

59 The Badger

The badger is a member of the weasel family. It ranges throughout the western United States. It is both a help and a burden to farmers and ranchers. It kills harmful rodents, but it also digs deep holes that cause tractors to break wheels and livestock to break legs.

A clumsy critter, the slow-footed badger is built low to the ground, with short legs and a flat, squat body. It digs like a steam shovel into the rich earth of the prairie. Its strong, dark feet, each tipped with five two-inch-long nails, can dig any gopher or ground squirrel out of its burrow.

This pigeon-toed, round-shouldered ground hugger is dirty yellowish gray with a dark brown face striped with white. It may grow to more than two feet long and weigh up to twenty-five pounds. The badger has thirty-four sharp teeth and a menacing growl and hiss that make it about as sociable as a grizzly bear. Being a close cousin to the skunk, it doesn't smell very good.

An acute sense of smell enables the badger to locate food underground. It eats snakes and snails, insects, rats and mice, gophers, ground squirrels, and other rodents. Occasionally it will kill ground-nesting birds and eat their nestlings or eggs, but the badger saves many more birds than it destroys. The rodents it usually kills are animals that hunt birds. And the holes it digs in its quest for food provide homes for many animals.

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. The slow-moving badger is considered both a help and a burden. ☐
- b. Prairie animals can be both helpful and harmful. ☐
- c. The badger hunts many rodents that live on the prairie. ☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

Subject Matter 2 This passage is about

- ☐ a. the problems of farmers.
- ☐ b. the badger.
- ☐ c. rodents.
- ☐ d. prairie animals.

Supporting Details 3 According to the passage, the badger's smell

- ☐ a. is bad and helps to make it unsociable.
- ☐ b. is stronger than a skunk's smell.
- ☐ c. attracts rodents and snakes.
- ☐ d. is feared more than its sharp teeth.

Conclusion 4 The passage suggests that badgers

- ☐ a. are pleasant animals.
- ☐ b. are a nuisance to foxes and coyotes.
- ☐ c. aren't friendly animals.
- ☐ d. are lazy.

Clarifying Devices 5 The writer of this passage tells his story by depending mainly on

- ☐ a. cases cited by farmers and ranchers.
- ☐ b. logical reasoning and careful argument.
- ☐ c. carefully chosen descriptive words.
- ☐ d. facts given by scientists.

Vocabulary in Context 6 Quest means

- ☐ a. need.
- ☐ b. adventure.
- ☐ c. battle.
- ☐ d. search.

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

Total
Score

60 Altitude Sickness

Mountain climbing is becoming a popular sport, but it is also a potentially dangerous one. People can fall; they may also become ill from drinking bad water. One of the most common dangers to climbers is altitude sickness, an ailment that can affect even very experienced climbers.

Altitude sickness usually begins when a climber goes above 8,000 or 9,000 feet. The higher one climbs, the less oxygen there is in the air. When people don't get enough oxygen, they often begin to gasp for air. They may also feel dizzy and light-headed. Besides these common symptoms of altitude sickness, others such as nausea, headache, tiredness, and difficulty sleeping may also occur. At heights of over 18,000 feet, people may be climbing in a constant daze. This state of mind can have a serious effect on their judgment.

A few precautions can help most climbers avoid altitude sickness. The first is not to go too high too fast. If you climb to 10,000 feet, stay at that height for a day or two. Your body needs to get used to a high altitude before you climb to an even higher one. Or if you do climb higher sooner, come back down to a lower height when you sleep. Also, drink plenty of liquids and avoid tobacco and alcohol. When you reach your top height, do light activities rather than sleep too much. You breathe less when you sleep, so you get less oxygen.

The most important warning is this: if you have severe symptoms and they don't go away, go down! Don't risk injury or death because of overconfidence or lack of knowledge.

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. Altitude sickness is a serious ailment that can be avoided with care. ☐
- b. Even experienced mountain climbers can get altitude sickness. ☐
- c. Mountain climbers face many dangers. ☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

Subject Matter 2 This passage deals mostly with

- ☐ a. the dangers of mountain climbing.
- ☐ b. altitude sickness.
- ☐ c. protecting your lungs.
- ☐ d. avalanches.

Supporting Details 3 The height at which climbers may begin to feel ill is

- ☐ a. 5,000 feet.
- ☐ b. 6,000 feet.
- ☐ c. 7,000 feet.
- ☐ d. 8,000 feet.

Conclusion 4 Climbing above 18,000 feet

- ☐ a. should be avoided by everyone.
- ☐ b. should not be done without a companion.
- ☐ c. will make a person think more clearly.
- ☐ d. should be the goal of all climbers.

Clarifying Devices 5 The writer uses the last two paragraphs to

- ☐ a. describe mountain scenery.
- ☐ b. tell about a famous climber.
- ☐ c. give advice.
- ☐ d. express anger at careless climbers.

Vocabulary in Context 6 Precaution means

- ☐ a. way of attacking a problem.
- ☐ b. care taken beforehand.
- ☐ c. objection.
- ☐ d. alternate route.

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

Total
Score

61 A Light Blazing Across the Sky

When you look up at the night sky, what do you see? There are other heavenly bodies out there besides the moon and stars. One of the most fascinating of these is a comet.

Comets were formed around the same time the Earth was formed. Usually about five to ten miles across, they are made up of ice and other frozen liquids and gases. Now and then these "dirty snowballs" begin to orbit the sun, just as the planets do. Scientists know of over one hundred comets in orbits that sometimes bring them fairly close to Earth.

As a comet gets closer to the sun, some of the gases in it begin to unfreeze. The gases combine with dust particles from the comet to form a cloud thousands of miles across. As the comet gets even nearer to the sun, a solar wind blows the cloud behind the comet, thus forming its tail. The tail and the generally fuzzy atmosphere around a comet are characteristics that can help you to identify this phenomenon in the night sky.

In any given year, about a dozen known comets come close to the sun in their orbits. There may also be a dozen or more newly discovered comets. The average person can't see them all, of course. Usually there are only one or two a year bright enough to be seen with the naked eye. Comet Hale-Bopp, discovered in 1995, was an unusually bright comet. Its orbit brought it relatively close to Earth—within 122 million miles of it. But Hale-Bopp came a long way on its earthly visit. It won't be back in this vicinity for another four thousand years or so.

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. There are many heavenly bodies in the night sky. ☐

b. Comets are heavenly visitors that now and then come into Earth's vicinity. ☐

c. Ten or twelve comets are discovered every year. ☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Subject Matter 2 This passage is mainly about

- ☐ a. where comets come from.
- ☐ b. what comets are.
- ☐ c. the Hale-Bopp comet.
- ☐ d. how to locate comets in the night sky.

Supporting 3 As a comet gets nearer to the sun, it

- ☐ a. shrinks in size.
- ☐ b. develops a large cloud.
- ☐ c. develops a small cloud.
- ☐ d. begins to freeze up.

Conclusion 4 The phrase "dirty snowball" suggests that comets

- ☐ a. are very tiny.
- ☐ b. are pure white.
- ☐ c. look somewhat gray or black.
- ☐ d. will melt in the sun.

Clarifying 5 The writer develops ideas in the third paragraph by

- ☐ a. telling a story.
- ☐ b. comparing and contrasting.
- ☐ c. presenting a strong argument.
- ☐ d. explaining the steps in a process.

Vocabulary 6 Solar means related to the

- ☐ a. sun.
- ☐ b. moon.
- ☐ c. comets.
- ☐ d. larger planets.

Add your scores for questions 1-6. Enter the total here

Score

62 The Great Stock Market Crash

The stock market can be a wonderful place to make money. If you buy stock in a company at \$12 a share and later sell it for \$24, your investment has doubled. It is tempting to believe that stock prices will always increase, but they can also decrease. Prices of shares of all companies can drop simultaneously—and drop a lot. Then there is a market crash—like the one in 1929.

During the last week of October in 1929, people began to lose confidence in the market and to sell stock shares in great numbers. On October 29, the worst day, over 16 million shares of stock were traded—by far the highest number ever sold in one day. By November 13, the market temporarily bottomed out. In about three weeks it had lost 40 percent of its value, a drop of about \$30 billion. It would be years before that value was regained.

What caused the crash? The 1920s had been years of tremendous growth and prosperity. Road construction skyrocketed as people traded in horses and buggies for cars. Radios and other consumer items rose in demand as more homes were wired for electricity. Feeling prosperous, many people looked to the stock market as a way to make money. Many stocks were bought on margin: put down as little as 10 percent and buy the rest on credit. Since everyone else was doing the same thing, the value of the market continued to rise. It seemed as if you couldn't lose.

When stock prices began to plummet, the brokers stopped giving credit and demanded to be paid the money they were owed. In a panic, people began selling everything they had. The long spiral down into the Great Depression had begun.

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

- a. The stock market crash of 1929 brought a swift end to a decade of prosperity. ☐
- b. The stock market can go up, but it can also go down. ☐
- c. Many people had begun buying on margin. ☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

Subject Matter 2 This passage is mostly about

- ☐ a. the crash and the reasons for it.
- ☐ b. how people made money in the 1920s.
- ☐ c. how the stock market works.
- ☐ d. what margin is.

Supporting Details 3 On the worst day of the crash, the number of shares sold was

- ☐ a. 10 million.
- ☐ b. 12 million.
- ☐ c. 16 million.
- ☐ d. 40 million.

Conclusion 4 The 1920s were a decade when

- ☐ a. only rich people invested in the stock market.
- ☐ b. people with less money began to buy into the market.
- ☐ c. most people invested through stock clubs.
- ☐ d. many public warnings were given about investing too heavily in the market.

Clarifying Devices 5 In this passage, the term "skyrocketed" suggests

- ☐ a. a vehicle that flies.
- ☐ b. a very fast increase.
- ☐ c. the beginning of the space program.
- ☐ d. a new way of building roads.

Vocabulary in Context

6 Plummet means

- ☐ a. rise.
- ☐ b. go up and down rapidly.
- ☐ c. drop dramatically.
- ☐ d. dig into the earth.

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

Total
Score

63 The World's Greatest Athlete?

Many people are good in one athletic event. A few excel in two. But very few can compete in a sport requiring skill in seven different events. Jackie Joyner-Kersey is someone who could. Some have called her the world's greatest athlete.

Even as a child, Jackie Joyner wanted to do well in many sports. In high school she competed in volleyball, basketball, and track. Basketball was her favorite sport then. She attended college on a four-year basketball scholarship. She became a basketball All-American.

After marrying her coach, Bob Kersey, Jackie began focusing on track. One of her best events was always the long jump. Over the years Joyner-Kersey has won many long jump medals. These include an Olympic gold medal and several world championships.

What about the sport with seven different events? It is called the heptathlon. Besides long jump, it includes events like hurdles, high jump, and shot put. Joyner-Kersey competed in this sport in four different Olympics. She won two gold medals and one silver.

Joyner-Kersey has succeeded for two reasons. Her great athletic ability is one thing. But she also possesses great mental toughness. That toughness helped her triumph in spite of her serious asthma and allergies.

Joyner-Kersey's last Olympics was in 1996. After that, she played professional basketball for a while. She did one final heptathlon in 1998 and then retired at the age of thirty-six.

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. Only a few athletes do very well in more than one sport.

☐

b. The heptathlon is a challenging athletic event.

☐

c. Jackie Joyner-Kersey has excelled in many sports through her career.

☐

Score 15 points for each correct answer.

Score

- Subject Matter** 2 The subject of this passage is
- ☐ a. the importance of getting into sports early in life.
 - ☐ b. discrimination against women athletes.
 - ☐ c. the career of Bob Kersee.
 - ☐ d. the career of Jackie Joyner-Kersee.
- Supporting Details** 3 During college, Joyner-Kersee was very active in
- ☐ a. long jump.
 - ☐ b. volleyball.
 - ☐ c. basketball.
 - ☐ d. the heptathlon.
- Conclusion** 4 Based on her life thus far, it would not be surprising if Joyner-Kersee
- ☐ a. became a referee.
 - ☐ b. got out of sports completely.
 - ☐ c. took up a new sport.
 - ☐ d. became a play-by-play volleyball announcer.
- Clarifying Devices** 5 The passage is basically a
- ☐ a. biography of Jackie Joyner-Kersee.
 - ☐ b. biography of Bob Kersee.
 - ☐ c. history of women's sports.
 - ☐ d. comparison between long jump and heptathlon.
- Vocabulary in Context** 6 In this passage, triumph means
- ☐ a. compete.
 - ☐ b. win.
 - ☐ c. fall in love.
 - ☐ d. continue to smile.

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

Total
Score