

Reading Article #1 ~ Looking for a Bear



“I want to see the bears!”

“I don’t care. I want to see the whales first.”

“But bears are so much better.”

“Yeah, if you’re seven. I’m ten now. I like whales.”

“So what? I want to see the bears.”

“I don’t care! Coming to the museum was my idea, and we’re seeing the whales first.”

“Bears!”

“Whales!”

“Bears!”

“Whales!”

“Mommmmm! Graham is being mean!” shouted Sarah. Everyone in the main lobby of the Museum of Natural History turned to look at her. Mom turned around with an embarrassed look on her face—the one that she called mortified.

“What did he do?” whispered Mom.

“He said that bears are for little kids, and that we have to see the whales first.”

“We’re going to see everything in the museum. We have all afternoon.”

“But I want to start with the *bears*.”

“Then you should have asked nicely instead of shouting. Graham, take us to the whales.”

Sarah's heart sank. Graham didn't even have to say anything. The look he gave her was bad enough. He was smiling ear to ear like one of the chimpanzees in the Africa exhibit. She dragged her feet all the way to Ocean Life. She knew she shouldn't have shouted, but Graham made her so angry. And the simple fact was, they didn't have all afternoon. It was 3:00 PM now, and the museum closed at 5:15 PM. Sarah had seen the sign. She had read her mother's watch. She knew there was not much time left for bears.

Ever since they started learning about them the year before at school, Sarah had had bears on the brain. She had paid extra close attention during that unit and now knew all sorts of facts about bears. Grizzly bears were some of the biggest in the world, and they were her favorite.

"Did you know," she asked her mother, "that grizzly bears can get as big as 850 pounds?"

"I did, Sarah. You mentioned that several times in the car."

"Well, did you know they can run 35 miles an hour?"

"Yes, I did."

"That's speeding in some places!" said Sarah, but Mom didn't seem to care.

"Whales are way bigger than bears," said Graham. "That means they're better."

"Yeah, but whales live in the ocean."

"So what's wrong with the ocean?"

"It means they're wet all the time. And they smell like fish."

"You smell like fish!" Graham cracked up. Clearly, he thought he was very clever.

"How big are whales?" asked Sarah.

"What do you mean?"

"Grizzly bears weigh 850 pounds. How much do whales weigh?"

"Uh...I don't know. A whole lot."

Sarah scoffed. Graham didn't even know anything about whales. He just wanted to make sure she was unhappy. She had been looking forward to this trip for months. She read about the museum online, about all the dioramas that were built in the 1940s. They were a very old-fashioned kind of exhibit, but they looked beautiful in the pictures. It was as

close as she could get to a real bear, and she had stayed up all the night before thinking about it. And now Graham was ruining the fun.

The Ocean Life exhibit was dark and quiet. Spooky sounds filtered down from the speakers which were supposed to make them feel like they were underwater. Sarah didn't feel underwater. She just felt grumpy.

"Oh look," she said. "A whale."

"That's a humpback whale," said Graham, doing his best to show off.

"No, it's not. It's a beluga whale. Read the sign."

The model of the beluga was one of the ugliest animals she had ever seen. It had a smooshed-up face and a sad grey color, and it looked like it definitely smelled like fish.

"Well I think it's so good that I'm going to stand here and appreciate it," said Graham. "For a while."

"Mom—can I please just go look at the bears by myself?" asked Sarah.

"No," said Mom. "You have to stay in this room."

As Graham pretended to be interested in the whale, Sarah watched the seconds tick by on her mother's watch. Finally, she couldn't take the beluga any longer. She stomped away, her arms swinging at her side, looking desperately for something in the Ocean Life exhibit that wasn't ugly, boring, or stinky. And then, from across the room, she saw it.

It was a diorama of Alaskan seals swimming just below a sheet of ice. Above them, peering hungrily into the water was a polar bear, looking so real that Sarah flinched when she saw it. It had snow-white fur, a wet-looking, black nose, and claws as sharp as razor blades. As Sarah pressed her face up against the glass to look at it, she forgot about the whales behind her. The polar bear was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

1. What does Sarah want to see?

- A. ocean life
- B. whales
- C. bears
- D. African mammals

2. What is the main conflict in the story?

- A. Sarah wants to see the bears, but Graham wants to see the whales.
- B. Sarah wants to see the whales, but Graham wants to see the bears.
- C. Sarah does not want to be at the Museum of Natural History.
- D. Sarah has been at the Museum of Natural History for too long.

3. Read the following sentences about Sarah: "She read about the museum online, about all the dioramas that were built in the 1940s. They were a very oldfashioned kind of exhibit, but they looked beautiful in the pictures. It was as close as she could get to a real bear, and she had stayed up all the night before thinking about it."

What conclusion can be drawn about Sarah based on this evidence?

- A. Sarah had never been to a museum before visiting the Museum of Natural History.
- B. Sarah became interested in bears when she started preparing for her trip to the Museum of Natural History.
- C. Sarah probably wants to work at a museum when she grows up.
- D. Sarah's trip to the museum meant a lot to her.

4. Read the following sentences: "She stomped away, her arms swinging at her side, looking desperately for something in the Ocean Life exhibit that wasn't ugly, boring or stinky."

How is Sarah feeling at this point in the story?

- A. sad
- B. angry
- C. tired
- D. excited

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A. Sarah's relationship with her brother
- B. Sarah's knowledge about bears
- C. Sarah's trip at the Museum of Natural History
- D. dioramas at the Museum of Natural History

6. Read the following sentences:

"Grizzly bears weigh 850 pounds. How much do whales weigh?"

"Uh...I don't know. A whole lot."

Sarah **scoffed**. Graham didn't even know anything about whales.

As used in the passage, what does "**scoffed**" most nearly mean?

- A. made fun of
- B. knew a lot
- C. shouted
- D. mumbled

Reading Article #2 ~ Lessons from Fishing

Morgan has always loved fishing. He is about to graduate from high school and has been fishing his entire life. His entire family loves to go fishing—even his grandmother! Morgan started learning how to fish before he could even walk.

“My dad would have to hold the pole,” he said, “and I’d reel.”

By the time Morgan was two, he could hold the fishing pole all by himself. Now he is eighteen years old and still goes fishing a lot. He tries to make sure he can go at least once every few months. He has gotten even better at it than his father and his grandfather!

When Morgan was ten years old, he caught the biggest fish of his life. It was 4:45 a.m., and he was out in his boat at his favorite fishing spot. But he just wasn’t catching anything. Suddenly, he felt his fishing pole bend forward, and the reel started spinning! He had caught a fish, and it was trying to get away! The fish kept trying and trying to get away, but Morgan held on tight. He struggled with the fish for 45 minutes before he finally caught it! When Morgan finally pulled the fish into the boat, it was almost as big as he was!

The fish was 42 inches long, just 5 inches shorter than Morgan, and wider than him. The fish was so big, Morgan even got to have his picture on the cover of a magazine!

However, Morgan says not every fishing experience turns out so well. Once, when he was 12, he had a fishing experience he will never forget! He was out fishing one morning, and it was very cold. To make matters worse, he also wasn’t wearing enough clothes. However, he had caught a fish, and it was one of the largest he had ever caught. After catching it, he attached it to his boat using a stringer, which is a device used to attach the fish to the boat while still keeping it in the water.

When Morgan went to pull the fish out of the water, it escaped with the stringer and started swimming away! He immediately jumped in after it, right into the cold water! Of course, he couldn’t outswim the fish, so it got away. “We never saw the fish again; I was freezing, and I lost my stringer,” said Morgan. “But it’s funny if you think about it.” Morgan always tries to have a positive attitude when he is fishing. He thinks being a fisherman has also taught him some important lessons about life. “Fishing has created the person I am,” he said. “It brings out the better in me, and it shows me there’s more to life than what goes on immediately. Some days you’ll get nothing, and the next day you’ll go out and catch the biggest fish.”

1. When did Morgan start learning to fish?

- A. when he was two years old
- B. before he could walk
- C. when he was 10 years old
- D. when he was about to graduate from high school

2. In the passage, the author compares which two events?

- A. a fishing trip when Morgan caught a fish AND a fishing trip when he caught a fish and then lost it
- B. a fishing trip with his father AND a fishing trip with his grandfather
- C. a fishing trip when Morgan fell off the boat AND a fishing trip when Morgan went swimming
- D. a fishing trip with a big, strong fish AND a fishing trip with a small, fast fish

3. In the passage, the author says that Morgan "goes fishing a lot" and that he "has gotten even better at it than his father and his grandfather."

Based on this evidence, what can be concluded about the sport of fishing?

- A. Fishing can be learned in less than a week.
- B. Being good at fishing takes a lot of practice.
- C. Only teenagers are good at fishing.
- D. Fishing is best taught by family members.

4. Read the following sentences from the passage: "The fish kept trying and trying to get away, but Morgan held on tight. He struggled with the fish for 45 minutes before he finally caught it!"

Based on this evidence, how can Morgan best be described?

- A. determined
- B. lazy
- C. angry
- D. uncertain

5. What is the main theme of the story?

- A. Learning how to fish is a good way to learn how to swim.
- B. Fishing makes you strong if you hold onto the pole.
- C. Fishing is a good family activity.
- D. Fishing is like life, with some days that are a success and other days that are not.

6. Read the following sentences: "When Morgan went to pull the fish out of the water, it escaped with the stringer and started swimming away! He immediately jumped in after it, right into the cold water! Of course, he couldn't **outswim** the fish, so it got away."

What does the word "**outswim**" mean?

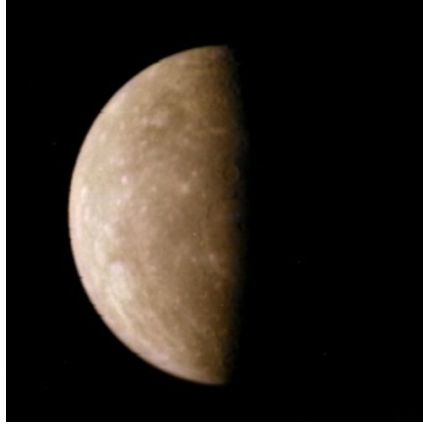
- A. to get out of the water
- B. to swim faster than
- C. to swim slower than
- D. to swim past the boat

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Morgan jumped in the water _____ it was cold.

- A. after
- B. because
- C. when
- D. even though

Reading Article #3 ~ Mercury



Before the 1970s, people didn't know much about the planet Mercury. They knew that Mercury was the smallest planet in our solar system and the closest to the sun. They also knew that the planet orbited the sun in only 88 Earth days, faster than any other planet in our solar system.

In the 1970s, scientists sent a space probe to fly by Mercury and take photographs of the planet. The probe wasn't able to take photos of the entire planet, but scientists were able to learn more than they ever had.

A second probe, called MESSENGER, was launched in 2004. For a few years it collected a lot of data on Mercury. Now, scientists know much more about Mercury.

Mercury is only a little bigger than Earth's moon. In fact, Mercury's surface even has craters like Earth's moon. Comets and meteoroids have hit the planet, leaving dents or pits on its surface. These are called impact craters.

There are also some differences between Mercury and Earth's moon. One major difference is that Mercury's surface has curved cliffs. Earth's moon doesn't have them. Astronomers think these cliffs are a sign that the planet has actually shrunk over time.

A lot of the facts scientists know about Mercury are from the space probes sent there. However, no one has ever been sent to the planet. It is so close to the sun that it would be dangerous for anyone to go there. Maybe one-day astronauts would be able to travel to the planet and study it.

1. Which is the smallest planet in our solar system?

- A. Earth
- B. Mercury
- C. Venus
- D. Mars

2. What two things does the author compare in this text?

- A. the planet Mercury and Earth's moon
- B. the first and second probes sent to Mercury
- C. how Mercury and Earth formed
- D. the sizes of Earth and Earth's moon

3. Read these sentences from the text.

In the 1970s, scientists sent a space probe to fly by Mercury and take photographs of the planet. The probe wasn't able to take photos of the entire planet, but scientists were able to learn more than they ever had.

A second probe, called MESSENGER, was launched in 2004. For a few years it collected a lot of data on Mercury. Now, scientists know much more about Mercury.

What conclusion can be drawn about space probes and Mercury based on this evidence?

- A. Scientists do not need to send any more space probes to Mercury.
- B. Scientists did not know anything about Mercury before sending space probes there.
- C. The first space probe scientists sent to Mercury was better than the second space probe.
- D. Space probes have been very helpful in helping scientists learn more about Mercury.

4. Based on the text, why have no humans been sent to Mercury?

- A. because humans do not want to learn about Mercury
- B. because scientists know enough about Mercury that they do not need to send humans there
- C. because it is so far away that it would be difficult to send anyone there
- D. because it is so close to the sun that it would be dangerous for anyone to go there

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Scientists have learned a lot about the planet Mercury because of the space probes sent there.
- B. The planet Mercury and Earth's moon are alike and different in many ways.
- C. Mercury is the closest planet to the sun, and it orbits the sun faster than any other planet.
- D. In 2004, scientists sent a space probe called MESSENGER to Mercury to collect data on the planet.

6. Read these sentences from the text:

"For a few years [the space probe] collected a lot of data on Mercury. Now, scientists know much more about Mercury."

Based on the text, what does the word "data" mean?

- A. teaching
- B. speed
- C. information
- D. planet

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

No one has ever been sent to Mercury _____ it is so close to the sun that it would be dangerous for anyone to go there.

- A. because
- B. although
- C. therefore
- D. while

8. In the 1970s, what did scientists send to fly by Mercury and take photographs?

Reading Article #4 ~ The Fox and the Crow



One bright morning as the Fox was following his sharp nose through the wood in search of a bite to eat, he saw a Crow on the limb of a tree overhead. This was by no means the first Crow the Fox had ever seen. What caught his attention this time and made him stop for a second look, was that the lucky Crow held a bit of cheese in her beak.

"No need to search any farther," thought sly Master Fox. "Here is a dainty bite for my breakfast."

Up he trotted to the foot of the tree in which the Crow was sitting, and looking up admiringly, he cried, "Good-morning, beautiful creature!"

The Crow, her head cocked on one side, watched the Fox suspiciously. But she kept her beak tightly closed on the cheese and did not return his greeting.

"What a charming creature she is!" said the Fox. "How her feathers shine! What a beautiful form and what splendid wings! Such a wonderful Bird should have a very lovely voice, since everything else about her is so perfect. Could she sing just one song, I know I should hail her Queen of Birds."

Listening to these flattering words, the Crow forgot all her suspicion, and also her breakfast. She wanted very much to be called Queen of Birds. So she opened her beak wide to utter her loudest caw, and down fell the cheese straight into the Fox's open mouth.

"Thank you," said Master Fox sweetly, as he walked off. "Though it is cracked, you have a voice sure enough. But where are your wits?"

The flatterer lives at the expense of those who will listen to him.

1. What animal does the Fox see on the limb of a tree?

- A. a Dove
- B. an Eagle
- C. a Crow
- D. a Blue Jay

2. The most exciting or important part of a story is the climax. What is the climax of this story?

- A. The Fox trots to the tree in which the Crow is sitting.
- B. The Crow keeps her beak closed on the cheese and does not return the Fox's greeting.
- C. The Fox says that he will hail the Crow as the Queen of Birds if she sings.
- D. The cheese falls from the Crow's beak into the Fox's mouth.

3. The Crow does not trust the Fox at first. What evidence in the text supports this statement?

- A. The Crow does not return the Fox's greeting.
- B. The Fox tells the Crow that she has splendid wings.
- C. The Crow opens her beak wide to utter her loudest caw.
- D. The Crow wants to be called the Queen of Birds.

4. The Fox compliments the Crow only because he wants the cheese. What evidence in the text supports this conclusion?

- A. The Fox tells the Crow that she has a beautiful form and splendid wings.
- B. The Fox says that he will hail the Crow as Queen of Birds if she sings a song.
- C. When the Crow opens her beak, the cheese falls out of it.
- D. The Fox stops complimenting the Crow after he gets the cheese.

5. What is the theme of this story?

- A. Crows are easier to take care of than Foxes are.
- B. Getting a lot of praise can lead you to do something foolish.
- C. If you have more food than you can finish on your own, you should share it.
- D. One act of kindness often leads to another.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"What a charming creature she is!" said the Fox. "How her feathers shine! What a beautiful form and what splendid wings! Such a wonderful Bird should have a very lovely voice, since everything else about her is so perfect. Could she sing just one song, I know I should hail her Queen of Birds."

Listening to these flattering words, the Crow forgot all her suspicion, and also her breakfast."

Based on this evidence, what are "flattering words"?

- A. insults and rude names
- B. compliments and praise
- C. suggestions and advice
- D. warnings and alerts

Reading Article #5 ~ Rivers of Bangladesh



There are many rivers that run through Bangladesh. These rivers have played an important role in the development of Bangladesh. The rivers have helped Bangladesh build its economy in many ways. Boats can travel down these rivers, which makes it easy to trade with other countries. The natural power of these rivers can also be used to create energy. For example, the flow of the Karnaphuli River is interrupted by the Kaptai Dam. A dam is a large barrier that blocks water to generate electricity. The Kaptai Dam also serves as a water supply source. Unfortunately, the Kaptai Dam has had a negative impact on many of the locals. The construction of the Kaptai Dam forced thousands of people out of their homes. The Dam has also caused flooding in the area.

Like the Karnaphuli River, other rivers in Bangladesh often flood. In fact, these rivers overflow every year! Between June and October, the rivers flood the surrounding land. Severe flooding can damage crops and force people to leave their homes. These annual floods are necessary, however. The land needs water in order to be fertile, and fertile ground is important for growing crops. Farmers need the water from these floods, but they fear that too much water will ruin their crops.



Photograph of boat sailing along the Padma River

The rivers in Bangladesh can be divided into five different groups. The first group is the Padma river and the streams that stem off of it. The Padma is also called the Ganges and it flows through multiple countries, including India, Nepal, and China. The second group is made up of the Meghna and Surma rivers. The Surma river flows for 559 miles! The third group is the Jamuna river, which often floods. The fourth group is the North Bengal rivers, and these are all located in north-western Bangladesh. The fifth group is the rivers in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, one of which is blocked by the Kaptai Dam.

1. According to the text, what has played an important role in the development of Bangladesh?

- A. rivers
- B. mountains
- C. deserts
- D. the Kaptai Dam

2. The text describes the effects of rivers on Bangladesh. What is one of these effects?

- A. Rivers have caused different areas in Bangladesh to lose electricity.
- B. Rivers have made Bangladesh's trade with other countries harder.
- C. Rivers have helped Bangladesh build its economy.
- D. Rivers have caused different areas in Bangladesh to become dry.

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

A dam is a large barrier that blocks water to generate electricity. The Kaptai Dam also serves as a water supply source. Unfortunately, the Kaptai Dam has had a negative impact on many of the locals. The construction of the Kaptai Dam forced thousands of people out of their homes. The Dam has also caused flooding in the area.

Which conclusion about dams does this information best support?

- A. Dams can have both helpful and harmful effects on the areas near them.
- B. Dams can only have harmful effects on the areas near them.
- C. Dams can only have positive effects on the areas near them.
- D. Dams normally don't affect the areas near them.

4. Why might a farmer in Bangladesh face both benefits and risks living near a river?

- A. The rivers give farmers easier access to water. However, the rivers can severely overflow which can ruin farmers' homes and crops.
- B. The rivers give farmers easier access to animals they can use to help grow their crops. However, the rivers can severely overflow which can ruin farmers' homes and crops.
- C. The rivers give farmers easier access to water. However, the rivers often cut off the electricity in their homes.
- D. The rivers give farmers easier access to water. However, the rivers often attract animals that destroy their crops.

5. What is the main idea of the text?

- A. The Kaptai Dam has had a negative impact on many of the locals. For example, its construction forced thousands of people out of their homes.
- B. The rivers in Bangladesh flood the surrounding lands every year. Severe flooding can damage crops and force people to leave their homes.
- C. Rivers in Bangladesh have played an important role in the country's development. However, these rivers often flood, which can cause people to lose their homes and crops.
- D. Rivers can help countries develop their trade because they allow people to more easily move goods from one location to another.

6. The author provides a map of Bangladesh. Why might the author have included this map?

- A. to show Bangladesh has built its economy and expanded its trade with other countries
- B. to show Bangladesh has different rivers running through it
- C. to show severe flooding can damage crops and force people to leave their homes in Bangladesh
- D. to show the rivers in Bangladesh flood every year

Reading Article #6 ~ Computers vs. Books



Mia Murphy was tired when she got home from school last Friday. It had been a long week. She was working on a computer project and had stayed late at school to finish her work. After stepping off the bus and trudging home, she plopped onto her chair in the kitchen.

“What’s up, Mia?” Mr. Murphy asked. He was making Mia her favorite after-school snack, a grilled cheese sandwich.

“This project is taking me forever!” Mia replied. “I have to design a website page for my computer class.”

“Wow, fancy!” Mrs. Murphy shouted from the living room. “When we were in middle school, we didn’t even know how to use computers.” She walked into the kitchen and sat down next to Mia. She asked her daughter if she had anyone to help her with her project.

“We have partners—mine is named Ali,” she explained. “Today we learned how to insert pictures into our page!”

Mr. and Mrs. Murphy looked at each other and smiled. Mia noticed their little exchange. “What?” she asked, wondering what they were thinking.

“Well, we first met when we were working on a project together in high school,” Mr. Murphy explained. “We were assigned to do a research project on American Indian history.”

Mrs. Murphy chimed in. “But we didn’t have computers back then, so we had to go to the library every day to do research!” She explained that they didn’t have online search engines to help them with their work; they could only rely on books. They didn’t have cell phones to text each other when they needed help. They had to work together at each other’s houses.

“But that sounds so hard!” Mia said. “I can’t imagine completing a project without the help of a computer.”

Mr. Murphy chuckled. “I know. But I have that project to thank for meeting your mom! All those countless hours in the library. We had to spend a lot of time together,” he said.

Now Mia was curious. She wondered what else was different when her parents were growing up. So she asked.

Mrs. Murphy started to list off things she didn’t have as a child, like an mp3 player and a flat-screen television. “Also, since I had many brothers and sisters, we had to pitch in more. I helped my mom cook dinner, and we repaired our clothes ourselves when they tore,” she said, tapping Mia on the nose. “How about you help me cook dinner tonight then?” Mrs. Murphy suggested, laughing.

“Sure!” Mia exclaimed. “How about something that you used to make as a kid?”

“Chicken noodle soup it is,” Mrs. Murphy said with a smile.

1. Who is Mia?

- A. a girl in elementary school
- B. a girl in middle school
- C. a teacher at an elementary school
- D. a teacher at a middle school

2. What does Mia mainly learn about in the story?

- A. how her parents met
- B. how her mother's life differed from hers
- C. how to use computers to do homework
- D. how to work in pairs

3. Read the following section from the story:

"[Mia's mother] explained that they didn't have online search engines to help them with their work; they could only rely on books. They didn't have cell phones to text each other when they needed help-they had to work together at each other's houses.

"'But that sounds so hard!' Mia said. 'I can't imagine completing a project without the help of a computer.'"

Based on this evidence, what conclusion can be made?

- A. Mia thinks new technology makes homework easier.
- B. Mia's parents think that her homework is too easy.
- C. Mia thinks it would be more fun to work with a partner.
- D. Mia's parents think she should have a cell phone.

4. Read the following sentences: "Mr. Murphy chuckled. 'I know. But I have that project to thank for meeting your mom! All those countless hours in the library...we had to spend a lot of time together,' he said."

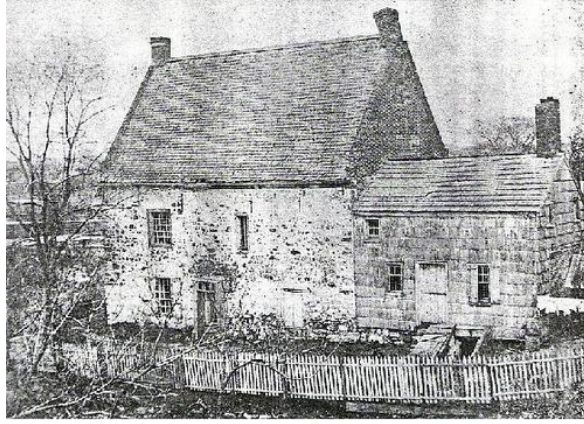
Based on this evidence, what conclusion can be made?

- A. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy grew annoyed with each other while working on their project.
- B. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy began to fall in love during their long hours in the library.
- C. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy were first introduced by a librarian.
- D. Mr. and Mrs. Murphy think Mia would more easily find a boyfriend in the library.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A. a conversation about generational differences
- B. a conversation about the evils of technology
- C. a conversation about how Mia's parents met
- D. a conversation about devices that are popular with teens

Reading Article #7 ~ The Old Stone House



On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the Revolutionary War was about to begin. Seven weeks later, on August 22, 1776, the British Army invaded New York. The British chose to attack Brooklyn, a village across the East River from Manhattan. General George Washington's army was located in this village. The Patriot forces were ready to fight, but they were badly outnumbered. The British had about 20,000 soldiers. The Americans had fewer than 13,000.

The battle started on August 27, when British soldiers raided a watermelon patch, and were fired upon by American troops. The Americans retreated northward, fighting as they went. The British surrounded the Americans, who fled across the Gowanus Creek. To keep back the British, they left behind a group of soldiers from Maryland: just a few hundred Americans to hold off 2,000 Redcoats (British Army soldiers).

The British were fighting from in front of the Old Stone House—a farmhouse built in 1699. The Marylanders attacked the house six times. Nearly all of them were killed or captured. As he watched from a nearby hill, General Washington said, “Good God! What brave fellows I must this day lose.” Because of the sacrifice of the Marylanders, the rest of the American army was able to escape. Had it not been for the fighting at the Old Stone House, the war could have been lost that morning.

The Revolution survived, and so did the Old Stone House. The family home of the Vechte family was sold to the Cortelyous in 1783. In the late 19th century, it served as the clubhouse for the baseball team that would later be named the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1897, the house was destroyed and buried. Thirty years later, it was dug up and rebuilt by the New York City Parks Department.

“Eighty percent of the house,” said Old Stone House Executive Director Kimberly Maier, “is original material.”

On the outside, the house looks just as it did in 1699. On the inside, there is an exhibit about the Battle of Brooklyn and the men who died there. There are uniforms like the

soldiers would have worn, maps of the battle, and a diorama of the fighting around the house. Six thousand children come every year to learn about the house. Maier and her staff teach them not just about the battle, but about what life was like in the 18th century.

“You couldn't just go to the grocery store,” she said. “You just had one dress, because you had to weave it and cut the cloth and sew it together. The chores were so much more than just making your bed.”

Maier said that school children are most surprised when they learn what playtime was like in the 18th century. To kids today, 18th century fun looks a lot like work.

“Kids would start out by helping in the garden, or helping to churn butter,” Maier said.

Children would do basic weaving, or help in the kitchen. As they got better at these tasks, they would learn more advanced tasks. Eventually, they would be as good as a grown-up. When they played outside, they didn't have rubber balls. Instead, they used an inflated pig's bladder.

Outside the Old Stone House is a park. A few years ago, it was rebuilt. It has swings, fountains, and jungle gyms. Children play there every day—and they don't have to use a butter churn.

1. Where is the Old Stone House?

- A. Maryland
- B. Britain
- C. New York
- D. Washington

2. What does the author describe at the end of the passage?

- A. what life was like in the 18th century
- B. an exhibit about the Battle of Brooklyn
- C. how George Washington escaped from the British
- D. how the Old Stone House was destroyed and rebuilt

3. The Old Stone House played an important role in the American Revolution. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. "The British surrounded the Americans, who fled across the Gowanus Creek."
- B. "Had it not been for the fighting at the Old Stone House, the war could have been lost that morning."
- C. "The British chose to attack Brooklyn, a village across the river from Manhattan, where General George Washington had his army."
- D. "The Marylanders attacked the house six times. Nearly all of them were killed or captured."

4. The passage states, "Because of the sacrifice of the Marylanders, the American Army was able to escape."

What was the sacrifice of the Marylanders?

- A. They risked the Old Stone House to hold off 2,000 Redcoats.
- B. They risked their lives fighting with the American Army.
- C. They risked their lives to help the 2,000 Redcoats.
- D. They risked their lives to hold off 2,000 Redcoats.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. the Old Stone House
- B. the Revolutionary War
- C. the Battle of Brooklyn
- D. George Washington

6. Read the following sentences: "The Patriot forces were ready to fight, but **they were badly outnumbered**. The British had about 20,000 soldiers. The Americans had fewer than 13,000."

What does "**they were badly outnumbered**" mean?

- A. There were far more British soldiers than American soldiers.
- B. There was no way for the American soldiers to win.
- C. The Americans couldn't count the number of British soldiers.
- D. The American soldiers were better than the British soldiers.

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

George Washington left a few hundred soldiers behind to hold off the British.

_____, the American army was able to escape.

- A. On the other hand
- B. As a result
- C. For example
- D. In particular

8. What is currently inside the Old Stone House?

Reading Article #8 ~ Famous African Americans



Harriet Tubman lived during a time when it was illegal to help enslaved people escape to freedom, but she helped them escape anyway. Because of her efforts, she came to be known as “Moses,” referring to an important figure in the Bible. The Moses of the Bible led the Jews, his own ethnic group, out of slavery in Egypt. Similarly, Tubman led African Americans out of slavery in the American South. She became the most well-known leader of the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was a system of secret routes that helped enslaved people escape to free states.

Harriet Tubman was born enslaved. She escaped slavery and made a promise to help others do the same. She made a total of 19 rescue trips back down south. She never lost one of the 300 people she saved. She was skillful and brave. She even led her parents to freedom in 1857.

Harriet Tubman continued to help other African American people. She was a nurse and a spy during the Civil War. In her later years, Tubman established a house for elderly African Americans who needed help. She was a beacon for the African American community and the United States.

1. How was Harriet Tubman most like Moses?

- A. They are both important figures in the Bible.
- B. They both saved people from slavery.
- C. They are both famous Americans.
- D. They both lived in Egypt.

2. What does the author describe in the passage?

- A. slavery in the United States
- B. how Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery
- C. how Moses led the Jews out of Egypt
- D. the life and works of Harriet Tubman

3. Harriet Tubman helped African Americans in more ways than just her role in the Underground Railroad. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. She never lost one of the 300 enslaved people she led to freedom.
- B. She made a total of 19 rescue trips to the South.
- C. She established a house to help elderly African Americans.
- D. She became the most famous leader of the Underground Railroad.

4. Why is Tubman most likely described as brave?

- A. She promised to help free enslaved people.
- B. She made 19 rescue trips back down south.
- C. She established a house for elderly African Americans who needed help.
- D. She is compared to Moses, an important figure in the Bible.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. how Tubman helped enslaved people and other African Americans
- B. why the Underground Railroad was never discovered by police
- C. how Tubman trained to be a nurse in the Civil War
- D. similarities and differences between Tubman and Moses from the Bible

Reading Article #9 ~ The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing



This text is from "Aesop's Fables."

A certain Wolf could not get enough to eat because of the watchfulness of the Shepherds. But one night he found a sheep skin that had been cast aside and forgotten. The next day, dressed in the skin, the Wolf strolled into the pasture with the Sheep. Soon a little Lamb was following him about and was quickly led away to slaughter.

That evening the Wolf entered the fold with the flock. But it happened that the Shepherd took a fancy for mutton broth that very evening, and, picking up a knife, went to the fold. There the first he laid hands on and killed was the Wolf.

The evil doer often comes to harm through his own deceit.

1. Why couldn't the Wolf get enough to eat?

- A. because of the watchfulness of the Shepherds
- B. because there weren't enough sheep
- C. because the sheep would run away too quickly
- D. because the Wolf preferred mutton broth

2. What motivates the Wolf to dress in sheep's skin?

- A. The wolf wanted to find a way to disguise himself so that he could kill and eat the sheep.
- B. The wolf wanted to find a way to disguise himself so that he could befriend the sheep.
- C. The wolf wanted to find a way to disguise himself so that he could kill and eat the Shepherds.
- D. The wolf wanted to find a way to disguise himself so that he could befriend the Shepherds.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"The next day, dressed in the [sheep] skin, the Wolf strolled into the pasture with the Sheep. Soon a little Lamb was following him about and was quickly led away to slaughter."

Based on the information, what can you infer about the little Lamb?

- A. The little Lamb realized the Wolf was wearing sheep skin.
- B. The little Lamb thought the Wolf was a sheep.
- C. The little Lamb told the Shepherds about the Wolf.
- D. The little Lamb thought the Wolf was a Shepherd.

4. Why was the Wolf able to stroll into the pasture and eat the little Lamb?

- A. The Shepherds did not see the Wolf stroll into the pasture and eat the little Lamb.
- B. The Wolf looked like a sheep in the sheep's skin. As a result, the Shepherds and little Lamb thought the Wolf was a sheep.
- C. The Shepherds invited the Wolf into the pasture to eat the little Lamb.
- D. The Shepherds were not home to stop the Wolf, so the Wolf was able to stroll into the pasture and eat the little Lamb.

5. What is the theme of this text?

- A. Evildoers often come to harm through their own deceit.
- B. Evildoers never come to harm through their own deceit.
- C. Good doers often come to harm through their own deceit.
- D. Good doers never come to harm through their own deceit.

Reading Article #10 ~ Sauropods: Giants on Earth



Hundreds of millions of years ago, dinosaurs walked the earth. These ancient reptiles were very diverse, ranging in size, diet, movement, habits, and more. One group of dinosaurs was called the sauropods. These were the giants that many people today imagine when thinking of dinosaurs. They generally had large bodies and long necks. They walked on four legs and had a small head.

Just how big were the sauropods? Like other groups of dinosaurs, the sauropods differed in size from species to species. As a group, the sauropods included the largest land animals ever to exist. Many of the biggest sauropods were part of a subgroup called the titanosaurs. One titanosaur, the *Argentinosaurus*, was almost ten times bigger than the largest land mammals today. It may have grown to weigh 90 tons. That's more than twelve times as heavy as a large elephant! Other huge sauropods, like the *Apatosaurus* and *Brachiosaurus*, reached lengths of 65 to 100 feet from head to tail. And even the smaller ones were not very small. A small sauropod could reach a length of 50 feet!

Sauropods didn't always start out big. When a sauropod hatched from an egg, it usually weighed less than 11 pounds. But sauropods grew extremely quickly over the course of about thirty years. By the time they were done growing, they would have been at least 10,000 times heavier than when they were born! This quick rate of growth probably helped sauropods stay alive. The larger a baby sauropod was, the more likely it was to be able to stay safe from predators. This may have contributed to the overall large size of the sauropod group.

If larger sauropods were more likely to survive, then why weren't there even bigger sauropods? Scientists think that it probably would have been impossible for even larger sauropods to evolve. There simply wouldn't have been enough food to feed such huge creatures! Also, scientists think that if sauropods had gotten much bigger, their bones might not have been



able to support their weight. Sauropods were about as large as they could possibly be.

1. What were sauropods?

- A. a group of fossils
- B. a group of dinosaurs
- C. a group of ancient plants
- D. a group of fish

2. This passage describes how sauropods looked and acted. How can sauropods best be described?

- A. They ate other dinosaurs.
- B. They were similar to each other.
- C. They were very large.
- D. They grew very slowly.

3. The passage says, "The larger a baby sauropod was, the more likely it was to be able to stay safe from predators. This may have contributed to the overall large size of the sauropod group." What conclusion can you draw from this statement?

- A. Sauropods were known for being fierce predators.
- B. Sauropods were able to hunt many other creatures because of their size.
- C. Sauropods were hunted by many kinds of predators.
- D. Not many predators could attack large creatures like sauropods.

4. The text calls some sauropods the largest land animals to ever exist. What detail from the text supports this statement?

- A. Sauropods usually weighed less than 11 pounds when they hatched from an egg, but grew extremely quickly over the course of thirty years.
- B. Scientists think that if sauropods had gotten much bigger, their bones might not have been able to support their weight, so they were as large as they could be.
- C. The larger a baby sauropod was, the more likely it was to be able to stay safe from predators.
- D. Sauropods generally had large bodies, long necks, small heads, and four legs.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. The sauropods were huge dinosaurs that were able to stay safe from predators due to their size and rapid growth.
- B. The sauropods were big, fierce predators who ate many smaller dinosaurs.
- C. The sauropods were scientists who studied huge dinosaurs that had small heads and long necks.
- D. Many kinds of dinosaurs walked the earth long ago, and one group of them was called the sauropods.

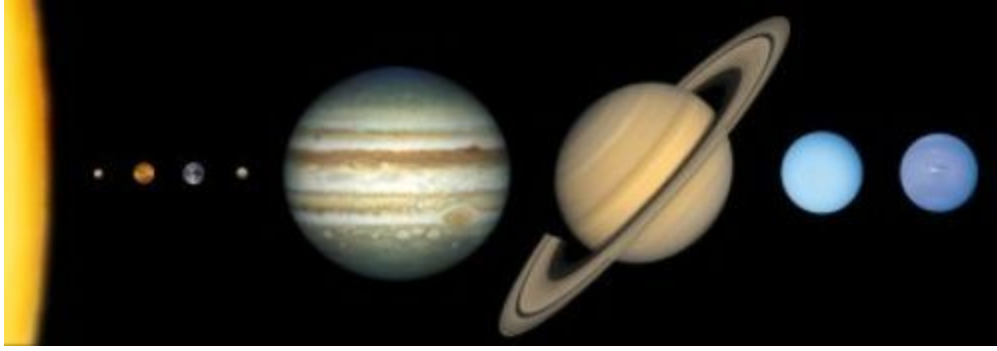
6. Please read the following sentence from the passage.

"These ancient reptiles were very**diverse**, ranging in size, diet, movement, habits, and more."

As used in the passage, what does the word **diverse** mean?

- A. fierce
- B. similar
- C. special
- D. different

Reading Article #11 ~ What's up in Space?



Places in Space

Space is an exciting place! Our solar system is in space. It is made up of the sun and the eight planets that travel around the sun. Our solar system also has moons, stars, and other space objects.

In the Center

The sun is at the center of our solar system. The sun is a hot, bright star. A star is a ball of hot gas. It gives off heat and light. The sun is the star closest to Earth. That is why it looks different from other stars. Most stars look tiny and can be seen only at night because they are so far away.

Around the Sun

A **planet** is a large ball made of rock or gas. Eight planets make up our solar system. You live on one of them—Earth! The others are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Each planet moves in a path around the sun. The path is called an **orbit**.

Around Earth

Earth has one **moon**. It travels in an orbit around Earth. The moon is made of rock. It is covered with deep holes called craters. The moon may look as though it gives off light, but it does not. It looks bright when it reflects light from the sun.

Space Facts!

- The sun is so large that it could hold a million Earths.
- Earth is called the Blue Planet because it is covered in so much water.
- Some planets have many moons. Jupiter has the most. It has more than 60 moons.

1. What is the sun?

- A. a planet
- B. a star
- C. a moon
- D. an asteroid

2. What does the author describe in the passage?

- A. the objects in our solar system
- B. why Earth only has one moon
- C. the different stars in the universe
- D. how the moon got its craters

3. Our sun does not look tiny like other stars because it is the closest star to Earth. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. "The sun is at the center of our solar system. The sun is a hot, bright star."
- B. "A star is a ball of hot gas. It gives off heat and light."
- C. "The sun is so large that it could hold a million Earths."
- D. "The sun is the star closest to Earth. That is why it looks different from other stars."

4. Read the following sentence: "Earth is called the Blue Planet because it is covered in so much water."

Based on this information, what color does most of Earth look like from space?

- A. white
- B. brown
- C. green
- D. blue

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. facts about our solar system
- B. facts about planets
- C. facts about the sun
- D. facts about the moon

6. Read the following sentences: "The moon may look as though it gives off light, but it does not. It looks bright when it reflects light from the sun."

As used in this sentence, what does "**reflects**" most nearly mean?

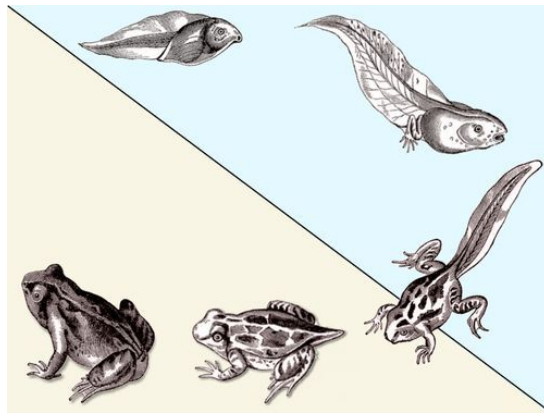
- A. lets light pass through a surface
- B. makes light go around an object
- C. sends light back from a surface
- D. stops light from going through an object

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Our solar system has many different objects, _____ planets, moons, and asteroids.

- A. such as
- B. but
- C. so
- D. then

Reading Article #12 ~ A Frog's Life



From Egg to Frog

Watch a frog grow.

What would your life be like as a frog? You would have to know how to swim and hop. Frogs are **amphibians** (am-FI-bee-uhnz). Amphibians spend part of their lives in water and part on land. Most have smooth, wet skin. Most amphibians hatch from eggs.

Learn about the **life cycle** of a frog. A life cycle shows the stages in an animal's life.

(1) Egg

Most frogs come from tiny eggs. A mother frog lays eggs in or near water. A frog can lay thousands of eggs at once. The eggs are in large clumps. A jelly coating makes the eggs slippery. That protects them from being eaten by other animals.

(2) Tadpole

A tiny **tadpole** grows inside each egg. A few weeks later, the tadpole hatches. A tadpole lives in water. It breathes using **gills**. It uses its long tail to swim and moves like a fish. Tadpoles eat tiny water plants called **algae** (AL-jee).

(3) Froglet

During the next few weeks, the tadpole grows legs and toes. The tadpole's gills grow smaller, and the tadpole starts to grow **lungs**. It swims to the top of the water to breathe air. The tadpole starts to look more like a frog. It is called a **froglet**.

(4) Frog

The froglet's tail gets smaller and soon disappears. Now the frog is an adult. It leaves the water and lives mostly on land. It breathes using lungs. It eats insects, worms, and snails. Mother frogs return to the water to lay eggs. Then the life cycle begins again.

1. According to the text, what does a life cycle show?

- A. the eggs that amphibians hatch
- B. the tadpole that grows inside each egg
- C. the stages in an animal's life
- D. the tiny egg that most frogs come from

2. The text lists and describes the stages of the life cycle of a frog. Which of the following shows these stages in the correct order?

- A. egg, tadpole, frog, froglet
- B. egg, tadpole, froglet, frog
- C. egg, froglet, tadpole, frog
- D. egg, froglet, frog, tadpole

3. Frogs eat different kinds of food during different stages of their life cycles.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. Tadpoles hatch from eggs. Adult frogs grow from froglets.
- B. Tadpoles live in water. Adult frogs live mostly on land.
- C. Tadpoles breathe using gills. Adult frogs breathe using lungs.
- D. Tadpoles eat tiny water plants called algae. Adult frogs eat insects, worms, and snails.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"A mother frog lays eggs in or near water.

"A tadpole lives in water.

"[An] adult [frog] leaves the water and lives mostly on land."

Based on this information, what can you conclude about where a frog lives during different stages of its life cycle?

- A. At the beginning stages of its life cycle, a frog lives mostly on land. Towards the final stages of its life cycle, a frog lives in water.
- B. Throughout all stages of its life cycle, a frog lives in water.
- C. At the beginning stages of its life cycle, a frog lives in water. Towards the final stages of its life cycle, a frog lives mostly on land.
- D. Throughout all stages of its life cycle, a frog lives mostly on land.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. A life cycle of a frog has four main stages.
- B. Tadpoles use their long tails to swim and move like fish.
- C. A jelly coating protects frog eggs from being eaten by other animals.
- D. Amphibians spend part of their lives in water and part on land.

Reading Article #13 ~ How 'Bout Them Apples?



“What do you mean we’re going apple picking?” asked Janie.

“Well, just that,” said her mother. “We’re going out into the country to an orchard.”

“That’s an apple field,” said Janie’s sister, Theresa.

“I know what an orchard is,” said Janie.

“Just making sure.”

“And once we get there,” continued Mom, “we’re going to walk around and pick apples off the trees.”

“All day?”

“All day. It’ll be great fun. You love apples.”

“I do not. I love applesauce. It’s different.”

“Maybe this will convince you that you love apples.”

“Once we pick them off the trees...they’re free?”

“No. We pay the farmer for them before we leave.”

“Mom, maybe nobody told you: They sell apples at the grocery store.”

“Not like these apples.”

Janie didn’t believe it.

The air at the apple orchard was crisp and cool. The sky was bright. The leaves on the trees were orange and yellow and rust red. It was a lovely day, but Janie wished she was back at home.

“I could be having fun in the backyard,” she grumbled. Because she was shorter than the shortest branches of most of the trees, Janie did no apple picking. Her mother and sister reached up, plucked the fruit from the branches, and handed them to her. Janie’s job was to drag the basket with the apples. The farther they walked, the heavier it got, and the harder Janie frowned.

“This farmer must be a genius,” she said.

“Why?” asked Theresa.

“Because he tricked all these people into coming here and doing his work for him. I bet he’s sitting back in his farmhouse right now, rocking in a rocking chair beside the fire. I bet he’s drinking hot chocolate!”

“He’s right up there, silly, helping that family with their apples.”

“He still doesn’t look like he’s working very hard. He should be paying us!”

But the farmer didn’t pay Janie any money, and her family didn’t pay her any attention.

They came home with more than 10 pounds of apples. Janie’s mom made apple pies, apple tarts, apple crisps, and apple cider. She made turnovers and candy apples and apple cake, and six kinds of applesauce. Janie ate all of it, scowling the whole time.

But then, one afternoon, Janie opened the refrigerator. There were no apples anywhere. There were no pies, turnovers, tarts—nothing! As her stomach growled, she remembered how good all the cooked apples tasted, and how nice the weather had been that day at the orchard. There was only one thing to do.

“Mom!” she yelled. “We have to go apple picking!”

1. What do Janie, Theresa, and their mom do at an orchard?

- A. They climb trees.
- B. They pick apples.
- C. They make apple cider.
- D. They make apple pie.

2. Who is the main character in this story?

- A. Janie's mom
- B. Janie
- C. a farmer who owns an orchard
- D. Theresa

3. Read this paragraph describing Janie at the apple orchard.

I could be having fun in the backyard,' she grumbled. Because she was shorter than the shortest branches of most of the trees, Janie did no apple picking. Her mother and sister reached up, plucked the fruit from the branches, and handed them to her. Janie's job was to drag the basket with the apples. The farther they walked, the heavier it got, and the harder Janie frowned.

Based on this paragraph, what can you conclude about how Janie feels at the orchard?

- A. Janie feels brave.
- B. Janie feels cheerful.
- C. Janie feels annoyed.
- D. Janie feels afraid.

4. Read this dialogue between Mom and Janie from the text.

And once we get there,' continued Mom, 'we're going to walk around and pick apples off the trees.'

'All day?'

'All day. It'll be great fun. You love apples.'

Based on this dialogue, how does Janie's mom probably feel about going apple picking?

- A. Janie's mom is hesitant and unsure she wants to go apple picking.
- B. Janie's mom is enthusiastic and excited to go apple picking.
- C. Janie's mom is annoyed and upset about going apple picking.
- D. Janie's mom is exhausted and would rather not go apple picking.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A. You should be kind to others if you want them to be kind to you.
- B. If you have a problem with someone, the best way to resolve it is to talk to that person about the problem.
- C. You may not realize you like something until it is gone.
- D. You should not judge other people by the way they look.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

The air at the apple orchard was crisp and cool. The sky was bright. The leaves on the trees were orange and yellow and rust red. It was a lovely day, but Janie wished she was back at home.

What does the word "crisp" mean here?

- A. dry and crunchy
- B. hot and windy
- C. fresh and pleasant
- D. firm but easy to break

Reading Article #14 ~ U.S. Presidents: George Washington



George Washington is regarded as the Father of Our Country. He guided America and helped it evolve into the nation that it is today. Before becoming President, Washington led the Continental Army to victory, winning American independence from Britain during the Revolutionary War. After the war ended, he was a key player at the convention that drafted the United States Constitution. Finally, as President, Washington's leadership solved many problems. It showed people that the Constitution could work to govern a new nation.

America was a very different place back in Washington's time. The nation was small and weak. There were only 11 states in the U.S. when Washington took office. When he left after two terms there were 16. The country only stretched as far as the Mississippi River. Most people farmed and struggled to make a living. Many children never went to school. Most adults could not read or write. Communication and transportation were slow and difficult. It took days for Washington to travel the distance covered in a couple of hours by car today.

Most Americans loved Washington for the way he handled hardship. As a general, he lost many battles and suffered greatly. Washington never gave up, even during the bitter winters when he and his troops had barely enough food or supplies to survive. Washington's officers admired his loyalty and strength so much that they wanted to make him king. Washington refused.

Today, George Washington is honored in many ways. His face adorns America's dollar bill and its quarter. Both Washington state and our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C., are named after the first President. The bridge that stretches across the Hudson River from New Jersey to New York is named the George Washington Bridge. It is located

exactly where Washington crossed the Hudson with his troops to defeat British forces. Perhaps one of Washington's officers expressed America's feelings about Washington best: "He was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

1. George Washington led soldiers in which war?

- A. World War I
- B. the Civil War
- C. the Revolutionary War
- D. World War II

2. What does the author describe at the end of the passage?

- A. how George Washington became president
- B. how America was different during Washington's time
- C. how George Washington is honored today
- D. how Washington helped win the Revolutionary War

3. America was very different during George Washington's lifetime. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?

- A. Most adults could not read or write. Many children never went to school.
- B. George Washington helped America evolve into the nation it is today.
- C. Today Washington's face adorns America's dollar bill and its quarter.
- D. The George Washington Bridge spans the Hudson River from New Jersey to New York.

4. How can America's feelings about George Washington best be described?

- A. intimidated
- B. divided
- C. appalled
- D. respectful

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. how the United States was different during the time of George Washington
- B. George Washington, the first President of the United States
- C. why George Washington's face is on the dollar bill and the quarter
- D. how George Washington helped defeat the British in the Revolutionary War

6. Read the following sentence: "[George Washington's] face adorns America's dollar bill and its quarter."

What does the word "**adorns**" mean as used in this sentence?

- A. loves
- B. peels
- C. shocks
- D. decorates

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

George Washington's officers admired him so much that they wanted to make him king, _____ Washington refused.

- A. so
- B. namely
- C. after
- D. but

Reading Article #15 ~The Tornado Drill



The alarm went off again. Jonas knew what to do this time. They all had to go out in the hall, sit next to each other, and curl up into a ball. This was in case there was a tornado. Jonas hadn't understood how in the world going into the hall and curling up into a ball would help you if you got hit by a tornado. Then his teacher had told him that they went into the hall to be away from windows that might break during a tornado. Curling up was in case something fell on you. That's why they put their hands over their neck, to protect it in case something sharp fell.

Molly had just joined the class, and she sat next to Jonas. When the alarm went off, Molly hid under her desk. Jonas had to tell her to get out from under there and follow the class in the hall.

It turned out to be a drill, just like last time. After a few minutes, all the students went back into their classroom and sat back down at their desks. After school, Jonas teased Molly about hiding under her desk when the alarm went off. "Scaredy cat!" he said. Molly laughed at him. "I wasn't scared," she replied. Molly explained. She had moved to Oklahoma from California last week. In school in California, when the alarm went off, it was an earthquake drill, not a tornado drill. During the earthquake drill, you were supposed to hide under your desk.

Kanisha overheard them. She told them she had just visited her cousins in Florida, and there they are more likely to face a hurricane instead of a tornado or an earthquake. One time the weather forecaster on the nightly news said that a hurricane had formed near Florida, and that the hurricane would probably impact the area. So school was closed completely the next day.

There are other storms that can be predicted at least a day before they hit, and schools might close if severe weather were likely to impact the areas near the schools. Jonas had cousins in Minnesota. They told him that they had three days in a row with no school because it wouldn't stop snowing. They had known about the snowstorm from a prediction by the weather forecaster the day before it started to snow.

“Any storm is scary, but I think earthquakes and tornadoes are the scariest,” Molly said. “The weather forecaster can probably tell you if a hurricane or snowstorm will come. With earthquakes and tornadoes, you never know.”

1. What do students do during a tornado drill?

- A. go into the basement
- B. go into the hall and curl up in a ball
- C. hide under their desks
- D. stay home from school

2. What is the setting of this story?

- A. a classroom in Oklahoma
- B. a classroom in California
- C. a classroom in Florida
- D. a classroom in Minnesota

3. Read the following sentences: "Molly had just joined the class, and sat next to Jonas. When the alarm went off, Molly hid under her desk. Jonas had to tell her to get out from under there and follow the class in the hall."

Based on the evidence above, what conclusion can be made?

- A. Molly did not know it was a tornado drill at first.
- B. Jonas didn't know what to do in a tornado drill.
- C. Molly was hiding from Jonas because she felt shy.
- D. The teacher forgot about Molly during the drill.

4. Based on the story, what conclusion can be made about emergency drills?

- A. Emergency drills are different depending on the different weather.
- B. All emergency drills are the same.
- C. Emergency drills are different depending on the different school districts.
- D. Emergency drills are different depending on the different countries.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A. the proper procedures for tornado drills
- B. the differences between Oklahoma and California culture
- C. the best way to make new students feel welcome at school
- D. the different ways people respond to weather across the US

Reading Article #16 ~ A New Tail



Dolphin Rescue

Scientists make a new tail for a dolphin.

Meet Winter. Winter is a 4-year-old dolphin. She lives at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium in Clearwater, Florida. Unlike other dolphins, Winter has a **prosthetic** tail that was made just for her. A prosthetic body part is a fake part that is used in place of a real one.

Why did Winter need a new tail? In 2005, she got caught in a **crab trapline** and needed to be rescued. A crab trapline is a cord used to lift a crab trap out of the ocean. The cord damaged Winter's tail and made it fall off. She was only 3 months old. Many people thought she would not survive. Dolphins need to move their tails up and down to swim.



Age fotostock/SuperStock

A crab trap is used to catch crabs in the ocean. The traps can be a danger to dolphins and other ocean animals.

Making a New Tail

Scientist Kevin Carroll heard about Winter. He makes prosthetic parts for humans. “I thought to myself, ‘That poor dolphin,’ ” says Carroll. “Then I thought, ‘That’s what we do. We replace missing body parts. Why not a dolphin?’ ”



AP Images

Winter plays with another dolphin at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

Carroll and his team tried many ideas. Finally, they made a tail that worked. It is made of a special material that works well with Winter’s sensitive skin. The tail is placed over a gel-like material that helps hold it in place. The new tail lets Winter move quickly through the water. She is now able to swim like a dolphin again!



1. What is a prosthetic body part?

- A. a fake body part that is used in place of a real one
- B. a real body part that is used in place of a fake one
- C. a fake body part that is used along with another fake one
- D. a real body part that is used along with another real one

2. In 2005, Winter's tail was damaged and fell off. What was the effect of Winter losing her tail?

- A. Winter could swim faster.
- B. Winter could not swim at all and had to stay still.
- C. Winter had to swim differently.
- D. Winter could swim better.

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"In 2005, [Winter] got caught in a crab trapline and needed to be rescued. [...] The cord damaged Winter's tail and made it fall off. [...] Many people thought she would not survive. Dolphins need to move their tails up and down to swim."

Based on this information, what can you infer about the importance of a dolphin's tail?

- A. A dolphin's tail is not important to its ability to survive.
- B. A dolphin's tail is important to its ability to survive.
- C. A dolphin's tail is not important to its ability to swim.
- D. A dolphin's tail is important to its ability to be rescued.

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"Carroll and his team tried many ideas. Finally, they made a tail that worked. It is made of a special material that works well with Winter's sensitive skin. The tail is placed over a gel-like material that helps hold it in place. The new tail lets Winter move quickly through the water."

Based on this information, what can you infer about the ideas Carroll and his team tried before they made a tail that worked?

- A. These ideas probably allowed Winter to swim like a dolphin again.
- B. These ideas probably held Winter's new tail in place.
- C. These ideas probably did not let Winter move quickly through the water.
- D. These ideas probably worked well with Winter's skin.

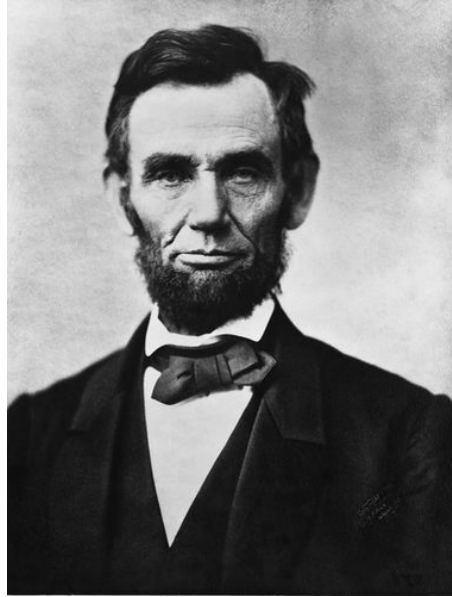
5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Scientists made a new tail for a dolphin that had lost her tail.
- B. Scientists proved that prosthetic body parts are better than real ones.
- C. Crab trawls are dangerous to dolphins.
- D. Dolphins need to move their tails up and down to swim.

6. At the end of the passage, there is an illustration of Winter's prosthetic tail. Why might the author have included this illustration?

- A. to show readers how Winter's prosthetic tail is better than a real tail
- B. to show readers how a real tail is better than Winter's prosthetic tail
- C. to show readers what Winter's prosthetic tail looks like
- D. to show readers what all prosthetic tails look like

Reading Article #17 ~ U.S. Presidents: Abraham Lincoln



Abraham Lincoln was America's 16th president. He is considered to be one of the greatest leaders in the nation's history. He helped guide the United States through the U.S. Civil War. Lincoln also helped to end slavery in the country. Sadly, Lincoln was assassinated near the end of the Civil War in 1865. He became the first U.S. president to be killed in office.

Lincoln was elected president in 1860. Before the election, most people did not know much about Lincoln or his humble background. He was born on February 12, 1809, in a Kentucky log cabin. In 1816, his family moved to the wild Indiana frontier. Lincoln helped his father farm and work the fields. He barely had time for school. He spent no more than one year in a classroom. In 1818, Lincoln's mother died.

Even though Lincoln had very little schooling, he learned how to read and write. Books were scarce on the frontier, but he closely read the books he got his hands on. Lincoln pored over the family Bible. He would walk for miles to borrow books. Some books he read were Aesop's *Fables* and *Pilgrim's Progress*.

As a young man, Lincoln worked many jobs to earn a living. He was tall and strong. He split logs and fence rails for farmers. He helped take a flatboat down a river to New Orleans. Eventually, he started a general store with a friend. When the store went into debt, he paid those debts off working other jobs. By 1834, a friend encouraged Lincoln to become a lawyer. Instead of learning at a law school, Lincoln taught himself law. "Your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing," he would later say.

Among Lincoln's many skills, he was a great writer and speaker. In one of his most famous speeches, known as the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln's words reassured a suffering people at war that democracy would survive.

As president, Abraham Lincoln was most proud of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued during the Civil War. It declared that the slaves in the southern states rebelling against the U.S. government were free. The proclamation paved the way for the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which ended slavery in the U.S.

Lincoln's stand against slavery caused him to make many enemies. Even so, his assassination was felt all over the nation from the North to the South. Millions of people admired his spirit and service to his country. A train carried Lincoln's body to Springfield, Illinois, making stops at some major cities. Mourners crowded near the tracks to try and see the train. To this day, people visit Lincoln's tomb to pay their respects.

1. What did Abraham Lincoln help to end in the United States?

- A. slavery
- B. war
- C. democracy
- D. discrimination

2. Which of the following describes the correct sequence of events in Lincoln's life?

- A. He became a lawyer; he started a general store; his mother died.
- B. He became President; he issued the Emancipation Proclamation; he moved to Indiana.
- C. He issued the Emancipation Proclamation; his mother died; he moved to Indiana.
- D. He moved to Indiana; he became President; he issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

3. Abraham Lincoln was a man of integrity. What evidence from the passage best supports this statement?

- A. "A friend encouraged Lincoln to become a lawyer."
- B. "As a young man, Lincoln worked many jobs to earn a living."
- C. "When the store went into debt, he paid those debts off working other jobs."
- D. "He split logs and fence rails for farmers. He helped take a flatboat down a river to New Orleans."

4. Which of the following was probably *least* important in Lincoln being a successful president?

- A. He was persuasive.
- B. He was tall and strong.
- C. He had political skill.
- D. He was a great writer.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

- A. Lincoln was the first U.S. president to be killed in office.
- B. Lincoln's most famous speech, the Gettysburg Address, reassured people.
- C. Millions of people admired Lincoln's spirit and service to his country.
- D. Lincoln was one of America's greatest leaders.

6. Read the following sentences: "Before the election, most people did not know much about Lincoln or his **humble** background. He was born on February 12, 1809, in a Kentucky log cabin. In 1816, his family moved to the wild Indiana frontier. Lincoln helped his father farm and work the fields. He barely had time for school. He spent no more than one year in a classroom."

What does the word "**humble**" most nearly mean based on the text?

- A. not proud
- B. simple and modest
- C. humiliating
- D. unknown

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

_____ Lincoln had many enemies, he was mourned by millions of people across the country.

- A. Ultimately
- B. Therefore
- C. Although
- D. Meanwhile

Reading Article #18 ~ Victoria Falls: The Smoke that Thunders



Victoria Falls is one of the most impressive waterfalls on the planet. It is located along the border of Zimbabwe and Zambia, two countries in southern Africa. There, the Zambezi River takes a plunge, forming the giant “sheet” of falling water. Victoria Falls is considered to be the largest waterfall in the world. And no wonder – it’s about one mile wide and 360 feet high!

This amazing sheet of falling water can be heard from miles away. The spray and mist from the waterfall can be seen from many miles away, too. In fact, local tribes first called the waterfall “Mosi-oa-Tunya.” That means “the smoke that thunders.” But the falls received another name in 1855. That year, a Scottish explorer came across the waterfall. His name was David Livingstone. He named it Victoria Falls after Queen Victoria, who was ruling Great Britain at the time.

The mist caused by the falls also supports the surrounding environment. Around the waterfall is a rainforest-like ecosystem. Many species of trees, plants, and animals thrive there. If you travel there, you may catch a glimpse of the many different raptor species nearby, like falcons and black eagles. You may even spot elephants in the national parks on both sides of the river!

Today, the site is one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. Hundreds of thousands of people make the trip to Victoria Falls each year. They hope to see the spectacular “smoke that thunders” in person.

1. What is Victoria Falls considered to be?

- A. It is considered to be the smallest waterfall in the world.
- B. It is considered to be the largest waterfall in the world.
- C. It is considered to be the loudest waterfall in the world.
- D. It is considered to be the oldest waterfall in the world.

2. What does the text describe?

- A. David Livingstone's trip to Victoria Falls
- B. how the ecosystem around Victoria Falls has changed
- C. Victoria Falls
- D. the Seven Natural Wonders of the World

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"The mist caused by the falls also supports the surrounding environment. Around the waterfall is a rainforest-like ecosystem. Many species of trees, plants, and animals thrive there. If you travel there, you may catch a glimpse of the many different raptor species nearby, like falcons and black eagles. You may even spot elephants in the national parks on both sides of the river!"

What can be concluded about the ecosystem around the waterfall based on this information?

- A. The ecosystem doesn't have as many plant and animal species as it used to many years ago.
- B. The ecosystem is healthier than what it used to be like many years ago.
- C. The ecosystem is in danger, and many plant and animal species are close to dying out.
- D. The ecosystem is very healthy and has a variety of plant and animal species.

4. Why might the local tribes who lived near Victoria Falls first call it "the smoke that thunders"?

- A. The spray and mist look like smoke. The falling water makes a loud sound like thunder.
- B. The falling water looks like smoke. The spray and mist sound like thunder.
- C. The waterfall can start loud fires that sound like thunder and create a lot of smoke.
- D. They wanted to scare visitors away from visiting the waterfall.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Hundreds of thousands of people make the trip to Victoria Falls each year to see the spectacular "smoke that thunders" in person.
- B. Local tribes first called Victoria Falls "the smoke that thunders."
- C. Victoria Falls is considered to be the largest waterfall in the world, and it supports its surrounding ecosystem.
- D. The spray and mist from Victoria Falls can be seen from many miles away.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"The mist caused by the falls also supports the surrounding environment. Around the waterfall is a rainforest-like ecosystem. Many species of trees, plants, and animals thrive there. If you travel there, you may catch a glimpse of the many different raptor species nearby, like falcons and black eagles. You may even spot elephants in the national parks on both sides of the river!"

As used in the text, what does the word "thrive" most nearly mean?

- A. to grow healthy and strong
- B. to become tired and weak
- C. to die off
- D. to move to another place

Reading Article #19 ~ Should Schools be Year-Round?



Many students say that June is the best time of year. In most places, school lets out as summer begins. Some students don't spend summers at home or at camp, though. They are in school instead. That is because they go to year-round schools.

Students in some year-round schools go to school the same number of days as students in regular schools. But they get mini-breaks throughout the year instead of one long summer vacation. The mini-breaks are a few weeks long. For example, students at some year-round schools often get a few weeks off at Thanksgiving instead of just a few days.

More and more schools are becoming year-round places of learning. The National Association for Year-Round Education states that the number of students in year-round schools has tripled in the last ten years. By 2001, there were about 3,000 year-round schools.

Could your school be next? Would you want your school to be year-round? Read the arguments that follow. Then decide.

Yes Schools Should Be Year-Round.

Year-round schools are better than regular schools. Students in year-round schools have more breaks. They get to enjoy time off in every season.

Year-round schools allow families to plan vacations in times other than summer. Students in year-round schools are less likely to have to miss school for a trip.

Frequent breaks are good for students. They have less stress when they go back to school after a break. They become more eager to learn. One student said, "I love it. Just about the time I'm really tired, I get a break."

Breaks also give teachers time to plan better lessons. Teachers in regular schools are so busy teaching that they have less time to plan lessons for their classes. Students in year-round schools tend to remember what they learn. That is because their breaks

aren't too long. Teachers don't have to spend time going over things that students have forgotten over the summer. All schools should be year-round.

No Schools Should Not Be Year-Round.

Year-round schools are a bad idea. Summer is a great season. Students should be able to enjoy their summers.

Most families plan vacations over the summer. Year-round schools restrict family vacations. They also don't allow students to go away to camp or take on summer jobs to earn money for the future.

Too many breaks disrupt learning. The breaks allow teachers to focus on a topic for only a few weeks. During mini-breaks, students are away from school long enough to forget what they learned.

In regular schools, lessons are not broken up by frequent breaks. Teachers can spend more time on one topic. Teachers also don't have to plan around as many breaks. Summer can also be very hot. Many schools don't have air conditioning. How can students learn in a hot classroom?

Christopher Newland, a researcher at Auburn University, said that year-round schools do not help students learn. Newland said, "The evidence is that it would be as useful as changing the color of the school buses."

Regular schools work just fine. There is no need to change to year-round schools.

1. According to the passage, why might students have trouble learning in school during the summer?

- A. Many students would rather be at the beach than inside a classroom.
- B. Many schools do not have air conditioning, and students would be too hot to learn.
- C. Year-round schools make students more tired than schools with a long summer break.
- D. Many students are more likely to daydream when the weather outside is hot.

2. How does the author organize the information in this passage?

- A. The author describes a problem and several possible solutions.
- B. The author defines several different terms.
- C. The author describes an argument and then presents evidence to support both sides.
- D. The author gives evidence to support his opinion but ignores other opinions.

3. Read this statement: "Students feel like they need frequent breaks." Which piece of evidence from the text supports this statement?

- A. the information from the National Association for Year-Round Education
- B. the quote from a student
- C. the quote from the researchers
- D. the information about air conditioners

4. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A. students do not read during breaks
- B. teachers do not teach well enough during the school sessions
- C. teachers can get better at teaching during breaks
- D. students do not remember material after breaks

5. This passage is mostly about

- A. reasons why year-round schools are or are not a good idea
- B. reasons why all schools should be year-round schools
- C. reasons why nine-month schools should offer longer vacations
- D. reasons why teachers would prefer to teach in year-round schools

Reading Article #20 ~ Hide and Go Hide



“I don’t think they’re going to find us,” said Lisa.

“Nope,” said Krisi. “That’s the whole point.”

“But what if they never find us?”

“Then we win!”

It was recess, on a cold day in November. The class was playing a raging game of hide-and-go-seek. On the jungle gym and in the playhouse, children screamed as loud as they could. Hiding kids were found quickly. The game passed in a blur. None of the players were being very sneaky, except for Lisa and Krisi. They knew just where to hide.

The playground sloped toward a hill. A few feet past the jungle gym, the hill fell sharply down to the football field. Lisa and Krisi were hiding just beyond the hill’s lip. No one on the playground could see them. Technically, they were in bounds, but it didn’t feel like they would ever be found.

Lisa clenched her fists in her mittens as her teeth began to chatter.

“Did you hear that?” she said.

“No.”

“It sounded like Andy shouting, ‘Got you! You’re it!’”

“That sounds like something he’d shout.”

“It means the round is over. We can go back now.”

“Why?”

“Because that’s how the game works?”

“Don’t be crazy! Just because the round is done doesn’t mean we have to give up this hiding spot. Nobody found us. We can use it again.”

“I want to find a different hiding spot. I’m cold here.”

“It’s cold everywhere.”

“But it’s windy here. We’re out in the open.”

“That’s the best part! A normal hide-and-go-seek spot is behind a tree or under the slide. You’re huddled like a mouse in a trap. You can’t see anything. You get caught fast. But look at this!”

Lisa rolled on her back and looked. From the top of the hill they could see across the football field and out into the neighborhood beyond. Because it was winter, and the trees were bare, they could see all the way to downtown.

“Isn’t that awesome?!” asked Krisi.

“I feel like we’re not playing the game anymore. We’re not hiding or seeking or running or screaming. We’re just lying on a hill.” As Krisi nodded, Lisa realized that had been the point all along. “Fine. But just one more round.”

Krisi rolled over too, and the two girls lay on their backs, hiding in plain sight, as a soft November snow began to fall.

1. What game is the class playing?

- A. flag football
- B. tag
- C. hide-and-go-seek
- D. Duck, Duck, Goose

2. What is the main conflict in this story?

- A. Krisi wants to stay in the hiding spot, but Lisa wants to leave.
- B. Krisi and Lisa are hiding out in the open, but snow begins to fall.
- C. Krisi thinks the view from the hiding spot is awesome, but Lisa feels like they’re not playing the game anymore.
- D. Lisa and Krisi are not found, but other kids in the class are found quickly.

3. Lisa is cold. What evidence from the story supports this statement?

- A. "Lisa rolled on her back and looked. From the top of the hill they could see across the football field and out into the neighborhood beyond."
- B. "Lisa clenched her fists in her mittens as her teeth began to chatter."
- C. "None of the players were being very sneaky, except for Lisa and Krisi. They knew just where to hide."
- D. "Lisa and Krisi were hiding just beyond the hill's lip. No one on the playground could see them."

4. Krisi wants to stay in the hiding spot where she and Lisa are. What is something Krisi says that supports this conclusion?

- A. "That sounds like something he'd shout."
- B. "Don't be crazy! Just because the round is done doesn't mean we have to give up this hiding spot. Nobody found us. We can use it again."
- C. "It's cold everywhere."
- D. "A normal hide-and-go-seek spot is behind a tree or under the slide. You're huddled like a mouse in a trap. You can't see anything. You get caught fast."

5. What is the main idea of this story?

- A. Two girls have a great hiding spot, but one of them wants to leave it.
- B. From the top of a hill, two girls can see across a football field and all the way to downtown.
- C. A class plays a game of hide-and-go-seek at recess.
- D. Soft snow begins to fall during a day in November.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

The class was playing a raging game of hide-and-go-seek. On the jungle gym and in the playhouse, children screamed as loud as they could. Hiding kids were found quickly. The game passed in a blur.

What does the author mean when he writes that "the game passed in a blur"?

- A. The game was hard to see.
- B. The game went by very fast.
- C. The game made kids dizzy.
- D. The game took a long time.