

Fireflies in the Garden

By Robert Lee Frost

Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,
And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kind of insect is this poem about?

- A) dragonflies
- B) fireflies
- C) grasshoppers
- D) ants

2. What does the poet compare and contrast fireflies with in this poem?

- A) stars
- B) planets
- C) comets
- D) planes

3. Read these lines from the poem:

And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

What can you conclude from these lines?

- A) The fireflies cannot act like they are stars for very long.
- B) The fireflies do not want to be like stars.
- C) The fireflies are able to shine brightly like stars without ever stopping.
- D) The fireflies can grow to be the same size as stars.

4. Read these lines from the poem:

That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.

Why might the poet have included the phrase “of course” in the last line?

- A) to show that the poet does not really know much about fireflies
- B) to show that the poet thought the fireflies would be able to sustain the part
- C) to show that the poet wishes that fireflies could sustain the part
- D) to show that the poet is not surprised that fireflies cannot sustain the part

5. What is the main idea of this poem?

- A) Although stars are larger in size, fireflies are more beautiful than stars.
- B) Fireflies live in the garden, while stars appear in the sky.
- C) Fireflies can seem very star-like, but only for a short time.
- D) Fireflies and stars are both interesting things to study.

6. Read these lines from the poem:

And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.

Why might the poet have chosen to use the word “achieve” in the last of these lines?

- A) to make it seem like fireflies do not want to look like stars
- B) to make it seem like fireflies sometimes look like stars by accident
- C) to make it seem like fireflies are very intelligent insects
- D) to make it seem like fireflies are trying and succeeding at looking like stars

7. What does the word “they” refer to throughout the poem?

- A) skies
- B) flies
- C) stars
- D) parts

8. What are two ways that the poet contrasts flies and stars in this poem?

9. In what way are flies similar to stars, based on the poem?

10. “Emulating” means imitating, or trying to be like something else. Why might the poet have called fireflies “emulating flies” in this poem? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Harbor of Rio de Janeiro



Harbor of Rio de Janeiro

On January 1, 1502, an explorer from Portugal named Goncalo Coelho and his crew sailed into a huge bay by what is now Brazil. A bay is a body of water that is partly surrounded by land. The explorers thought they had found the mouth of a large river. So they named the place "Rio de Janeiro," or "River of January." The bay they found is known today as the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro.

The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is the world's largest natural bay, containing more water than any other bay in the world! Because of its size, the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is considered one of the world's seven natural wonders.

The bay is surrounded by mountains made from granite. The mountains are huge and steep, with odd shapes. One of these mountains was named after a sugar loaf, because it looks like a type of bread made on an island near Portugal. Another one was named Corcovado, or "The Hunchback," because of its mound-like shape. Together, the water and mountains create a beautiful harbor.

The beauty of the harbor attracts people to this day. Tourists from all over the world come to see the gorgeous harbor and the city of Rio de Janeiro. People have even built cable cars and trains to accommodate tourists and show them around the area.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is the largest natural bay in the world. According to the text, what is a bay?

- A. a body of water that is completely surrounded by land
- B. an area of land that is surrounded by water
- C. a body of water that is partly surrounded by land
- D. an area of land that is partly surrounded by water

2. What does the text describe?

- A. Goncalo Coelho's trip to Brazil
- B. how bays form
- C. the difference between rivers and bays
- D. the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro

3. Read these sentences from the text.

The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is the world's largest natural bay, containing more water than any other bay in the world!

[. . .]

The bay is surrounded by mountains made from granite. The mountains are huge and steep, with odd shapes. . . . Together, the water and mountains create a beautiful harbor.

What conclusion does this information support?

- A. The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is a very cold place.
- B. The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is a very impressive place.
- C. The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro doesn't have a lot of plant and animal life.
- D. The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is a very poor place.

4. Based on the text, what can be concluded about the world's seven natural wonders?

- A. The world's seven natural wonders are natural places that have a lot of rocks.
- B. The world's seven natural wonders are places with a lot of buried treasure.
- C. The world's seven natural wonders are strange places people have built.
- D. The world's seven natural wonders are very impressive natural places.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is the world's largest bay and a beautiful place with water and mountains.
- B. Concalo Coelho was a Portuguese explorer who sailed to Brazil in the 1500s.
- C. The mountains of the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro are huge and have odd shapes.
- D. Tourists from all over the world go to see the gorgeous harbor and the city of Rio de Janeiro.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"The bay is surrounded by mountains made from granite. The mountains are huge and steep, with odd shapes. One of these mountains was named after a sugar loaf, because it looks like a type of bread made on an island near Portugal. Another one was named Corcovado, or 'The Hunchback,' because of its mound-like shape. Together, the water and mountains create a beautiful harbor."

Why does the author discuss the mountain named after a sugar loaf and the mountain called "The Hunchback"?

- A. to contrast the way the mountains by the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro were described earlier in the text
- B. to give the reader examples of mountains with odd shapes by the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro
- C. to give the reader examples of different mountains around the world
- D. to show that people sometimes give funny names to mountains

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

The Harbor of Rio de Janeiro is considered one of the world's seven natural wonders _____ it is very large.

- A. however
- B. on the other hand
- C. although
- D. because

8. Describe the mountains that surround the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

9. Why do people from all over the world visit the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro?

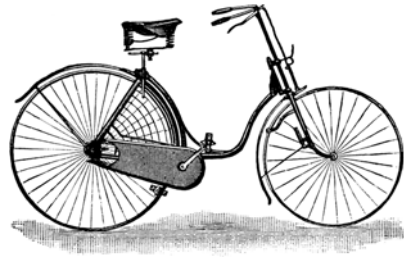
Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Imagine you wanted to convince a friend to join you on a trip to the Harbor of Rio de Janeiro. Explain the argument you might make to your friend to persuade him or her to join you.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Fixing My Sister's Bike

Kyria Abrahams



I love to fix things. I'm only eight years old, but I can figure lots of stuff out by myself. I want to be a scientist when I grow up.

Last week, the red, shiny reflector came off my sister's bicycle seat. My sister Ariel said she wanted to take it to the bicycle repair shop to be fixed.

"No way!" I stopped her. "I know how to fix things, so I'll fix this too!"

"Well, it had better work!" Ariel said. She looked like she didn't believe me.

I got some rope from the closet, and I tied the reflector right back onto the bike. It dangled a little bit, but it still worked just fine.

"It looks messy," Ariel said.

When my dad came home, I showed him how I had fixed the bike.

"Do you think that's the best solution?" he asked me.

I looked over at the reflector. On second glance, it didn't look that secure after all. There were some pieces of rope hanging off.

I shrugged.

"Yes! It's fine!" I said.

I thought it was the best solution. I had come up with it, after all, so it had to be the best.

"Okay," he said. "Let's see how long it stays attached to the bike."

My dad said he was proud of me for taking initiative. That means I see something that needs to be fixed and do it without being told!

"I think I have a new lesson for you, though," Dad said. "I want to show you how to conduct an experiment."

I had come up with a solution to a problem, and now the second step was to test it under different conditions.

I asked my sister when she was planning to go for a bike ride. She said at 2:00 p.m.

I grabbed a pen and a piece of paper and made two columns on the paper. One column said GOOD, and one column said BAD. At 2:00, I went outside to watch her ride.

First, she rode down the sidewalk and the reflector stayed on. I made a checkmark in the GOOD column.

Next, she went over a bump and the reflector stayed on. I made another checkmark. Good again!

Then, she rode underneath a tree. *Uh oh!* I knew what was coming next.

One of the branches from the tree swept across the back of her bike, and the next thing I knew the whole reflector was untied and on the ground!

Ariel cried out, "My reflector!"

I made another checkmark, this time in the column that said BAD.

"Back to the drawing board!" I said.

"Grrr!" said Ariel.

Later that night, my dad and I sat down with my paper to look at the checkmarks.

"Under what conditions did the reflector stay on the bike?" he asked me.

I looked. "Well, it stayed on when the bike was riding normally, but it fell off when it was hit by that tree branch."

“What you have on that sheet of paper is called *scientific data*,” Dad said. “What do you think you can learn from this?”

“I don’t think the rope worked very well,” I said.

“I don’t think so, either,” he said. “But you did have to test it first to be sure.”

“Well, I tested it and now I know.”

“What will hold the reflector on a little bit better?”

“Let’s use glue!” I said.

We went downstairs, where the family keeps all our tools. Dad pulled the bike up onto the bench and took out the Super Glue.

I’m not allowed to use strong glue by myself. So we did this part together.

We let the glue dry overnight, and the next day I conducted my experiment all over again.

“You’re not going to break my reflector again, are you?” my sister asked. She looked a little mad and suspicious.

“Well, I don’t think so,” I told her. “But that’s what this experiment is for. Do you trust me?”

“I guess so,” Ariel said. “But mainly because Dad helped this time!” She stuck her tongue out at me.

I made her ride the bike exactly the same way she had the last time so that we could try to recreate the conditions. This is important in a scientific experiment.

She rode down the sidewalk. The reflector stayed on. So far, so good!

Then, I had her go over the bump again. The reflector stayed on. I made another checkmark. But now it was time for the final test.

“Okay, get ready!” I yelled. “It’s time to ride under the tree!”

Just like last time, my sister rode under the tree. However, this time, the reflector stayed on the bike.

“Yay! It didn’t fall off!” Ariel squealed happily.

I was pretty proud myself. I made a great big checkmark in the GOOD column, and then drew a smiley face just for fun.

I turned around to see that my dad had been watching the entire time.

“Excellent work, little scientist,” he said. “You recreated the experiment and found the solution to your sister’s bike problem.”

“And I saved us a trip to the bike shop!” I said.

“You sure did,” Ariel said. And then she gave me a great big hug.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What keeps falling off Ariel's bicycle?

- A the front wheel
- B the back wheel
- C the reflector
- D the seat

2. The narrator is the person who is telling the story. In this story, the narrator is Ariel's sibling. How does the narrator finally solve the problem of the reflector falling off Ariel's bike?

- A by taking Ariel's bike to a repair shop
- B by tying the reflector on with some rope from a closet
- C by asking their dad to fix the reflector by himself
- D by gluing the reflector on with help from their dad

3. Rope does not keep the reflector on the bike as well as glue does.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A Ariel's father helps to glue the reflector onto the bike after the reflector falls off a second time.
- B After the reflector is tied onto the bike with rope, it stays on when Ariel rides down the sidewalk.
- C After the reflector is tied onto the bike with rope, it stays on when Ariel rides over a bump.
- D The reflector falls off after being tied onto the bike, but it does not fall off after being glued on.

4. Why does Ariel give the narrator a hug at the end of the story?

- A Ariel is upset about how long it has taken to fix the bike.
- B Ariel is happy that the narrator has fixed the bike.
- C Ariel is excited to take her bike to a repair shop.
- D Ariel is confused because she does not understand how the narrator fixed the bike.

5. What is this story mainly about?

- A two siblings who do not get along until their dad makes them be nice to each other
- B a bike that is unsafe to ride because it is falling apart
- C a problem with a bike and what the narrator does to solve it
- D a girl whose bike breaks and what happens when she takes it to a repair shop

6. Read the following sentence: "Last week, the red, shiny **reflector** came off my sister's bicycle seat."

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

- A a wheel that turns very slowly
- B something that shines when light hits it
- C a type of metal that is worth a lot of money
- D a safety pad that someone riding a bicycle wears

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

The narrator tries fixing the reflector with glue _____ rope does not work.

- A after
- B although
- C before
- D so

8. What causes the reflector to fall off Ariel's bike after it has been tied on with rope?

9. What are the three bike riding conditions that the narrator has Ariel recreate after gluing the reflector on Ariel's bike?

10. Why is recreating these conditions important to the narrator's experiment?

How to Have an Adventure



To have an adventure, first you need to have a dog. You also need to have a small backpack, some juice, and a sandwich, in case your adventure makes you hungry. Although you don't need a map, a route, or a plan—it's best to have no plan at all, in fact—it's never a bad idea to have a goal. For instance, you could want to know what happens to the golf balls that are collected from the sand traps each evening. Or you may wish to learn what it's like to play on the school playground when no one else is there. Or you might want to find out which Mexican restaurant in town sells the best taco. (If you are trying to have this adventure, you will not need a sandwich.)

Kurt had a backpack, juice and a sandwich. He had the best dog in the world, a sad-eyed bulldog named Roscoe. And he had a goal. Having already solved the mysteries of the missing golf balls, the empty playground, and the taco tasting, he had something far more adventurous in mind for this sweltering summer Sunday. With Roscoe at his side, Kurt was going to venture where no boy had gone before. He was going to answer questions that no one but he dared ask. He was going to confront the bees.

Ever since his family moved to town, Kurt had wondered where the honey came from. In their last town, Kurt's mother bought honey at the store in a little plastic bear, the same as everyone else. But since the big move—that's what Kurt's dad always called it, “the big move”—their honey came in a jar, with a crooked label that had obviously been applied by hand. “Hilltop Hives,” it said. “Locally Made, Locally Eaten.”

“How local is this honey?” he asked his mom the night before, as he spread it on a biscuit.

“Pretty local,” she said. “The woman who makes it lives somewhere in town.”

“On a hill?”

“Yep. The one behind the movie theater.”

That was all Kurt needed. He had his plan.

The hill behind the movie theater was not a big one. It was easy to walk up it if you took the main road—you could even ride your bike—but nobody ever had an adventure by walking on roads. While the usher wasn't looking, Kurt and Roscoe walked around the back of the movie theater, where the dumpsters were: a concrete corner littered with broken glass and empty soda cans.

“The guys who work here must drink a lot of soda,” said Kurt. “But if they work at a movie theater, how come they don't just get big fountain drinks for free?” He wrote this question down in his notebook, to be answered on a future adventure. He helped Roscoe over the wall—the old dog didn't climb as well as he used to—and heaved himself after. The concrete scratched his palms a little, but Kurt did not worry about it. An adventurer fears no pain.

As they scrambled up the hill face, Kurt sweated and Roscoe panted. Halfway up, they paused for a juice break. “On an adventure,” Kurt reminded Roscoe, “it's vital to stay hydrated.” The dog panted in agreement as he sipped his juice. “Okay, buddy,” said Kurt as he wiped the juice from his chin. “Onward!” They went onward together, stepping over gnarled tree roots and under low-hanging branches, until they reached the top. Kurt peered over the edge of the hill, to make sure nothing dangerous lay ahead. It was then that he saw the alien.

“Oh, wow,” he said.

The creature wore a bulky white spacesuit, with a screen on the helmet that obscured its face. It held a wheezing brown weapon, which sprayed smoke all around.

“That is a pretty freaky alien,” Kurt said. “And probably really dangerous. Let's go see.”

Kurt swallowed his fear, and a little more juice, as he approached the creature. Intent on whatever it was doing with the smoke-weapon, the alien did not turn around. Kurt was very close to it now. The alien didn't see him—it wasn't too late to turn around. He sweated, from fear instead of heat, and decided it would be safer to run away. He was about to turn around when Roscoe chimed in.

“Bark!” said Roscoe. “Bark bark bark.”

The alien whirled around. It definitely saw them now. The alien grabbed Kurt's hand and pulled him back towards the hill. Roscoe followed, because that is what dogs do. Kurt screamed, but only a little. A good adventurer never loses his cool.

“What are you doing here?” said the alien.

“Having an adventure!” said Kurt.

A strange sound came from behind the alien's mask, a throaty rippling sound, like gift wrap being ripped. The alien, Kurt realized, was laughing. It raised its hands to the helmet, and lifted the mask.

“Welcome to Hilltop Hives,” said the alien, who was—Kurt now saw—not an alien at all. It was a lady, with short brown hair and crinkles around her smile. “I’m Brenda. I’m sorry for grabbing your wrist like that. But bees can be very dangerous if you’re allergic.”

“I’m not allergic to anything, and I’m not afraid of anything.”

“What about him?” she said, pointing at Roscoe.

“He’s not afraid of anything except for thunder.”

“Well then. Want to meet the bees?”

First, Brenda gave Kurt a bee-suit of his own—with heavy canvas gloves and a helmet just like hers, with a screen that let in light but kept out bees. It was hot in the suit, but he liked being hot better than being stung. Once he was outfitted, they approached the hives. There were six of them, each taller than Kurt, with boxes and boxes piled on top of each other. Brenda explained to Kurt that she takes care of the hives and protects them so that the bees have a safe place to make their honey.

“Each one of those is full of bees?” asked Kurt.

“Yep,” she said. “Tens of thousands.”

“Wow. You have more pets than anyone I know.”

She opened one of the hives, moving very slowly, so as not to upset the creatures inside. Within the box were eight slats, each covered in honeycomb, and full of swiveling, swarming, wagging bees. Kurt's eyes went wide as she explained to him how the bees worked, how they lived and died, and how every moment of their life was spent making honey in service of their queen.

“What do they make the honey out of?” he asked.

“Pollen,” she said. “From flowers.”

“Where do they get the flowers?”

“Everywhere! I grow flowers all around the hill, without using any harmful chemicals that can kill the bees. But the bees don’t just use the flowers on the hill here. They fly up to five miles each day to find new flowers, then come home and tell the other bees about it, using a special kind of dance.”

“You’re joking.”

“I never joke about honey.”

Kurt peered closely at a cluster of quivering bees. It did look a little bit like they were dancing.

“Five miles,” he said. “There's a lot you can see in five miles.”

“No kidding,” she said. “For bees, every day is an adventure.”

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where do Kurt and Roscoe go on their adventure?

- A inside a movie theater
- B a planet in outer space
- C the emergency room of a hospital
- D a hill with lots of bees

2. What is the plot of this story?

- A An alien comes to earth, hides on the top of a hill, and kidnaps a boy.
- B A boy goes on an adventure to Hilltop Hives and meets the bees there.
- C A dog gets lost, a boy goes looking for it, and he finds it in a Mexican restaurant.
- D A woman puts on a bee-suit, decides to take off the helmet, and gets stung.

3. Read this sentence from the story: "For bees, every day is an adventure."

What evidence from the story supports this statement?

- A The hives that Kurt sees are taller than he is.
- B The honey that Kurt's family eats comes from Hilltop Hives.
- C Kurt sees a creature with a wheezing brown weapon that sprays smoke.
- D Bees fly up to five miles every day to find new flowers.

4. Why does Kurt think Brenda is an alien when he first sees her?

- A Brenda has short brown hair and crinkles around her smile.
- B As Kurt is about to turn around and run away after climbing the hill, Roscoe barks.
- C Brenda is wearing something that looks like a white space suit with a helmet hiding her face.
- D Brenda explains to Kurt how bees work, how they live and die, and how they spend their lives making honey.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A the dangers of talking to people you do not know
- B the harmful effects that pollution has on animals
- C the excitement of having an adventure
- D the fun of growing up and becoming an adult

6. Read the following sentence: "Kurt **swallowed his fear**, and a little more juice, as he approached the creature."

What does it mean that Kurt **swallowed his fear**?

- A Kurt kept his fear under control
- B Kurt touched his throat with one hand
- C Kurt was too afraid to keep going
- D Kurt screamed for help

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

Kurt wants to find the bees; _____, he does.

- A however
- B particularly
- C initially
- D ultimately

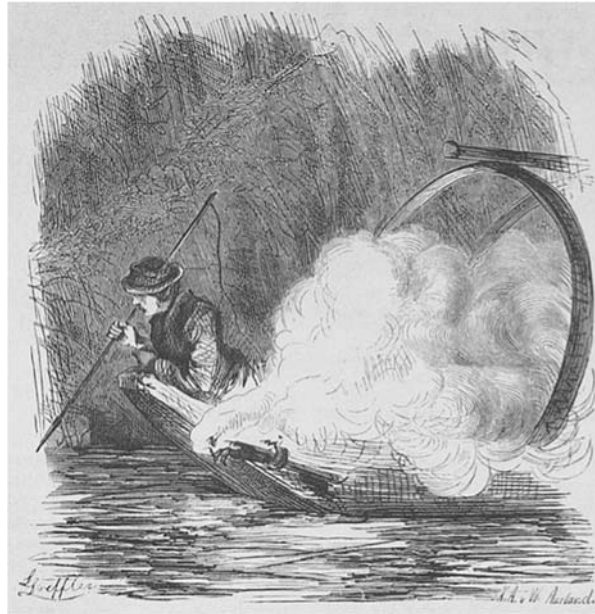
8. According to the story, what do you need to have an adventure?

9. What is an example of an adventure that Kurt went on before his adventure at Hilltop Hives?

10. Based on the story, what does it mean to have an adventure? Support your answer with evidence from the passage.

Lessons from Fishing

By ReadWorks



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."

Name: _____ Date: _____

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

8. Explain how Morgan caught the biggest fish of his life when he was ten years old.

9. Why does Morgan like fishing so much? Use evidence from the passage to support your answer.

10. Morgan thinks that being a fisherman has taught him important life lessons. Identify one of these important life lessons that Morgan may have learned from being a fisherman by using evidence in the text.

Magic Tomatoes

By Edward I. Maxwell



Luke's father is a farmer. To be more precise, his dad is a fruit-and-vegetable farmer. Instead of cows, pigs, sheep, and horses, Luke's house is surrounded by corn, squash, lettuce, and tomatoes.

Luke does not mind that there are no animals. In fact, he likes living on a fruit-and-vegetable farm much better. If you asked Luke, he would say that a fruit-and-vegetable farm is magical.

"What do you mean, magical?" Luke's friend Tom asked one day.

"Well, it's like this," said Luke. "My dad casts a spell, and soon enough the fruits and vegetables appear where there used to be bare dirt!"

Now, Luke knows that this is not really *magic*. But all the same, he feels it is pretty special that his dad is able to create something as grand as a corn field where there used to be nothing. Sometimes, Luke sets his alarm clock, so he can wake up before the sunrise, too. He eats cereal with his dad and asks him what spells he is going to cast.

"I'm planting tomatoes today, son," Luke's father explained. "Tomatoes ripen best in very hot summer heat, so I need to plant the seeds early in spring. That way there will be tall, healthy tomato vines once August arrives."

"How do you make sure the vines grow tall and healthy?" Luke asked.

“They grow strong when you give them care and attention and have a little bit of hope,” his father laughed.

“Can I help?” Luke begged.

“Of course!” exclaimed his father.

So on days Luke did not have school, he helped his father, and Luke learned more about his dad’s magical work.

Luke learned that a tomato plant indeed needs a lot of care. He spent one whole day in the early June sun, sinking wooden stakes into the ground by young tomato sprouts. After the tomato vines had grown a little taller, Luke tied them to the stakes so that they would not topple over and lose their special fruit.

“The tomatoes sure need a lot of attention!” Luke exclaimed one late afternoon. He had been double and triple tying the vines, because the weather forecaster had predicted wind and rain for that night. Luke’s father wanted to make sure his tomatoes did not get blown over in the storm.

“Most worthwhile things do require a lot of attention, Luke,” replied his father with a smile.

“What do you mean?” asked Luke.

“Well,” said his father, standing up straight and wiping the sweat from his forehead. “We should pay close attention to things that make our lives better.”

“That is why you pay attention to Mom?” asked Luke.

“Yes,” replied his father. “I pay close attention to you and Mom, because you both make my life better. You both make me very happy.”

The rest of Luke’s work that day went by a lot quicker. Taking care of the tomato plants, Luke imagined he was taking care of his mom and dad. With a little bit of family magic and a lot of attention, Luke was certain these would be the most beautiful tomatoes he had ever seen once August arrived.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kind of farmer is Luke's dad?

- A) a dairy farmer
- B) a grain farmer
- C) a fruit-and-vegetable farmer
- D) a cow-and-chicken farmer

2. One effect in this story is that Luke learns about tomatoes and farming. What is the cause?

- A) Luke's house is surrounded by lettuce.
- B) Luke helps his father grow tomatoes.
- C) Luke explains what he means by "magical" to his friend Tom.
- D) Luke sometimes sets his alarm clock so that he can wake up before sunrise.

3. Luke's father pays a lot of attention to his son.

What evidence from the story supports this statement?

- A) Luke's father is a fruit-and-vegetable farmer.
- B) Luke's father says that most worthwhile things require a lot of attention.
- C) Luke's father pays a lot of attention to Luke's mother.
- D) Luke's father listens to his son's questions and answers them.

4. What is Luke's opinion of the work his father does?

- A) Luke thinks his father's work is special and interesting.
- B) Luke thinks his father's work is a waste of time and money.
- C) Luke thinks his father's work is strange and confusing.
- D) Luke thinks his father's work is evil and dangerous.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A) the benefits of exercise
- B) the effects of being lazy
- C) giving care and attention to worthwhile things
- D) making friends with people who are different from you

6. Read the following sentences: "Luke's father is a farmer. **To be more precise**, his dad is a fruit-and-vegetable farmer."

Why does the author start the second sentence with the words, "**To be more precise**"?

- A) to make readers look up a word
- B) to make sure readers are paying attention
- C) to create a clear picture in readers' minds
- D) to let readers know that more detail is coming

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

Luke asks about his father's work on the farm; _____ he starts helping his father with work on the farm.

- A) before
- B) then
- C) for example
- D) on the contrary

8. If you asked Luke, how would he describe a fruit-and-vegetable farm?

9. Why is Luke certain that the tomato plants he is working with will become "the most beautiful tomatoes he had ever seen" once August arrives?

10. Based on the story, is farming magical? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the passage.

A Hot, Hot Day

By Jaclyn Einis

It was a hot, hot day. Pug the Pig was talking to Dot the Dog under the shade of the big elm tree. Pug talked in oinks and Dot talked in barks, but they could understand each other just fine. In fact, they talked every day. They were best friends.

The other animals on the farm thought they were silly. “Cats should play with cats, chickens should play with chickens, cows should play with cows, horses should play with horses, dogs should play with dogs, and pigs should play with pigs,” they would say. When the other animals saw Pug and Dot together, they would shake their heads and laugh. Pug and Dot did not care. They each had a very best friend, so they were happy.

Pug and Dot each thought the other had a funny tail. Pug would snort in delight when Dot wagged her big, fluffy tail. Dot would jump up and down when Pug wiggled his curly tail. Today, it was so hot out that Pug and Dot were too tired to wiggle and wag their tails.

“It’s so hot out, you could fry an egg on my back,” Pug said.

“It’s so hot out, I’m sweating out of my paws,” Dot said, panting between words.

Pug giggled. “Imagine if we sweat like Farmer Fred.”

“I wasn’t joking,” Dot said. “I really am sweating from my paws.”

“Wowee!” Pug said, staring with wide eyes at Dot’s wet paws. “That must be uncomfortable, having damp paws.”

“Actually, it helps in this heat. That’s why people sweat all over. It cools you down,” Dot explained.

“Well, gee. I wish I could sweat like people,” Pug said with a frown.

“Pigs don’t sweat much, but there is another way you could cool down,” said Dot. “Are you thinking what I’m thinking?”

Pug smiled and wiggled his tail with excitement.

“Mud bath!” they yelled at the same time.

Pug trotted and Dot dashed across the field to the pool of mud by the lake. Pug rested in the cool mud, sighing with relief. Dot leapt into the fresh, clear lake water. She swam back and forth, making sure to stay near the mud so she and Pug could talk as they bathed. They were best friends, after all.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What kinds of animals are Pug and Dot?

- A a cat and a chicken
- B a horse and a cow
- C a pig and a dog
- D a dog and a cat

2. The two main characters in this story are Pug and Dot. How can both of these characters be described?

- A friendly, cheerful, and excited
- B lonely, shy, and quiet
- C nervous, careful, and jumpy
- D loud, self-centered, and confident

3. Read these sentences from the text.

"The other animals on the farm thought they were silly. 'Cats should play with cats, chickens should play with chickens, cows should play with cows, horses should play with horses, dogs should play with dogs, and pigs should play with pigs,' they would say. When the other animals saw Pug and Dot together, they would shake their heads and laugh."

Based on this evidence, why did the other animals think Pug and Dot were silly?

- A because Pug and Dot always played funny jokes on the other animals
- B because they all wanted to play with Pug and Dot, but Pug and Dot did not play with them
- C because Pug and Dot were not the same kind of animal, but they still played with each other
- D because Pug and Dot were the same kind of animal, but they did not play with each other

4. Pug and Dot enjoy their differences. What evidence best supports this conclusion?

- A "Pug would snort in delight when Dot wagged her big, fluffy tail. Dot would jump up and down when Pug wiggled his curly tail."
- B "'Wowiee!' Pug said, staring with wide eyes at Dot's wet paws. 'That must be uncomfortable, having damp paws.'"
- C "When the other animals saw Pug and Dot together, they would shake their heads and laugh. Pug and Dot did not care."
- D "Pug trotted and Dot dashed across the field to the pool of mud by the lake. Pug rested in the cool mud, sighing with relief."

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A The best friends are ones who are similar.
- B You don't need to be very alike to be great friends.
- C The closer you are to someone, the less well you know him or her.
- D There is no room for selfishness in friendship.

6. Read these sentences from the text.

"The other animals on the farm thought they were silly. 'Cats should play with cats, chickens should play with chickens, cows should play with cows, horses should play with horses, dogs should play with dogs, and pigs should play with pigs,' they would say. When the other animals saw Pug and Dot together, they would shake their heads and laugh. Pug and Dot did not care. They each had a very best friend, so they were happy."

Why might the author have included the details about what the other animals on the farm thought and said?

- A to suggest that Pug and Dot were only friends because they couldn't be friends with other animals
- B to make the reader wonder what the other animals' daily lives were like
- C to suggest that Pug and Dot's friendship was pretty normal for the farm
- D to show that Pug and Dot thought differently about friendship than the other animals

7. Pug talked in oinks and Dot talked in barks, but they could understand each other just fine.

How could you rewrite this sentence without changing its meaning?

- A Pug talked in oinks and Dot talked in barks, so they could understand each other just fine.
- B Pug talked in oinks and Dot talked in barks, even though they could understand each other just fine.
- C Even though Pug talked in oinks and Dot talked in barks, they could understand each other just fine.
- D After Pug talked in oinks and Dot talked in barks, they could understand each other just fine.

8. At the end of the story, Pug takes a mud bath while Dot swims in the nearby lake, staying near the mud. Why does Dot make sure to stay near the mud?

9. Contrast Pug and Dot. Support your answer with at least three details from the text.

10. Based on the text, what is important in a friendship? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

The First Greenmarket in New York City

by ReadWorks



Where do fruits and vegetables come from? When we go to the grocery store, there are shelves of carrots, lettuce, and broccoli. All of this produce comes from farms. Sometimes those farms are very far away. Many of the grapes sold in the United States are grown in South America. The lettuce could be grown in Mexico. Trucks, ships, and planes bring food from all over the world to a grocery store near you.

But there are also farms close by. In the 1970s one man thought that we should be eating more food from local farms. His name was Barry Benepe, and he lived in New York City. New York City is the largest city in the United States-over 8 million people lived there in 2013!

Barry knew that there were tasty vegetables being grown close to New York City. But the farmers couldn't sell these vegetables to the people in the city. Grocery stores in New York bought their vegetables from far away and didn't want to buy vegetables from the nearby farms.

Barry knew there had to be a way to sell local vegetables to New Yorkers. "What if the farmers could bring the vegetables to the city themselves?" he asked. Every week, the

farmers would drive into the city and set up a market where they could sell their vegetables.

Barry took his idea to the city government. At first the city had doubts. It wasn't sure New Yorkers would care enough to buy the vegetables from local farmers instead of the grocery store. But Barry convinced the city officials, and they agreed to help. The new farmers' market was called a "Greenmarket."

The first Greenmarket in New York City opened on a Saturday in July 1976. It was very popular. On the first day, most of the farmers sold everything they had. It felt like a party. People chatted and laughed. Neighbors met each other for the first time.

The fruits and vegetables at the Greenmarket were much fresher than the fruits and vegetables at the big grocery stores. It took a lot of time for tomatoes to come to New York from Mexico—they had to cross much of a continent. But tomatoes from near the city didn't have to travel as far. The farmer could pick them on the same day. These local tomatoes were delicious.

"The success of the market is touching and smelling the fruits and vegetables," said Barry. New Yorkers agreed. They loved the Greenmarket so much that they wanted more farmers' markets. Barry worked with the city, and they made markets in other neighborhoods. By 2013, New York City had 54 farmers' markets. They were in every part of the city and on every day of the week.

Other states saw how popular the farmers' markets were and decided that they wanted to have their own markets. Soon there were farmers' markets across the country. Barry Benepe had started a trend.

Now the farmers' markets in New York City don't just sell vegetables and fruits. You can also buy meat, bread, yogurt, eggs, milk, plants, and pastries. All of the foods at the farmers' markets still come from farms that are close by. Not only does this help the farmers, it makes less pollution.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Where did the first Greenmarket open?

- A. Chicago
- B. Boston
- C. New York City
- D. San Francisco

2. The passage describes the sequence of events which led to the first Greenmarket in New York City. Which of the following is one of those events?

- A. Farmers' markets in New York City began selling other foods besides fruits and vegetables.
- B. Barry Benepe convinced New York City government to help establish a farmers' market.
- C. Farmers' markets were opened across the country after other states saw how popular the farmers' markets in New York were.
- D. New Yorkers demanded more farmers' markets.

3. The New York City government was not eager to start a farmers' market. What detail from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. People chatted and laughed at the first Greenmarket.
- B. The city government finally agreed to help Barry Benepe open the first Greenmarket.
- C. The new farmers' market was called a Greenmarket.
- D. The city government wasn't sure New Yorkers would care enough to buy the vegetables from the local farmers instead of the grocery store.

4. What does the passage suggest about Benepe's role in the spread of farmers' markets across the country?

- A. Benepe's role was important because he helped other states open farmers' markets.
- B. Benepe's role was important because he started the trend of farmers' markets.
- C. Benepe's role was not important because he only helped open Greenmarkets in one state.
- D. Benepe's role was not important because he was unable to influence the New York City government to open a farmers' market.

5. What is this passage mainly about?

- A. why people like fresh vegetables
- B. how farmers' markets got established in New York City
- C. how to have a farm near New York City
- D. what Barry Benepe did for a living

6. Read the following sentences from the passage: "It took a lot of time for tomatoes to come to New York from Mexico-they had to cross an entire continent. But tomatoes from near the city didn't have to travel as far. The farmer could pick them on the same day. These **local** tomatoes were delicious."

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

- A. nearby
- B. country
- C. unripe
- D. far away

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

All the food, _____ vegetables, fruit, eggs, meat, and milk, sold at farmers' markets in New York City comes from a local farm.

- A. consequently
- B. except
- C. such as
- D. however

8. Barry Benepe was passionate about his idea of starting a farmers' market in New York City. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

9. Explain at least two differences between the fruits and vegetables sold in a grocery store and the fruits and vegetables sold at the Greenmarket.

10. Explain whether one should support the spread of farmers' markets. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Sunflowers

By Mimi Jorling

A sunflower is a big, circular, yellow flower that looks a lot like the sun. Sunflowers also need a lot of sun to grow. Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers. The center part is made of one kind of flower, and the petals around it are another kind of flower.

We use sunflowers in many different ways. One thing we do with them is look at them! Many people add them to gardens because they are so big, bright, and colorful. They can also be cut and brought inside. They will last a long time in a vase. A vase is a pretty jar, bottle, or other container that is used to hold flowers.

Sunflower seeds are also good to eat. People, birds, and animals, including squirrels and chipmunks, love to eat sunflower seeds. They can be difficult to eat if they are still in their shells, but they are filled with protein and are good for you! Sunflower seeds also have a lot of oil in them. It can be squeezed out and collected. Many people use sunflower oil for cooking and in recipes.

Sunflowers are pretty flowers, and they give us and other animals food. Be careful of the stems, though—they are rough and very scratchy!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What is a sunflower?

- A a big, circular, yellow flower
- B a big, triangular, red flower
- C a small, circular, blue flower
- D a small, triangular, purple flower

2. What does the author describe in the second paragraph?

- A the center of a sunflower
- B different ways people use sunflowers
- C animals that love to eat sunflower seeds
- D food that is made with sunflower oil

3. Sunflowers provide food to people and animals. What evidence in the text supports this statement?

- A "Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers."
- B "We use sunflowers in many different ways. One thing we do with them is look at them!"
- C "They [sunflowers] will last a long time in a vase. A vase is a pretty jar, bottle, or other container that is used to hold flowers."
- D "People, birds, and animals, including squirrels and chipmunks, love to eat sunflower seeds."

4. Read these sentences from the text.

"We use sunflowers in many different ways. One thing we do with them is look at them!"

Based on the information in this text, why might people look at sunflowers?

- A because sunflower seeds are filled with protein
- B because sunflower seeds have a lot of oil in them
- C because sunflowers need a lot of sun to grow
- D because sunflowers are bright and pretty

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers.
- B The stems of sunflowers are rough and scratchy.
- C Sunflowers are pretty flowers that give people and animals food.
- D Sunflower seeds can be difficult to eat if they are still in their shells.

6. Read this sentence from the text.

“Sunflowers are actually made up of lots and lots of tiny flowers.”

Why might the author have used the phrase "lots and lots" here?

- A to call attention to how bright sunflowers are
- B to call attention to the amount of flowers that make up sunflowers
- C to call attention to how small the flowers that make up sunflowers are
- D to call attention to how much sun sunflowers need to grow

7. Read these sentences from the text.

“Sunflower seeds are also good to eat. People, birds, and animals, including squirrels and chipmunks, love to eat sunflower seeds. They can be difficult to eat if they are still in their shells, but they are filled with protein and are good for you!”

What does the word "they" in the last sentence refer to?

- A people
- B birds and animals
- C squirrels and chipmunks
- D sunflower seeds

8. What do sunflower seeds have inside them?

9. What do people use sunflower oil for?

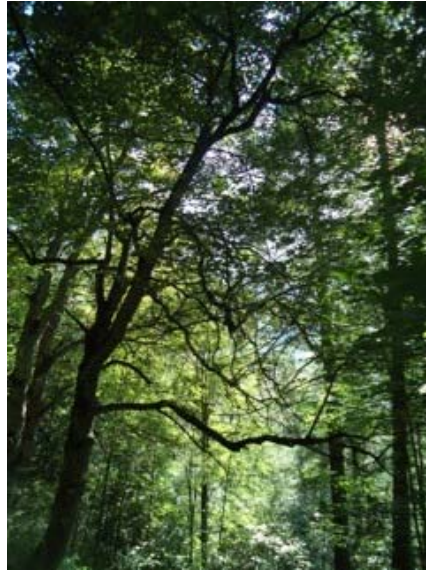
10. Read this sentence from the text.

"We use sunflowers in many different ways."

Explain what part of a sunflower might be most useful to people. Support your answer with evidence from the text.

Happy Trails

By ReadWorks



The morning she left for Camp Kanawa, Maria awoke with a lump in her throat and an ache in her stomach. She had gone on plenty of sleepovers. She'd even spent a whole weekend at Aunt Jolie and Uncle Ed's. So why was she so nervous?

No breakfast today, she thought, imagining the ache turning into nausea and a horrible road trip after a full meal. Then the smell of French toast wafted upstairs. As usual, Maria's stomach grumbled as soon as the French toast-scented air hit her nostrils. *On the other hand, maybe a good breakfast is exactly what I need.*

She gave her arms and legs a good stretch and ambled downstairs.

"There's my big camper!" her mom said, squeezing Maria's shoulders with one arm the way she did when she wanted to give a hug but was in too much of a rush for a full embrace. She walked briskly to the stove, placed two pieces of French toast on a plate and tapped a canister above them, powdered sugar snowing down.

"Just like you like it: super fluffy, slightly crispy..."

"...and lightly dusted," said Maria, already in position, armed with knife, fork, napkin and full glass of milk.

Maria poured a puddle of maple syrup beside the toast and topped each piece with a little mountain of whipped cream.

“Get started while it’s hot. Your father’s coming down in a minute. I told him to shave. Don’t want the grizzly bear—I mean, grizzly beard—to send your new bunkmates running for the woods.”

“Okay, okay,” Maria’s dad said with a sneaky smile. “Clean as a whistle. Just like you ordered.”

“*Just* like I ordered?”

“The mustache stays. Admit it, you love it.”

Maria’s mom shrugged.

“I think it’s hip,” Maria said, dipping a bite in some syrup.

“Well, your old man *is* hip,” her dad said, moving his head the way he did when he wanted to look like a cool surfer dude but looked more like an Egyptian robot. “In fact, I was the most popular kid at my camp.”

“For the record, it was science camp,” Maria’s mother reminded her, “and his rise to fame was thanks to what was known as The Great Explosion.”

“Accident or genius? The world may never know,” Maria and her dad said in unison, using their deepest, most mysterious voices. They slowly broke out of character and into laughter.

“In all seriousness, Maria, popularity is not important,” her mother said, looking her straight in the eyes. “Finding the people who like you for you—that’s what matters.”

“Your mom speaks the truth, Sugar,” said Maria’s dad, wiping his thick mustache with a napkin. “Just be yourself. You’ll have a blast.”

* * * *

Just be yourself. Just be yourself. Maria repeated the words like a mantra as she sat with her new cabin mates in a circle on the grass.

“Cool bracelet,” said the skinny, freckled redhead sitting next to her.

“Thanks. I made it in an embroidery class I took this winter.”

“Whoa! That’s impressive. Can you teach me how?”

“If you teach me how to do a braid just like the one in your hair. I’ve mastered the art of French toast eating, but *definitely* not French braiding.”

A loud whistle hushed the girls’ laughter and buzzing all around them. They looked up to see a beautiful older girl blowing into an acorn top between her thumbs. Her skin was tan and eyes were dark brown, like Maria’s, but her dirty blonde hair made Maria feel bored of her plain, black hair.

“Hello! I’m Audrey, one of your two cabin counselors.”

“And I’m Gina, your other cabin counselor,” said the pale girl with curly, brown hair and eyes that were icy blue in color, yet warm.

“And you ladies are the Dragonflies!” Audrey lifted her arms in the air as she announced it. “Each cabin here at Camp Kanawa is named after a different insect.”

“The Cockroach boys—age twelve and thirteen like you—think they’ve got the best mascot. I beg to differ. Dragonfly girls are as tough as dragons and graceful as...well, dragonflies.”

“That sounded better when we rehearsed it,” Gina said lightheartedly.

The ache in Maria’s stomach had officially turned into butterflies—the excited kind.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. At the beginning of the story, where is Maria about to go?

- A a sleepover
- B Camp Kanawa
- C Aunt Jolie and Uncle Ed's
- D school

2. How do Maria's feelings about camp change in the story?

- A At first Maria is nervous, but then she is excited.
- B At first Maria is excited, but then she is nervous.
- C At first Maria is excited, but then she is bored.
- D At first Maria is nervous, but then she is sad.

3. Maria is anxious and nervous about going to camp. What evidence from the story best supports this statement?

- A Maria decides to eat French toast for breakfast before going to camp.
- B Maria's parents give her advice about making friends at camp.
- C Maria and her mom joke with her dad about being hip and cool.
- D The morning she leaves for camp, Maria wakes up with a stomach ache

4. Read the following sentences: "*Just be yourself. Just be yourself.* Maria repeated the words like a mantra as she sat with her new cabin mates in a circle on the grass."

Based on this information, what conclusion can you make?

- A Maria is confident that she will make friends.
- B Maria is not sure if she will like her cabin mates.
- C Maria is nervous about making friends.
- D Maria has already made some new friends.

5. What is this story mostly about?

- A Maria goes to camp for the first time.
- B Maria really loves to eat French toast.
- C Maria discovers her love for dragonflies.
- D Maria jokes with her parents over breakfast.

6. Read the following sentences:

She walked briskly to the stove, placed two pieces of French toast on a plate and tapped a canister above them, powdered sugar **snowing down**.

“Just like you like it: super fluffy, slightly crispy...”

“...and lightly dusted,” said Maria, already in position, armed with knife, fork, napkin and full glass of milk.

What does the author mean when she describes the powdered sugar as “**snowing down**”?

- A The powdered sugar was cold like falling snow.
- B The powdered sugar was wet like falling snow.
- C The powdered sugar smelled like falling snow.
- D The powdered sugar looked like snow as it fell.

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

_____, Maria is nervous about camp, but soon after she arrives, she becomes excited instead.

- A Finally
- B Initially
- C Especially
- D Although

8. What advice does Maria’s mom give her before going to camp?

9. Maria is nervous about going to camp, but after she arrives at camp she becomes more excited than nervous. What causes Maria's feelings to change?

10. Based on the information in the story, will Maria likely have a good time at camp? Support your answer using details from the story.

Chicken Soup For Nicole

by W.M. Akers



"Hello?" said Elizabeth. "Are you there?"

"Ahhhhhhh-choo!"

"Nicole?"

"Ahh-choo!"

"Gesundheit."

"Ahh-choo!"

"If you don't stop sneezing, how are we ever going to have a conversation?"

"I'm sorry," said Nicole, finally. Her voice sounded thick and tired. "I think I have a little cold."

"Oh no, you don't. Uh-uh. Not today. Today we are going to the beach."

"I don't know. I feel pretty awful. My nose is runny and my eyes are itchy, and my head feels

like someone stuffed it full of boiled cabbage."

"Beeswax!" said Elizabeth, which is what she always told her best friend when she was talking nonsense. "Absolute beeswax. Who ever heard of someone getting a cold in July?"

"I guess I'm some kind of medical miracle."

Elizabeth chewed her fingernail and looked down at her bathing suit. It was an adorable one -the most adorable she had ever owned-with pale pink stripes that nicely accented her blue eyes. She had bought it in April, and had spent the last months of school looking forward to the first day she could wear it at the beach. Today was meant to be the day.

Each summer, Elizabeth's brother and his friends spent every day, from lunchtime to sunset, lounging on the sand. By the end of June they were as red as lobsters, and by halfway through July they were as tan as beech nuts. (Elizabeth wasn't sure what a beech nut was, but she knew it must be very brown.) Every summer, she and Nicole begged him to take them along, but he always refused.

"You guys are too young," David would say. "Maybe next year."

Finally, next year was here. Two days before, their mother had said to David over dinner, "Why don't you take Elizabeth to the beach with you on Friday?"

"I can't, Mom. She's just a kid."

"Oh, come on. She's too old to spend another summer sitting around the house. Take her with you! It will be fun."

And because in their family, you simply didn't argue with Mom, that was it. Elizabeth and Nicole had their ticket to the beach.

"Until you had to get sick and spoil it!" exclaimed Elizabeth.

"I'm sorry," sniffled Nicole. "Why don't you just go without me?"

"Did your cold rot your brain? You really think I would go to the beach alone with David and his friends? It would be more boring than school. You're coming, and that's it."

"I can't. I have a fever." And that was that. In Nicole's family, you simply didn't argue with a fever.

"Beeswax," said Elizabeth. "Positively beeswax."

David was loading the cooler into his car when his sister stomped out of the house.

"Hurry up," he said. "It's a beautiful day, and I don't want to miss a minute. I'm getting paler by the second-do you see?" Elizabeth scowled at him. "Where's your suit?"

"I'm not coming to the beach today."

"Okay. Your loss." He started the car. "Could you get out of the way? I have to back out, and Mom would be mad at me if I squished you."

"Mom said you need to take me to the grocery store. It's for Nicole."

David looked at his sister in the rearview mirror. She was trying to smile at him, but it wasn't working. She was trying to look sweet. Something was definitely up.

"You're lying," he said. He revved his engine, startling her, and she jumped out of the driveway. "Mom didn't tell you a thing, which means that I don't have to take you anywhere, which means that I'm going to the beach. So long!"

He drove away, and Elizabeth wondered if there was anywhere on the Internet that explained how to melt older brothers with your mind. She had been lying, and he knew. He always knew. She would have to ride her bike.

David was right. It was a beautiful day-just hot enough to go to the beach, but far too hot to be riding a bike. Elizabeth felt like her skin was going to sweat off, and only made it to the store by imagining how good the air conditioning would feel inside. She parked her bike, locked it, and inhaled sharply when the icy air hit her chest.

"Spectacular," she murmured. If only Nicole had been there to appreciate it.

At the butcher's counter, she rang the bell for service, and the butcher appeared: a pimply-faced young man who was really too old to have pimples. "May I help you?" he asked.

"I need to buy a chicken."

"What cut do you want? Thighs, drumsticks, breasts?"

"I don't know. Just give me the whole thing."

"Broiling Chickens are over there. See?"

She had seen. In the poultry aisle, there were all sorts of pale bits of chicken, sealed tightly under plastic, shimmering in the harsh white light. To one side were whole chickens, plucked

bare and sad-looking. It made her skin lurch to look at them. She picked up the least disgusting one, and grimaced when it squelched through the plastic.

"Think of Nicole," Elizabeth said. "Just think of poor, sick, sniffly, selfish, beach day-ruining Nicole!" Failing to contain her anger, she marched up and down the store, grabbing all sorts of things she thought she might need: avocados, noodles, some pineapple, teriyaki sauce and mayonnaise. (Mayo was Nicole's favorite.) The clerk at the checkout line gave her a funny look.

"What are you making, little girl?" he asked.

"Jeez," she said. "Duh. Jeez. Obviously, I'm making chicken soup."

Step one: get the biggest pot you can find. Elizabeth nearly toppled off the counter as she lifted her mother's largest stock pot, which slipped through her fingers and crashed to the floor. The pot was unharmed, but the floor was pretty badly nicked. It didn't matter—there was no time to waste.

Elizabeth filled the pot with water, but it was too heavy to pick up and out of the sink. She dumped it out, sloshing only a little onto the floor, and put it on the stove. She poured cup after cup of water into it, managing to fill it after twenty minutes or so, when she turned the heat on high.

Now, the chicken. She unwrapped the bird carefully, and lowered it into the pot with her mother's tongs.

"No way am I touching that," she said. The chicken plopped into the water, sending a wave over the side of the pot, where it hissed away on the flame. Along with the chicken, Elizabeth added all the soup stuff she could think of: carrots, onion, celery, potatoes, radishes, Brussels sprouts, broccoli and a banana. She wasn't allowed to use the knife, so she couldn't chop any of the vegetables, but she did the best she could with what she had: prying the broccoli apart with her teeth, and mashing the potatoes and banana with her elbow. Now she just had to wait.

"This is going to be awesome," she said. "This will be the best chicken soup Nicole has ever tasted, and she's going to be so thankful that she'll feel just awful that she spoiled our day. That will show her!"

The water was not boiling. She stuck her finger in it. It was barely even warm. While she waited, she added a few handfuls of pineapple, noodles, teriyaki sauce and mayonnaise. (The avocado she ate while she waited, because avocado makes an excellent snack.) After what

seemed like nine or ten hours, but was actually just eight minutes, she checked the water again. It still wasn't bubbling.

"Beeswax," she said, and sipped her broth. It tasted like watered down mayonnaise with teriyaki sauce in it. It tasted terrible. "Double, triple, quadruple, infinity beeswax!"

Elizabeth's mother was gardening when she heard her daughter shouting. "Hmm," she said, and popped her head in the kitchen door. "It looks like a tornado came in here."

"Mom-I think your oven is broken. This soup tastes terrible."

"That's soup?"

"Obviously. I'm making chicken soup for Nicole because she's a jerk."

"I see," said Mom, who didn't see at all. "Why all the teriyaki sauce and pineapple?"

"It's Hawaiian-inspired."

"Let me see if I can help."

Nicole was blowing her nose when the doorbell rang. "One second!" she shouted. When she opened it, Elizabeth thrust a Thermos in her face.

"Here," said Elizabeth. "I made you some soup. I made it out of spite."

"Out of what?"

"It means that I'm mad that you got sick, and so I made you soup. Well, really my mom made it. And actually, it's out of a can. But I opened the can!"

Nicole gave Elizabeth a big hug. "Thank you! That was so sweet. My throat is sore, and I'm just dying for some soup."

As her friend hugged her, Elizabeth realized that she wasn't mad at Nicole. She was just hungry. They were just pouring the soup into bowls when they heard the thunderclap. Sheets of rain whipped against the window, and they watched from the kitchen, safe and dry.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does Elizabeth decide to make for Nicole?

- A. beeswax
- B. avocado soup
- C. chicken soup
- D. chicken drumsticks

2. Who is the main character of this story?

- A. David
- B. Elizabeth
- C. Elizabeth's mom
- D. the young man at the butcher counter

3. Elizabeth is upset at Nicole.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A. "In the poultry aisle, there were all sorts of pale bits of chicken, sealed tightly under plastic, shimmering in the harsh white light."
- B. "Elizabeth filled the pot with water, but it was too heavy to pick up and out of the sink."
- C. "Along with the chicken, Elizabeth added all the soup stuff she could think of: carrots, onion, celery, potatoes, radishes, Brussels sprouts, broccoli and a banana."
- D. "'Think of Nicole,' Elizabeth said. 'Just think of poor, sick, sniffly, selfish, beach day-ruining Nicole!'"

4. What might be a reason that Elizabeth does not bring Nicole the chicken soup she makes herself?

- A. The chicken soup Elizabeth makes herself tastes terrible.
- B. Elizabeth likes the chicken soup she made too much to share it.
- C. Elizabeth wants to save the chicken soup she made for her mother.
- D. The chicken soup Elizabeth makes will taste better in a couple days.

5. What is a theme of this story?

- A. Going to the beach is never a good idea.
- B. Making chicken soup is so easy that anyone can do it.
- C. Things in life do not always work out as planned.
- D. Brothers and sisters should always be nice to each other.

6. Read the following sentence: "He drove away, and Elizabeth wondered if there was anywhere on the Internet that explained how to melt older brothers with your mind."

Why does the author describe Elizabeth wondering if there was anywhere on the Internet that explained how to melt older brothers with your mind?

- A. to make the reader wonder why Elizabeth spends so much time on the Internet
- B. to make the reader afraid of young people who like to use the Internet
- C. to make the reader laugh and understand how Elizabeth feels
- D. to make the reader cry and feel sorry for Elizabeth's brother

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

At first the weather seems great for a trip to the beach; _____, it starts to rain.

- A. later on
- B. for example
- C. in particular
- D. previously

8. Where were Elizabeth and Nicole planning to go together?

9. Why do Elizabeth and Nicole not go to the beach?

10. In "Chicken Soup for Nicole," many things do not work out as planned. Give one example of something not working out as planned. Then explain whether what actually happened turned out to be better or worse than what was planned.
