Dear Parents,

This summer assignment is designed for students to complete over the summer to help retain information and keep students reading. My hope is that they are already reading very interesting story books, magazines, articles and nonfiction texts. This summer assignment will ensure that students will keep working on reading and comprehension over the summer time. The assignment will not be due until August 22, 2016. The following scale will be used for grading students.

5 Passages completed will earn a C
6-7 Passages completed will earn a B
8 Passages completed will earn an A
More may be completed for additional points.

Please contact me with any questions regarding this assignment.

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A Funny Old Ballpark

W.M. Akers

Have you ever seen a baseball stadium with a hill in it? In Nashville, Tennessee, there used to be a ballpark called Sulphur Dell. It was one of the strangest ballparks in history.

In most ballparks, the right field fence is about 330 feet from home plate. In Sulphur Dell, it was only 262 feet—which made it very easy to hit home runs, if you hit the ball to just the right spot. That's pretty odd, but not half as weird as the hill in the outfield. It sloped up in front of the right field fence, until it got to about 22 feet high!

Skip Nipper, a historian who wrote about Sulphur Dell in his book *Baseball in Nashville*, calls the stadium "quirky." He likes to tell a story about a player named Phil Weintraub, who had some trouble with the outfield hill in 1934.

"A hard line drive came his way," says Nipper, "and he ran down the hill and reached down to catch the ball and missed it. It went between his legs. He turned around, went up the hill to catch it, and once again it went between his legs. When he finally got it, he threw it over the third baseman's head."

In baseball, when a player makes a mistake, he's charged with an "error." It's pretty bad if a player makes more than one error in a game, but on that play, Phil Weintraub made three!

A lot of great players came through Sulphur Dell, including Bill Dickey, Honus Wagner, and the sultan of swat himself: Babe Ruth. When Ruth came to town, the whole city was excited. The state Senate even made a special resolution, allowing them to leave the Capitol early so they could all go to the game. Back then, you couldn't watch players on TV, and they
didn't want to miss their chance to see Babe Ruth. Ruth was in the outfield when he played
there in 1934, Nipper says, and "almost broke one of his legs" running on it.

But even though the ballplayers didn't like hills, the people of Nashville loved their
ballpark. They called it "the Dell." Nipper started going to games at the Dell when he was a
child. His father would take him, and so would his grandfather.

"My dad would take me and my cousin or my brother," he says, "and we would sit on
the first base side, so we could see that right field hill. And my grandfather would not let us go
to the concession stand until the seventh-inning stretch. He wanted us to watch the game."

One of the greatest games ever played at the Dell was on July 11, 1916. A pitcher named
Tom Rogers was on the mound for the Tennessee Volunteers. They called him Shotgun Rogers,
because he threw the ball so fast. That night, he pitched better than he ever had. He did
something that's only happened a few dozen times in all of baseball history: he threw a perfect
game. That means that, in nine innings of play, nobody on the opposing team got a hit. Nobody
got a walk. Nobody even got to first base!

By 1963, the old ballpark wasn't so popular anymore. Teams stopped playing baseball
there, and eventually Sulphur Dell was torn down. It had been around for almost 100 years.

In 1978, a new team came to town: the Nashville Sounds. They built themselves a brand
new ballpark called Greer Stadium. A lot of famous players have played there: Don Mattingly,
Ryan Braun, Rick Ankiel—even Michael Jordan, when he was playing baseball. The Sounds played
at Greer Stadium through the 2014 season. A new ballpark called First Tennessee Park was built
for The Sounds. It opened its doors in 2015, and it is located right beside the state Capitol, on
the spot of land Sulphur Dell once stood.

Where does Skip Nipper think they should have built First Tennessee Park? He doesn't
care.

"I'm a baseball fan," he says. "I'm going to go wherever they play."
Name: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________________

1. What was Sulphur Dell?
   A) a baseball
   B) a historian
   C) a ballpark
   D) a meeting place for state senators

2. What does this passage describe?
   A) This passage describes the career of baseball stars like Babe Ruth, Don Mattingly, and Ryan Braun.
   B) This passage describes a strange old ballpark and some of the things that happened there.
   C) This passage describes the reasons that some people want to build a new ballpark next to the state Capitol in Tennessee.
   D) This passage describes the different players on the Nashville Sounds.

3. Sulphur Dell was a strange ballpark.
   What evidence from the passage supports this statement?
   A) “In most ballparks, the right field fence is about 330 feet from home plate. In Sulphur Dell, it was only 262 feet—which made it very easy to hit home runs, if you hit the ball to just the right spot.”
   B) “A new ballpark called First Tennessee Park was built for The Sounds. It opened its door in 2015, and it is located right beside the state Capitol, on the spot of land Sulphur Dell once stood.”
   C) “One of the greatest games ever played at the Dell was on July 11, 1916. A pitcher named Tom Rogers was on the mound for the Tennessee Volunteers.”
   D) “A lot of great players came through Sulphur Dell, including Bill Dickey, Honus Wagner, and the sultan of swat himself: Babe Ruth. When Ruth came to town, the whole city was excited.”

4. Based on the information in the passage, how did baseball fans feel about Sulphur Dell?
   A) Baseball fans hated Sulphur Dell and almost never went to games there.
   B) Baseball fans loved Sulphur Dell and were excited about going to games there.
   C) Baseball fans did not care much about Sulphur Dell one way or the other.
   D) Baseball fans did not like Sulphur Dell at first but started liking it more in the 1960s.
5. What is this passage mainly about?
   A) what watching a baseball game at Sulphur Dell was like for Skip Nipper
   B) what it means for a pitcher to throw a perfect game
   C) what made Sulphur Dell a strange and special ballpark
   D) how the right field fence in Sulphur Dell made it easy to hit home runs

6. Read the following sentence: "By 1963, the old **ballpark** wasn't so popular anymore. They stopped playing baseball there, and eventually Sulphur Dell was torn down."
What does the word **ballpark** mean?
   A) a hill in the outfield of a baseball stadium
   B) a fence that is about 310 feet from home plate
   C) a baseball game in which no player gets a hit
   D) a place where baseball is played

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.
   Sulphur Dell was eventually torn down, _________ it had once been popular and loved by baseball fans.
   A) although
   B) because
   C) before
   D) especially

8. According to the passage, what was weird about the outfield at Sulphur Dell?

9. Describe the trouble Phil Weintraub had with the outfield hill in 1934.
10. Was Sulphur Dell a good place or a bad place for baseball games? Explain your answer using evidence from the story.
Take Me Out to the Ball Game
By ReadWorks

Corinne skipped through the parking lot. She couldn’t hold back her excitement. Her family was going to the baseball stadium for the first time!

"Corinne, chill out," said her brother, Jake. Jake was only two years older than Corinne, but he thought that gave him the authority to boss her around. Corinne slowed to a walk and waited for her family to catch up.

"I can’t help it," she said. "I’ve never been to a baseball game before."

Corinne had watched countless baseball games on television. Baseball was her favorite sport, and she had been a Chicago Cubs fan as long as she could remember. Corinne thought that the best moment of her life would be when the Cubs finally broke their curse and won the World Series. The team had been losing for decades, but she knew that sooner or later, they had to win.

But tonight her family wasn’t going to see the Cubs. They were going to see the Cougars, a new minor league team that had come to their town. Jake wasn’t excited about the game. He thought the minor leagues didn’t count. "The minor league is for players who aren’t good enough for the major league," Jake always said. But Corinne liked the idea that these players weren’t famous yet. They were still training and learning, just like her. Maybe she’d see baseball’s next big star. Maybe he’d even sign a baseball for her.

"Mom," Corinne said, "Can we wait outside the dugout after the game? I want to get some autographs."

"Sure, we can," said Corinne’s mother. "But let’s enjoy the game first."

They pulled out their tickets and walked into the stadium. The stadium security guard checked Corinne’s mother’s purse and waved them through. "Mmmm," Corinne breathed in deeply. The air smelled like a delicious mix of popcorn and soda. Corinne looked at the tickets and saw that they were sitting on the upper level, just past third base. They walked up the concrete stairs and found their seats as the first inning was beginning.

Corinne couldn’t decide whether to watch the field itself or the enormous screen behind the outfield. Her eyes darted back and forth between the two. The Cougars were pitching first. She cheered at the top of her lungs for every strike and booed when anyone on the other team, the Cyclones, got a hit. Even Jake looked like he was having fun, cheering just as loudly as Corinne.
The game was close. The Cougars would score, and then the Cyclones would score. Back and forth, the two teams battled. The Cyclones had a better pitcher, but the Cougars were quicker. Corinne especially liked the shortstop. He was short, like her, and he was really agile. No matter where the ball was, he was there first. He seemed to have a magic ability to predict its path.

"Mom," said Corinne, tugging on her mother’s sleeve. "What’s the shortstop’s name?"

Her mother looked through the program, searching. "Cory Alvarez," she said. "Cory!" thought Corinne. "Just like me."

By the end of the ninth inning, the teams were still tied, and the Cougars were up to bat. "This is it," Corinne said to Jake. "If the Cougars can manage to score just one run, then we’ll win!"

"Don’t be such a baby," said Jake. "It doesn’t really matter. It’s just the minor leagues."

Corinne noticed, though, that Jake was leaning forward in his seat and watching the batter with interest. Jake could pretend to be cool as a cucumber, but inside he was just as excited as Corinne.

The batter turned, and Corinne saw that it was her favorite player, Cory Alvarez. "Come on Cory," she thought, "You can do it!"

Cory walked up to the home plate and tapped the bat on the ground twice. Then he lifted the bat and waited. The pitcher wound up and then threw a ball so fast, Corinne didn’t even see it. She heard the crack when the bat hit the ball, though, and saw the ball flying through the air toward third base. The ball sailed past the base, then over the stands and straight toward Corinne’s family. Corinne climbed up on her seat and put her hands out. She felt a sting and tumbled backwards as the baseball slammed into her palms. She tumbled out of the chair, and her parents kneeled over her. "Corinne! Corinne! Are you okay?"

Corinne held up the baseball and smiled. "I’m much more than okay," she said.
1. Which team is Corinne hoping will win this baseball game?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. Where does this story take place?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

3. Corinne is completely enjoying herself at the baseball game. What evidence from the story supports this conclusion?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

4. Why is Corinne so very excited about this baseball game?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
5. What is the main idea of this story?

______________________________________________________________

6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"Corinne noticed, though, that Jake was leaning forward in his seat and watching the batter with interest. Jake could pretend to be cool as a cucumber, but inside he was just as excited as Corinne."

What does the phrase "cool as a cucumber" mean in this text?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

Corinne especially likes Cory Alvarez _________ he seems to have the ability to predict where the ball will go and get there first.
8. What happens to the baseball that Cory Alvarez hits?


9. At the end of the story, Corinne says, “I’m much more than okay.” What does Corinne mean by this? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.


10. Why might Corinne be feeling “much more than okay” at the end of the story? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.


The Legend of Ol’ Greeny
By ReadWorks

Kevin pulled the flannel blanket tighter around his body as the cool lake breeze drifted off the soft waves toward the shore. The burning warmth coming from the bonfire was becoming weaker, and Kevin finally felt the cold of the night. He gazed at the faces that huddled around the glowing embers—his grandfather off to his right, his father directly across from him, and his younger sister, Kali, to his left. The only sound they heard was the gentle crash of the waves on the rocky shore. Kevin could just make out the lights of the cottages that sat on the opposite side of the lake, a couple miles away. He wondered if they were also bonfires that were flickering to their dark ends.

Cayuga Lake, one of the biggest Finger Lakes in upstate New York, isn’t very wide but stretches to almost 40 miles, or 64 kilometers, in length. Kevin always wanted to swim across, since he thought he could manage a couple of miles. But he could only dream of swimming its length. He figured he would get too tired early on, even though he was a very strong swimmer. But as he stared at the fire, he fantasized about completing the feat, climbing onto the opposite shore to the massive crowd that had gathered to cheer him on. He would be wrapped up in a blanket like the one he was wearing now, and his photograph would be taken and put on the front page of the newspaper the next day with the headline: “Local Boy Swims the Length of Lake, Now Champion.”

“Kevin! Hello... Earth to Kevin!” Kevin snapped his head up. His grandfather had been calling his name, but he had been too busy daydreaming to hear him.

“What are you thinking about over there?” Grandpa Joe asked.

“Oh, nothing,” Kevin mumbled, still smiling to himself. Maybe one day he would live the dream.

“Okay, well it’s time for a story,” his grandfather said. “So gather around, close.”
Kevin and Kali glanced at each other and rolled their eyes. Grandpa Joe always had crazy stories to tell around the bonfire, stories that were too far-fetched to believe. But the two siblings each grabbed a long stick, stuck marshmallows on their ends, started to roast them over the fire, and waited for their grandfather to begin.

"More than a century ago, my grandfather was out fishing on a night like this," Grandpa Joe said in a hushed voice. "No one was out on the lake, and his was the only boat in sight. He and his buddy stayed out for a while, but then left because the fish weren't biting."

Kevin smashed his marshmallow between two graham crackers and a piece of chocolate. He took a messy bite, and Grandpa Joe continued, "On their way home, they drove to Lake Shore Drive, so they could see the lake in full view from up high. My grandpa said that he noticed something dark in the water—it looked like a log, but it was almost too big to be a piece of driftwood. He kept his eye on it for a while, and eventually..."—he paused for effect—"it moved."

Kali let out a gasp. Her mouth and fingers were sticky from the gooey marshmallows. Kevin laughed, and then he asked, "Come on, are you saying that there's some Cayuga Lake monster out there?"

"It's Ol' Greeny!" Granda Joe exclaimed. "Check the old papers in the early 1900s; the Ithaca Journal reporters wouldn't even go near the lake for fear of being snatched up by the monster."

"Were there other sightings?" Kali asked.

"Sure there were!" said Grandpa Joe. "In the 1970s, a kid claimed that he was bitten by Ol' Greeny, and a boater said that he and his friends spotted something they thought was a huge log, but then it dived beneath the surface of the water."

"Wow!" Kali exclaimed. Her eyes had grown twice in size, and her jaw dropped. Kevin giggled at the thought of her believing in these lake monster stories, but as he looked out over the water, he wondered if something strange was out there hiding in the deep.
1. What does Kevin dream of doing?


2. Where does the story take place?


3. Read these sentences from the story.

"Okay, well it's time for a story,' his grandfather said. 'So gather around, close.' Kevin and Kali glanced at each other and rolled their eyes. Grandpa Joe always had crazy stories to tell around the bonfire, stories that were too far-fetched to believe."

Based on this evidence, what can you conclude about Kevin and Kali?
4. Read these sentences from the story.

"My grandpa said that he noticed something dark in the water—it looked like a log, but it was almost too big to be a piece of driftwood. He kept his eye on it for a while, and eventually...’—he paused for effect—'it moved.'"

What "effect" is Grandpa Joe trying to produce?

5. What is the main idea of this story?

6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"Kevin and Kali glanced at each other and rolled their eyes. Grandpa Joe always had crazy stories to tell around the bonfire, stories that were too far-fetched to believe."

What does the word "far-fetched" mean as used in this text?
7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

Kevin and Kali roll their eyes when Grandpa Joe announces he's going to tell a story, _____ they listen to him anyway.

8. What does Kevin wonder as he looks at the water at the end of the story?


10. Explain how Kevin feels about Grandpa Joe's story by the end of the text. Support your answer using evidence from the text.
Butterflies in Culture

This text is provided courtesy of OLogy, the American Museum of Natural History’s website for kids.

Most people in Taiwan are Han Chinese. In Han culture, butterfly motifs are common in crafts, paintings, and even buildings.

To understand why butterflies are such popular symbols, look at the Chinese characters for "butterfly." The first character 蝴 (hú) has a similar sound as the character 福 (fú) for "good fortune." This is why butterflies are symbols of good luck. The second character 蝴 (dié) has the same sound as the character 耄 for "the elders." So butterflies are often seen in artwork celebrating a long life.

Butterflies carry meaning for Taiwan's indigenous groups, too. For the Rukai people, the butterfly is a symbol of swiftness when used on headdresses. It is a symbol of diligence when used on clothes. The Paiwan people use tribal beads of the Swallowtail to decorate a person who is fast and nimble. And the Tao tribe believe that Magellan's Iridescent Birdwing represents evil spirits.

Photo Credit: © National Museum of Natural Science Taiwan
The annual Yellow Butterfly Festival celebrates and protects butterflies and their habitats. Organized by local people and conservation groups, the festival features performances, costumes, butterfly-watching hikes, and ceremonies to honor butterflies.

Photo Credit: © National Museum of Natural Science Taiwan
In the Rukai tribe, wearing a butterfly headdress is a great honor granted by the chief. These men run so swiftly, they have won the title "Iyalivarane." It means "butterfly"
Cats in the Catacombs
By ReadWorks

Carlo hopped onto a marble slab. He was underground and it was dark, but he could see to the end of the tunnel. He pulled his tail around his four paws and began licking his fur. He was one of the ninth generation of cats to live in the catacombs. The catacombs are a series of tunnels below Rome, in Italy. Long ago, the ancient Romans buried people in the tunnels, and they were filled with tombs. Other cats might find it creepy to be around so many tombs. But Carlo was a Roman cat, and he had lived in the catacombs ever since he was a kitten.

"Meow?" Carlo heard the sound of another cat in the distance. It was probably his sister, returning from her nightly hunt. Just in case, Carlo jumped down and hid. If it was a strange cat, he didn’t want to be caught by surprise.

He heard the soft sound of paws on stone. The sound grew louder as the paws came closer. "Carlo? Are you there?" It was his sister, Daria.

Carlo sprang out from his hiding spot and his sister yowled in surprise.

“You scared me!” she said.

“I’m sorry, Daria,” said Carlo. “Did you find anything to eat?”

“I found three mice,” said Daria. “But I’ve already eaten them. You’ll have to hunt for yourself tonight. Be careful: there’s a tour group coming through.”

Daria and Carlo knew that they needed to be careful around humans. Tour groups often visited the catacombs. The humans brought lights with them and spent a lot of time staring at the stones. The tour guides didn’t like to see cats in the catacombs. Carlo did not understand why. After all, Carlo and Daria kept the mice away from the tour groups. Carlo did not know much about humans, but he knew that they liked mice even less than they liked cats.

“I’ll be careful,” said Carlo. “The tour group won’t even know I’m here.” Nobody knew the tunnels as well as Carlo and Daria. Even if the tour group saw Carlo, he would be able to outrun them.

Just then, the two cats heard a sound. CRASH! They froze, alert. “What was that?” asked Daria.

CRASH! The sound came again. This time it was closer.

Carlo began moving slowly toward the sound. He stayed close to the wall of the tunnel, sneaking along silently. CRASH! The noise continued. Carlo felt Daria moving behind him,
following him to the noise. They turned a corner and saw two huge men with a hammer. CRASH! One of the men was swinging the hammer against a tomb.

"Daria! They’re trying to rob the tomb!" shouted Carlo.

The men looked up at the sound of his meow. "Did you hear that, Fabio?" the larger man asked. "It sounded like a cat."

"Don’t be crazy," the other man answered. "No cat could live down here. There’s nothing to eat. It’s dark. A cat wouldn’t last a day."

Just as the man finished his sentence, Daria sprang onto his back. The man screamed in pain as Daria’s claws dug into him. "Oooooowl!" he cried.

Carlo dove toward the feet of the other man, knocking him off balance. The man fell with a thud, dropping the hammer.

Just then a light appeared in one of the nearby tunnels. A tour group had heard the noise and come to see what was making it. The tour leader shined his torch on the cats and robbers. The two robbers were lying on the floor, and two very happy cats were perched on top of them.

"Mamma mia!" said the tour guide. "These men were trying to rob the tombs!" The guide blew his emergency whistle, and soon the police arrived to arrest the two robbers. By the time the police got there, the cats were already gone. Carlo and Daria had disappeared in the chaos. They hid in the shadows and watched as the robbers were taken away.

From that day on, whenever that tour guide passed through the catacombs he would leave two pieces of cheese. Carlo and Daria had changed one tour guide’s mind. They thought that maybe one day all the tour guides would like having cats in the catacombs.
1. What are the catacombs?

2. Who is the main character in the story?

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

"Just as the man finished his sentence, Daria sprang onto his back. The man screamed in pain as Daria's claws dug into him. 'Oooooow!' he cried. "Carlo dove toward the feet of the other man, knocking him off balance. The man fell with a thud, dropping the hammer. "Just then a light appeared in one of the nearby tunnels. A tour group had heard the noise and come to see what was making it. The tour leader shined his torch on the cats and robbers. The two robbers were lying on the floor, and two very happy cats were perched on top of them."

Based on this evidence, how do Carlo and Daria protect the tomb?
4. What evidence from the text shows that the tour guide has changed his mind about cats and that he likes having Carlo and Daria in the catacombs?

5. What is the main idea of this story?

6. Read the sentences and answer the question.

"Just then, the two cats heard a sound. CRASH! They froze, alert. 'What was that?' asked Daria.
"CRASH! The sound came again. This time it was closer."

What does the word "alert" mean as used in this text?

7. What word or phrase best completes the sentence?

The tour guides don't like seeing cats in the catacombs, _____ Carlo doesn't understand why.
8. What are the men with the hammer doing in the catacombs?

9. What is the tour guide's opinion about cats at the end of the story? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. Read the sentences from the story.

"From that day on, whenever that tour guide passed through the catacombs he would leave two pieces of cheese. Carlo and Daria had changed one tour guide's mind. They thought that maybe one day all the tour guides would like having cats in the catacombs."

How did Carlo and Daria change the tour guide's mind about cats in the catacombs? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.
Set Sail

Do you ever wonder where a little toy boat would go if you put it into a river and let it ride the water? The river behind my house is wide and winding, wrapped around a cliff in the middle of nowhere, Pennsylvania. I live with my parents in a house on stilts, and I’m allowed to play in the water but only when an adult is around. Sometimes I’m jealous of my cousins when they visit in the summertime. They’re allowed to get in and swim and ride inflatable tubes as far as the first river bend. I guess I can wait till I’m old enough to do that, though. In the meantime, I’d spent two weeks working on a boat, a little one, which I set sail on the river to see where it would go.

Dad used to be a woodworker in college, so he did all of the cutting, but I drew the picture of the boat I wanted, and I’m the one who picked out the wood and painted the sides of the boat blue and gold. Mom made a little sail out of cloth, and Dad helped me glue it to the mast. I named the boat the Admiral, and I was the one who set her sail.

I wanted to put something inside the hull of the boat to track her, because really, more than just watching her float, I wanted to know where the Admiral would go. We don’t really have anything like that, Dad said, and I was disappointed. But then I decided to write a little note in paint about who to call if someone found her washed up on a riverbank: me, Molly Mere, four-one-two, six-three-five-seven. Dad varnished the boat in some kind of clear paint that wouldn’t let in water or smudge the paint. We put it on a stand to dry overnight.

The night went quickly. Mom made me a waffle and Dad some coffee; and I tapped the side of the Admiral to make sure her paint wasn’t sticky. It wasn’t, but I got her a little bit sticky with syrup when I lifted her out of the stand after breakfast. No matter. The river would wash it off.

Dad counted down when I knelt to put the Admiral into the water, and on “two, one, GO,” I let go and watched my boat wobble away from the shore. The Admiral tipped and rocked and knocked against some stones. She got stuck on a log and seemed to waddle really slowly along the water, but finally she found a
good spot in the middle of the river and the current took her around the corner. Then we couldn’t see her anymore, but I waved at her anyway.

We went inside. I cleaned up my paints. Dad put away his tools. Mom stored her sewing kit. We ate lunch, and Dad read the paper, while Mom helped me with some sketches. I wondered out loud: where is the Admiral now? I hope she didn’t sink. I hope she didn’t get smashed. I hope if someone finds her, they won’t throw her away like trash. I hope someone finds her at all.

Then the phone rang.
1. What does Molly build with her parents?
   A) an inflatable tube
   B) a toy boat
   C) a dollhouse
   D) a house on stilts

2. What does Molly build with her parents?
   A) an inflatable tube
   B) a toy boat
   C) a dollhouse
   D) a house on stilts

3. Read these sentences from the text.
   "[Dad] did all of the cutting, but I drew the picture of the boat I wanted, and I'm the one who picked out the wood and painted the sides of the boat blue and gold. . . . I named the boat the Admiral, and I was the one who set her sail."
   Based on this evidence, what conclusion can be made?
   A) Molly did not like to cut wood.
   B) Molly did a lot to help make the boat.
   C) Molly's dad came up with the name, "the Admiral."
   D) Molly had never made a boat before.

4. How does Molly feel after watching her boat sail down the river?
   A) She feels excited about what she will have for lunch.
   B) She feels upset that she didn't make a bigger boat.
   C) She feels happy that she gets to spend the rest of the day with her parents.
   D) She feels anxious about what will happen to the boat.

5. What is the main idea of this story?
   A) Molly and her parents live next to a winding river.
   B) Molly wants to be more like her cousins and swim in the river.
   C) Molly builds a toy boat to see where it will go on the river.
   D) Molly and her parents enjoy a good breakfast of waffles and coffee.
6. Read these sentences from the text.
   "I wondered out loud: where is the Admiral now? I hope she didn’t sink. I hope she didn’t get
   smashed. I hope if someone finds her, they won’t throw her away like trash. I hope someone finds
   her at all.
   
   Then the phone rang."
   
   Why might the author have ended the story by writing "Then the phone rang"?
   A) to let the reader know that Molly’s family had a phone
   B) to show that Molly’s cousins were calling her
   C) to make the reader wonder whether someone found Molly’s boat
   D) to show the importance of answering the phone

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.
   ______ the Admiral found a good spot in the middle of the river, it got stuck on a log.
   A) Including
   B) As a result
   C) Before
   D) So

8. Why does Molly want to put something inside the hull of the boat?

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

9. What does Molly do to figure out where her boat goes?

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

10. Why is the boat important to Molly?
    Support your answer with evidence from the text.

    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
    __________________________________________
Donald Seastrunk never feared the jugglers until they upgraded from bean bags to bowling pins. By the movie theater, after a movie let out, excited crowds gathered around the most skilled jugglers, whose silk vests were as blue as the sky. Winking and smiling, the jugglers performed astonishing feats: dozens of balls in the air at once; nifty, behind-the-back and through-the-legs tricks; even juggling blindfolded. Word of mouth spread to neighboring towns. People from far away came to see the street performers. All seemed well and good, but with the jugglers’ popularity came copycats. And so many of them!

On the side streets and quiet walkways, juggling copycats blundered through their simple routines. A ball or two rolling into the street was the worst of it, at first. But when the very best jugglers switched to bowling pins to freshen up their act, the bad jugglers copied this, too. For Donald Seastrunk, the juggling problem came to a head one May morning, as he hurried from his car up the path to the library. Just as he thought he was safe, a stray bowling pin spiraled through the air and whomped him on the head.

The next day it was crazy at Town Hall, too. Mayor Marjorie Arnold sighed at her desk. She had just read Donald Seastrunk’s angry email, which Donald had sent to dozens of friends,
the town council, and the mayor’s office. This wasn’t the first complaint the mayor had received about the jugglers. But what could she do? Some people were mad, but others loved the jugglers. After all, the town was practically famous now, and people were proud to be from a famous town. The biggest newspaper in the state capital had even written an article about the jugglers. And think of all the money the crowds spent at local stores! The mayor chewed her pen. She tapped her foot furiously. She sighed so strongly that important documents blew off her desk, and this made her sigh again.

Whenever she found herself in trouble, Mayor Arnold liked to hold imaginary conversations with the golden cat statue on her desk. With another heavy sigh, she asked it for advice.

"Why not pass a law banning juggling in public?" it seemed to say.

"The mayor can’t just pass whatever laws she wants," said Mayor Arnold. "Laws are passed by the town council." With a groan, the mayor rose from her leather chair and stood at the window, looking at the trees in full bloom on the town green. One tree had a bowling pin caught in the branches.

The mayor imagined the cat’s voice dropping to a whisper. "Why not order the police to fine the jugglers for disturbing the peace?"

"That’s no good," the mayor said. She rested her forehead on the cool window and closed her eyes. "What if the jugglers sue us? Then the case would go to court, and the town could lose a lot of money!"

The golden cat statue made no reply. The mayor was by herself. She heard what sounded like the distant rumble of thunder. Thunder? There wasn’t a cloud in the sky! Without taking her forehead off the window, Mayor Arnold opened her eyes. What she saw next made her jump up with a squeak. A crowd of people were marching up the long street that led to Town Hall, and at the crowd’s front was Donald Seastrunk himself. They pumped their fists in the air and waved signs. An anti-juggler protest! Mayor Arnold sighed. It was going to be a long day.
1. What is the town in the passage famous for?
   A tightrope walkers
   B jugglers
   C bowling pins
   D circus elephants

2. What main problem does Mayor Arnold face?
   A People are complaining about the jugglers, and she doesn’t know what to do.
   B Donald Seastrunk is hit in the head by a juggler’s stray bowling pin.
   C She holds imaginary conversations with the golden cat statue in her office.
   D The jugglers might sue the city if they were fined for disturbing the peace.

3. While many people are happy to live in a famous town, not everyone is happy about the jugglers. What evidence from the passage supports this conclusion?
   A The biggest newspaper in the state capital writes an article about the jugglers.
   B Excited crowds gather around the skilled jugglers outside the movie theater.
   C Donald Seastrunk leads a crowd in an anti-juggler protest.
   D Donald Seastrunk is hit in the head by a bowling pin.

4. Read the following sentences: “The mayor chewed her pen. She tapped her foot furiously. She sighed so strongly that important documents blew off her desk, and this made her sigh again.”

   Based on this description, how is Mayor Arnold most likely feeling?
   A inspired
   B upbeat
   C lonely
   D frustrated

5. What is this story mostly about?
   A how Mayor Arnold makes decisions
   B problems caused by jugglers in a town
   C the dangers of increased numbers of copycat jugglers
   D the routines performed by skilled jugglers
6. Read the following sentence: "Winking and smiling, the jugglers performed **astonishing** feats: dozens of balls in the air at once; nifty, behind-the-back and through-the-legs tricks; even juggling blindfolded."

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

A  unsurprising  
B  realistic  
C  colorful  
D  amazing

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

The jugglers bring tourists and money to the town; ________, the jugglers disturb the peace and annoy some citizens.

A  on the other hand  
B  initially  
C  above all  
D  as a result

8. Why does Donald Seastrunk send an email to the mayor’s office?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
9. Why can’t the mayor order the police to fine the jugglers for disturbing the peace?

10. Explain why the issue of the jugglers is so difficult for Mayor Arnold. Support your answer using information from the passage.
The Twilight of the Italian Social Club

During the 1800s and 1900s, immigrants from all over the world began moving to New York City in large numbers. They were coming to seek a better life for their families. Often, immigrants of a certain ethnicity lived in the same neighborhood. In New York, many Italians lived in neighborhoods like Little Italy, in Manhattan. Many of the families lived in cramped apartment buildings, called “tenements.” Because the tenements were so small, people spent a lot of time outside. Some ethnic groups formed organizations called social clubs. These social clubs were housed in small clubhouses where people, particularly men, could hang out and talk.

The social clubs became the centers of many neighborhoods. They were places where men could gather after work and where families could gather on special occasions. During holidays, many of the social clubs threw parties. If a family in the neighborhood needed help, the social club might get together to help them. Membership in these clubs was a privilege. A member was required to pay dues to the club. When a neighborhood boy was allowed to join his local social club, it was like a rite of passage for him. It meant that he was one step closer to becoming a man.

Perhaps the group of people with more social clubs than anyone was the Italians. Italians had social clubs not just in Little Italy, but in many other neighborhoods, like Bensonhurst and Carroll Gardens, in Brooklyn. The Italians saw these clubs as an important way of maintaining their native heritage. Sometimes, members of some of the clubs would be from the same region of Italy. While the members of the clubs were all Americans, they still celebrated certain Italian
holidays. Many of the clubs would play Italian music and cook Italian food. Local politicians would often drop by the clubs at election time, to try and get votes.

However, as New York has changed, many of these Italian clubs have disappeared. Italians have moved out of Manhattan and Brooklyn to other areas, such as the borough of Staten Island and the state of New Jersey. As other groups have moved into these ethnic neighborhoods, the membership of many of the clubs has declined. As members have gotten older or died, fewer younger Italians have taken their place. This has led to many of the social clubs closing. While New York used to have dozens of Italian social clubs, only a handful are now left.

Today, however, some of these social clubs are still going strong. For example, the Van Westerhout Cittadini Molesi, in Brooklyn’s Carroll Gardens neighborhood, still has several hundred members. The club was founded by men who had emigrated from a small town in Italy, Mola di Bari. Now, most of the members are from other places, but they are still of Italian descent. While many of them still live in Carroll Gardens, some live in other neighborhoods but still drop by the club to see their old friends and neighbors.

The clubs that remain continue to be important parts of the neighborhoods. Every July 4, one of the clubs in Carroll Gardens holds a party to which everyone in the neighborhood, Italians and non-Italians alike, is invited. The social club fills a pool in the parking lot and serves pasta and cannoli, an Italian dessert. This is a nice way for people in the neighborhood to get to know each other more over Italian food.

The neighborhoods around the remaining Italian social clubs are more diverse now. You can find people not just from Italy, but also from dozens of countries, each with different ideas and rituals. These clubs have evolved to help unite people from many different cultures, but they continue to preserve a specific ethnic tradition.
1. What is a social club?
   A) another name for a dance club
   B) a gathering place for Italians
   C) an organization formed by ethnic groups where people could gather
   D) a club for young socialites

2. What does the author describe in the passage?
   A) past and present Italian social clubs in New York City
   B) the trials immigrants faced on their journey to America
   C) a large party held by Van Westerhout Cittadini Molesi
   D) the process by which young boys were allowed to join social clubs

3. What can be concluded from the following sentences? “They were places where men could gather after work and where families could gather on special occasions... When a neighborhood boy was allowed to join his local social club, it was like a rite of passage for him. It meant that he was one step closer to becoming a man.”
   A) Both men and women could become members of social clubs.
   B) Membership at the social clubs was mostly for men.
   C) Boys were allowed to join social clubs at age eighteen.
   D) Women were never allowed in social clubs.

4. Italian social clubs were considered influential forces in the community. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?
   A) “Italians had social clubs not just in Little Italy, but in many other neighborhoods.”
   B) “A member was required to pay dues to the club.”
   C) “While the members of the clubs were all Americans, they still celebrated Italian holidays.”
   D) “Local politicians would often drop by the clubs at election time, to try and get votes.”

5. What is this passage mainly about?
   A) the role of social clubs in New York City
   B) the creation of Little Italy in New York City
   C) the poor living conditions for immigrants in the 1800s and 1900s
   D) the diversification of former Italian neighborhoods in New York City
6. Read the following sentence: “The neighborhoods around the remaining Italian social clubs are more diverse now. You can find people not just from Italy, but also from dozens of countries, each with different ideas and rituals. These clubs have **evolved** to help unite people from many different cultures...”

What word best replaces “**evolved**”?

A) mutated  
B) decided  
C) grown  
D) decreased

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

Many Italians have left Manhattan and have moved to New Jersey or Staten Island; ______, many Italian social clubs in Manhattan have disappeared.

A) meanwhile  
B) consequently  
C) although  
D) moreover

8. Why did immigrants initially form social clubs in the 1800s and 1900s?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

9. How have Italian social clubs changed since the 1900s, and why? Name two changes mentioned in the text and why they occurred.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

10. Are social clubs still relevant today? Why or why not? Support your argument with examples from the text.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
What's the Big Idea about Archaeology?

This text is provided courtesy of OLogy, the American Museum of Natural History's website for kids.

Piecing Together the Puzzle of History

How do we know about people who lived in ancient times? If people didn't leave behind any written records, how do we know what gods they worshiped, what food they ate, or what clothes they wore?

One of the ways we know about people who lived long ago is through archaeology: the study of past life through what's been left behind.

An archaeologist might find a pot, a grave, or the remains of a building. Each discovery is like a piece of a puzzle. The archaeologist works to put these pieces together to create a picture of what life was like long ago.

Clues to the Past

Anthropologists study people and cultures, both in the past and in the present. Archaeology is a special branch of anthropology which focuses on the past.

Like all scientists, archaeologists start with a question they want to explore, such as "Why was this ancient city abandoned?" Then, they gather evidence by digging in the field. Back in the lab, they analyze their evidence. Finally, they share their results with others.
Fieldwork Is Where They Dig In

It's not easy finding the remains of an ancient culture. As years pass, buildings and artifacts get buried under dirt, rubble, or even other settlements. Archaeologists have to dig underground to find these remains. But finding the right place, or "site," to dig is the first challenge.

Archaeologists don't just dig anywhere. They look for a site they think will help answer their questions about the people or time they are studying.

This takes a lot of planning and research. Before digging begins, archaeologists survey the site, and then they create a map of it to help them decide where to dig.

Evidence of an Era

There are many kinds of evidence that teach us about the past: majestic pyramids, the ruins of an ancient city, pieces of pottery, even a simple trash pit.

Every piece of evidence has one thing in common—it's lasted a long time.

Most things from the past, like fabric, wood, and food, decay over time. Things made of clay, metal, and stone survive much longer. What survives also depends on the environment. In a rain forest, a wooden spear would rot and decay. But in a desert, the same spear might be preserved by the dry air.
Recording the Remains

When a site is excavated, it is also destroyed. That's why it's so important to keep accurate, detailed records of everything on a site.

When archaeologists dig, they create a grid to keep track of where they find things. They also draw pictures and take photographs of everything they find.

All this information helps archaeologists re-create a picture of the site later. These records will be shared with other scientists interested in that site. They're also left for future generations of scientists, like you!

Making Discoveries in the Lab

When archaeologists complete an excavation, work in the lab begins. This is where they analyze their findings by carefully measuring, weighing, drawing, and comparing. They try to answer questions about when an object was made and how it was used. They can learn even more by looking at objects found together as a group.

Archaeologists publish what they've learned in books and articles. They might support or challenge other theories. Most importantly, they're bringing new ideas to the debate. And that's what science is all about!
Into the Collections

Many places, like the American Museum of Natural History, collect artifacts from around the world. The artifacts on display at the Museum are only a fraction of these huge collections. Rows of cabinets are filled with thousands of artifacts, like bowls, tools, masks, and textiles.

Scientists use the collections like a library. They come to observe objects for their own research.

These collections give people a chance to see artifacts from faraway places and ancient cultures that disappeared long ago.
Sunrise, Sunset...or Not?

The sun is a wonderful thing for Earth. It is a star that heats the planet and makes life on Earth possible. In addition, its light shines onto the planet. It is Earth’s ultimate source of energy.

Summer days may be longer than winter days, but for most people, the sun seems to do the same thing each day: it appears to come up in the east for the day, and it appears to go down in the west for the night. The sun looks like it rises in the east and sets in the west because of how the earth spins in space. It spins toward the east, or counterclockwise. This means that when most people look at the sky in the morning, the sun will first appear in the east.

The earth takes 24 hours to complete one turn. For most places on Earth, there is a daytime and nighttime every 24 hours. But in some places for many days at a time, the sun might stay up in the sky, or it might not even come up above the horizon.

In some parts of the world, the sun can be up in the sky for months. During part of the spring and summer in Earth’s Northern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted towards the sun so much that the sun in northern Alaska, which is located in the Arctic Circle, never goes below the horizon. The Arctic Circle is an area at the top of the earth. In Barrow, Alaska, the sun doesn’t set for almost three months! This phenomenon is called the midnight sun, when the sun has not set at midnight. Try sleeping through that!

During parts of the fall and winter in Earth’s Northern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted in such a way that the sun doesn’t come over the horizon in northern Alaska for a little
over two months. Therefore, nights last more than 24 hours. This phenomenon is called the polar night. Although the sun never rises above the horizon during parts of the fall and winter in the Arctic Circle, enough light often shines so that people who live there don’t need flashlights to walk around outside.

It may be hard for many people to get through these times of very little or prolonged sunlight. But arctic plants and wildlife have adapted to these seasons of long days and long nights. In the arctic winter, some animals hibernate, and others travel south to where there is more sunlight.

In the arctic summer, there are pools of still water from melted ice, and the 24-hour sunlight warms the Arctic Circle. These conditions are favorable for mosquitoes, which lay their eggs on the surface of water, to thrive. The birds that eat these insects now have plenty of food in the arctic summer. For animals like caribou that mainly eat plants, they can easily find food during the long days of summer.

Most animals, including humans, are used to a period of sunlight and a period of no sunlight every 24 hours. In places where there are months when the sun continuously stays above the horizon or below the horizon, living things have had to adapt to survive.
1. What is the sun?

   A a planet that can only be seen from northern Alaska
   B an asteroid that shines light onto the earth
   C a star that can only be seen from northern Alaska
   D a star that shines light onto the earth

2. The midnight sun in northern Alaska is an effect described in the passage. What is its cause?

   A animals moving south in the winter
   B getting a sunburn in the winter
   C the Northern Hemisphere tilting away from the sun
   D the Northern Hemisphere tilting toward the sun

3. Read the following sentences: "During part of the spring and summer in Earth’s Northern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted towards the sun so much that the sun in northern Alaska, which is located in the Arctic Circle, never goes below the horizon. . . . During parts of the fall and winter in Earth’s Northern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted in such a way that the sun doesn’t come over the horizon in northern Alaska for a little over two months."

   What conclusion about the impact of the tilt of the earth does this information support?

   A The tilt of the earth has no impact on the amount of sunlight different parts of the earth receive.
   B The tilt of the earth has an impact on how fast the earth moves around the sun.
   C The tilt of the earth has an impact on the amount of sunlight different parts of the earth receive.
   D The tilt of the earth has an impact on how fast the Earth rotates on its axis.

4. Based on the text, how does the Northern Hemisphere tilt during the Northern Hemisphere’s winter months?

   A away from the sun
   B towards the sun
   C away from the moon
   D towards the moon

5. What is this passage mostly about?

   A the town of Barrow, Alaska, and what people there do in the arctic summer
   B sunrise, sunset, midnight sun, and polar night
   C mosquitos, caribou, and adult birds
   D how living things have adapted to survive the arctic summer and winter
6. Read the following sentences: "During some of the spring and summer in Earth’s Northern Hemisphere, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted towards the sun so much that the sun in northern Alaska, which is located in the Arctic Circle, never goes below the horizon. In Barrow, Alaska, the sun doesn’t set for almost three months! This \textit{phenomenon} is called the midnight sun, when the sun has not set at midnight."

What does the word "\textit{phenomenon}" mean above?

A large body of water  
B event or occurrence  
C big problem or disaster  
D the study of stars, planets, and space

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

The midnight sun is when the sun never sets; \underline{_______}, the polar night is when the sun never rises.

A for instance  
B most importantly  
C in contrast  
D in the end

8. How does the Northern Hemisphere of the earth tilt when northern Alaska is experiencing the midnight sun?

\underline{_______}
9. How does the Northern Hemisphere of the earth tilt when northern Alaska is experiencing the polar night? Use information from the text to support your answer.


10. How does the earth's tilt affect the earth? Use information from the text to support your answer.