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Standards: RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.3, RI.3.5
Welcome to the Common Core Coach, English Language Arts, Independent Leveled Practice Resource Book, First Edition. The purpose of this component is to provide students with the opportunity for independent reading practice. It allows students to apply the skills they have learned in a particular reading lesson to a short, topically related selection.

Each reading lesson in the Student Edition has a corresponding Independent Practice Reading Selection that is the third step of the research-proven, three-step “gradual release model.” The Independent Practice Reading Selection is available in three versions written at different reading levels to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Level 1 passages are written below grade level; Level 2 passages are written at grade level; Level 3 passages are written above grade level. The comprehension questions are the same for each leveled passage within a selection, so regardless of reading level, all students have the opportunity to apply higher-level critical thinking skills and strategies independently. (Exception: In the Reading Poetry lesson, three different poems, at three different reading levels, are provided to give students the opportunity to read poetry independently. In this case, the comprehension questions are specific to the poem.)

Assigning Independent Leveled Practice Reading Selections

Use your knowledge of each student’s reading level to determine which version of a passage to assign. Reproducibles for each level are provided in the pages that follow. The difficulty level of each passage is indicated by the shading of the three cubes in the margin.

Level 1: 
Level 2: 
Level 3: 

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Answer Key and Standards Correlation Chart

The following answer key shows both the correct answer for every question in the practice reading and the standard each question covers. Except where indicated, the practice questions are the same for each leveled reading and are provided once.

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<th>Correct Answer</th>
<th>Common Core State Standard</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Tiger Gets His Stripes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Butterfly tells Tiger that he will be proud of who he is when he is older. I would have told Tiger not to worry about others’ differences and abilities.</td>
<td>RL.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>RL.3.2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: It is important to like who you are.</td>
<td>RL.3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Leopard gets his paw caught under a tree branch. Tiger moves the branch and frees Leopard.</td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>The Case of the Stolen Letter</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RL.3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Phil would be very embarrassed.</td>
<td>RL.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: Julio knew that since the letter was in an envelope, it would be folded.</td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RL.3.3</td>
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<td>Correct Answer</td>
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<td><strong>Harriet Tubman</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RI.3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>People were not allowed to own slaves in the North.</em></td>
<td>RI.3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The slaves traveled in secret, and if their owners found them, they were brought back to the South.</em></td>
<td>RI.3.1</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RI.3.2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>Harriet Tubman was a brave woman who risked her own life to help people escape slavery.</em></td>
<td>RI.3.2</td>
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<td><strong>Attic Stardust</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>RL.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>Zora Neale Hurston was one of the first African American women writers who became famous for their work.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The second part of the passage gives more information about Marcus’s grandmother’s life.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>He learns that some of the things are special and important.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
<td>Common Core State Standard</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Who Has Seen the Wind? (Level 1)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RL.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>The first and fifth lines ask a question, and the other lines answer it.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>RL.3.4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>She proves there is wind by showing how the wind moves things.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>Just because you can’t see something doesn’t mean it isn’t there. We can’t see the wind, but we see what it can do.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
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<td><strong>Afternoon on a Hill (Level 2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>She is very excited and happy.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>At the end of the poem, the lights go on in the town. This means it will soon be night.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: <em>She means that she will be quiet and peaceful as she looks at the cliffs and clouds.</em></td>
<td>RL.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Correct Answer</td>
<td>Common Core State Standard</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>From a Railway Carriage (Level 3)</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RL.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RL.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The first stanza describes how quickly things are passing by, and the second stanza describes things in more detail.</td>
<td>RL.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>RL.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The phrase means “very quickly” or “as fast as possible.”</td>
<td>RL.3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Swimming with Sharks</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: In case there is an emergency, there will be someone who can help you.</td>
<td>RI.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>RI.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RI.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: I learn what scuba gear looks like, how closely divers swim alongside the shark, and that swimming with sharks is done in indoor aquariums, not only in the open sea.</td>
<td>RI.3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td><strong>Plants That Fight Back!</strong></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>RI.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The acacia tree pumps poison into its leaves when the tree “senses” that its leaves are being eaten.</td>
<td>RI.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The acacia trees send messages to one another by releasing a gas.</td>
<td>RI.3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Answers will vary. Sample answer: The sentence fits under the heading “Stay Away or Else!” The sentence tells what the leaves of the stinging tree look like. It is important to be able to identify the leaves so you know to stay away from them.</td>
<td>RI.3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>RI.3.2</td>
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</tbody>
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Independent Leveled Practice
Reading Selections
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Tiger Gets His Stripes

1 Tiger tried hard to catch prey, but he was never able to get any. He was big, strong, and scary-looking, but he wasn’t sneaky like the smaller animals in the forest. When the little animals saw him come near, they ran away.

2 “If only I had some spots and could climb trees like Leopard,” Tiger said to himself. “I could hide and sneak up on the other animals.”

3 He was sitting there feeling sorry for himself, when a beautiful butterfly rose out of the grass.

4 “I have heard your complaints, Tiger,” said Butterfly. “When I was younger, I didn’t like being stuck in my cocoon.”

5 “But you grew up and grew wings,” said Tiger. “And now you can fly.”

6 “That’s my point,” said Butterfly. “When I grew up, I wasn’t sorry to be me.” Then, Butterfly flew away into the trees.

7 Tiger walked away. He was confused by what Butterfly had said. Suddenly, Tiger heard a cry in the woods, and he ran to find out what it was. He found Leopard sitting on the forest floor. Leopard’s paw was trapped under a heavy tree branch.

8 “Help me, Tiger!” cried Leopard.

9 Tiger ran over and pushed his body under the heavy branch. He pushed and pushed. Finally, the branch rolled off Leopard’s paw.

10 “You’re lucky to be so strong!” cried Leopard. “Thank you, Tiger!”

11 Just then, Butterfly returned. “You have done well, Tiger,” she said, smiling. “Now, do you still feel the same way about being a tiger?”
Tiger thought for a moment. Then he answered, “No. I’m glad
that I am big and strong.”

Butterfly said, “You have learned to be proud of who you are.
For that, I will give you a special gift.”

Butterfly landed on Tiger’s back and flapped her wings. All at
once, beautiful stripes appeared all over his fur.

“Now you have stripes to help you hide. You must wear them
with pride, for they will be yours forever.”

“Thank you, Butterfly!” cried Tiger.

But Butterfly had already flown away. As she flew, she cried,
“I’m off to Africa! Some zebras need my help!”
Comprehension Check

1. What advice does Butterfly give Tiger? What advice might you have given?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

2. Tiger learns that his special talent is
   A. climbing trees.
   B. being strong.
   C. running fast.
   D. having stripes.

3. At the end of the story, Butterfly gives Tiger stripes because
   A. Tiger is feeling sad.
   B. Tiger is jealous of Leopard.
   C. Tiger has learned to be proud of himself.
   D. Tiger cannot climb trees.
4. What lesson does Tiger learn in this story?

5. What happens to Leopard in the story? How does Tiger help Leopard solve his problem?
Tiger Gets His Stripes

No matter how hard he tried, Tiger could never seem to catch any prey. He was big, strong, and scary-looking, but he wasn’t sneaky like the smaller creatures of the forest. When the animals saw him coming, they ran away.

“If only I had some spots and could climb trees like Leopard,” Tiger said to himself. “I could hide and sneak up on the other animals.”

As he was sitting there feeling sorry for himself, a beautiful butterfly rose out of the tall grass.

“I have heard your complaints, Tiger,” said Butterfly. “You know, when I was younger, I didn’t like being stuck in my cocoon.”

“But you grew up and grew wings, and now you can fly,” said Tiger.

“That’s just my point. By the time I grew up, I wasn’t sorry to be me.” With that, Butterfly flew away into the trees.

Tiger walked away, confused by what Butterfly had said. Just then, he heard a cry in the woods and ran to find out what it was. He found Leopard on the forest floor, with his paw trapped under a heavy tree branch.

“Help me, Tiger!” cried Leopard.

Tiger ran over and squeezed his body under the tree branch. He pushed and pushed, until finally the branch rolled off Leopard’s paw.

“You’re lucky to be so strong!” cried Leopard. “Thank you!”

Just then, Butterfly returned. “You have done well, Tiger,” she said, smiling. “Now, do you still feel the same way about being a tiger?”
Tiger thought for a moment and answered, “No. I’m glad that I’m big and strong.”

Butterfly said, “Because you have learned to be proud of who you are, I will give you a special gift.”

Butterfly landed on Tiger’s back and flapped her wings, and all at once, beautiful stripes appeared all over his fur.

“No now you have stripes to help you hide. You must wear them with pride, for they will be yours forever.”

“Thank you, Butterfly!” cried Tiger.

But Butterfly had already fluttered away. Over her wings, she cried, “You’re welcome, my friend! Now I’m off to Africa! Some zebras need my help!”
**Comprehension Check**

1. What advice does Butterfly give Tiger? What advice might you have given?

   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. Tiger learns that his special talent is
   A. climbing trees.
   B. being strong.
   C. running fast.
   D. having stripes.

3. At the end of the story, Butterfly gives Tiger stripes because
   A. Tiger is feeling sad.
   B. Tiger is jealous of Leopard.
   C. Tiger has learned to be proud of himself.
   D. Tiger cannot climb trees.
4. What lesson does Tiger learn in this story?


5. What happens to Leopard in the story? How does Tiger help Leopard solve his problem?


Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Tiger Gets His Stripes**

1. No matter how hard he tried, Tiger could never seem to catch any prey. He was big, strong, and scary-looking, but he wasn’t sneaky like the smaller creatures of the forest. As soon as the animals he was trying to catch saw him, they scurried away.

2. “If only I had some spots and could climb the tallest trees like Leopard,” Tiger said to himself. “I could hide and sneak up on the other animals.”

3. As he was sitting there feeling sorry for himself, a beautiful butterfly rose out of the tall grass.

4. “I have been listening to your complaints, Tiger,” said Butterfly. “You know, when I was about your age, I really hated being stuck in my cocoon.”

5. “But you grew up and grew beautiful wings, and now you can fly,” said Tiger.

6. “That’s just my point. Once I was grown up, I wasn’t sorry to be me.” With that, Butterfly flew away into the trees.

7. Tiger walked away, confused by what Butterfly had said. Just then, he heard a cry in the woods, and he ran to find out where it was coming from. He found Leopard on the forest floor, with his paw trapped under a heavy tree limb.

8. “Help me, Tiger!” cried Leopard.

9. Tiger ran over and wedged his body under the tree branch. He pushed and struggled, until finally the branch rolled off Leopard’s paw.

10. “You’re fortunate to be so strong!” cried Leopard. “Thank you!”

11. Just then, Butterfly returned. “You have done well, Tiger,” she said, smiling. “Now, do you still feel ashamed of being a tiger?”
Tiger thought for a moment and answered, “No. I’m glad that I’m big and strong.”

Butterfly said, “Since you have learned to be proud of who you are, I will leave you with a special gift.”

Butterfly landed softly on Tiger’s back and flapped her wings. Suddenly, beautiful black stripes appeared all over his orange fur.

“Now you have stripes to help you hide. You must wear them with pride, for they will be yours forever.”

“Thank you, Butterfly!” Tiger cried happily.

But Butterfly had already fluttered away. Over her wings, she cried, “You’re welcome, my good friend! Now I’m heading to Africa! Some zebras need my help!”
Comprehension Check

1. What advice does Butterfly give Tiger? What advice might you have given?

2. Tiger learns that his special talent is
   A. climbing trees.
   B. being strong.
   C. running fast.
   D. having stripes.

3. At the end of the story, Butterfly gives Tiger stripes because
   A. Tiger is feeling sad.
   B. Tiger is jealous of Leopard.
   C. Tiger has learned to be proud of himself.
   D. Tiger cannot climb trees.
4. What lesson does Tiger learn in this story?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. What happens to Leopard in the story? How does Tiger help Leopard solve his problem?

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
Independent Practice
Lesson 2: Reading Short Stories

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Case of the Stolen Letter

1 Julio went to his friend Phil’s house before school. When he got there, Phil looked very nervous. He was pacing the floor of his kitchen. Julio had never seen Phil look so upset.

2 “Hey, what’s the matter, Phil?” Julio asked.

3 Phil’s face turned red. “Oh, it’s just too embarrassing to talk about, Julio.”

4 Julio put his hand on Phil’s shoulder. “Come on, you can tell me. After all, I’m your friend.”

5 Phil sighed. “Well, I wrote a letter to Megan telling her I have a crush on her.”

6 “There’s nothing wrong with that. What are you so worried about?” Julio asked.

7 “Last night I put the letter in a nice envelope so I could give it to her after class today without anybody seeing. But when I looked in the envelope this morning, it was gone! One of my big brother’s stupid drawings was in the envelope instead. He must have taken the letter last night!”

8 Julio asked, “Why don’t you try to get it back?”

9 Phil threw his hands in the air. “I tried! I looked all over his room. I searched his closet, even his underwear drawer! He says if I don’t give him ten dollars, he’s going to read the letter in front of the whole school! What am I going to do?”

10 Julio thought for a moment as he looked around the kitchen. Suddenly, he snapped his fingers. “Say, Phil,” he said, “why don’t you save that ten dollars and buy us some pizza after school?”

11 “What?” Phil was confused. “Why do you say that?”
Julio walked over to the door of the refrigerator. Phil’s brother had hung one of his drawings on the door. He took it down, turned it over, and showed it to Phil. Phil was surprised. It was the letter he had written to Megan!

“My letter! Wow, Julio, you saved my life! How did you know it was there?”

Julio said, “When your brother took your letter, he probably knew that you would look in his room for it. So, he hid the letter where you would least expect to find it—right in front of you!”

Phil was still confused. “But how did you know it was on the refrigerator?”

“I remembered you said you put it in an envelope,” explained Julio. “I saw that the drawing was folded in three parts, just as it would be in an envelope. I thought it seemed weird that your brother would fold up a drawing to put on the refrigerator. So, I figured he drew it on the back of the letter and then hung it on the refrigerator to hide it.”

Just then, Phil’s brother walked into the kitchen. He cried, “Hey! My letter!”

Phil said, “You mean my letter! Come on, Julio. I owe you some pizza!”
Comprehension Check

1. This story takes place in
   A. Julio’s house.
   B. a pizza restaurant.
   C. Phil’s kitchen.
   D. a school.

2. Which word BEST describes Julio?
   A. nervous
   B. mean
   C. clever
   D. confused

3. How do you think Phil would react if his brother read the letter aloud at school?

   __________________________________________

   __________________________________________

   __________________________________________

   __________________________________________
4. In the story, Phil tells Julio that he put his letter in an envelope. How does this clue help Julio spot the letter in the kitchen?

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

5. In the story, which event happens first?
   A. Phil’s brother steals his letter.
   B. Julio comes over to Phil’s house.
   C. Phil has a crush on Megan.
   D. Phil buys Julio some pizza.
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Case of the Stolen Letter

1 When Julio arrived at Phil’s house before school, Phil was pacing the floor of his kitchen and looking nervous. Julio had never seen him looking so upset.

2 “Hey, what’s the matter, Phil?” Julio asked.

3 Phil’s face turned red as he said, “Oh, it’s just too embarrassing to talk about, Julio.”

4 Julio put his hand on Phil’s shoulder. “Come on, you can tell me. After all, if you can’t tell your best friend, who can you tell?”

5 Phil shuffled his feet. “Well, last night I wrote a letter to Megan telling her I’ve had a crush on her.”

6 “There’s nothing wrong with that. Why are you pacing around and worrying?” Julio asked.

7 “Well, last night I put the letter in a nice envelope so I could give it to her after class today without anybody seeing. But when I looked in the envelope this morning, it was gone! One of my big brother’s stupid drawings was shoved in there instead. I think that sometime last night he must have stolen the letter!”

8 Julio asked, “Why don’t you try to get it back from him?”

9 Phil sighed and threw his hands in the air. “I already tried that! I looked all over his room earlier this morning. I searched his closet, under his bed, and even in his underwear drawer! He says if I don’t give him ten dollars by lunchtime, he’s going to read the letter in front of the whole school! What am I going to do?”

10 Julio thought for a moment as he looked carefully around the kitchen. Then he smiled, snapped his fingers, and said, “Why don’t you save that ten dollars and buy us some pizza after school?”
“What?” Phil was confused. “Why do you say that?”

Julio walked over to the door of the refrigerator, where Phil's brother had hung one of his drawings. He took down the drawing, turned it over, and showed the other side to Phil. Phil's jaw dropped. It was the letter he had written to Megan!

“My letter!” said Phil. “Wow, Julio, you’ve saved my life! How did you figure out it was there?”

Julio said, “When your brother took the letter, he probably knew you would search all over his room for it. So, it would make sense for him to hide the letter in a place where you would least expect to find it—right in front of you!”

Phil was still confused. “But how did you know it was on the refrigerator?”

“I remembered you said you put your letter in an envelope,” explained Julio. “When I saw the drawing on the fridge, I noticed it was folded in three parts, just as it would be in an envelope. It seemed weird that your brother would fold up a drawing if he wanted to put it on the fridge. So, I figured he did the drawing on the back of the letter and then hung it there so it would be well hidden.”

Just then, Phil’s brother walked into the kitchen. He yelled, “Hey! My letter!”

Phil said, “You mean my letter! Come on, Julio, I owe you some pizza!”
Comprehension Check

1. This story takes place in
   A. Julio’s house.
   B. a pizza restaurant.
   C. Phil’s kitchen.
   D. a school.

2. Which word BEST describes Julio?
   A. nervous
   B. mean
   C. clever
   D. confused

3. How do you think Phil would react if his brother read the letter aloud at school?

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4. In the story, Phil tells Julio that he put his letter in an envelope. How does this clue help Julio spot the letter in the kitchen?

5. In the story, which event happens first?
   A. Phil’s brother steals his letter.
   B. Julio comes over to Phil’s house.
   C. Phil has a crush on Megan.
   D. Phil buys Julio some pizza.
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Case of the Stolen Letter

When Julio arrived at his friend Phil’s house just before school, Phil was nervously pacing the floor of his kitchen. Julio had never seen him looking so miserable before.

“Hey, what’s the matter, Phil?” Julio asked.

Phil’s face turned bright red as he said, “Oh, it’s just too embarrassing to talk about.”

Julio went over to Phil, gently put his hand on his friend’s shoulder, and said, “Come on, you can tell me. After all, if you can’t tell your best friend, who can you talk to?”

Phil shuffled his feet. “Well, last night I wrote this long letter to Megan telling her I’ve had a crush on her.”

“There’s nothing wrong with that at all. What are you so upset and worried about?” Julio asked.

“Well, last night I put the letter in this really nice envelope so I could give it to her after class today without anybody seeing it. But when I looked inside the envelope this morning, it was gone! One of my big brother’s stupid drawings was shoved in there instead. I think that sometime last night he must have stolen the letter when I wasn’t looking!”

Julio asked, “Why don’t you just try to get it back from him?”

Phil sighed and threw his hands in the air. He explained that he had already spent several hours searching his brother’s room. He’d looked through his closet, on his shelves, under his bed, and even in his underwear drawer!

Phil looked as if he was close to tears. “The worst part of it is, he says if I don’t give him ten dollars by recess, he’s going to read the whole letter in front of the entire school! What am I supposed to do?”
Julio thought for a moment and looked around the kitchen. Suddenly, a brilliant idea came to him. He snapped his fingers and smiled at Phil. “Say, Phil,” he said, “Why don’t you save that ten dollars and buy us some pizza after school instead?”

Phil was puzzled. “What are you talking about?”

Julio walked over to the door of the refrigerator, where Phil’s brother had hung one of his drawings. He took it down, turned it over, and showed the other side to Phil. It was the letter he had written to Megan!

Phil was amazed. “My letter! Wow, Julio, you’ve saved my life! How did you figure out it was there?”

Julio said, “When your older brother took the letter, he knew that you would look all over his room for it. So, he decided to hide the letter in a place where you would never expect to find it—right in front of you!”

Phil was still confused. “But how did you know it was on the refrigerator?”

“Well, I remembered you said you put your letter in a special envelope,” explained Julio. “When I looked at the drawing, I noticed it was folded in three parts, just as it would be in an envelope. It definitely seemed weird that your brother would fold up a drawing to put on the fridge. So, I concluded that he did the drawing on the back of the letter and then hung it on the fridge. It was a perfect hiding place.”

Just then, Phil’s brother walked into the kitchen. When he realized what had happened, he shouted, “Hey! My letter!”

“You mean my letter!” Phil snapped. “Come on, Julio, I owe you some pizza!”
**Comprehension Check**

1. This story takes place in
   A. Julio’s house.
   B. a pizza restaurant.
   C. Phil’s kitchen.
   D. a school.

2. Which word BEST describes Julio?
   A. nervous
   B. mean
   C. clever
   D. confused

3. How do you think Phil would react if his brother read the letter aloud at school?

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4. In the story, Phil tells Julio that he put his letter in an envelope. How does this clue help Julio spot the letter in the kitchen?

5. In the story, which event happens first?
   A. Phil’s brother steals his letter.
   B. Julio comes over to Phil’s house.
   C. Phil has a crush on Megan.
   D. Phil buys Julio some pizza.
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Harriet Tubman

1 Harriet Tubman was born a slave in the South. Her master was a very cruel man. He made Harriet work on his farm all day long. She had to work in the hot sun and in the freezing cold. Sometimes, her master even beat her with a whip.

2 Harriet dreamed of being free one day. She heard that up north people were not allowed to have slaves. She knew that if she could get there, she would be free.

3 After her master died, she decided to escape. This was a very dangerous thing to do. If she was caught, she could be killed. But Harriet was very brave. She escaped to the city of Philadelphia. There, she was able to live as a free woman.

4 Harriet felt bad that her friends and family were still slaves. She decided to risk her life to help them escape to freedom. Harriet went back to the South and helped slaves escape their masters. Then, she led them back north. Along the way, their masters chased after them. But Harriet was able to lead the slaves to special hiding places. These places were a part of a network called the Underground Railroad. Harriet was the Underground Railroad’s most famous “conductor.” No one she helped escape was ever recaptured. Slave owners hated her and tried to capture her, too. But Harriet was able to get away every time. In all, she led over three hundred slaves to freedom.
After the Civil War, slavery was no longer allowed in America. Even after that, Harriet spent her life helping people. To this day, she is seen as one of our bravest heroes.
Comprehension Check

1. Why did the author write this passage?
   A. to explain the difference between slavery and freedom
   B. to tell an entertaining story
   C. to inform people about the history of the Civil War
   D. to explain why Harriet Tubman was important

2. How was the North different from the South before the Civil War?
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
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   ________________________________________________________________

3. Why was traveling along the Underground Railroad dangerous?
   ________________________________________________________________
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4. Which statement BEST shows why Harriet Tubman was brave?
   A. She worked all day long on the farm.
   B. She felt bad that her friends and family were still slaves.
   C. She risked her life to help people escape slavery.
   D. She continued to help people after the Civil War.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Harriet Tubman**

1. Harriet Tubman was born a slave in the South. Her master was a very cruel man. He made Harriet work on his farm all day long. She had to work in the hot sun and in the freezing cold. When Harriet wasn’t working on his farm, he would make her work on other people’s farms. Sometimes, he even beat her with a whip.

2. Harriet dreamed of being free one day. She had heard that there were places in the North where people weren’t allowed to have slaves. She knew that if she could get there, she would be free.

3. After her master died, she decided to escape. This was a very dangerous thing to do. She knew that if she was caught, she could be killed. But Harriet was a very brave person. She escaped to the city of Philadelphia, where she was able to live as a free woman.

4. Harriet felt bad that her friends and family were still slaves. So, she decided to risk her own life to help slaves escape to freedom. Harriet went back to the South and helped slaves escape their masters. Then, she led them back north. Along the way, their masters would chase after them. Harriet was able to lead slaves to special houses where they could hide and be safe. These houses were a part of a network called the Underground Railroad. Harriet was the Underground Railroad’s best and most famous “conductor.” None of the people she helped escape were ever recaptured. Slave owners hated her and tried to capture her, too, but Harriet managed to get away every time. In all, she led over three hundred slaves to freedom.
5 After the Civil War, slavery was abolished in America. Even after that, Harriet devoted her life to helping people. To this day, she is seen as one of America’s bravest heroes.
**Comprehension Check**

1. Why did the author write this passage?
   - A. to explain the difference between slavery and freedom
   - B. to tell an entertaining story
   - C. to inform people about the history of the Civil War
   - D. to explain why Harriet Tubman was important

2. How was the North different from the South before the Civil War?

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3. Why was traveling along the Underground Railroad dangerous?

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4. Which statement BEST shows why Harriet Tubman was brave?
   A. She worked all day long on the farm.
   B. She felt bad that her friends and family were still slaves.
   C. She risked her life to help people escape slavery.
   D. She continued to help people after the Civil War.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Harriet Tubman**

1 Harriet Tubman was born a slave in the South. Her master was a very cruel man who made Harriet work on his farm all day long in the hot sun and in the freezing cold. When Harriet wasn’t working on her master’s farm, he would rent her out to work on other people's farms. Sometimes, he even beat her with a whip.

2 Harriet dreamed of being free one day. She had heard that there were places in the North where people weren’t allowed to own slaves. She knew that if she could only get there, she would be free.

3 After her master died, she decided to escape. This was an extremely dangerous thing to do because if she was caught, she could be killed. But Harriet was a very brave person. She managed to escape to the city of Philadelphia, where she was able to live as a free woman.

4 Harriet felt bad that her friends and family were still slaves. So, she decided to risk her own life to help the slaves escape to freedom. Harriet returned to the South and helped the slaves escape their masters. Then, she guided them on the journey back north. Along the way, their masters would chase after them. Harriet was able to lead slaves to houses where they could hide and be safe. These houses were a part of a network called the Underground Railroad. Harriet was the Underground Railroad’s best and most famous “conductor.” None of the people she helped escape were ever recaptured. Slave owners hated her and tried to capture her, too, but Harriet was able to get away every time. Altogether, she led over three hundred slaves to freedom, including her parents, brothers, and sister.
After the Civil War, slavery was abolished in America. Even after that, Harriet devoted her life to improving the lives of people. To this day, she is seen as one of our nation’s most courageous heroes.
Comprehension Check

1. Why did the author write this passage?
   A. to explain the difference between slavery and freedom
   B. to tell an entertaining story
   C. to inform people about the history of the Civil War
   D. to explain why Harriet Tubman was important

2. How was the North different from the South before the Civil War?

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3. Why was traveling along the Underground Railroad dangerous?

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4. Which statement BEST shows why Harriet Tubman was brave?
   A. She worked all day long on the farm.
   B. She felt bad that her friends and family were still slaves.
   C. She risked her life to help people escape slavery.
   D. She continued to help people after the Civil War.

5. What is the main idea of this passage?

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Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Attic Stardust

CAST OF CHARACTERS
MARCUS, a twelve-year-old boy
MOM
GRANDMA

Scene 1
(Marcus and his mother enter the attic of their house, each carrying a box. The attic is filled with boxes, furniture, clothes, and toys.)

1 MARCUS: Why do we have to do this today, Mom?
MOM: Because, Marcus, we have to get this place cleaned before we move. Besides, your teacher said you have to write a story about your family’s past. This attic is a good place to start.
MARCUS: What are we going to find in all of this junk?
MOM: Marcus, the attic is full of memories, not junk. I’m sure you’ll find something for your project. Why don’t you start in that corner?

5 (Marcus starts looking through a box and pulls out an old photograph.)
MARCUS: Mom, who’s the girl in this picture?
MOM: That’s your grandma.

MARCUS: That’s Grandma? She looks so young! (takes a book from the box) And what’s this book? (reads the title) *Dust Tracks on a Road.*
MOM: That’s one of your grandma’s favorite books. It’s by a woman named Zora Neale Hurston.

MARCUS: Who’s that?
MOM: She was a famous African American writer. At that time, it was almost impossible for African American women to get published. Because of her, Grandma decided to become a writer.

MARCUS: Grandma was a writer?
MOM: She sure was. You know, I’m sure she would like that box back. Why don’t I drive you over to Grandma’s house? You can show her the book. I’m sure she can tell you a lot more than I can.

Scene 2

(Grandma sits in a chair in her living room. She is looking at the book that Marcus gave her. Marcus looks over her shoulder. The box from the attic is on the floor.)

GRANDMA: Oh, Marcus! I’m so glad you brought this. Zora Neale Hurston was my hero.

MARCUS: How can a writer be someone’s hero?
GRANDMA: Oh, she lived quite a life. When Zora was thirteen years old, her mother died and she was left all alone. But she still got an education and became a famous writer. After I read a book about her life, I decided to become a writer, too. That’s how I was able to write all of those. (points to a bookshelf filled with books)

MARCUS: Wow, Grandma! You wrote all those books?
GRANDMA: I sure did!
MARCUS: I like to read. Do you think I could be a writer someday?

GRANDMA: Of course! You know what Zora Neale Hurston’s mother used to tell her?

MARCUS: What?

GRANDMA: She always said, “Jump at the sun!” That means the harder you try, the more you’ll be able to do. Just remember that, and you can do anything you set your mind to.

MARCUS: Thanks, Grandma!
**Comprehension Check**

1. Based on the passage, which of the following is MOST LIKELY true?
   - A. Marcus and his mom have never cleaned the attic before.
   - B. Marcus is visiting his grandma’s house for the first time.
   - C. Marcus does not know some things about his family.
   - D. Marcus’s grandma thinks he is lazy.

2. Why does Mom take Marcus over to his grandmother’s house?
   - A. Mom wants to clean the attic alone.
   - B. Mom knows Marcus’s grandmother has more room for boxes.
   - C. Mom wants Marcus to get more books from his grandmother.
   - D. Mom wants Marcus to learn more about his grandmother.

3. What does this passage tell you about Zora Neale Hurston?

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4. How does the second part of the passage build on the first part of the passage?

5. How do you think Marcus feels about the “junk” in the attic by the end of the passage?
Independent Practice
Lesson 6: Reading Drama

Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Attic Stardust

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARCUS, a twelve-year-old boy
MOM
GRANDMA

Scene 1

(Marcus and his mother enter the attic of their house, each carrying a box. The attic is filled with boxes, furniture, clothes, and toys.)

1  MARCUS: (sulking) Why do we have to go through all of this stuff today, Mom?

  MOM: Because, Marcus, we have to get this place cleaned before we move. Besides, your teacher said you have to write a story about your family’s past, and this attic would be a very good place to start.

  MARCUS: But what are we going to find in all of this junk?
MOM: Marcus, this attic is full of memories, not junk. I’m sure you’ll find something for your project soon enough. Why don’t you start looking over there in that corner?

(Marcus starts looking through a box and pulls out an old photograph.)

MARCUS: Mom, who’s the young girl in this picture?

MOM: That’s your grandma.

MARCUS: That’s Grandma? She looks so young! (takes a book from the box) And what’s this book? (reads the title) Dust Tracks on a Road.

MOM: Oh, that’s one of your grandma’s favorite books, written by a woman named Zora Neale Hurston. She was an African American writer at a time when it was almost impossible for African American women to get published. Her success inspired Grandma to become a writer.

MARCUS: Grandma was a writer?

MOM: She sure was. Tell you what: I’m sure she would very much like to have that box back. Why don’t I drive you over to Grandma’s house? You can look at the book together. I’m sure she can tell you a lot more about it than I can.

Scene 2

(Grandma sits in a chair in her living room, looking at the book that Marcus gave her. Marcus looks over her shoulder. The box from the attic is on the floor.)

GRANDMA: Oh, Marcus! I’m so glad you brought this book back to me! Zora Neale Hurston was my hero!

MARCUS: I don’t understand. How can a writer be someone’s hero?

GRANDMA: Oh, she lived quite an interesting life. When Zora was thirteen years old, her mother died and she was left all alone. But she still got an education and became a famous writer. After I read a book about her life, I decided that I wanted to become a writer, too. That’s how I was able to write all of those. (points to a bookshelf filled with books)
MARCUS: Wow, Grandma! You wrote all of those books?
GRANDMA: I sure did!
MARCUS: I enjoy reading, too. Do you think I could become a writer someday?
GRANDMA: Of course! You know what Zora Neale Hurston’s mother used to tell her?
MARCUS: What?
GRANDMA: She always said, “Jump at the sun!” That means the harder you try, the more you’ll be able to do. Just remember that, and you can do anything you set your mind to.
MARCUS: Thanks, Grandma!
**Comprehension Check**

1. Based on the passage, which of the following is MOST LIKELY true?
   A. Marcus and his mom have never cleaned the attic before.
   B. Marcus is visiting his grandma’s house for the first time.
   C. Marcus does not know some things about his family.
   D. Marcus’s grandma thinks he is lazy.

2. Why does Mom take Marcus over to his grandmother’s house?
   A. Mom wants to clean the attic alone.
   B. Mom knows Marcus’s grandmother has more room for boxes.
   C. Mom wants Marcus to get more books from his grandmother.
   D. Mom wants Marcus to learn more about his grandmother.

3. What does this passage tell you about Zora Neale Hurston?

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4. How does the second part of the passage build on the first part of the passage?

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5. How do you think Marcus feels about the “junk” in the attic by the end of the passage?

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Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Attic Stardust**

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

* MARCUS, a twelve-year-old boy  
  * MOM  
  * GRANDMA

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**Scene 1**

*(Marcus and his mother enter the attic of their house, each carrying a box. The attic is filled with boxes, furniture, clothes, and toys.)*

1. **MARCUS:** *(sulking)* Why do we have to go through all of this old stuff today, Mom?

   **MOM:** Because, Marcus, we have to get this place cleaned before we move. Besides, your teacher said you have to write a story about your family’s past, and this attic would be an excellent place to start.

   **MARCUS:** But what are we going to find in all of this junk that I can write about?
MOM: (sounding encouraging) Marcus, this attic is full of memories, not junk. I’m sure that if you put your mind to it, you’ll find something for your project soon enough. Why don’t you start looking over there in that corner?

(Marcus starts looking through a box and pulls out an old photograph.)

MARCUS: Mom, who’s the pretty young girl in this photo?

MOM: That’s a picture of your grandma.

MARCUS: That’s really Grandma? She looks so young! (takes a book from the box) And what’s this book? (reads) The title says Dust Tracks on a Road.

MOM: Oh, that’s one of your grandma’s favorite books, written by a woman named Zora Neale Hurston. She was an African American writer born over one hundred years ago, at a time when it was almost impossible for African American women to get their work published. Her courage and success inspired Grandma to become a writer.

MARCUS: Grandma was a writer?

MOM: She sure was. Tell you what: I’m sure she would very much like to have that box back. Why don’t I drive you over to Grandma’s house? You can talk about the book and the photograph with her. I’m sure she can tell you a lot more information, and maybe you just might have something to write about for your project.

Scene 2

(Grandma sits in a chair in her living room. She is looking at the book that Marcus gave her while Marcus looks over her shoulder. The box from the attic is on the floor.)

GRANDMA: Oh, Marcus! I’m so grateful that you brought these books back to me! Zora Neale Hurston was my hero when I was a little girl.

MARCUS: How can a writer be someone’s hero?
GRANDMA: Oh, she lived quite an interesting life. When Zora was thirteen years old, her mother died and she was left all alone, but she still got an education and became a famous writer. After I read a book about her life, I decided that I wanted to become a writer, too. That’s how I was able to write all of those children’s books over there. (points to a bookshelf filled with books)

15 MARCUS: Wow, Grandma! You wrote all of those?

GRANDMA: I sure did! It was hard work, but I enjoyed it.

MARCUS: I like reading, too. Do you think I could possibly become a writer someday?

GRANDMA: I certainly do! You know what Zora Neale Hurston’s mother used to tell her?

MARCUS: What?

20 GRANDMA: She always said, “Jump at the sun!” That means the harder you try, the more you’ll be able to achieve. Just remember those words, and you can do anything you set your mind to.

MARCUS: Thanks, Grandma!
**Comprehension Check**

1. Based on the passage, which of the following is MOST LIKELY true?
   
   A. Marcus and his mom have never cleaned the attic before.
   
   B. Marcus is visiting his grandma’s house for the first time.
   
   C. Marcus does not know some things about his family.
   
   D. Marcus’s grandma thinks he is lazy.

2. Why does Mom take Marcus over to his grandmother’s house?
   
   A. Mom wants to clean the attic alone.
   
   B. Mom knows Marcus’s grandmother has more room for boxes.
   
   C. Mom wants Marcus to get more books from his grandmother.
   
   D. Mom wants Marcus to learn more about his grandmother.

3. What does this passage tell you about Zora Neale Hurston?

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   ________________________________________________________________
4. How does the second part of the passage build on the first part of the passage?

5. How do you think Marcus feels about the “junk” in the attic by the end of passage?
Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Who Has Seen the Wind?**  
*by Christina Rossetti*

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither I nor you;  
But when the leaves hang trembling  
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?  
Neither you nor I;  
But when the trees bow down their heads  
The wind is passing by.
Comprehension Check

1. This poem is divided into
   A. chapters.
   B. stanzas.
   C. scenes.
   D. lines.

2. How are the first and fifth lines of the poem different from the other lines?

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3. What does the poet mean when she says the trees “bow down their heads”?
   A. The trees are pushed down by the wind.
   B. The trees have heads covered with leaves.
   C. The trees are afraid of the wind.
   D. The trees are thin and weak.
4. How does the author of this poem prove there is a wind?

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5. What is the message of this poem?

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Independent Practice
Lesson 7: Reading Poetry

Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

Afternoon on a Hill
by Edna St. Vincent Millay

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!
Comprehension Check

1. This poem is divided into
   A. chapters.
   B. stanzas.
   C. scenes.
   D. lines.

2. This poem MOST LIKELY takes place
   A. in a city.
   B. at the beach.
   C. near a small town.
   D. on a farm.

3. Describe how the poet feels in this poem.

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4. What MOST LIKELY is the time of day at the end of the poem? How do you know?

5. What does the poet mean when she says that she will look at the cliffs and clouds “with quiet eyes”? 
Read the poem. Then answer the questions that follow.

From a Railway Carriage
by Robert Louis Stevenson

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;
And charging along like troops in a battle,
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:

All of the sights of the hill and the plain
Fly as thick as driving rain;
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,
Painted stations whistle by.

Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,
All by himself and gathering brambles;
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!
Here is a cart run away in the road
Lumping along with man and load;

And here is a mill, and there is a river:
Each a glimpse and gone forever!
Comprehension Check

1. This poem is divided into
   A. chapters.
   B. stanzas.
   C. scenes.
   D. paragraphs.

2. When the poet says the horses and cattle are “charging along like troops in battle,” he means
   A. they are very angry.
   B. they seem to be moving fast.
   C. they all look alike.
   D. they are frightening.

3. How is the first part of the poem different from the second part?

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   __________________________________________________________
4. The railway carriage is probably traveling
   A. in a big city.
   B. through a rough storm.
   C. over the mountains.
   D. through the country.

5. What does the phrase “in the wink of an eye” mean?
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Swimming with Sharks

1 Scuba diving near sharks might sound crazy. But if you are careful, it can be a lot of fun. You just have to follow some important rules.

2 First, be prepared. Before you dive, learn about the sharks that live where you will be diving. Above all, find a buddy to dive with you. Never dive alone. Before you dive together, make plans. Decide where you will dive into and come out of the water. Work out hand signals so you can talk to each other underwater. Make plans for any emergencies. That way, if either of you is in danger, you’ll know what to do.

3 Now you are ready to go into the water. When you do, don’t make a big splash. A big splash might scare a shark away. It might even make the shark attack you! While underwater, stay close to your buddy. But do not get too close. Groups of people scare sharks. Make sure you always can see where the shark is. At the same time, try not to stare at it. Sharks feel threatened by direct eye contact. Don’t move around too quickly. This might make the shark attack you. It’s OK to make sounds to get the shark to come a bit closer. But NEVER try to feed a shark. You just might get eaten yourself!
Finally, when you are ready to leave the water, do it carefully. As you swim away, make sure you always know where the shark is. When you get to the surface, get out of the water quickly.

Swimming with sharks takes a lot of work. But if you are careful and follow these steps, you are in for a big thrill.

These scuba divers are swimming with a shark in an indoor aquarium.
Comprehension Check

1. Why is it a good idea for a person to have a buddy while diving near sharks?

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2. What should the person do right after diving into the water?
   A. find a buddy
   B. watch the shark carefully
   C. start feeding the shark
   D. make hand signals

3. If the diver makes a big splash, what might happen?
   A. It might protect the diver from the shark.
   B. It might make the shark easier to watch.
   C. It might frighten the shark.
   D. It might warn the shark of an emergency.
4. What new information do you learn from the photograph and caption?

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5. Which of the following words signals the last step in the instructions?
   A. now
   B. never
   C. finally
   D. when
Swimming with Sharks

Scuba diving near sharks might sound crazy. But if you are careful, it can actually be a lot of fun. You just have to make sure you follow some rules.

First, be prepared. Before you dive, read some books and articles about sharks. Learn about the kinds of sharks that live in the waters where you will be diving. Above all, make sure you find a buddy to dive with you. Never dive alone. Before you dive together, make plans. Decide where you will dive into the water and where you will come out. Work out hand signals so you can communicate with each other underwater. Make plans for what you will do if there is an emergency. That way, if either of you is in danger, you’ll know what to do.

Now you are ready to go into the water. When you do, don’t make a big splash. A big splash might scare a shark away. Even worse, it might make the shark attack you! While underwater, stay close to your buddy, but not too close. Large groups sometimes frighten sharks. Make sure you always can see where the shark is. At the same time, try not to stare at it. Sharks can feel threatened by direct eye contact. Don’t move around too quickly. The shark might see sudden movements as a threat and attack you. It’s OK to make sounds to get the shark’s attention and bring it a bit closer. But whatever you do, NEVER try to feed a shark. You just might get eaten yourself!
Finally, when you are ready to leave the water, do it slowly and carefully. As you swim away, make sure you always know where the shark is. Once you reach the surface, get out of the water quickly.

Swimming with sharks takes a lot of work. But if you are careful and follow these important steps, you’re in for a big thrill.

These scuba divers are swimming with a shark in an indoor aquarium.
Comprehension Check

1. Why is it a good idea for a person to have a buddy while diving near sharks?

2. What should the person do right after diving into the water?
   - A. find a buddy
   - B. watch the shark carefully
   - C. start feeding the shark
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4. What new information do you learn from the photograph and caption?


5. Which of the following words signals the last step in the instructions?
   A. now
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   C. finally
   D. when
Swimming with Sharks

1 Scuba diving near sharks might sound like a crazy idea. But if you are careful, it can actually be an enjoyable experience. You just have to make sure that you follow some important rules.

2 First, make sure that you are prepared. This is important for any dive, but it is essential for any diving near a shark’s habitat. Before you dive, aim to learn as much as you can about the sharks that live where you will be diving. Above all, make sure you find a buddy to dive with you. Even experienced divers never dive alone. Before you dive together, carefully plan every part of your dive. Decide where you will enter the water and where you will come out. Work out some basic hand signals so you can send messages to each other underwater. Make plans for what you will do if there is an emergency. That way, if either of you is in danger, you’ll both know exactly how to deal with it.

3 Now you are ready to go into the water. When you do, be careful not to make a big splash. A big splash might scare a shark away. Even worse, it might make the shark attack you! While underwater, stay close to your buddy, but not too close. Large groups can frighten sharks. Always keep your eyes on where the shark is, but do not stare at it. Sharks can feel threatened by direct eye contact, so do not move around too quickly. The shark might see those sudden movements as a threat and attack you. It’s OK to make sounds to get the shark’s attention and bring it a bit closer to you. But no matter what you do, NEVER try to feed a shark. You just might get eaten yourself!
Finally, when you are ready to leave the water, you should do so slowly and carefully. As you swim away, make sure you know where the shark is at all times. Once you reach the surface, get out of the water as quickly as possible.

Swimming with sharks takes a lot of work and skill. But if you are careful and follow these important steps, you’re in for a thrilling experience.

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   B. never
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Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Plants That Fight Back!**

1. Did you ever pull a leaf from a plant? You might think the plant did not notice. But some plants do. Some plants can defend themselves. If you touch them, they can sting you. Some plants can even kill you!

**Secrets to Survival**

2. The African acacia (uh-KAY-shuh) tree can defend itself. In fact, the acacia tree has many ways to defend itself. The tree’s thorns are its first type of defense. Do not try to touch one of these thorns. You will get scratched.

3. The thorns can hurt people, but not giraffes. A giraffe has a long tongue. Its tongue can get past the thorns and grab the leaves. But giraffes also know a secret. They don’t eat an acacia tree’s leaves for too long. If they do, the tree pumps poison into its leaves. This poison makes the leaves taste awful. In some cases, the poison can be deadly.
Spread the Word

A herd of kudus learned the acacia's secret the hard way. The kudus did not know what the giraffes knew. The kudus ate all the leaves on a group of acacia trees. Then the whole herd died.

Scientists did some tests to find out what had happened. They learned that when an acacia's leaves fill with poison, the leaves let out a gas into the air. This gas tells other acacia trees to pump poison into their leaves.

Stay Away or Else!

Like the acacia trees, stinging trees can defend themselves. These trees are found in Australia. Their leaves and stems look harmless, but they are covered by tiny stinging hairs. The hairs are as sharp as glass. If you brush against a leaf, the hairs will break off into your skin.

The tiny hairs send a poison into your skin. The poison causes painful burning that can last for months. Some people even die from the sting.

So, watch out before you touch a tree or eat one of its berries. Remember—some plants fight back!
Comprehension Check

1. What is the acacia tree’s first form of defense?
   A. gas
   B. poison
   C. thorns
   D. berries

2. What causes the acacia tree to pump poison into its leaves?

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3. How do acacia trees send messages to one another?

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4. Read this sentence.

   The leaves of the stinging tree are heart shaped.

Under which heading from the passage would this sentence BEST fit? Why do you think this would be a good sentence to add?

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5. What is the main idea of this passage?

   A. Some plants have ways to defend themselves.
   B. Animals such as giraffes find ways to avoid poisonous leaves.
   C. The acacia tree pumps poison into its leaves to protect itself.
   D. Plants can send messages to one another.
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

**Plants That Fight Back!**

1. Have you ever pulled a leaf from a plant? You probably thought the plant did not notice. But some plants do. Some plants even have ways to defend themselves. Touch certain plants, and the plant might sting you. Eat the leaves of other plants, and you might even die!

**Secrets to Survival**

2. The African acacia (uh-KAY-shuh) tree is a plant that has several ways to defend itself. Its thorns are its first form of defense. If you try to touch one of the acacia’s branches, you will get badly scratched.

3. But the thorns don’t stop giraffes from eating the acacia’s leaves. The giraffe’s long tongue can reach through the thorns and grab the leaves. But giraffes also know a secret. They don’t eat from an acacia tree for too long. If they do, the tree pumps poison into its leaves to defend itself. This poison makes the leaves taste awful. In some cases, it can be deadly.
Spread the Word

A herd of kudus once learned the acacia’s secret the hard way. Unlike the giraffes, these kudus ate all the leaves on a group of acacia trees. Then the whole herd died.

Scientists weren’t sure what had happened, so they did some tests. They found that when an acacia’s leaves fill with poison, the leaves release a gas into the air. This gas signals other acacias to pump poison into their own leaves.

Stay Away or Else!

Like the acacia trees, stinging trees can kill. Found in Australia, these trees have leaves that look harmless. But the leaves and stems are covered by tiny stinging hairs. The hairs are as sharp as glass. So, if you brush against a leaf, the hairs will break off into your skin.

Where the tiny hairs stick, they send a poison into your skin. The poison causes painful burning that can last for several months. Some people even die from the sting.

So, watch out before you touch a tree or take a bite of one of its berries. Remember—some plants fight back!
Comprehension Check

1. What is the acacia tree’s first form of defense?
   A. gas
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2. What causes the acacia tree to pump poison into its leaves?

3. How do acacia trees send messages to one another?
4. Read this sentence.

The leaves of the stinging tree are heart shaped.

Under which heading from the passage would this sentence BEST fit? Why do you think this would be a good sentence to add?

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A. Some plants have ways to defend themselves.
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C. The acacia tree pumps poison into its leaves to protect itself.
D. Plants can send messages to one another.
Read the passage. Then answer the questions that follow.

Plants That Fight Back!

1 Have you ever pulled a leaf from a tree? You probably thought the tree didn’t notice. But if you tried to pluck a second leaf, the tree might have sent out the message, “Touch my leaves again, and you’ll be sorry.”

2 This is exactly what some plants do to defend themselves. Touch certain plants, and they might sting you. Eat the leaves of others, and you might even die!

Secrets to Survival

3 The African acacia (uh-KAY-shuh) tree is a plant that knows how to defend itself. Its sharp thorns are its first form of protection. If you try to touch one of the acacia’s branches, you will get badly scratched.

4 The thorns don’t prevent giraffes from munching on the trees, though. The giraffe’s long tongue can reach in between the thorns and grab the leaves. But giraffes also know an important secret. They don’t eat from an acacia tree for too long. If they do, the tree pumps poison into its leaves to protect itself. This poison makes the leaves taste awful, and sometimes it can be deadly.
Spread the Word

A herd of kudus once discovered the acacia's secret the hard way. Unlike the giraffes, these kudus ate all the leaves on a group of acacia trees. Then the whole herd died.

Scientists weren’t sure what had happened, so they did some tests. They found that when an acacia’s leaves fill with poison, the leaves also release a gas into the air. This gas warns other acacias to pump poison into their own leaves.

Stay Away or Else!

Like the acacia trees, stinging trees can kill. Found in Australia, these trees have leaves that look totally harmless. But the leaves and stems are covered by tiny stinging hairs that are as sharp as glass. If you accidentally brush against a leaf or touch a stem, the hairs will break off and pierce your skin. Bam! You are stung.

Where the tiny hairs stick, they send a powerful poison into your skin. The poison causes a painful burning sensation that can last for months. Some people even die from the sting.

So, watch out before you touch a tree or take a bite of one of its berries. Remember—some plants fight back!
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