watched, and did capture the beauty of the earth's songs much as the fragile threads of a spider's web catch and reflect the gold of the morning sun. They did this with the tiniest poems in the world, called *haiku*. A haiku is a poem that is just three lines and seventeen syllables long.

In their haiku, the early Japanese poets caught the colors, sounds, and fragrances of the seasons of the year. They sang of their islands' beauties, from the stately Buddha to the delicate fragrance of lotus and cherry blossoms to the iridescence of the dragonfly's wing. Their miniature poems were not meant to fully describe a scene or to explain it but rather were a flash, split-second impression.

The old poets are not the only writers of haiku. Today Japanese farmers, shopkeepers, grandparents, and students write it, and because of its strong appeal, haiku is written in many other countries throughout the world.

Interestingly enough, Japanese poetry has had a long and colorful history. In the prehaiku period in the early eighth century, Japanese poets wrote *katauta*, poems in a question-and-answer form, using two people. Each three-line verse contained about seventeen syllables that could be delivered easily and spontaneously in one breath—just as one would naturally ask or answer a question. This has remained the basic pattern for traditional Japanese poetry throughout the centuries.

Another form that emerged was the *tanka*, which contained five lines and thirty-one syllables (5-7-5-7-7), written by either one or two persons. From that evolved the *renga*, which contained more than one verse, or link. Composed by three or more people, it could have as many as 100 links! The first verse of the *renga* introduced a subject or theme. It had three lines and was called the *hokku*, or starting verse. *Renga* parties became a favorite pastime.

Around 1450, *haikai no renga* became popular. This style of linked verse contained puns and was humorous and amusing. The opening three lines were still called a *hokku*, and from *haikai* and *hokku* the term *haiku* evolved.

Here is an example of a haiku:

*The best I have to
offer you is the small size
of the mosquitoes.*

21 What is the **most likely** reason the author uses imagery in the question that begins the article?

- A to provide some examples of earth songs
- B to establish a dramatic tone for the passage
- C to express an appreciation of natural events
- D to explain how haiku differs from other poetry

22 According to the article, what was the **main** activity at a *renga* party?

- F creating a group poem
- G changing haiku into *tanka*
- H studying the history of haiku
- J competing to write earth songs

23

How does the author support the idea that haiku is an important part of Japanese culture?

- A** by describing how haiku has evolved and remained popular for centuries
- B** by making comparisons between modern haiku and other types of poetry
- C** by emphasizing that most Japanese people share an appreciation of nature
- D** by explaining that the Japanese people still prefer reading short poetry today

24

Read the partial outline below.

I. Types of Haiku

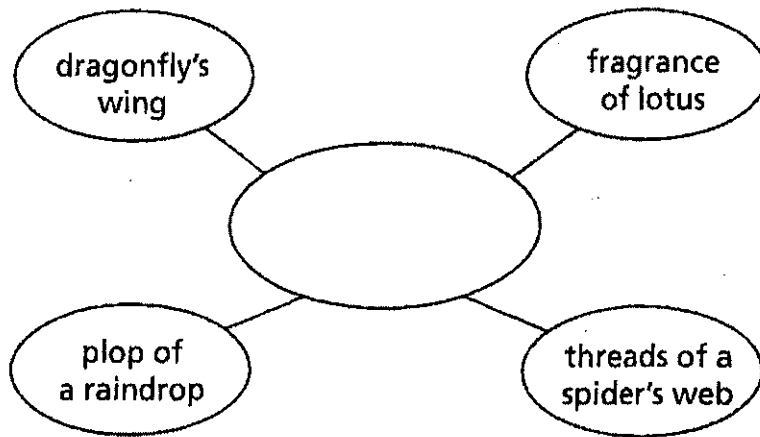
- A. Katauta:** _____
- B. Tanka:** (5-7-5-7-7) written by 1 or 2 persons
- C. Renga:** contains more than one verse or link

Which detail belongs in the blank space in the outline?

- F** contains thirty-one syllables
- G** question-and-answer poem
- H** humorous and amusing poem
- J** could have as many as 100 links

25

Look at the graphic organizer below.



According to the article, what word or phrase should go in the blank space in the center of the graphic organizer?

- A tanka
- B katauta
- C tiny poems
- D haiku subjects

26

Information in this article would be of **most** value to a reader who wants to

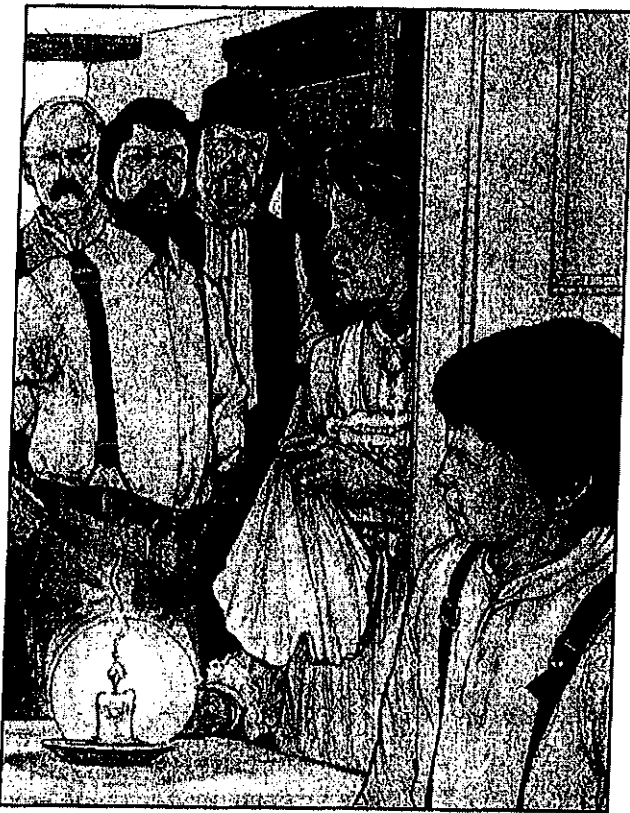
- F teach how to write haiku
- G research the history of haiku
- H compare Japanese and American poetry
- J find suggestions about hosting a renga party

Directions

Read this story about a young boy and a runaway slave. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

The Sign

by Laura Wrang
illustrated by Joel Snyder



Jess tried to steady his trembling legs. It wasn't easy to do with the strangers in the house. They were searching every room and surrounding Ma, who stood there bravely.

"A slave?" she was saying. "We have no slaves on our farm."

"We're looking for a runaway named Orion," said a bearded man. "If you're hiding my slave . . ."

Jess didn't wait to hear more. Ma had helped many slaves on their way to freedom; she was an expert at handling men like these. Jess slipped outdoors. In the distance, the river roared in the night. A light flickered on its bank. Jess ran toward it and gasped, "Orry, they're searching for you!"

In the glow of the fire, Jess saw Orry wince. Then, with his good arm, Orry grabbed a pail of water and put out the flames.

"Their search won't be easy."

"The men won't find you," Jess said firmly. "Ma told me what to do. I'll row you across the river. Then, you go to the farm Ma told you about. They'll help you from there."

Orry shook his head. "Taking the boat wouldn't be safe. The men will probably look here soon. They'd spot us in the water."

Orry crawled into the pit that he had dug, where he had slept the past few nights. He came out with a bundle and tied it to his belt with a bandanna. He stuck a hunting knife in his sheath, then took a step toward the river.

Jess went cold as he looked across the raging river's expanse. "Swimming's too dangerous."

Orry chuckled softly. "I'm not afraid of the river. I'll be fine."

Jess gulped. How could Orry swim with a wounded arm? Six days ago, Orry had staggered into their yard, hurt from his journey. Ma had treated his arm, but it still hadn't healed completely.

"Even if you make it across, will you be able to find the farm in the dark?" asked Jess.

"Look at the sky," Orry said gently. "All the stars are out. I reckon they'll guide me safely."

Jess tilted his head to the stars he and Orry had loved studying during their brief friendship. Jess had told Orry their names and drawn the constellations for him. But it was Orry who had brought the stars to life. He had made up stories about the dancing Seven Sisters, the rumbling Big Bear, the laughing Little Bear. . . .

"The stars will guide me," Orry repeated. "When I make it to the opposite bank, I'll leave a sign for you. Then you'll know I'm safe."

"What kind of sign?"

"Why, I'll—"

Orry stopped at the sound of a shout. "They're on their way," he whispered.

Jess felt a warm hand on his shoulder. Seconds later, Orry was gone. Orry had been his friend for six days of his life; he would miss him all the rest of it. "You've got to be safe, Orry," he thought. "If you can just swim the river, you can make it to the North, too."

The roaring river filled Jess's dreams that night. He slept fitfully. But in the morning, the river had quieted. Ma followed Jess to the boat. Together they rowed across the water.

"The men might come back," said Ma.

"It doesn't matter," said Jess. "Orry must be far away by now. When we see his sign on the bank, at least we'll know that he made it across the river."

But as they docked, Ma gasped. Tangled in some riverbank weeds was a bandanna.

Jess gritted his teeth. "Orry's all right. The sign has to be here."

Jess stumbled through the brush, searching everywhere. He paused at a tree to study some marks on its trunk. Had Orry made them with his knife?

But Ma shook her head. "It's just woodpeckers, Jess."

Ma was blinking back tears as they rowed home. Jess stared silently at the shoreline ahead. He tried not to look at the mighty river; he tried not to think of Orry lost in its depths. When they got to the farm, Jess went to work in the yard. He chopped wood until his hands were blistered and burning. Then he dropped to the ground for a rest.

The sky above Jess was blue. But in his mind, it was night again, with the stars shining. Orry's words came back: "The stars will guide me. . . . I'll leave a sign. . . ." A terrible sadness filled Jess. But as he stared upward, a pattern came to mind. Like pieces of a puzzle, the pattern clicked into place.

"Ma!" shouted Jess. Trembling with joy, he jumped up and ran into the house.

"Orry's name, Ma. Remember what it's short for?"

Ma said softly, "Orion."

Jess grabbed his slate and drew a pattern on it. "Those marks on the tree weren't from woodpeckers. They're the shape of a constellation." Jess held out the slate. "The stars of Orion, Ma. Orry made them. He's safe!"

Ma gave a happy cry and hugged Jess. From the open door came the sound of the rushing river. To Jess, it sounded just like Orry's soft chuckle.

1 This story is told from the point of view of

- A Orry
- B Jess's mother
- C Jess
- D an outside narrator

2 Ma's actions in the story are best described as

- A convenient and practical
- B peculiar and disturbing
- C sympathetic and daring
- D negligent and mischievous

3 Read these phrases from the story.

"The stars will guide me. . . . I'll leave a sign"

These phrases foreshadow, or predict, that

- A the strangers will go elsewhere to conduct their search
- B Jess will stay silent if asked about slaves staying on the farm
- C Orry will successfully escape the men who are looking for him
- D the use of the river as an escape route for slaves will remain a secret

4 Read this sentence from the story.

Like pieces of a puzzle, the pattern clicked into place.

The author uses this description to indicate that Jess understands

- A** the message Orry left and knows he is safe
- B** why Orry left his bandanna behind in the weeds
- C** the reason Orry studied stars and made up stories
- D** why Orry uses a shorter version of his full name

5 Which statement best describes the theme of "The Sign"?

- A** You never miss friends until they are gone.
- B** Memories of special friendships last forever.
- C** Staying alone is better than hiding among others.
- D** Never take on more responsibility than you can handle.

6 Read these sentences from the story.

The roaring river filled Jess's dreams that night. He slept fitfully.

The word "fitfully" most likely means

- A** easily
- B** heavily
- C** noisily
- D** restlessly

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 7 through 11.

The Shopping Cart

by Don Wulffson

Today there are twenty to twenty-five million shopping carts rolling around the world. In fact, the shopping cart is presently one of the most often used items on four wheels, second only to the automobile.

Indeed, almost everybody in America will spend a part of his or her life behind a shopping cart. They will, in a lifetime, push the chrome-plated contraptions many miles. But few will know—or even think to ask—who it was that invented them.

Mr. Sylvan N. Goldman of Oklahoma City invented the shopping cart in 1937.

Mr. Goldman's invention did not make him famous. It did, however, make him very rich.

When Goldman invented the cart he was in the supermarket business. Every day he would see shoppers lugging groceries around in baskets that they had to carry.

One day Goldman suddenly had the idea of putting baskets on wheels. The wheeled baskets would make shopping much easier for his customers. And by lightening their chore, he would attract their business.

Pondering the idea, Goldman walked into his office and sat down on a folding chair. Looking down at the chair, Goldman had another idea. The carts, he realized, should be made so they could be folded up. This would make it easier to store them when not in use.

On June 4, 1937, Goldman's first batch of carts was ready for use in his market. He was terribly excited on the morning of that day as customers began arriving. He couldn't wait to see them using his invention.

But Goldman was disappointed. Most shoppers gave the carts a long look, but hardly anybody would give them a try.

After a while, Goldman decided to ask customers why they weren't using his carts. "Don't you think this arm is strong enough to carry a shopping basket?" one offended shopper replied.

Day after day, the same thing happened. People wouldn't use the carts. They preferred a basket on the arm to a basket on wheels.

But Goldman wasn't beaten yet. He knew his carts would be a great success if only he could persuade people to give them a try. To this end, Goldman tried something that was both very clever and very funny. Believe it or not, he hired a group of people to push carts around his market and pretend they were shopping! Seeing this, the real customers gradually began copying the phony customers.

As Goldman had hoped, the carts were soon attracting larger and larger numbers of customers to his market. But not only did more people come—those who came bought more. With larger, easier-to-handle baskets, customers unconsciously bought a greater number of items than before.

Today's shopping carts are five times larger than Goldman's original model. Perhaps that's one reason Americans today spend more than five times as much money on food each year as they did before 1937—before the coming of the shopping cart.

7 In this article, the author's purpose is most likely to

- A** analyze the secrets of business success
- B** explain the power of advertising
- C** tell about the life of an inventor
- D** describe the history of an invention

8 Which phrase best describes Goldman's technique for getting customers to use the new shopping cart?

- A** printing advertisements
- B** giving a special discount
- C** offering a demonstration
- D** selling different products

9 Goldman achieved his goal mostly by

- A** acting on instinct
- B** perfecting his skills
- C** demanding obedience
- D** exercising persistence

10 What unintended benefit did Goldman gain from his invention?

- A** More customers came to Goldman's store.
- B** Shoppers bought more items.
- C** Goldman became famous.
- D** Shopping carts became larger.

11 All of the following secrets of success are suggested by the article **except**

- A** act on your ideas
- B** believe in your work
- C** use your imagination
- D** watch your competition

Directions

Read this poem. Then answer questions 12 through 16.

Neighbors

by Michael Spooner

Some people like to
put up a fence
a hickety rickety white painted pickety
(keep your bikes on your own side)

FENCE

to tell the street
where the street should be
to tell the neighbors
that side's you /
this side's me.

But I am
raising a row of sapling green
a ragged row of curving stems
(of rough sweet bark),
of vining twines and
branching tangles,
and oh
the smallest leaves
greening the sun
with their little hands.
(and of bright
busybirds
neighboring
cheerily)
tree to tree /
tree to tree.

12 Read this line from the poem.

(keep your bikes on your own side)

The space in this line is most likely used to

- A show how fences separate people
- B create a sense of irritation
- C show that two people are talking
- D suggest the speaker is confused

13 The placement of the word "FENCE" in the poem indicates

- A what a fence looks like
- B where a fence should be
- C how a fence divides space
- D why some people like fences

14 Read these lines from the poem about a row of saplings.

a ragged row of curving stems
(of rough sweet bark),
of winding twines and
branching tangles,

These lines suggest the saplings are different from a fence because they

- A take up more space than a fence
- B look more interesting than a fence
- C can be more dangerous than a fence
- D are more difficult to care for than a fence

15 The poet **most likely** includes birds in the poem to indicate that they

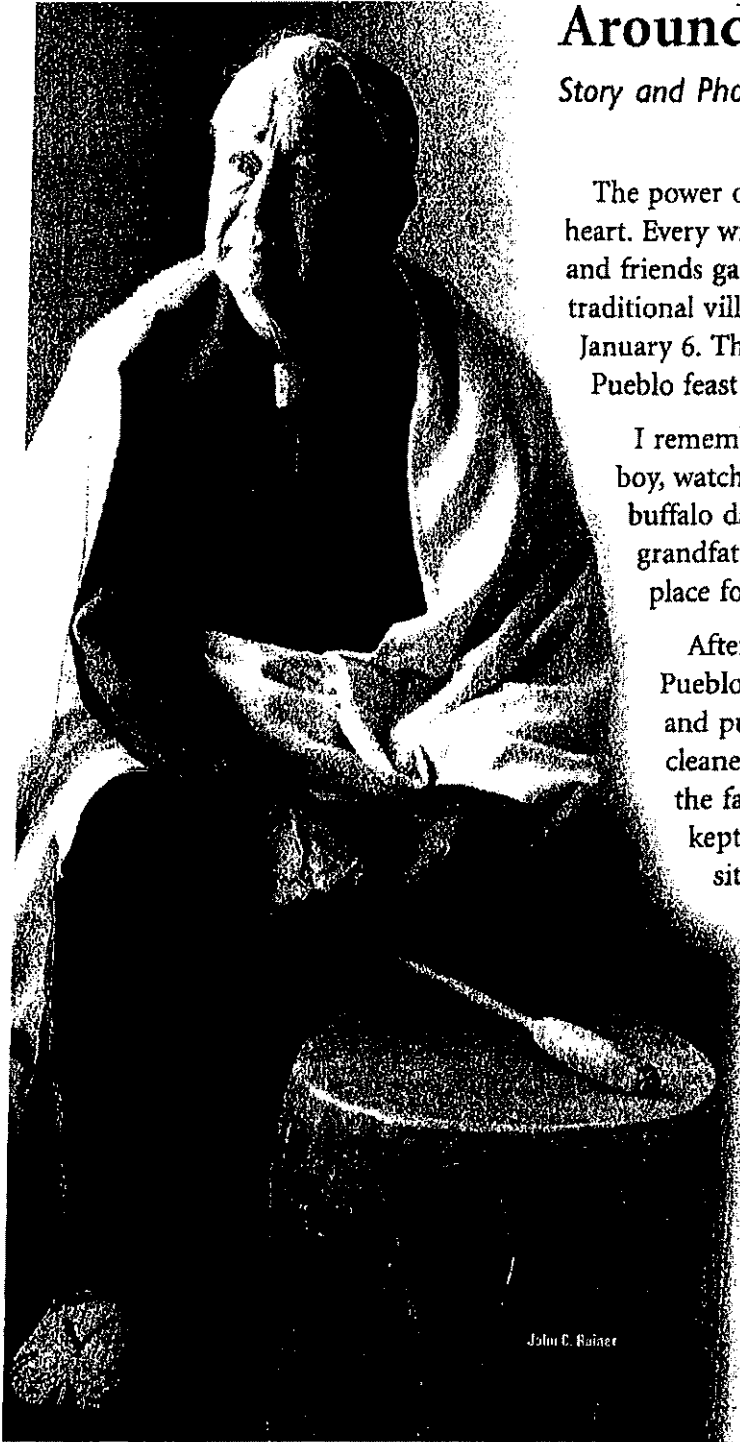
- A** build their nests with leaves
- B** happily share space in the trees
- C** bring noise to their surroundings
- D** quickly move into friendly neighborhoods

16 Which example of repetition in the poem **best** suggests a sense of sharing?

- A** "to tell the street / where the street should be"
- B** "that side's you / this side's me"
- C** "raising a row of sapling green / a ragged row of curving stems"
- D** "tree to tree / tree to tree"

Directions

Read this story. Then answer questions 17 through 20.



Around the Family Drum

Story and Photo by Howard Rainer

The power of the family drum remains tied to my heart. Every winter as long as I can remember, family and friends gathered at my grandfather's home in the traditional village of Taos Pueblo, New Mexico, on January 6. The sixth was, and is, a special traditional Pueblo feast day for the Taos Pueblo Indians.

I remember with great fondness, as a young boy, watching and eventually participating in the buffalo dance during the day. In the evening my grandfather's home became the central gathering place for family, friends and relatives.

After eating a scrumptious traditional Pueblo meal, the women would clear the table and put away the dishes. After everything was cleaned up, one of the uncles would bring out the family drum from where it was usually kept. While a warm fire crackled, those sitting around the family drum would commence singing Taos round dance songs that had been fondly recorded in the minds of those who sang them.

My father loved to sing the old Taos Pueblo and Apache round dance songs dating back as far as the late 1800s. I would watch him close his eyes and he seemed to travel back in time trying to recall a particular sage's song. With a growing smile he would start beating the drum and introduce a found song.

John C. Rainer

Back then I marveled at the volume of the voices of my uncles and father. There was a powerful spirit of camaraderie around the family drum as song after song was sung far into the night.

The day I was finally allowed to sit around the family drum was a memorable time for me, a time of intense boyhood concentration to not only memorize the songs, but to beat the drum on tempo and end in unison. I made my share of mistakes, and I must have sounded like a young coyote howling among the seasoned, but in time I gained confidence, and a strong voice to start leading some of the songs.

Sitting around the family drum with my father and uncles brought me a sense of great comfort and inner joy. It was a marvelous experience to be seated around the circle of love, acceptance and teaching.

During our singing, there was a particular war dance song my grandfather thoroughly enjoyed. As soon as we would begin this song, he would get up from his place at the drum and start dancing. This made all of us want to sing harder and louder! He would dance proudly and with a face beaming with satisfaction, he would come near the drum and dance with great intensity.

Sometimes while we were singing, there might come a knock at the door. In Pueblo tradition, the person outside would peek his head in and respectfully say, "I heard the drum, and I wanted to ask permission to enter your house, if 'my' grandfather would permit it!" My grandfather would graciously nod and tell the visitor to enter and join us around the drum.

These are cherished memories. I often close my eyes and can hear uncles and a beloved father now departed singing around the family drum!

17 Which statement best describes the theme of the story?

- A** The value of old songs lies in the words they contain.
- B** People value family and family traditions.
- C** The journey to adulthood is difficult for some people.
- D** People have special skills they can call their own.

18 This story is told from the point of view of

- A** an adult recalling his childhood
- B** a young boy describing a family celebration
- C** a group of family members reliving an enjoyable experience
- D** an uninvolved narrator describing events that happened to others

19

Based on the story, which description **best** fits the speaker's grandfather?

- A** a respected family elder
- B** a powerful leader in the community
- C** a man who regrets his lost youth
- D** a relative who worries about his grandchildren

20

Read this sentence from the story.

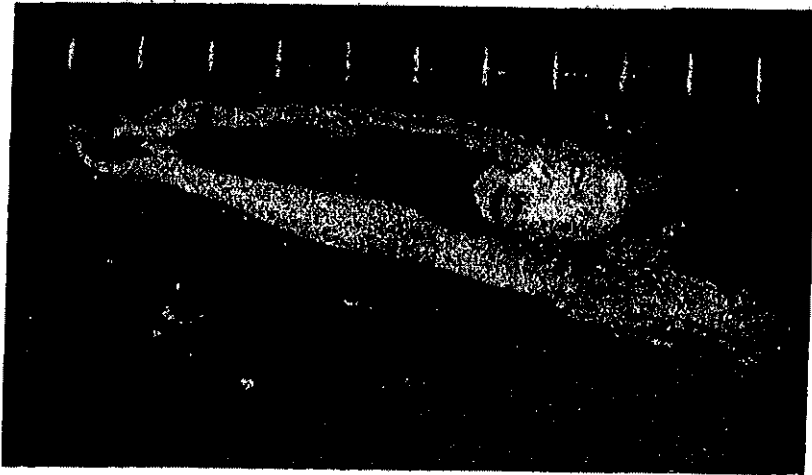
While a warm fire crackled, those sitting around the family drum would commence singing Taos round dance songs that had been fondly recorded in the minds of those who sang them.

What does the word "commence" mean?

- A** praise
- B** begin
- C** teach
- D** witness

Directions

Read this article about an accomplished swimmer. Then answer questions 21 through 26.



Making A Splash

by Carla C. Engelbrecht

"Swimmers, step up."

Goggles clamped over her eyes, nineteen-year-old Kate Pavlacka stepped onto the starting block. She was about to race against the world's fastest competitors at the 2000 Paralympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

To stay relaxed, Kate pictured herself making the proper strokes and the turns. She was the American record-holder in this event—the 400-meter freestyle for visually impaired swimmers—but she was worried. Her qualifying races that morning had been several seconds slower than her best.

"Take your mark."

A loud blast signaled the start of the race. Kate's worries disappeared as she dived. "When I'm swimming, my mind is clear," she says.

With each stroke, Kate brushed her hand against the rope that separated her lane from the next one. This is how she knows she is swimming in a straight line. It's not easy. "My high-school coach would always tease me about swimming 105 yards instead of 100 because I would zig and zag so much," she says. Thousands of hours of practice have helped her overcome that problem.

A tap on the shoulder tells Kate that she is near the end of the pool and should prepare to turn. A person taps her on the shoulder with a tennis ball attached to a bamboo pole. In an earlier race at the Paralympics, she thought she had felt a tap, so she turned. It was too early, though, and she was nearly disqualified.

Fortunately, she had no such problems in the final. She finished in fifth place among swimmers from around the world. Her time of six minutes, three and two-hundredths seconds set a new American record.

When she heard the time, "I started flipping out!" she recalls.

To prepare for the Paralympics, Kate had taken a semester off from college to devote all of her efforts to training. She spent three months at the Olympic Training Centers in California and Colorado swimming and lifting weights for five to six hours a day.

"The Paralympics were incredible and a lot of fun, but also a lot of stress," she says. She was glad to take a break after all that intensity to focus on her studies. She plans to become a sports dietician after graduating from college.

Learning to Be Blind

Kate hasn't always been blind. When she was five, doctors discovered she had a very rare degenerative eye condition. Unfortunately, there is no cure. Her eyesight became progressively worse until she could not see at all.

Letting people help her allows Kate to do things she might not have been able to do on her own. She loves to run, for example, and is able to do it if she runs with a partner. The partner can warn her about branches, curbs, and other obstacles.

Swimming is the best of both worlds—Kate can be independent while in the pool, but she is also part of a team. She has excelled at swimming ever since she started competing with her high-school team in Liverpool, New York.

Many swimmers learn by watching others. For Kate the process is different. A coach demonstrates the techniques by moving her arms and legs in the proper way.

"I try to let the coaches know that I am not any different from their other swimmers except for the fact that they might have to physically show me things instead of just telling me," Kate says.

Swimming has helped Kate connect with people, especially other athletes. "I have found that I inspire many people," she says. "It is not only uplifting and beneficial for others to see me, but it is also uplifting and beneficial for me when I know that I have helped others, through inspiration, to reach their own goals."

21 According to the article, which description **best** fits Kate Pavlacka?

- A** goal-oriented
- B** overambitious
- C** self-conscious
- D** easygoing

22 Study the chart below.

Kate's Challenge	Kate's Solution
swimming in a straight line	uses her hand to touch a lane rope to indicate her position
recognizing when she's near the end of the pool	gets a tap on the shoulder as a signal to prepare to turn
developing proper stroke techniques	

Which phrase **best** completes the chart?

- A** has a coach move her body to make the strokes
- B** has a partner describe the form of the strokes
- C** practices at a special camp to learn the strokes
- D** pictures herself correctly making the strokes

23 The information under the subheading "Learning to Be Blind" is **best** described as

- A** a personal interview with Kate about her future plans
- B** specific details explaining how Kate encourages others
- C** background information about Kate and her swimming
- D** a summary of the athletic achievements Kate has reached

24 According to the article, Kate **mainly** inspires others by

- A** actively pursuing personal goals
- B** planning for a career after college
- C** staying relaxed before each race
- D** accepting help with difficult tasks

25 Which advice would Kate Pavlacka **most likely** give to other visually impaired athletes?

- A** Contain your excitement when experiencing personal success.
- B** Find a sport that is adaptable to your needs, and learn to enjoy it.
- C** Focus on what you want to accomplish, and work to make it possible.
- D** Participate in team sports rather than those that require individual performance.

26 Study the sample index below from a book about the Paralympic Games.

Swimming

- coaching opportunities, 54–60**
- records and rules, 61–64**
- safety in the water, 65–66**
- suits and equipment, 67–72**
- workouts and techniques, 73–78**

On which pages would a swimmer **most likely** find information about training for the games?

- A** pages 61–64
- B** pages 65–66
- C** pages 67–72
- D** pages 73–78

Directions

Read this excerpt from *Millicent Min, Girl Genius*. Then answer questions 1 through 5.



Millicent Min, Girl Genius

by Lisa Yee

The book *Millicent Min, Girl Genius* is the story of how a young girl genius, who has quickly advanced through elementary school into high school, has to deal with the effects of her unusual situation.

Everyone keeps making a fuss about my graduating next year. I can't wait. I want to get on with my life, go to college, embark on the first of several careers, and win the Fields Medal—the highest mathematical honor a person under forty can receive. It would be great to do all this by age twenty, but I don't want to put too much pressure on myself. Therefore, if it doesn't happen until I am, say, twenty-three, that's fine with me.

My age has always been an issue. Not for me, but for everyone else. Even starting at JFK was a big deal. I was nine at the time. On my first day of high school, my grandparents, parents, and the press insisted on tagging along. I made them walk four paces behind me, since I didn't want to stand out.

The next morning I was mortified to learn that the Associated Press picked up a photo of me on tippytoes trying to reach the top of my locker

while a couple of basketball players stood by and gawked. The caption on the photo read "High school may not be a big stretch for nine-year-old Millicent Min, but her locker sure is."

In time things calmed down. Now new students stare, but most of the upperclassmen are used to me, and instead of being known as "that smart little girl," I am vilified¹ as "the one who brings up the curve."

I had a difficult start, though. It's embarrassing enough being a foot shorter and five years younger than your peers, but then to have your grandmother cemented to you makes it even worse.

My parents allowed me to go to high school with the condition that during freshman year, Maddie would walk me to my first-period class.

¹vilified: spoken badly of

There, she was expected to hand me over directly to Gaspar, my habitually late French instructor whose real name was Lester. Maddie and I made an odd couple, but at least it meant I had somebody to talk to while the other kids made it a point to ignore me.

We were well into the first week and waiting outside Gaspar/Lester's class when someone, I never did figure out who, made an offending remark using the words "boring," "brainiac," and "Millicent" in the same run-on sentence. Believing I was being ridiculed, my grandmother warned my classmates that she knew kung fu and was not afraid to use it. To show how serious she was, Maddie did a series of complicated martial arts moves involving low blocks, high kicks, and several impressive jump spins.

There was a gasp from the crowd and immediately everyone backed away, fearing Maddie might hurt herself. When she was done and the applause petered out, Maddie was still in her age-defying leg-split position.

"Get up," I hissed. "Everyone's staring."

"No can do," she whispered. "I appear to be stuck."

By then Gaspar/Lester had arrived. He asked for volunteers and several of the bigger boys carried my grandmother to the school nurse's office as she waved adieu² to first-period French.

²adieu: good-bye

1

What does the first paragraph tell the reader about Millicent?

- A** She is spontaneous and flexible.
- B** She has high expectations for herself.
- C** She avoids thinking too much about the future.
- D** She worries about her ability to meet her goals.

2

When Millicent says her grandmother is "cemented" to her, she means that her grandmother

- A** stays very close
- B** has a hard attitude
- C** moves very slowly
- D** has a solid character

3 Maddie becomes upset with some students because they

- A** are staring at Millicent
- B** do not know who Millicent is
- C** are making comments about Millicent
- D** do not help Millicent open her locker

4 Which pair of words **best** describes Millicent's grandmother?

- A** energetic and protective
- B** patient and thoughtful
- C** gentle and compassionate
- D** hardworking and ambitious

5 According to the passage, Millicent places great importance on her

- A** age and experience
- B** fame and reputation
- C** height and athletic ability
- D** education and achievements

Directions

Read this article and sidebar about wolves living in the United States. Then answer questions 6 through 10.



Living the Wild Life

by Gary Ferguson

Doug Smith has been hard at work with wolves in Yellowstone for six years. But the animals have been a big part of his life since long before that.

"I grew up in northern Ohio," he says, "where my father owned a camp. As a boy I was outdoors almost every day—tramping through the woods, watching birds, turning over rocks to look for salamanders."

All that time outside helped create in Dr. Smith not just a fascination with animals, but a strong concern for how people treat them.

"I knew early on I wanted to be a voice for that part of the world that doesn't have a voice," he recalls. "At about 12 years old, I started reading about wolves. I found out that they were persecuted, they were rare, they only lived in wilderness areas."

By the time he was 16, Doug Smith was writing letters to Dave Mech, one of the most respected wolf researchers in the country, looking for ways to get involved. Two years

later, as a senior in high school, he had his first of many volunteer jobs working with wolves.

He could hardly have picked an animal more in need of a voice. Throughout history, all over the world, wolves have been shot, trapped, and poisoned. Though at one time they were common throughout much of America, by 1964 their numbers had dwindled to fewer than 500 animals in the lower 48 states, most in northern Minnesota.

The science of ecology tells us that you can't remove one piece of nature's puzzle without affecting the other pieces. As an example, Dr. Smith points to the problem New England has today with deer ticks, a small insect that carries Lyme disease, a danger to humans. "The reason there are so many deer ticks is because, with no predators around, we have record levels of deer. Those deer, in turn, are in many places over-browsing the plants. Once you lose the plants—things like aspen and willow—you also lose the songbirds that make their homes there."

The wolves of Yellowstone are teaching us much the same lesson. Wolves help keep elk numbers in check. They prompt elk to move, which keeps them from overgrazing the plants that grow along streams and rivers. The remains of the animals that wolves kill for food provide dinner for a variety of other creatures. Beetles feed on wolf kills, as do grizzlies, eagles and fox.

Beyond all that, though, much of the appeal wolves have for Dr. Smith is simply their wildness.

"There are few things in the world that we will never conquer," he says. "Skunks, coyotes, red fox—all of those animals have learned to deal with people. But we can't make wolves live with us by turning them into something else. They are truly a symbol of all things wild."

Restoring Wolves: You Make the Call

For: Doug Smith, Director of wolf recovery, Yellowstone National Park

In the world today there is so much we are losing; more and more species vanish from the earth with every passing year. The time has come to put something back, to restore, to heal some of the old wounds we've inflicted on the landscape over the years.

Wolves are the dominant predators in North America—as such, they play a critical role in keeping the continent healthy. Most places don't have enough wild country to make such predator restoration possible, which means it's even more important to restore wolves where conditions are right; places like Yellowstone, which has both a high level of wildness, as well as an abundant prey base. (Yellowstone offers wolves one of the highest prey-to-predator ratios to be found anywhere in the world.)

Some who oppose wolves have a human-centered point of view—a perspective that basically says the earth is here for humans, and is completely at our disposal. But wolves offer us a chance to live another way—a way that makes it a priority to learn to live with other life forms.

Against: Larry Bourret, Executive Vice President, Wyoming Farm Bureau

What does wolf introduction to Yellowstone mean? To the average citizen it probably just means introducing wolves to Yellowstone. There would be no adverse impacts because livestock do not graze in the park and few people live near Yellowstone.

But to ranchers it means introducing wolves, which wander over vast areas—in and out of the park—onto their ranches.

Wolves eat meat—as in the cattle, calves, sheep or lambs that keep ranchers in business. Introduction apparently also means lawsuits by environmental groups attempting to remove livestock from federal lands. To ranchers, who own private lands in the same area, it means the possibility of financial ruin. To ranchers it is a form of land use restrictions. To ranchers introducing wolves means taking away the ranchers' livelihoods without just compensation.

Why don't we introduce wolves into New York City; Washington, D.C.; or Chicago, where they were at one time? Because the people in those areas would not like wolves in their area! Why do people not want a nuclear power plant built in their backyard—for the same reason ranchers do not want wolves introduced into their backyard.

6

According to the information in the article and the sidebar, Doug Smith can **best** be described as a

- A** health advocate
- B** dedicated hunter
- C** wildlife conservationist
- D** national park supporter

7

Read this quotation by Doug Smith from the article.

“I knew early on I wanted to be a voice for that part of the world that doesn’t have a voice.”

By this statement, Smith means he wants to

- A** speak up for misunderstood wildlife
- B** help animals learn to deal with people
- C** speak up for ranchers who enjoy wildlife
- D** help find homes for animals that receive little attention

8

Which statement from the sidebar **best** supports Larry Bourret’s argument?

- A** “To the average citizen it probably just means introducing wolves to Yellowstone.”
- B** “There would be no adverse impacts because livestock do not graze in the park and few people live near Yellowstone.”
- C** “To ranchers introducing wolves means taking away the ranchers’ livelihoods without just compensation.”
- D** “Why don’t we introduce wolves into New York City; Washington, D.C.; or Chicago, where they were at one time?”

9

The article describes the chain of events below.

1. Too few predators leads to too many deer.
2. Too many deer leads to over-browsing of plants.
3. Over-browsing of plants leads to the loss of songbird habitat.

Which phrase describes the **most likely** outcome of this chain of events?

- A too many wolves
- B an unbalanced environment
- C a reduction in the number of deer ticks
- D fewer opportunities for scientific research

10

Read this sentence from the sidebar.

Wolves are the dominant predators in North America—as such, they play a critical role in keeping the continent healthy.

What does the word “dominant” mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A major
- B smartest
- C most unusual
- D most demanding

Directions

Read this poem about Joan Benoit. Then answer questions 11 through 15.

Joan Benoit

1984 U.S. Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist

by Rina Ferrarelli

During the third mile
not the eighteenth as expected
she surged ahead
leaving behind the press
of bodies, the breath
hot on her back
and set a pace
the experts claimed
she couldn't possibly keep
to the end.

Sure, determined,
moving to an inner rhythm
measuring herself against herself
alone in a field of fifty
she gained the twenty-six miles
of concrete, asphalt and humid weather
and burst into the roar of the crowd
to run the lap around the stadium
at the same pace
once to finish the race
and then again in victory

and she was still fresh
and not even out of breath
and standing.



11 The speaker's attitude toward Joan Benoit seems to be one of

- A** admiration
- B** disappointment
- C** curiosity
- D** jealousy

12 Running is said to be a small percentage physical and a great percentage psychological. Which lines from the poem best support this statement?

- A** "leaving behind the press
of bodies, the breath
hot on her back"
- B** "moving to an inner rhythm
measuring herself against herself
alone in a field of fifty"
- C** "she gained the twenty-six miles
of concrete, asphalt and humid weather"
- D** "to run the lap around the stadium
at the same pace"

13 Read the last stanza of the poem.

**and she was still fresh
and not even out of breath
and standing.**

Each of these lines emphasizes Joan Benoit's

- A** slow pace
- B** stunning victory
- C** expected first-place finish
- D** surprising early lead

14 This type of poem would **most likely** be categorized as

- A** narrative, because it tells a story
- B** classic, because of its formal style
- C** lyric, because of its musical language
- D** symbolic, because it uses many metaphors

15 The author describes Joan Benoit as “alone in a field of fifty.” This use of figurative language reinforces the idea that

- A** Benoit did not know the other runners
- B** everyone thought Benoit would win
- C** Benoit was competing against herself
- D** some people feel lonely in a crowd

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 16 through 20.



Tech-Trash Tragedy

by Liam O'Donnell

In our wired world, technology moves at a laser-fast pace. Every day, a new gadget arrives and promises to bring us the future, today. In the race for faster computers and more powerful gadgets, it's easy to forget about yesterday's high-tech wonders.

Unfortunately, many times used computers and gadgets end up in landfills across the country. Each year, we throw away 12 million computers. By the end of 2004, we had junked 30 million cell phones. And that is not good news for the environment. To make our gadgets work, many of them use materials like lead and mercury. When mercury and lead end up in a landfill, they spread poisons into the earth, water, and air for miles around. This is called e-waste—and it's becoming a big pollution problem around the world.

Big problems call for big solutions, so adults and kids from dozens of countries are working hard to clean up our e-waste. And *you* can help, too.

Turning Old Into New

The trick to stopping e-waste is to catch it before it gets into the landfill. That's why the seventh-grade students at Cityside Middle School in Zeeland, Michigan, organized a computer drop-off event. They put up posters and spread the word around the town, telling people to bring out their old computers.

And the people of Zeeland got the message. They dropped off dozens of old computers, monitors, and printers at the school. Craig Greshaw, the school's computer teacher who helped organize the event, believes that knowing about computers goes beyond surfing the Web. "Part of that is learning about the chemicals inside the computers and what needs to be done with

them to keep them safe," he told the *Holland Sentinel* during the recycling drive. With their school gym filled with old computers, the students were ready for the next step in cleaning up the high-tech trash: turning old computers into new ones.

That's where companies like RePC step in. The Seattle company takes e-waste and turns it into e-gold. "Almost all of the parts of a computer can be reused or recycled," says Mark Dabek, owner of RePC. Any computer parts that can't be reused or sold get recycled in a way that won't hurt the environment. "The circuit boards are sent to a circuit board recycler that chops them and sends them to a facility with a very, very hot furnace called 'the reactor,'" Dabek says. After the computer parts are safely crushed and burned, their raw materials can be reused to make everything from appliances to office buildings.

Sometimes you can make a new computer from the parts of an old computer. Called refurbishing, it's what the tech whizzes at RePC do best. Buying a refurbished computer is a lot cheaper than buying a new one. But who wants a computer made up of old parts?

A lot of people, actually. Places like schools and community centers are often short on cash, but need computers to help them get things done. Robert Sterling, a computer teacher at Estancia High School in California, uses computers donated from local businesses to motivate students and teach them about recycling. "If kids learn to recycle everything," says Sterling, "they will set a good example for some of the older people who are not in the habit yet of recycling every day."

Recycling old computers is big business, and there are many other companies like RePC across the country. Many big charities have computer recycling programs too, but be sure to call them first before you drop off any equipment.

Computers aren't the only technology that can be reused. Last year, schools in New Mexico gave old cell phones a new lease on life while also helping to raise money for charity. The students collected 11 garbage bags of old cell phones, sold them to a cell phone refurbishing company, donated the money to charity, and helped keep the environment clean—all at the same time.

Donating Dos and Don'ts

1. **Check first.** Some refurbishing companies don't accept very old computers, so call or check their Web site before you load up the car.
2. **Don't forget to accessorize.** By donating keyboard, printer, and mouse along with your computer, you're more likely to find them all a new home.
3. **Keep the Operating System intact.** Don't erase Windows from your computer.
4. **Clean your hard drive.** Erase from the hard drive any personal information or e-mails. There are free disc cleaning programs on the Web.

16 According to the article, why do so many computers and gadgets **most likely** end up in landfills?

- A** It is cheaper to buy new products when replacing old equipment.
- B** Computer manufacturing companies produce low-quality products.
- C** Technology education classes fail to teach students about recycling.
- D** The development of new technology makes current devices outdated.

17 Which advice is given in the "Donating Dos and Don'ts" section?

- A** Drop off your computer at the nearest landfill.
- B** Ask for a receipt as proof of the contribution.
- C** Keep all of the computer accessories together.
- D** Drain the chemicals found inside the computer.

18 Which statement is **not** supported with facts or examples in the article?

- A** Computers and electronic gadgets are often dumped in landfills.
- B** People from dozens of countries are recycling computer parts.
- C** Technological devices other than computers can be recycled and reused.
- D** One way to stop electronic waste is to find a need for old equipment.

19 How is information in the article organized?

- A** A problem and several solutions are described.
- B** New programs are ranked by their success rate.
- C** The events are reported in the order they occur.
- D** Two methods of deciding an issue are compared.

20 Read the following sentences from the article.

Robert Sterling, a computer teacher at Estancia High School in California, uses computers donated from local businesses to motivate students and teach them about recycling. "If kids learn to recycle everything," says Sterling, "they will set a good example for some of the older people who are not in the habit yet of recycling every day."

In the first sentence, the word "motivate" means about the same as

- A** confuse
- B** control
- C** encourage
- D** evaluate

Directions

This excerpt from *Down Garrapata Road* is set in a small Mexican-American community in southern Texas during the 1940s. Read this excerpt. Then answer questions 21 through 26.

A Fork in the Road

by Anne Estevis

A gust of wind blew a canvas chair across the yard. My eyes followed the swirling dirt out to the road and down toward the school bus stop. I was going to miss walking down the road to catch the big school bus that took us into town to school. I enjoyed being with the teachers and the other students. Now that I was finished with school I seemed to have lost some of the excitement from my life.

As I was folding the canvas chair, Chatita Chávez drove into our yard in her father's old pickup. It rattled and roared, and emitted a trail of black smoke out of its tailpipe. She got out smiling as usual and excitedly pointed toward the storm that seemed to be moving toward us.

"I can't stay long, Nilda. There's a storm coming and I need to beat it home."

I was glad to see her. "Yes, I think we're in for some bad weather. Come on in and have a cup of coffee at least," I said as I ushered her into our kitchen.

"I'm so excited, Nilda! You'll never guess what I just did!"

I stopped pouring the coffee and turned and looked at her.

"I just went over to Edinburg and registered for junior college," she said and looked at me and smiled. "Don't you want to go take classes with me?"

I was stunned. I didn't know what to say. How could I go to college? I didn't have any money. I gave Chatita a cup of coffee. "I don't know. I don't think I can. Isn't college expensive?"

Chatita sat down at the table and began adding sugar to her coffee. "Not really, and I'm working part-time at the packing shed on Canal Road. You could work there, too."

The wind began to gust causing the house to occasionally creak and shudder. The lightbulb hanging over the table blinked off and on and I heard a low roll of thunder in the distance.

I haltingly asked, "Do you think I could get a job at the packing shed?"

"Sure. My *primo*¹ is the *jefe*.² He'll give you a job."

Mamá came into the kitchen and exchanged greetings with Chatita. She must have heard our conversation.

"I think it's nice that you're going to go to college, Chatita. What will you study?" my mother asked as she joined us at the table.

"I want to be a teacher."

¹primo: cousin

²jefe: boss

"*¡Una maestra! Qué bueno,*"³ Mamá said as she patted Chatita's arm.

"A teacher?" I asked. "Don't you need a degree?"

"You can start teaching before you get your degree. Clarence Duncan has been teaching in Brownsville since last year and I think Zulema will start this year."

The lightbulb blinked again and went out. Mamá quickly arose from the table. "I'm going to have to bring in the lanterns. I knew I shouldn't have packed them away."

"Well, Nilda, do you want to go? Because, if you do, you can go over to Edinburg with me tomorrow."

I hesitated, then said, "Yes. I want to go." My heart was beating fast. I couldn't believe how happy I was feeling.

"But I have to talk to Mamá and Papá. What if they won't let me?"

"You can at least go with me tomorrow and find out what it's all about. I'll come by for you around eight."

Chatita left me sitting at the table staring at my cup of coffee. It seemed so unreal, this idea of me going to college. My parents had never had the opportunity for much education. Juana had quit school to get married and Roberto and Zeke had graduated from high school as I had. But college? I would be the first one in my family to go to college. Yes, college was exactly what I wanted.

³Una maestra! Que Bueno: A teacher! How nice!

The day had turned dark and the rain had started. My mother came back into the kitchen with two lanterns.

"Mamá, I need to ask you something."

She picked up a cloth and began to clean the dust from the lanterns. She looked at me and smiled.

"Mamá, if I could find a way to pay, could I take classes at the junior college?" I asked, trying to subdue my excitement.

She stopped cleaning and raised her eyebrows. "What would you study, *m'ija*?"⁴

"I think I want to be a teacher," I quietly replied.

Mamá sat down at the table across from me. "*Pues,*"⁵ I would like for you to go to college," she said in a serious tone.

"What about Papá? Do you think he will allow me to go?"

"Your father wants you to be happy. If going to college and being a teacher makes you happy, then he will probably allow it," she answered.

I didn't say anything. I was enjoying the feeling of happiness and sense of wonder that had come over me. The two of us sat in the darkened room without speaking until I saw my mamá daubing her eyes with the hem of her apron.

"What's wrong, Mamá."

"Nothing," she replied. "I probably got some dust in my eyes. That's all."

⁴m'ija: my daughter

⁵Pues: then

21 This story is told from the point of view of

- A Chatita
- B Mamá
- C Nilda
- D Papá

22 Chatita responds to Nilda's hesitancy about going to college with

- A acceptance
- B disappointment
- C encouragement
- D indifference

23 Read this sentence from the story.

I would be the first one in my family to go to college.

What feeling does this realization create for Nilda?

- A compassion
- B frustration
- C resentment
- D satisfaction

24 The real reason for Mamá's tears is **most likely** because she is

- A proud that Nilda wants to become a teacher
- B concerned about missing Nilda once she leaves
- C worried her husband will stop Nilda from leaving
- D happy that Nilda can work at a job with her friend

17

Go On

25 How does Nilda **most** show respect for her parents?

- A** She seeks their approval to go to college.
- B** She sits with her mother without speaking.
- C** She picks up a canvas chair from their yard.
- D** She tells her mother she plans to become a teacher.

26 Which sentence from the story **best** supports Nilda's sense of fulfillment?

- A** "Now that I was finished with school I seemed to have lost some of the excitement from my life."
- B** "I haltingly asked, 'Do you think I could get a job at the packing shed?'"
- C** "'Mamá, if I could find a way to pay, could I take classes at the junior college?'"
- D** "I was enjoying the feeling of happiness and sense of wonder that had come over me."

Directions

Read this passage. Then answer questions 1 through 5.

#4

Old Champ

by Maureen Crane Wartski

illustrated by Ezra Tucker

Brady is a recently retired search and rescue dog. He is not happy and misses his owner Al because Al has gone out on a rescue mission without him. Al's nephew Steve decides to take Brady along when he and his friend Zach go on an overnight hike. In this part of the story, Steve and Zach have just realized that lightning has set the woods on fire.

In the short time they'd been inside their tent packing their gear, wind-blown flame had leaped from the top of one tree to another. The long dry summer had turned the forest into a tinderbox, and the thunderstorm wasn't helping much. It had more wind and lightning than rain.

Zach tugged at Steve's arm. "Let's go! We can make it back to the river we crossed today."

Steve snapped Brady's leash to his collar, and their heads down against the gusting fire-wind, they hurried down the trail they had followed earlier. The air was full of smoke and fiery cinders, and pine branches snapped from burning trees with a cannon-like sound. Steve kept his eyes fixed on the trail. All they had to do was to make it down to the river. . . .

Brady barked a sharp warning. Ahead of them lay a dense curtain of smoke across the trail. They'd never make it through that—they'd have to find another escape route.

The dog was tugging at his leash trying to draw them away from the smoke. This was what Brady was trained to do, and yet Steve was uneasy. It seemed to him they were moving away from the river.



Go On

Suddenly, Zach yelled. Steve whipped around, but his friend had disappeared. "Zach!" Steve shouted. "Are you O.K.? Where are you?"

Zach's answer was lost in the fire-noises around them, but Brady tugged Steve down a sharp incline. At the base of the slope Zach was sitting and rubbing his ankle.

"I've sprained it," he groaned. "I tried to get up, but I can't put any pressure on it."

"We can't stop moving. Lean on me, and we'll go slow."

As Steve helped his friend to his feet, Brady lifted his head and snuffed the smoke-laden wind. Next moment, the dog bounded away and disappeared. The boys yelled and shouted for him, but he didn't come back.

They had no choice but to leave him behind. Heartsick, Steve helped Zach up the slope. He couldn't blame Brady for panicking and bolting. He himself wanted to run even though he didn't have a clue which way.

They hadn't gone far when there was a familiar bark, and Brady came bounding toward them. "Where've you been?" Steve cried.

For an answer Brady stopped directly in front of him. "What's gotten into him?" Zach demanded as the big dog butted Steve with his head, pushing him back toward the slope they'd just climbed. Then, when Steve still didn't get it, Brady grabbed the boy's jeans and started tugging.

The message was clear, but Steve hesitated. Of course he remembered what his uncle had

said about Brady saving his life, but that had been a long time ago when the dog was much younger. Was he still sharp enough to get them through this?

Nearby, a pine went up in a whoosh of smoke. Brady tugged again, urgently. "O.K., big guy," Steve gritted. After all, what choice did they have?

Brady led them back down the incline and into the trees. Not far from them fire was licking at underbrush and old logs before rearing up into the trees. Zach stared as if hypnotized, but Steve focused on Brady. "You can do it," he kept muttering.

Could he? Steve didn't know, and he wasn't sure whether Brady knew, either. Several times the big dog stopped as if to get his bearings. Often he changed direction. Once Zach stumbled, taking Steve with him, and they both went sprawling.

Steve was so tired that he just wanted to lie there and rest, but Brady wouldn't have it. Growling and nudging, the dog bullied both boys to their feet. Then they started to move again.

How long they'd walked Steve had no idea. He just held onto Brady's leash with one hand, hung onto Zach with the other, and kept putting one foot in front of the other. He was almost numb when he heard it—the wonderful sound of rushing water.

The river! With a hoarse yell the boys stumbled forward until they splashed thigh-deep in cool, running water. "Brady, you did it!" Zach yelled. "Yee-ha! You got us through!"

1 This passage is told by

- A Brady
- B Steve
- C a fire fighter
- D an outside narrator

2 Brady tugs on Steve's jeans because he

- A wants Steve to follow him
- B cannot see where he is going
- C is trying to pull Steve up the hill
- D does not want to be left behind

3 Where does Brady lead Steve and Zach?

- A to the river
- B to the tent
- C to the woods
- D to the trail

4 What is the most likely reason the author writes that the pine branches "snapped from burning trees with a cannon-like sound"?

- A to give objects human-like qualities
- B to provide hints about a future event
- C to make a comparison for dramatic effect
- D to explain how the characters are feeling

5 Read this sentence from the passage.

Not far from them fire was licking at underbrush and old logs before rearing up into the trees.

With this sentence, the author creates a feeling of

- A anticipation
- B disappointment
- C surprise
- D urgency

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 6 through 10.

Why We Play

Why play games? Because they are fun, of course, and a lot more besides. Following the rules . . . planning your next move . . . acting as a team member . . . these are all “game” ideas that you will run into throughout your life.

Think about some of the games you played as a young child, such as hopscotch and hide-and-go-seek. These games are more than a hundred years old, and children all over the world play some variation of them.

The games of children’s cultures are entertaining and fun. But perhaps more importantly, they translate life into exciting dramas that teach children some of the basic rules they will be expected to follow the rest of their lives, such as taking turns and cooperating.

Many children’s games have a practical side. Children around the world play games that prepare them for work they will do as grown-ups. For instance, some Saudi Arabian children live in the desert interior. They play a game called bones, which sharpens the hand-eye coordination needed in hunting.

Many sports encourage national or local pride. The most famous games of all, the Olympic Games, bring athletes from around the world together to engage in friendly competition. Spectators wave flags, knowing that a gold medal is a win for an entire country, not just the athlete who earned it.

One of the most poignant images of the games is watching a gold medal-winning athlete stand on the podium as his or her national anthem is played. For countries experiencing turmoil either in the form of natural disasters or war, an Olympic win can mean so much.

Sports are also a unifying event. Soccer is the most popular sport in the world. People on all continents play the game—some for fun and some for a living. Nicolette Iribarne, a soccer player from California, has discovered a way to spread hope through soccer. Iribarne created Fútbol 4 Refugees after participating in an international soccer tournament. The mission of the group is to provide children living in refugee camps with soccer balls. Other groups such as Playing for Peace and Right to Play provide opportunities for children who otherwise might never play soccer or throw a Frisbee.

The next time you play your favorite game or sport, think about why you enjoy it. What skills are needed to excel in your favorite game or sport? Do you think these skills will help you in other aspects of your life? But most importantly, the next time you play, have fun!

6 Which of these important game-playing skills is **not** mentioned in the article?

- A following rules
- B planning a move
- C acting as a team member
- D learning to lose with dignity

7 According to the article, winning in the Olympics can be inspiring especially to countries that are

- A wealthy
- B industrialized
- C electing new leaders
- D experiencing turmoil

8 The author states that games “translate life into exciting dramas.” This **most likely** means that games

- A allow people to become someone else
- B can make learning life skills more interesting
- C can change people’s views of sporting events
- D teach children to be more serious about their lives

9 Read this sentence from the article.

One of the most poignant images of the games is watching a gold medal-winning athlete stand on the podium as his or her national anthem is played.

What does the word “poignant” most likely mean?

- A common
- B emotional
- C humorous
- D sorrowful

10 Based on information in the article, the reader can predict that

- A games will continue to help children acquire important skills
- B fewer countries will participate in the Olympic Games because of conflict
- C groups like Fútbol 4 Refugees will begin to move into wealthier countries
- D outdoor games will become less popular as computers become more common

Directions

Read this excerpt from *Hello, America*. Then answer questions 11 through 16.

Mother Has a Job

by Livia Bitton-Jackson

The book *Hello, America* chronicles the experiences of a young woman and her mother who have emigrated from Hungary to America in the early 1950s. In this passage, the two reveal the fun they have working together to adapt to their new life in America.

In the morning Mother and I travel together to work. Rising at the crack of dawn, I love the adventure of tiptoeing around in the dark living room where we sleep, whispering to each other so as not to wake Aunt Celia and Uncle Martin in the bedroom, then leaving the house soundlessly and making our way to the subway station in semidarkness. By the time we reach Kings Highway, the rising day splatters an eerie light on the deserted avenue ordinarily swarming with human traffic, and on the shuttered storefronts and fruit stands now cozily wrapped in layers of canvas. There is a sense of mystery—a sense of power—in being here before the rest of the world awakens . . . as if witnessing the beginning of time.

We love traveling together on the subway, Mother and I. It's fun to observe our fellow subway riders, exchange jokes and asides¹ in Hungarian, play guessing games as to their identities, their ages, and their jobs and make bets as to where they'd be getting off.

In a couple of weeks Mother becomes familiar with the train route, and she no longer allows me to accompany her.

"But I'll miss the fun of traveling together in the morning," I protest.

"So will I. But it comes at a sacrifice. In order to accompany me, you must rise an hour earlier, losing an hour's sleep. You need that extra hour of sleep." Mother is firm, and I have no choice but to comply and regretfully give up on our morning fun.

"I hope you'll have time to teach me English. Now that I have a job and travel alone on the subway, I'll need to improve my vocabulary. I don't want to depend on you every time I need to make a phone call in English, or want to take public transport."

"Okay, madam," I agree in a happy, jocular tone. "How about today? Let's have our first lesson this evening!"

Every evening I grill Mother in vocabulary and grammar, and indeed in a couple of weeks she learns enough English to do marketing on her own and travel freely by subway.

¹asides: remarks made in private

11 According to information in the passage, it is **most** important to the mother that she

- A** tells jokes in Hungarian
- B** rises early in the morning
- C** learns to speak in English
- D** travels daily on the subway

12 The narrator says the avenue is ordinarily "swarming with human traffic." This means that usually

- A** the street is crowded with people
- B** the street is clogged with vehicles
- C** people are raising their voices on the street
- D** drivers are honking their horns on the street

13 Read this sentence from the passage.

Mother is firm, and I have no choice but to comply and regretfully give up on our morning fun.

The word "comply" means about the same as

- A** disappear
- B** hesitate
- C** obey
- D** relax

14 Which detail from the passage **best** shows that the narrator is excited about her life in America?

- A** her resistance to the growing independence of her mother
- B** her acceptance of why she can no longer accompany her mother
- C** her discipline to work on language lessons every day with her mother
- D** her description of rising early to ride the subway with her mother

15 Read this sentence from the passage.

"Okay, madam," I agree in a happy, jocular tone. "How about today? Let's have our first lesson this evening!"

The word "jocular" **most likely** means that the narrator is being

- A** careless
- B** humorous
- C** impatient
- D** soothing

16 Which word **best** describes the narrator's behavior toward her mother?

- A** disrespectful
- B** resentful
- C** supportive
- D** sympathetic

Directions

Read this poem by Lilian Moore. Then answer questions 17 through 20.

Winter Dark

by *Lilian Moore*

Winter dark comes early
mixing afternoon
and night.
Soon
there's a comma of a moon,

and each streetlight
along the
way
puts its period
to the end of day.

Now
a neon sign
punctuates the dark
with a bright
blinking
breathless
exclamation mark!

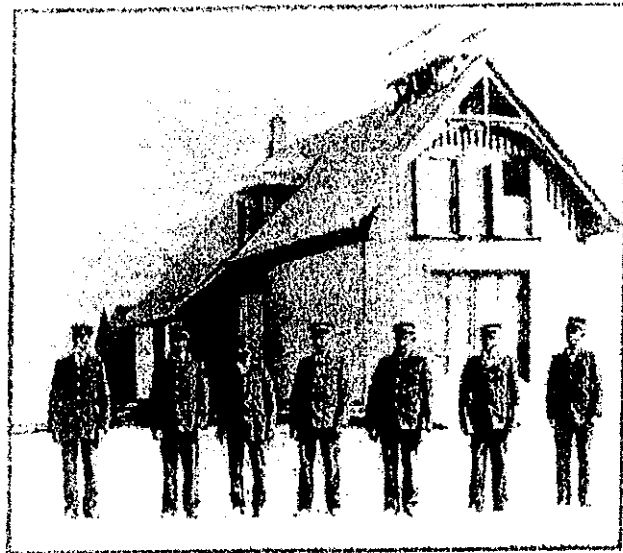
- 17 The poet probably compares the moon to a comma because of its
- A shape
 - B location
 - C purpose
 - D importance
- 18 The poet probably associates streetlights with periods to suggest that streetlights
- A are too dim to be exclamation points
 - B signal that something has ended
 - C are smaller than the moon
 - D represent a change in activity
- 19 The poet compares various sources of light to
- A punctuation marks
 - B neon signs
 - C the end of day
 - D the darkness of winter
- 20 The poet's **main** purpose in writing this poem is probably to make the reader
- A feel the cold of winter
 - B imagine the fading of the light
 - C visualize how lights appear on winter nights
 - D understand the difference between natural and artificial light

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 21 through 26.

Rescue at Pea Island

by Tracey E. Fern



Etheridge (far left) and his crew stand in front of Pea Island station in North Carolina.

Station Keeper Richard Etheridge peered from the lookout tower of the Pea Island life-saving station. Fog swirled around his face, and it was pitch-dark. Huge waves crashed onto the beach, and hurricane-force winds hurled sand and sea spray into the air.

On that night back in October 1896, the worst storm in almost fifty years was battering the North Carolina coast. Moments earlier, one of Etheridge's surfmen, Theodore Meekins, had spotted a faint red glimmer in the distance. Could it have been a flare from a ship in distress?

Etheridge quickly lit a flare and held it high over his head until the flame died out. Then he saw it—a dull red light flickered to the south. That could mean only one thing: shipwreck.

The Keeper of the Station

Rescuing ships in distress was nothing new for Etheridge. He had been keeper of this life-saving station since 1880. Etheridge had grown up swimming, fishing, and boating on nearby Roanoke Island. He eventually became known as one of the best surfmen and lifesavers in North Carolina. But Etheridge was also known for something else: he was the Life-Saving Service's first African American station chief.

White surfmen refused to work under Etheridge. So Etheridge and the Life-Saving Service recruited a crew of African American rescuers to work with him.

Etheridge's men trained for ten hours a day, seven days a week. They swam in the rough surf and patrolled the beach. They performed life-saving drills and tugged their 1,500-pound surfboat and equipment for miles through the sand. But the wreck on the night of October 1896 put all of the crew's practice to the test.

Rescuing the Wreck

As soon as Etheridge and Meekins spotted the red flare, they woke up the other five surfmen on duty. The crew quickly hitched up a team of mules. Then they pushed and pulled their surfboat and equipment cart down the beach for two miles.

"The storm was raging fearfully," Etheridge later wrote, "and . . . the team was often brought to a standstill by the sweeping current." But the crew kept trudging through the knee-deep sand and icy water. Finally, they spotted the wreck.

The schooner *E.S. Newman* had blown aground 30 yards offshore. The storm had ripped off the ship's sails and demolished her deck. Now the battered ship was rolling and tossing in the surf. All nine of the passengers and crew, including the captain's wife and three-year-old child, were trapped onboard.

"It seemed impossible under such circumstances to render any assistance," Etheridge later wrote.

But unless someone did something soon, the passengers would probably be swept out to sea, die from exposure, or be crushed when the *Newman* broke apart in the surf. So Etheridge came up with a daring plan.

His men would try to swim to the ship. Meekins and another surfman volunteered for the first attempt. They lashed themselves together with a rope. Then they grabbed one end of a life-saving line while the rest of the crew held the other end of the line securely to the beach.

Meekins and the other surfman slowly waded farther out into the chilly water. They struggled through the currents and against the undertow in total darkness.

Onboard the *Newman*, the captain lowered a ladder over the side of the broken ship. Finally the surfmen reached the ship.

"The voice of gladden[ed] hearts greeted the arrival of the station crew," Etheridge later wrote.

One passenger climbed carefully down the ladder. Meekins knotted the end of the rope around him. Slowly they carried him through the churning water to safety. Then two other surfmen headed back to the *Newman*.

Next, they carried the child to shore. Then they returned to rescue the captain's wife. Again and again, the surfmen took turns swimming in pairs through the sea to the wreck. After six grueling hours, the *Newman* was destroyed, but all nine passengers were safely onshore.

Life After the Rescue

The captain of the *Newman* was so grateful that he gave Etheridge and his crew the ship's name board. But for many years, this was the only award that the surfmen received. Pea Island Station was closed in 1947, and everyone seemed to forget the courageous crew.

Finally, in 1996 Etheridge and his men were awarded the Coast Guard's highest honor, the Gold Lifesaving Medal, for their "extreme and heroic daring." One hundred years after the *Newman* rescue, the men of the Pea Island Station were recognized for what they were—heroes.

Coming to the Crew's Rescue

Kate Burkart, an eighth-grader from North Carolina, helped to "rescue" the Pea Island crew. She wrote letters to her senator and President Clinton. With Coast Guard officer Stephen Rochon and graduate students David Wright and David Zoby, Burkart submitted a report to the Coast Guard about the crew. Their hard work paid off. Burkart was at the Navy Memorial when the Gold Lifesaving Medal was awarded to the Pea Island crew.

21 According to the article, what is the **main** reason the rescue of the *Newman* was considered extraordinary?

- A** It was recorded in detail in the journals of Richard Etheridge.
- B** It was conducted during the night when the fog was very dense.
- C** The crew had to drag their equipment two miles along the beach.
- D** The crew saved all of the passengers in spite of extreme conditions.

22 The author **most likely** provides the description of the crew's training experiences to

- A** prove how well the surfmen followed orders
- B** explain how much the crew respected their chief
- C** illustrate why some surfmen refused to work there
- D** show the crew was prepared to act in an emergency

23 The partial outline below contains information about the Pea Island Station.

- A. Responding to the *Newman***
 - 1. Observed red light
 - 2. Moved equipment to beach
 - 3.
 - 4. Tied themselves together with rope
- B. Recognition of the crew**

Based on information in the article, which detail best completes this outline?

- A** Woke up sleeping surfmen
- B** Heard voices from the ship
- C** Decided on a rescue plan
- D** Practiced life-saving drills

- 24** Which sentence from the article **best** supports the author’s claim that the men of the Pea Island Station were heroes?
- A** “Etheridge’s men trained for ten hours a day, seven days a week.”
 - B** “They performed life-saving drills and tugged their 1,500-pound surfboat and equipment for miles through the sand.”
 - C** “After six grueling hours, the *Newman* was destroyed, but all nine passengers were safely onshore.”
 - D** “The captain of the *Newman* was so grateful that he gave Etheridge and his crew the ship’s name board.”
- 25** This account of the Life-Saving Service’s efforts is historically significant because it tells about
- A** the first entirely African American station chief and crew
 - B** a crew presented with a souvenir from the ship of a grateful captain
 - C** the surfmen who received recognition a hundred years after a rescue
 - D** a sea rescue off the North Carolina coastline during a storm
- 26** This article would be **most** helpful to a student researching
- A** the storm patterns along the North Carolina coastline
 - B** the techniques used to save passengers from the *Newman*
 - C** the guidelines for winning the Coast Guard’s highest honor
 - D** the number of surfmen working for the Life-Saving Service

STOP

Directions

Read this passage. Then answer questions 1 through 6.

#5

The Hero

by Ron Woods

The book *The Hero* is about 14-year-old Jamie. In this part of the story, Jamie has been burning some leaves as part of his chores, and the fire has gotten out of control.

I wasn't one to panic, but my fun had turned to fear and desperation, and I realized help was needed. So while I still beat at the flames with my shovel, I gave up my pride, turned my face to the house, and began to shout for Mom.

The house was fifty yards away, and I didn't know if she'd hear me. I'd last seen her at the kitchen table sewing school clothes, and the kitchen was on the opposite side of the house.

* * *

At one spot, rocks and sparse grass slowed the fire's pace up the slope, and I made good progress. But I'd abandoned the other end as long as I dared. It might have been best to stay where I was, but I made a decision and ran back to the front just as flames there reached the base of the hill.

Sweat flew from my face as I pounded and dug in vain, all the while shamelessly shouting for help toward the house, like a man overboard beating off sharks while screaming at a passing ship.

Finally, I spotted Marie in the yard. She had come around the side of the house and was staring openmouthed. "Get Mom!" I yelled. "Get Mom out here!" She disappeared through the front door, blond hair flying.

Almost immediately, Mom was out the door and coming across the yard on the run. Suddenly, she stopped, turned, and ran back into the house. In a moment, she came out again with an old blanket in her arms. At the gate she stabbed a finger at Marie—probably telling her to stay in the yard—and ran across the road, her short legs pounding and her dress flying. At the irrigation ditch she stopped and threw the blanket into the water.

By now, the flames behind me had crawled through the rocky area, sprinted through thick grass, and now were halfway to the big ditch. And in spite of my present efforts, the front end of the blaze had a renewed start up the slope in heavy grass that looked like it was begging to be burned. Fire was everywhere.

1

Go On

I felt like sitting down and letting it go. It was too hard. My eyes stung, my throat was raw, my arm hair was singed, and my legs ached from running up and down the hill. I was soaked in sweat, and my hands—that I'd thought so tough from hoeing all summer—were already red and starting to blister from my grip on the shovel handle. What was the point? It was too late. How could we stop it now?

"Jamie! Come down! Let it go! Help me over here, Jamie!"

I looked. Mom wasn't heading for the burning hill at all. She was over by the pigpen, flailing with her soggy blanket. The pen was to the north, against the creek, and to my amazement the fire had a good start across the fifty-foot rocky swale¹ separating the garden and the pigpen fence. It had jumped our small irrigation ditch—the ready-made barrier—like a lion after a mouse.

* * *

"We'll have to let the hill go," Mom said when I reached her. "Have to. We can't stop it there." Her voice was different—lower than usual, and controlled. Mom was known as an enthusiastic person in everyday conversation. But in a crisis, she was calm. I'd seen it once when I cut my foot and we had trouble getting the bleeding stopped; another time when Marie was a baby and had a convulsion that wouldn't quit; and again when Dad developed a reaction to penicillin and his face and throat started swelling up like a movie monster. Mom was using that controlled voice right now. "Help me here, Jamie. Over here."

She was already in action, smothering flames with each throw of her sodden blanket. But it was like trying to stop a flood with a sponge—it just wasn't fast enough.

A flood! That was it! I was a genius!

"Here, Mom. I've got it! I know what to do," I shouted. Our garden ditch could save us. My shovel made four or five quick slices into the sod bank, and in a moment the stream was rushing across the small field.

The effect was impressive. The fire immediately lost its power as its roots were killed. Small plumes of steam rose from clumps of burning grass as the flames hissed out. Only their tops were left momentarily burning, like tiny volcanoes jutting from a miniature sea, until they toppled over and drowned.

Sloshing through the flood, I scooped and splashed with my shovel where water was needed most. Mom's blanket reached isolated spots, and soon the whole burn was extinguished in the little swale. In one place fire had come within a few feet of the fence, but to our relief, nowhere had the wood or the brush been touched.

¹swale: a low marshy area

1 This passage is told from the point of view of

- A** Jamie
- B** Marie
- C** a narrator outside the story
- D** a person watching the action

2 Which of these events happens **first** in the passage?

- A** Jamie slices the sod bank.
- B** Mom tells Jamie to help her by the pigpen.
- C** Mom smothers the flames with a blanket.
- D** Jamie sees Marie in the yard.

3 Read this sentence from the passage.

At one spot, rocks and sparse grass slowed the fire's pace up the slope, and I made good progress.

The word "pace" means about the same as

- A** direction
- B** magnitude
- C** speed
- D** warmth

4

Read this sentence from the passage.

By now, the flames behind me had crawled through the rocky area, sprinted through thick grass, and now were halfway to the big ditch.

This sentence suggests that the flames are

- A** growing larger
- B** moving faster
- C** getting hotter
- D** roaring louder

5

How does Jamie change from the beginning of the passage to the end of the passage?

- A** He is angry at first, then happy.
- B** He is surprised at first, then afraid.
- C** He is annoyed at first, then satisfied.
- D** He is scared at first, then relieved.

6

The events in this passage can **mostly** be described as

- A** amusing
- B** inspiring
- C** intense
- D** reflective

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 7 through 12.

Bindi!

by Milan Sandhu

“Why don’t you have a jewel carved in your forehead?”

The little girl who asked me that was hardly six, and she knew I was from India. I was six, too, beginning first grade, and it was years before trendy tattoos became popular. I stared at the girl a moment, trying to determine whether she was serious or not. She was! A jewel carved in my head was, first of all, likely to hurt, and second, it didn’t sound very attractive. “Ouch!” was my reaction.

For many mornings, I had seen my mother apply her *bindi*. She had her own style, using the round end of a lipstick cap. She would first dip the cap in petroleum jelly and then dip it in red powder. Finally, she carefully pressed the cap between her eyes, leaving a red powder dot on her forehead. I thought she was the most beautiful woman I’d ever seen, and I couldn’t wait to do the same thing. Sometimes, to make me happy, she’d use an eyeliner stick to apply a tiny black dot on my forehead. I’d skip away satisfied, waiting patiently until I could wear a big red one.

Hindus have adorned their bodies with bindis for thousands of years. Not that long ago, a bindi, which is also known as a *tilak*, was nothing more than ground vermilion powder applied to the forehead. It was a sign that a woman was married—like wearing a wedding ring. Vermilion powder was made from a mix of mercury and sulfur, a combination thought to have a cooling effect—very helpful in a warm country like

India. In fact, men often wore tilaks made from sandalwood paste, also to make them feel cool.

Some people think that the tradition of wearing bindis began with the ancient ritual of the bridegroom applying his blood to his wife’s forehead during the wedding ceremony. Others believed that the area between the eyebrows is the spot where there is a third eye—a point of hidden energy and wisdom. Wearing a bindi on this spot helps focus concentration and brings happiness and good fortune.



No matter what its origins were, a bindi was always worn with pride, and served as a gentle reminder to others to respect a married woman. Red, the color of life-giving blood and an important color in the Hindu religion, was always used for bindis.

In the early twentieth century, bindis became more of a fashion statement. Instead of wearing only round red bindis, married and unmarried women in India started wearing bindis of different sizes and shapes on their foreheads.

Today, women wear fashion stickers—decorated with beads, crystals, sequins, or glitter—on their foreheads to match what they are wearing.

Even though the jewel in the forehead isn't far from the truth, I still don't have one carved into my head, and nobody I know does either. But I do wear stickers from time to time. I look in the mirror and smile as I think about my beautiful mother and the days she painted a black dot on my forehead.

7

How is the way the author wears her bindis different from the way they are traditionally worn in India?

- A The author's bindis are large red dots.
- B The author wears bindis that are fashion stickers.
- C The author's bindis are made from expensive jewels.
- D The author wears bindis in the middle of her forehead.

8

Read this sentence from the article.

Hindus have adorned their bodies with bindis for thousands of years.

The word "adorned" means about the same as

- A decorated
- B honored
- C perfected
- D strengthened

9

Which sentence from the article best illustrates the author's feelings about her mother's bindi?

- A "She would first dip the cap in petroleum jelly and then dip it in red powder."
- B "Finally, she carefully pressed the cap between her eyes, leaving a red powder dot on her forehead."
- C "I thought she was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen, and I couldn't wait to do the same thing."
- D "Sometimes, to make me happy, she'd use an eyeliner stick to apply a tiny black dot on my forehead."

10

Which sentence from the article **best** informs the reader about the author's culture?

- A "I was six, too, beginning first grade, and it was years before trendy tattoos became popular."
- B "A jewel carved in my head was, first of all, likely to hurt, and second, it didn't sound very attractive."
- C "It was a sign that a woman was married—like wearing a wedding ring."
- D "Vermilion powder was made from a mix of mercury and sulfur."

11

The author **most likely** wrote this article

- A to inform the reader about bindis and their history
- B to describe the way her mother applied a bindi to her forehead
- C to express her opinion about whether modern women should wear bindis
- D to entertain the reader with a story about wearing a bindi in elementary school

12

Read this sentence from the article.

In the early twentieth century, bindis became more of a fashion statement.

Now read the dictionary entry below.

statement *noun* 1. A written fact or intention. 2. A bill for an amount due.
3. A special announcement made to the public. 4. An expression of an idea
or concept, especially by means other than words.

Which definition **best** fits the meaning of "statement" as it is used in the sentence above?

- A definition 1
- B definition 2
- C definition 3
- D definition 4

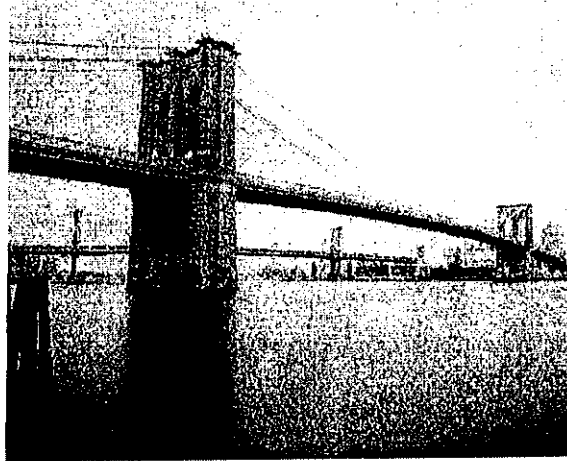
Directions

Read this passage from the story "Building Bridges." Then answer questions 13 through 17.

Building Bridges

by Andrea Davis Pinkney

The story "Building Bridges" is about a girl who lives with her grandmother, Mama Lil, and who dreams of someday becoming an engineer. In this passage from the story, the narrator is waiting for her grandmother to sign a consent form for her to participate in a summer program in which a group of students would work with a team of engineers to help repair the Brooklyn Bridge.



Ahead, in the distance, stood the Brooklyn Bridge. This was the best spot in Brooklyn's Red Hook section for seeing the bridge. I'd come to this corner and studied the bridge a million times. And on every one of those times, I was taken with what I'd come to call Brooklyn Belle.

I never got tired of looking out at its steel girders and iron cables—at its beautiful crisscross rafters that had started out in somebody's imagination, had been put to paper, formalized in an engineer's plans, then woven together, bolt by bolt. Now Belle was a powerful giant who carried all kinds of people to all kinds of places, day after day.

At night Belle was dressed in tiny lights that spanned her limbs. On a cloudless night like this one, she was a sight like no other sight in the whole city. Jeweled in light. *Beautiful.*

My fingers had tensed into fists at my sides, fists full of strength and eagerness. I uncurled my knuckles and shook them free of their strain. Then I reached into my jacket

pocket—where my consent form for the bridge project had been neatly folded for days—and pulled out my pencil. Slowly, I flipped through the pages of my sketchbook. I'd drawn Belle in the high-noon light, at sunset, on snowy days, and on foggy twilight mornings. My favorite sketches were those of Belle during rush hour, when cars and taxis danced like trinkets along her outstretched beams.

Tonight I'd draw Belle with her lighted cape. I sketched slowly at first, then faster, my pencil working with the speed of my excitement—the thrill that worked me over every time I sketched that bridge.

I was proud of my drawings (I liked to think of them as portraits), but with each page they showed a sad truth about Belle: She needed repair. She was some forty years older than Mama Lil. And as lovely as she was, she had some serious rough spots—corroded cables, rust, chipped paint, and plain old grit that had built up over the decades. That bridge renovation project needed me; and I needed it, in more ways than I could count.

13 When does this passage take place?

- A** at night
- B** at sunset
- C** on a snowy day
- D** on a foggy morning

14 What are the narrator's favorite sketches?

- A** the city in lights
- B** the bridge at twilight
- C** the bridge at rush hour
- D** the city in high-noon light

15 The author refers to the Brooklyn Bridge as "Brooklyn Belle" to help the reader

- A** understand that the bridge is very old
- B** remember the bridge's history
- C** imagine the noise around the bridge
- D** appreciate the bridge's beauty

16 Which sentence from the passage includes a metaphor used by the author to describe Belle?

- A** "I was taken with what I'd come to call Brooklyn Belle."
- B** "Now Belle was a powerful giant who carried all kinds of people to all kinds of places, day after day."
- C** "On a cloudless night like this one, she was a sight like no other sight in the whole city."
- D** "I'd drawn Belle in the high-noon light, at sunset, on snowy days, and on foggy twilight mornings."

17 In the passage, the narrator refers to the bridge renovation project. Based on information in the passage, the "renovation" project most likely refers to

- A** repairing the bridge
- B** removing the bridge
- C** replacing the bridge
- D** remembering the bridge

Directions

Read this poem. Then answer questions 18 through 21.

Wilderness Rivers

by Elizabeth Coatsworth

There are rivers
that I know,
born of ice
and melting snow,
white with rapids,
swift to roar,
with no farms
along their shore,
with no cattle
come to drink
at a staid
and welcoming brink,
with no millwheel,
ever turning,
in that cold
relentless churning.

Only deer
and bear and mink
at those shallows
come to drink,
only paddles,
swift and light,
flick that current
in their flight.
I have felt
my heart beat high,
watching
with exultant eye,
those pure rivers
which have known
no will, no purpose
but their own.

staid: quiet and
settled

18 What is the speaker's attitude toward wilderness rivers?

- A** She is afraid of them.
- B** She appreciates them.
- C** She thinks only wild animals should use them.
- D** She wishes more people would make use of them.

19 This poem is written from the point of view of a speaker who

- A** is afraid of what she describes
- B** is unaffected by what she describes
- C** has wanted to experience what she describes
- D** has personally witnessed what she describes

20 The speaker says that there are no farms, cattle, or millwheel near the river in order to show

- A** how people want to tame the wilderness rivers
- B** that the wilderness rivers are untouched by people
- C** how people should behave near the wilderness rivers
- D** that the wilderness rivers are too cold for people to use

21 Read these lines from the poem.

**those pure rivers
which have known
no will, no purpose
but their own.**

These lines contain an example of

- A** hyperbole
- B** onomatopoeia
- C** personification
- D** simile

//

Go On

Directions

Read this article. Then answer questions 22 through 26.

Video Racing Games

by Donna O'Meara

Juanita "Speedster" Lopez, sitting in her room in Spain, grabs her gearshift and shifts into high gear as she races her futuristic car furiously alongside her arch competitor Antonio "Fast-T" Castro in Guatemala; he has just covered his stealth vehicle with a cloaking device rendering it invisible. Each player is vying for the Gold Cup of Racing. How can drivers sitting in different countries compete in the same race? That's easy. All you need is an Internet connection.

Competitive online electronic sports, or e-Sports, have become widely popular all over the world. E-Sports are played competitively by both amateurs, who gain virtual scores, and professionals, who compete for real cash prizes.

* * *

Competitive video games have been designed for just about every sport, but racing is especially popular as individuals and teams can feed their need for speed. Most racing games are played on personal home computers rigged with popular gaming hardware. Once the games are uploaded and players are logged on to the World Wide Web, they can play against almost anyone in the world.

In racing e-Sport games, the player controls a specially designed car or other vehicle moving at a simulated high speed while avoiding all kinds of obstacles on a variety of racing tracks. The sky is the limit for designers



of these games. If you can dream it, then it probably exists.

Amazing computer graphics make you feel as if you are really in the driver's seat, so buckle up! Some racing games come with steering wheels, accelerator pedals, gear shifts, and a vibrating seat to make you really feel the bumps in the road. One company even created special racing socks to help players grip the pedals.

Players who excel at their chosen e-Sports may become e-Sport professionals. Professional e-Sport tournaments are not usually played over the Internet. Instead a special location is chosen, like a big office building with lots of computers, and a LAN (Local Area Network) is set up.

The professional players, reporters from the media, the referees, and game administrators all come to the LAN site and log on to play the professional e-Sport tournament. LAN-based

events allow professional administrators to make sure no one is cheating and to ensure fair play for all. Most LAN e-Sport events turn into parties for all in attendance.

The first professional cyber-tournament was played in 1997. Thousands of "spectators" connected through the Internet all over the world now "watch" their favorite cyber-athletes compete in games.

* * *

Like star baseball and football athletes, the best e-Sport players become cyber-celebrities and are under contract to play specifically for their sponsoring leagues or clans. Cyber-sports have become so popular that today even mainstream news media cover the big events.

22

What makes e-Sports competitions unique?

- A The games are watched by fans all over the world.
- B Players compete while sitting in different countries.
- C Players compete for high scores and real cash prizes.
- D The games are played by both amateurs and professionals.

23

What is a main reason e-Sport games are played by so many people?

- A Players can create their own computer games.
- B Players can compete against others using just a computer.
- C Players can become as famous as professional athletes.
- D Players can develop their graphic design skills.

13

Go On

24

Which sentence from the article shows that e-Sports can **almost** be like real sports?

- A "Most racing games are played on personal home computers rigged with popular gaming hardware."
- B "Once the games are uploaded and players are logged on to the World Wide Web, they can play against almost anyone in the world."
- C "Some racing games come with steering wheels, accelerator pedals, gear shifts, and a vibrating seat to make you really feel the bumps in the road."
- D "LAN-based events allow professional administrators to make sure no one is cheating and to ensure fair play for all."

25

The article says that a player "has just covered his stealth vehicle with a cloaking device rendering it invisible." The word "rendering" means about the same as

- A arranging
- B displaying
- C making
- D stating

26

Study this index from a book about computer networking.

LANs (Local Area Networks) user security settings, 46-47 printing on, 47-48 email on, 49-50 troubleshooting, 50-51
--

Which pages would **most likely** provide information to someone interested in preventing cheating during a professional e-Sport tournament?

- A pages 46-47
- B pages 47-48
- C pages 49-50
- D pages 50-51

14

STOP