

64 Vipers

The family of snakes called vipers includes some of the deadliest poisonous snakes in the world. Some of the snakes in this fearsome group are the water moccasin, rattlesnake, and copperhead (all of which are found in the United States), the bush-master and fer-de-lance of South America, and the puff adder of Africa.

Vipers have thick bodies, short tails, and triangular heads. Fangs in their upper jaws inject poison into their victims' bodies like a hypodermic needle. When the snakes bite, they contract the muscles around their poison sacs. These sacs are located behind the eyes. The poison squirts out through the hollow fangs. Almost a half-teaspoon of poison is put into a victim at one time. Fortunately, many of these snakes are small, so their bite is not fatal.

There are actually two main types of vipers—the true vipers and the pit vipers. Pit vipers live in Asia and the Americas. The name comes from a small hollow in the side of the head just below the eye. The small hollow, or pit, has a special nerve that senses heat, helping the pit viper to find its warm-blooded prey. True vipers don't have this special nerve and must rely on their keen sense of smell to find their food. Vipers don't usually strike unless they are disturbed or are looking for food. Still, it is a good idea to stay away from them.

Main Idea

1

Mark the *main idea*

Mark the statement that is *too broad*

Mark the statement that is *too narrow*

Answer

Score

M

15

B

5

N

5

a. Snakes are poisonous.

☐

b. Vipers are one of the most poisonous groups of snakes.

☐

c. Some vipers are called pit vipers.

☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 This passage is about
- ☐ a. turning vipers into pets.
 - ☐ b. how to cure snakebites.
 - ☐ c. poisonous snakes of the world.
 - ☐ d. vipers.
- Supporting Details** 3 Which of the following is not true?
- ☐ a. The bushmaster is from South America.
 - ☐ b. Some vipers have hollows like pits.
 - ☐ c. Pit vipers are found in Africa.
 - ☐ d. A viper's fangs are hollow.
- Conclusion** 4 We can infer from the passage that
- ☐ a. all snakes with triangular heads are vipers.
 - ☐ b. small vipers are harmless because of small amounts of venom.
 - ☐ c. very long snakes are not vipers.
 - ☐ d. when snakes are extremely hungry they eat people.
- Clarifying Devices** 5 The author compares the viper's poison-injecting fangs to
- ☐ a. a squirt gun.
 - ☐ b. a hypodermic needle.
 - ☐ c. triangular needles.
 - ☐ d. biting machines.
- Vocabulary in Context** 6 The word keen means
- ☐ a. really nice.
 - ☐ b. eager.
 - ☐ c. vivid.
 - ☐ d. very sensitive.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 218.

Total
Score

65 The Black Death

Imagine an illness so serious that people might go to bed well and be dead before morning. Think of this illness striking most of your family and friends. How would you respond? This question faced many Europeans in the 1300s as bubonic plague—the Black Death—swept the continent.

The plague rampaged across Europe beginning in late 1347. Its symptoms were terrible. In one form, sufferers developed egg-sized black swellings in their armpits and groins. These swellings were followed by boils and strange black blotches on their skin, the result of internal bleeding. In another form of the disease swellings didn't develop, but people spit blood instead. In both forms, people contracted a severe fever, and they were dead within hours or days.

The plague was spread either by contact with blood or by respiratory infection. The respiratory infection meant that if a person coughed on you, you could get the disease. And if you got it, you most probably died. By the time the plague burned itself out in 1350, over twenty million Europeans had died from it. The city of Paris lost half of its population; Venice lost about two-thirds. Sufferers died so fast that there often wasn't time to bury them, and bodies piled up in the streets. The plague was responsible for a decades-long shortage of people.

Today an outbreak of plague could be controlled with antibiotics, but no such cure existed 650 years ago. Many escaped the only way they could: by deserting sick friends and families. A few got to isolated areas where the plague had not hit, but most did not—and died anyway.

Main Idea

1

	Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>	☒ M	15
Mark the statement that is <i>too broad</i>	☐ B	5
Mark the statement that is <i>too narrow</i>	☐ N	5

- The Black Plague raced across Europe, killing great numbers of people.
- Many large cities lost large portions of the population during the Black Plague.
- People have always feared infectious diseases.

☐
☐
☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 This passage is mainly about
- ☐ a. the Black Plague and the destruction it caused.
 - ☐ b. how people got the plague.
 - ☐ c. how plague could be controlled now.
 - ☐ d. diseases that are quick killers.

- Supporting Details** 3 A characteristic of both forms of plague was
- ☐ a. boils.
 - ☐ b. spitting blood.
 - ☐ c. severe fever.
 - ☐ d. egg-shaped black swellings.

- Conclusion** 4 The final paragraph suggests that people
- ☐ a. cared for their loved ones as long as they could.
 - ☐ b. wanted to protect their children.
 - ☐ c. were frightened and selfish.
 - ☐ d. had a good understanding of how plague spread.

- Clarifying Devices** 5 The expression "the plague burned itself out" means that the plague
- ☐ a. self-destructed.
 - ☐ b. set people on fire.
 - ☐ c. traveled as fast as a blazing fire.
 - ☐ d. could not be controlled.

- Vocabulary in Context** 6 Rampaged means
- ☐ a. moved slowly and cautiously.
 - ☐ b. rushed wildly.
 - ☐ c. traveled.
 - ☐ d. slept.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 218.

Total
Score

66 The Man from Stratford

What makes a person famous? This is a mystery that many people have pondered. All kinds of myths surround the lives of well-known people.

Most people are familiar with the works of William Shakespeare, one of the greatest English writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet how many know Shakespeare the person, the man behind the works?

After centuries of research, scholars are still trying to discover Shakespeare's personal history. It is not easily found in his writings. Authors of the time could not protect their works. An acting company, for example, could change a play if they wanted to. Nowadays writers have copyrights that protect their work.

Many myths arose about Shakespeare. Some said he had no formal education. Others believe that he began his career by tending the horses of wealthy men.

All of these myths are interesting, but are they true? Probably not. Shakespeare's father was a respected man in Stratford, a member of the town council. He sent young William to grammar school. Most people of Elizabethan times did not continue beyond grammar school, so Shakespeare did have at least an average education.

Some parts of Shakespeare's life will always remain unknown. The Great London Fire of 1666 burned many important documents that could have been a source of clues. We will always be left with many questions and few facts.

Main Idea

1

Mark the *main idea*

Mark the statement that is *too broad*

Mark the statement that is *too narrow*

Answer

Score

M

15

B

5

N

5

- a. Very little is known about Shakespeare as a person.
- b. Shakespeare's writings are all we have as clues about him.
- c. The background of many sixteenth-century writers is a mystery.

☐
☐
☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

Subject Matter 2 This passage deals with

- ☐ a. the Great London Fire.
- ☐ b. the lost documents of Shakespeare.
- ☐ c. scholars of Shakespeare.
- ☐ d. Shakespeare's personal history.

Supporting Details 3 Parts of Shakespeare's life continue to remain a mystery because

- ☐ a. people are not interested.
- ☐ b. researchers do not have the expertise to find the facts.
- ☐ c. writers had no claim over their works.
- ☐ d. the Great London Fire burned important documents.

Conclusion 4 From this passage we can infer that Shakespeare

- ☐ a. was a horse thief.
- ☐ b. had no education.
- ☐ c. is surrounded by myths.
- ☐ d. was popular in Stratford.

Clarifying Devices

M 5 The first sentence arouses interest by presenting

- ☐ a. a direct statement.
- ☐ b. a question.
- ☐ c. an emotional appeal.
- ☐ d. a contrast.

Vocabulary in Context

6 In this passage formal means

- ☐ a. correct.
- ☐ b. organized.
- ☐ c. rigid.
- ☐ d. elaborate.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 218.

Total
Score

67 Once Poison, Now a Food

Would you eat a bacon, lettuce, and love apple sandwich? You probably have eaten many of them. Love apple was the name used many years ago for the tomato.

The tomato was originally an American plant. It was found in South America by early Spanish explorers. The word *tomato* comes from the native Nahuatl word *tomatl*. But when it moved north, the plant earned a different name. Remarkably, the settlers in North America thought it was poisonous. They believed that to eat it was surely to die. It was said that jilted suitors would threaten to eat a tomato to cause their cold-hearted lovers remorse. Because of this legend, the settlers called the tomato a "love apple." While people enjoyed other native plants, such as corn and sweet potatoes, everyone avoided the tomato.

No one knows who first dared to eat a tomato. Perhaps someone was brave enough, or lovesick enough, to try out the truth of the rumors. Of course, whoever ate this fruit was perfectly safe. No one died from eating a love apple. Still, it was many years before the people fully believed that the tomato was a safe, and even good, food. But its use did become common, and the plant was sent across the ocean to become part of many traditional European dishes.

Main Idea

1

Mark the *main idea*

Answer

Score

☒ M

15

Mark the statement that is *too broad*

☐ B

5

Mark the statement that is *too narrow*

☐ N

5

- Many foods have legends associated with them. ☐
- Although the tomato was thought to be poisonous, no one died from eating it. ☐
- Long ago the tomato was called a "love apple" and was thought to be poisonous. ☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

Subject Matter 2 Another good title for this passage would be

- ☐ a. Life in Early America.
- ☐ b. What Happens to the Brokenhearted.
- ☐ c. The History of the Tomato.
- ☐ d. Vegetables in Our Diet.

Supporting Details 3 The language from which we derived the word *tomato* is

- ☐ a. Portuguese.
- ☐ b. Spanish.
- ☐ c. Nahuatl.
- ☐ d. European.

Conclusion 4 The origin of the story about tomatoes being poisonous is

- ☐ a. South America.
- ☐ b. jilted lovers.
- ☐ c. an early settler who ate a tomato and got ill.
- ☐ d. unknown.

Clarifying Devices 5 The word "still" in the middle of the third paragraph tells you that

- ☐ a. people continued to be wary of tomatoes.
- ☐ b. people became very quiet when speaking of tomatoes.
- ☐ c. the writer is pointing out similarities.
- ☐ d. the writer is not sure about the truth of the following statement.

Vocabulary in Context 6 *Suitor* means

- ☐ a. boyfriend or girlfriend.
- ☐ b. launderer.
- ☐ c. tailor.
- ☐ d. explorer.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 218.

Total
Score

68 Developing the Desktop Computer

Can you remember a time without computers? Large computers have been around for many years. But small ones, the desktop kind, are a fairly new invention.

Two people who helped make small computers popular are Steven Jobs and Stephen Wozniak. The two technology buffs began designing their first computer in Jobs's bedroom. (They actually built it in Jobs's parents' garage.) That computer was the Apple I, and it was mostly a toy. The next year, 1977, they put out the Apple II. It was the first easy-to-use desktop computer and became a huge seller.

Apple Computer, Inc., took the computer world by storm. IBM, which made big computers, did not even enter the desktop computer market until several years later.

In 1984 Apple introduced their latest innovation: the Macintosh. Like the Apple II, it was an easy-to-use computer. It was the first computer to show icons such as the "Trash" container on the screen. It was the first popular computer to use a mouse. The icons and the mouse made it easy to do things like move and save files. A person could work without memorizing a lot of confusing keyboard commands.

Wozniak and Jobs didn't stay with the company they founded. And as time went on, the company was less successful. But their new ideas changed computer use. They were instrumental in bringing the Computer Age into people's businesses and homes.

Main Idea

1

Mark the *main idea*

Mark the statement that is *too broad*

Mark the statement that is *too narrow*

Answer

Score

M

15

B

5

N

5

- a. Steven Jobs and Stephen Wozniak developed several important early desktop computers.
- b. Jobs and Wozniak beat out IBM by several years.
- c. The invention of desktop computers changed the way business is done.

☐☐☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 Another good title for this selection would be
☐ a. The Beginnings of Apple Computer.
☐ b. Building Computers Cheaply.
☐ c. The Macintosh.
☐ d. Success and Failure.
- Supporting Details** 3 Jobs and Wozniak's first computer was built
☐ a. for \$700.
☐ b. in Jobs's bedroom.
☐ c. in Jobs's parents' garage.
☐ d. at Apple Computer.
- Conclusion** 4 It is safe to assume that
☐ a. Jobs and Wozniak did not take their ideas too seriously.
☐ b. Apple Computers are no longer easy to use.
☐ c. few people had desktop computers before the late 1970s.
☐ d. IBM always realized the importance of desktop computers.
- Clarifying Devices** 5 The information in this passage is presented in
☐ a. chronological order.
☐ b. cause and effect order.
☐ c. spatial order.
☐ d. order of importance.
- Vocabulary in Context** 6 An innovation is a(n)
☐ a. new idea or thing.
☐ b. keyboard.
☐ c. mouse.
☐ d. idea recycled from the past.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 218.

Total
Score