

50 Never Say Die

On October 17, 1829, Sam Patch did what he had said he would do. He perched on a platform built beside Niagara Falls and jumped into the water a hundred feet below. A big crowd had gathered to watch Sam's well-advertised leap. The spectators held their breath as the daredevil hit the swirling water. At last his head burst out of the foam, thirty feet clear of the falls, and the crowd let out a mighty roar. Men waved their hats and yelled out the expression that had become Sam's trademark: "There's no mistake in Sam Patch!"

Sam began his career as a leaper in 1827, when he jumped eighty feet into the Passaic River from a bridge that was still under construction. Delighted with the notoriety he received, Sam traveled from town to town, jumping from masts, cliffs, and bridges. Then he made his great conquest of Niagara Falls.

Sam was spurred on by the widespread public excitement over his successful leap from the falls. He turned to the higher Genesee Falls for his next feat. On November 13, a scaffold was constructed 125 feet above the base of the falls. A huge crowd gathered on both riverbanks. At 2:00 P.M., Sam climbed the shaky scaffold, made a brief speech, and jumped. Once again there was a hushed silence as his body smacked the water. But this time Sam didn't resurface.

Sam's body was pulled from the mouth of the river the following spring. Even so, for years afterward, a legend persisted that the great Sam Patch was still alive.

Main Idea

1

	Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> M	15
Mark the statement that is <i>too broad</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> B	5
Mark the statement that is <i>too narrow</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> N	5

- a. Sam Patch died jumping the Genesee Falls.
- b. Jumping from great heights is dangerous.
- c. Sam Patch made a career of leaping from great heights.

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 What is the general idea of the passage?
- a. Genesee Falls is a dangerous place.
 - b. Sam Patch jumped at Niagara Falls.
 - c. There's no mistake in Sam Patch.
 - d. Sam Patch was a popular leaper.

- Supporting Details** 3 Sam jumped into the Passaic River from a
- a. cliff.
 - b. scaffold.
 - c. bridge.
 - d. mast.

- Conclusion** 4 The passage implies that
- a. Sam Patch is still alive.
 - b. Sam Patch was a foolish man.
 - c. jumping from high bridges was not very dangerous.
 - d. Sam Patch loved to get a lot of attention.

- Clarifying Devices** 5 "Swirling" water is
- a. very rough.
 - b. cold.
 - c. boiling.
 - d. deep.

- Vocabulary in Context** 6 The best definition for the word notoriety is
- a. congratulations.
 - b. payment.
 - c. fame.
 - d. pleasure.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 217.

Total Score _____