

88 The Panama Canal

Here are some basics about the Panama Canal. It cuts through Panama to join the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Work on it started in 1904. The first ship sailed through on August 15, 1914. The canal is 50.72 miles long. From ocean to ocean, travel time is about eight hours.

What makes the canal so important is this. Ships don't have to sail around the tip of South America. For example, consider a ship sailing from New York City to San Francisco. Sailing around South America is 13,000 miles. Going through the canal is about 5,200 miles less.

About 40 ships pass through the canal in a day. All ships, including warships, must pay a toll. The toll depends on a ship's size and cargo. For example, the U.S.S. *New Jersey* paid \$28,838. The German ship *Hamburg* paid \$40,936. Warships are allowed to use the canal, but only in peacetime.

What was the greatest problem in building the canal? The answer: disease. The Canal Zone was one of the most disease-ridden areas in the world. In 1904, Colonel William Gorgas was put in charge of improving health conditions. He was a doctor. He had already gained fame by wiping out yellow fever in Cuba. His first two years were devoted to sanitation. Swamps were drained. Brush was cleared. Tall and short grasses were cut. By 1906, Gorgas had wiped out yellow fever. He eliminated the rats that carried bubonic plague. He did not completely wipe out malaria. But he greatly reduced its rate. So it is fair to say this. The canal engineers were great. But the project would never have been completed without William Gorgas.

Main Idea 1 _____

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

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------|
| a. The Panama Canal was an important development in the 1900s. | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| b. Ships pay a toll to pass through the Panama Canal. | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |
| c. The Panama Canal saves travel time, but it was not built without a struggle. | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 The passage is primarily about
- a. sailing through the canal.
 - b. Colonel William Gorgas.
 - c. the Panama Canal.
 - d. what people did before the canal was built.
- _____

- Supporting Details** 3 The Panama Canal
- a. has about 40 ships sailing through in a day.
 - b. does not charge a toll to American ships.
 - c. was completed in 1904.
 - d. goes from New York City to San Francisco.
- _____

- Conclusion** 4 Judging from this passage, one might say that building the canal
- a. caused diseases that hurt people in the area.
 - b. made it easier for warships to fight other countries.
 - c. made sailing more expensive than it had been.
 - d. took courage and dedication.
- _____

- Clarifying Devices** 5 The author makes clear how difficult canal building was by
- a. describing the work of Gorgas.
 - b. describing the tall mountains that surround it.
 - c. giving the number of people who died building it.
 - d. telling how long it took to build.
- _____

- Vocabulary in Context** 6 In this passage reduced means
- a. decreased.
 - b. improved.
 - c. measured.
 - d. enlarged.
- _____

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 214.

Total
Score

89 Knives, Forks, and Spoons

Imagine sitting down to dinner in the early days of our country. In front of you at that time would be a large plate made of pewter. Alongside the pewter plate would be only a knife and a spoon. What? No fork? Yes, no fork. Why? The first fork was brought to this country by Governor John Winthrop in 1630. It took many years before the average family had forks.

Even when forks were introduced, they were not widely used. They were thought to be effeminate. This was true especially among men. Tough men continued to pick up food with their fingers. Even the clergy jumped to the side of such men. They argued that it was almost a sin to eat with a fork. After all, they said, fingers were made before forks. Also, forks were an unnatural substitute for the God-given fingers.

Nevertheless, forks slowly gained acceptance. The earliest ones had only two tines. The tines were not delicate. They were long and looked more like a weapon than an eating utensil. For a better idea of what they looked like, do this. Open your kitchen drawer and take out the fork used in carving a big turkey or roast beef. This is a throwback to the early table forks. And these carving forks, in turn, were a throwback to a vicious twin-pointed battle spear.

The forks we now use have either three or four tines. Such forks came into use only about a century ago. You may wonder how such a simple utensil took so long to develop. After all, hundreds of complex inventions came about long before the fork. Why didn't people's ingenuity come to the fore a lot sooner? We don't know. What's your guess?

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. The fork's development took many years.
- b. Utensils take years to be accepted.
- c. The early fork was similar to a carving fork.

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|--|-------|
| Subject Matter | 2 | The focus of this passage is
<input type="checkbox"/> a. utensils.
<input type="checkbox"/> b. the early days.
<input type="checkbox"/> c. the development of the fork.
<input type="checkbox"/> d. simple inventions. | _____ |
| Supporting
Details | 3 | Early forks
<input type="checkbox"/> a. were sometimes used as battle spears.
<input type="checkbox"/> b. were more useful than modern forks.
<input type="checkbox"/> c. were used only for carving.
<input type="checkbox"/> d. originally had only two tines. | _____ |
| Conclusion | 4 | From this passage we can conclude that today's forks
<input type="checkbox"/> a. are used more widely than when forks were first developed.
<input type="checkbox"/> b. come in many sizes.
<input type="checkbox"/> c. are enjoying renewed popularity.
<input type="checkbox"/> d. are closely related to spoons. | _____ |
| Clarifying
Devices | 5 | The purpose of the first sentence in this passage is to
<input type="checkbox"/> a. jog your memory.
<input type="checkbox"/> b. help you visualize.
<input type="checkbox"/> c. put you in a serious mood.
<input type="checkbox"/> d. awaken your feelings. | _____ |
| Vocabulary
in Context | 6 | The word <u>throwback</u> , as used in this passage, means
<input type="checkbox"/> a. an object that is able to return to the sender.
<input type="checkbox"/> b. something that bounces back.
<input type="checkbox"/> c. an object related to a similar, earlier object.
<input type="checkbox"/> d. a valuable object. | _____ |

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 214.

Total
Score