

73 Riding the Desert Camel

Mention camel, and we quickly think of the desert—usually the Sahara Desert of North Africa. But did you know that the camel was native first to North America? This was 40,000,000 years ago. The camel probably got to Africa by migrating to South America. This was a large land mass that broke in two. The eastern part we now call Africa. The journey took millions of years.

Camels stand six to seven feet tall and weigh up to 1,600 pounds. They have long, strong legs and powerful muscles. A camel can carry as much as a thousand pounds for a short distance. But for long distances, its typical load is about 400 pounds.

When a camel walks or runs, both legs on one side of its body move forward at the same time. Then the legs on the other side swing forward. This leg action makes for a swaying, rocking motion. Some riders get "seasick." This may be part of the reason that camels are sometimes called "ships of the desert."

A camel's back is broad. It is too broad to let both of the rider's feet hang down. There is no use for stirrups. Well, then, how do you ride a camel? Camel drivers teach you to wrap one leg around the tall saddle horn. Then tuck the foot beneath the other leg. Let this leg just dangle. Or you can wrap both legs around the horn and sit cross-legged.

As for your hands, you can hold the reins gently. But if the going gets rough, you can clutch the saddle horn in desperation. Once you get used to the camel's constant rocking gait, though, you can almost be lulled to sleep.

Main Idea

1

Answer

Score

Mark the *main idea*

☒ M

15

Mark the statement that is *too broad*

☐ B

5

Mark the statement that is *too narrow*

☐ N

5

- The camel is tall and strong, but it is not too easy to ride.
- The camel moves both legs on one side of its body together.
- The camel offers a somewhat unusual ride.

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Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter 2 The author's main point is that riding a camel
☐ a. demands strength.
☐ b. is impossible.
☐ c. requires one to be experienced.
☐ d. is dangerous.
- Supporting Details 3 According to information in the passage, which of these statements is **not** true?
☐ a. There are no stirrups to assist the camel rider.
☐ b. Camels have a wider back than horses.
☐ c. Sitting cross-legged is not a good way to ride a camel.
☐ d. The camel's rocking motion is made from its long leg action.
- Conclusion 4 We can conclude that a camel rider is supposed to
☐ a. practice to get used to the ride.
☐ b. sleep while riding.
☐ c. watch the camel drivers.
☐ d. use only one comfortable position.
- Clarifying Devices 5 The content of this paragraph can best be described as
☐ a. an argument.
☐ b. a personal memory.
☐ c. a comparison.
☐ d. informative.
- Vocabulary in Context 6 As used in the paragraph, lulled most nearly means
☐ a. sung to.
☐ b. soothed.
☐ c. shaken.
☐ d. shocked.

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 213.

Total
Score

74 A Line on Kites

Kites are sources of childhood fun. But did you know that not all kites were used as toys?

In 1752 Ben Franklin used a kite to prove that lightning and electricity are the same. He made a flat kite. Then he tied a piece of iron wire to it. This he knew would attract the lightning. Next he used a ball of hemp string. At the end of the string he tied a long silk ribbon. The ribbon would serve as a protective insulator. Between the string and the ribbon he attached a brass key.

The kite rose into a dark cloud. Soon the rain-wet string began to stiffen. It bristled as if it were alive. Franklin knew electricity was coursing down the string. He put his finger near the key. A series of sparks jumped from key to finger. He felt the sharp tingle of the sparks. These were really electrical shocks. Franklin's experiment was dangerous. It took great courage.

Others experimented with kites too. In 1749, two Scotsmen tied a thermometer to a kite. They recorded the temperature of the clouds. Then in 1883, two Englishmen tied a wind meter to a kite. The speed of the wind was measured at 1,200 feet.

The suspension bridge at Niagara Falls was begun by a kite. The kite carried a light line over the gorge. Then the light line drew a heavier one across. Finally, a steel cable was pulled over.

This next event made world history. In 1901, Guglielmo Marconi wanted to prove that a radio signal could be sent across the Atlantic. But first he had to overcome the curve of the earth. He had a brilliant idea. In Newfoundland, he had the receiving antenna raised high in the air on the tail of a kite. The signal came over the Atlantic loud and clear.

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

- Kites have been useful in many historic discoveries.
- Kites have made people famous.
- The kite proved electricity and lightning are the same.

☐
☐
☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 In this passage the author tries to
- ☐ a. explain why kites are popular.
 - ☐ b. give an explanation of how kites work.
 - ☐ c. describe how kites have been important in the past.
 - ☐ d. define various ways we can use kites.
- _____
- Supporting Details** 3 Benjamin Franklin used a flat kite to
- ☐ a. prove that lightning was electricity.
 - ☐ b. make electricity.
 - ☐ c. show how lightning is dangerous.
 - ☐ d. demonstrate his courage.
- _____
- Conclusion** 4 We can conclude from this passage that kites
- ☐ a. are better to use for experiments than for play.
 - ☐ b. come in many shapes and sizes.
 - ☐ c. have more than one purpose.
 - ☐ d. are enjoyed by famous people.
- _____
- Clarifying Devices** 5 The opening sentence of the final paragraph is intended to
- ☐ a. point out a contrast.
 - ☐ b. attract your attention.
 - ☐ c. end an exciting story.
 - ☐ d. prove a point.
- _____
- Vocabulary in Context** 6 Another word for coursing might be
- ☐ a. stopping.
 - ☐ b. leading.
 - ☐ c. moving.
 - ☐ d. following.
- _____

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 213.

Total
Score

75 The Flying Penguin

Penguins are great swimmers. They are better than many other totally aquatic creatures. Penguins are really birds. But they cannot fly. They lost that ability millions of years ago. Their wings developed into flippers. Now the flippers serve as paddles in the water. Penguins once also had regular bird feet. But over millions of years, the feet became webbed. The flippers and the webbed feet make penguins swift swimmers and deep divers.

Why the change from a flying to a swimming bird? Scientists only guess. It may have been a need for food. There was nothing else available, so penguins constantly dove into schools of fish.

Then another great change took place. Nature equipped the penguin's body with built-in "shock absorbers." These are feathers that grow straight out from the body and then toward their ends take a right-angled turn. Why does the penguin need these? After dining in the water, the bird has a problem. It needs to get back on top of an ice floe. The floes are some five or six feet above the water. Here's what the penguin does. It swims in close. It measures the height of the floe with a watery eye. It turns and heads out some 30 feet. Then it turns toward the floe and races at top speed under water. Scientists have clocked its speed to about 60 miles per hour.

Now, here's the tricky part. Just short of the ice floe, the penguin planes upwards and becomes a hurtling aerial torpedo. Most of the time, a penguin will make it to the top of the ice floe. But on occasion, it smacks hard into the icy side of the floe. The impact would be hard enough to cripple the penguin or even kill it. But the ingenious feather "shock absorbers" save it.

Main Idea

1

	Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>	<input checked="" 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. Penguins are well-adapted to aquatic life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	—
b. The penguin's flippers were once wings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	—
c. The penguin is a swimming bird.	<input type="checkbox"/>	—

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 This passage deals mainly with
- ☐ a. dangerous ice floes.
 - ☐ b. the eating habits of the penguin.
 - ☐ c. swimming birds.
 - ☐ d. the penguin as a creature of the water.
- _____
- Supporting Details** 3 Penguins can swim
- ☐ a. up the side of an ice floe.
 - ☐ b. almost as well as they can fly.
 - ☐ c. up to 60 miles per hour.
 - ☐ d. because of their built-in shock absorbers.
- _____
- Conclusion** 4 We can infer from the article that penguins are
- ☐ a. often killed by hitting ice floes.
 - ☐ b. able to measure distances under water.
 - ☐ c. protected from impacts by their feathers.
 - ☐ d. similar to porpoises.
- _____
- Clarifying Devices** 5 The author makes a comparison between the penguin and a torpedo in order to
- ☐ a. explain the size of the penguin.
 - ☐ b. describe how dangerous its movement can be.
 - ☐ c. explain how the penguin swims.
 - ☐ d. help us imagine the penguin's speed.
- _____
- Vocabulary in Context** 6 The word ingenious, as used in the passage, means
- ☐ a. clever.
 - ☐ b. useful.
 - ☐ c. candid.
 - ☐ d. imitation.
- _____

Add your scores for questions 1–6. Enter the total here and on the graph on page 213.

Total
Score

76 Courage and Nobility

It was September of 1862. General Robert E. Lee marched into Maryland. He led 50,000 troops. Lee's best officer, Stonewall Jackson, was there too. He rode at the head of his troops into the town of Frederick.

In the morning 40 Union flags graced the town. Each owner quickly hauled his down. They heard the tramping of feet and the striking of hooves. The streets were empty now. Everyone was hiding behind shuttered windows. But one old woman did not hide. Barbara Frietchie took out her flag and hung it from her attic window.

Stonewall Jackson, riding ahead, spied the flag. The order "FIRE!" brought a shattering of glass and splintering of wood. As the broken staff was cracking and falling, a wrinkled old hand reached out. Barbara Frietchie caught the flag, now tattered and filled with holes. According to legend, this is what she said:

Shoot, if you must, this old gray head,
But spare your country's flag.

Riding below, Jackson heard her words. He was a brave and noble man. He must also have been impressed with the old woman's bravery and nobility. He turned to his troops. He ordered them to stop shooting. Barbara Frietchie was unharmed.

Frietchie's house still stands. The one-and-a-half-story brick building is in Frederick. Her clothing, her spinning wheel, her Bible are still waiting. And a flag hangs over her house.

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

- a. Barbara Frietchie's bravery and loyalty were recognized by Stonewall Jackson. ☐
- b. Stonewall Jackson ordered his soldiers to stop shooting. ☐
- c. Barbara Frietchie bravely faced the enemy. ☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 This main purpose of this passage is to
- ☐ a. describe the life of Barbara Frietchie.
 - ☐ b. show how courage and spirit were needed in the 1800s.
 - ☐ c. tell an important episode in Barbara Frietchie's life.
 - ☐ d. explain people's feelings during the Civil War.

- Supporting Details** 3 Despite Barbara Frietchie's old age she
- ☐ a. convinced Stonewall Jackson to leave town.
 - ☐ b. stood firm in her beliefs.
 - ☐ c. had strong opinions that war was evil.
 - ☐ d. spoke loudly.

- Conclusion** 4 Which of the following is most likely true?
- ☐ a. Frederick has many mementos of the Civil War.
 - ☐ b. Jackson was scolded by General Lee.
 - ☐ c. The Confederates made no raids after Frederick.
 - ☐ d. The townspeople were embarrassed by Frietchie.

- Clarifying Devices** 5 The last sentence of the story suggests that
- ☐ a. people in Frederick live in the past.
 - ☐ b. people remember what Frietchie did.
 - ☐ c. people in Frederick love flags.
 - ☐ d. Stonewall Jackson never came to Frederick again.

- Vocabulary in Context** 6 In this passage, spied means
- ☐ a. spotted.
 - ☐ b. sneaked.
 - ☐ c. surprised.
 - ☐ d. held.

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

Total
Score

77 The Faithful Dog

Which animal is "man's best friend"? We all know it's the dog. Dogs have earned the love and respect of humans. Many have given their own lives to save people. Dogs are faithful and devoted. For example Bobby, a Skye terrier, went to market with his Scottish master every day. After the man died, Bobby would not move from his grave. He stayed there for about 10 years. He stayed until he died.

Dogs serve many useful functions. They are good at watching and herding sheep. Wherever sheep are raised, a sheep-herding dog is developed. For instance, there is the German Shepherd dog. In Scotland, there is the Shetland sheep dog. Both are recognized breeds.

Specially trained dogs lead the blind. Such dogs are carefully selected. It takes about three to five months to train them. Guide dogs will refuse to cross a busy street unless the traffic has stopped.

One interesting dog is the St. Bernard. How did it get its name? It was developed by the monks of the St. Bernard Monastery. This is located in the Alps of Switzerland. The dog weighs from 140 to 220 pounds. It's one of the heaviest of all dogs.

St. Bernards are famous for rescuing travelers lost in the snow. They have a wonderful sense of smell. They find people buried under several feet of snow. A St. Bernard named Barry rescued 40 persons. This was over a period of years.

There is a popular misconception about these dogs. They do not carry flasks around their necks. Sir Edwin Landseer misrepresented them this way in a painting.

Main Idea

1

	Answer	Score
Mark the <i>main idea</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> M	15
Mark the statement that is <i>too broad</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B	5
Mark the statement that is <i>too narrow</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N	5
a. Many animals have been trained to work for humans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
b. The Saint Bernard is known for finding lost people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
c. Dogs are not only loyal companions but can also be helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 This passage is mainly about
☐ a. friendly dogs.
☐ b. breeds of dogs.
☐ c. useful dogs.
☐ d. small dogs.
- Supporting Details** 3 Dogs trained to lead the blind are
☐ a. Saint Bernards.
☐ b. chosen very carefully.
☐ c. trained for seven to 10 months.
☐ d. raised around blind people.
- Conclusion** 4 The dog named Bobby can best be described as
☐ a. lost.
☐ b. tired.
☐ c. loyal.
☐ d. friendly.
- Clarifying Devices** 5 To tell this story the author depends mainly on
☐ a. stories from dog trainers.
☐ b. lists of different kinds of dogs.
☐ c. stories about specific dog breeds.
☐ d. detailed descriptions of various dogs.
- Vocabulary in Context** 6 The word misconception means something that is
☐ a. well stated.
☐ b. not correctly understood.
☐ c. a personal belief.
☐ d. confusing.

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

Total
Score